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Preparing students for future employment? An exploratory study of English language education in vocational high schools in Taiwan

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Preparing students for future employment? An exploratory study of English language education in vocational high schools in Taiwan

A thesis submitted to Durham University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. No part of the work that appears in this study has been submitted in support of an application of any other degree qualification in this or any other university. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Statement of Copyright

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I dedicate this thesis to my parents, King Cheng Hua and Chia Hui Chu, whose love, support, patience, and encouragement has kept me going. I truly appreciate them, and I am extremely thankful to them for always being there for me.

Dedication

To my parents, King Cheng Hua and Chia Hui Chu

謹將此論文獻給我最摯愛的父母, 華金鎮和朱家慧

Abstract

Preparing students for future employment? An exploratory study of English language education in vocational high schools in Taiwan

This study explores aspects of how English language education in vocational high schools (VHSs) in Taiwan prepares students for their intended employment. It looks at the English language curriculum in VHSs and examines the ways in which it aims to equip students with the English necessary for their intended employment. It also looks at teachers' and students' experiences of English language teaching and learning in VHSs, particularly in terms of their perspectives on the extent to which English language education at VHSs prepares students for their intended employment, and the extent to which it provides students with the English language skills necessary to compete in a global job market.

The central question that this study seeks to address is: How does English language education at VHSs prepare students for their intended employment?

The above question is shaped through answering the following two sub-questions:

1. What are the ways in which the English language curriculum in VHSs in Taiwan aims to equip students with the English necessary for their intended employment?

2. What are teachers' and students' perspectives on English language education, and on the extent to which English language education at VHSs prepares students for future employment, particularly in terms of providing them with the English skills necessary to compete in a global job market?

A mixed-methods research design, involving questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, is used in an attempt to make best use of each approach to explain and answer research questions. The thesis concludes by proposing a model in light of the findings, outlining some of the implications of the research findings, and presenting some recommendations for further research.

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PART 3: METHODOLOGY, EXPERIENCE AND PERSPECTIVES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN TAIWANESE VHSs

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BEI	Business English Index
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EAL	English as an Associate Language
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EBE	English for Business and Economics
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
EGP	English for General Purposes
EI	Engineering Index
EIFL	English as an International Foreign Language
EIIL	English as an International or Intranational Language
EIL	English as an International Language
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELWC	English as a Language of Wider Communication
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESCP	English for Specific Communicative Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	Umbrella term for ESL or EFL
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EST	English for Science and Technology
ETS	Educational Testing Service
EVP	English for Vocational Purposes
GA	General American
GEPT	General English Proficiency Test
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMGs	International Medical Graduates
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language

MOE	Ministry of Education
NES	Native English Speakers
NNES	Non-Native English Speakers
RP	Received Pronunciation
SCI	Science Citation Index
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSCI	Social Sciences Citation Index
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TCTE	Testing Centre of Technology and Vocational Education
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication
TVE	Technological and Vocational Education
VESL	Vocational English as a Second Language
VHSs	Vocational High Schools
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore aspects of how English language education in vocational high schools (VHSs) in Taiwan prepares students for their intended employment. In line with this overarching aim, the study looks more specifically at the English language curriculum in VHSs and examines the ways in which it aims to equip students with the English necessary for their intended employment. The study also looks at teachers' and students' experiences of English language teaching and learning in VHSs, and explores their perspectives on the extent to which English language education at VHSs prepares students for their intended employment, particularly in terms of providing them with the English language skills necessary to compete in a global job market.

People choose to study languages for many reasons, though employability is widely cited as the key reason behind such a choice (Canning, 2009). With the rapid increase of globalisation, and with the increase in international cooperation and interaction taking place between individuals, there is a growing expectation and need for English language ability to give domestic companies a competitive edge in the global markets. This is particularly important for vocational education, as it is considered to "have a central role in developing the human capital required by a dynamic and forward-moving economy" (Avis, 2012, p. 1). Also, it is primarily associated with training individuals for employment (Twining, 1987), and providing them with the skills and competencies required for work (Canning, 2013).

VHSs provide vocational education in secondary schools, where the curriculum focuses on training students with the skills necessary for the workplace and therefore has greater labour market relevance than a traditional academic curriculum (Lauglo & Lillis, 1988).

Lauglo and Lillis also point out that the idea and justification of vocationalisation comes from a pragmatist philosophy of education, particularly the view that "learning should be directly relevant for the active interests and concerns which pupils have-or will face-in their out-of-school life: in their private lives and in their future roles as workers and citizens" (p.4). Therefore, the aim and emphasis of vocational education is to ensure that students are prepared "for the world of work" (p. 8). Accordingly, vocational education is subject to constant change in response to social and economic imperatives (Billett, 2011; Twining, 1987). Globalisation is one movement that is affecting the job market. Therefore, in discussing English language education in VHSs and its preparation of students for their intended employment, it is relevant to have an understanding of this wider contextual background.

Therefore, the remainder of this introductory chapter has two focuses. One is to explore this contextual background in more depth by examining the relationship between globalisation, the English language, and English language education. First of all, I will look at globalisation and aspects that drive and embody globalisation, followed by the impact of globalisation on the proliferation of the English language, the importance and need for English language ability for employability in this globalised world, and conclude that English language teaching has to change to meet the new demands (sections 1.3 to 1.5). The other focus is to look at research in areas related to English language education and employment, and link this to the English language education in VHSs in Taiwan (sections 1.6 and 1.7). This examination justifies the present study's rationale and research questions presented below (sections 1.1 and 1.2).

1.1 Rationale

Graddol (2006) makes the point that "in many countries, extensive curriculum reforms are taking place as economies build the capacity required to operate in a globalised world" (p. 70). Because of the trends towards economic globalisation and the growing need for English language ability, many countries have introduced a number of substantial changes in their English language educational policies. Warschauer (2000) maintains that there is downward pressure for vocational English skills to be incorporated into vocational secondary education in response to the changing global

economy. Wedell (2008) also calls for changes to English language curricula so they more closely fit existing contextual realities and priorities, thereby helping most learners feel that their English language learning efforts are worthwhile.

The socioeconomic position of Taiwan is in the process of changing. However, as Warden and Lin (2000) point out, English language courses in secondary education in Taiwan are "treated as a required academic subject rather than a tool for social survival" (p. 536). The main role of English language education should serve different functions in academic high schools and career-oriented VHSs, as the aim of VHSs is to allow students to develop the skills essential for their chosen future careers.

VHSs have a specially devised curriculum that is tailored for employment, and they offer specialised subjects for different departments, but this does not always apply to English language as a taught subject. Wang and Liao (2010) pointed out that "having focused more on professional knowledge and specialised skills, most vocational and technological university students tend to regard English courses as a low priority. This misunderstanding leads them to believe the English courses contribute little to their academic and career goals…they simply desire not to be failed in these courses" (p. 414).

Apart from this, the nature of general English language courses (which is essentially English for general purposes traditionally offered in schools) may also lead students to not be aware of the specific reason or purpose of English language learning (Abbott, 1981). General English has been criticised in that it tends to teach either too much of the language and skills that learners do not need, or too little that learners do need (Long, 2005b). For example, Barber (1985) found that, although in the early sixties the language syllabus typically covered all of the English tenses, progressive verb forms are rarely, if ever, used in scientific English writing. Similarly, Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) points out that general English may not be able to equip students with the potential level and type of English language skills desired or required as it is not domain specific. In view of this, Long (2005b) has advocated "an urgent need for courses of all kinds to be relevant - and to be seen to be relevant - to the needs of specific groups of learners and of society at large" (p. 19).

However, a review of the research has revealed that the English language education offered in vocational secondary education remains largely under-researched in respect of its ability to prepare students for their future employment (see section 1.6). Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by

1. Discussing the wider context of the research in terms of the importance of English in a globalised world, linking this to a discussion on why teaching English is particularly important for VHSs in Taiwan.

2. Eliciting VHS teachers' and students' perspectives on, English language education, the importance of English language for employability, and on how English language education provided in VHSs in Taiwan might prepare students for employability in their chosen career fields.

3. Examining the English Language syllabus within the curriculum of VHSs (which will include looking at the content and topics covered, aims of the subject, guidelines for teachers on how to teach and implement the syllabus, and the term one textbook) in order to understand better the type of English language education provided and how far it can be seen to prepare students for their future careers. Teachers' and students' perspectives and experiences of the syllabus will also be elicited.

4. Considering how appropriate English language provision in VHSs in Taiwan is in terms of preparing students for employability in their chosen career field.

1.2 The research questions

In line with the broader aims of the study as listed above, the central question that this study seeks to address is

How does English language education at VHSs prepare students for their intended employment?

The answer to the above question can be shaped through answering the following two sub-questions:

1. What are the ways in which the English language curriculum in VHSs in Taiwan aims to equip students with the English necessary for their intended employment?

2. What are teachers' and students' perspectives on English language education, and on the extent to which English language education at VHSs prepares students for future employment, particularly in terms of providing them with the English skills necessary to compete in a global job market?

The study serves as a preliminary exploratory study in order to find out about the current English language education offered in VHSs and to gain insight into teachers' and students' experiences of English language education in VHSs, particularly on how it prepares students for future employment. It is therefore hoped that this study will form the basis for further research in this area.

A sequential mixed-methods research design is used in an attempt to make best use of each approach to explain and answer the research questions. It involves a quantitative questionnaire study at the first phase, and then a separate qualitative interview phase. This allows me to gain multiple views, and also allows the data to be complimentary to each other. This is developed further in the methodology chapter.

To summarise, this study seeks to gain a deeper insight into two key areas:

1. The relationship between English language education and VHS students. This area is concerned with the importance and demand for English language in a globalised world, and how this influences or relates to English language education in VHSs. This area is explored through three different stages. It is first explored later in this chapter by a critical examination of globalisation and the current demand for English language. Followed by examining the impact of globalisation on English language education in general, and also in the context of Taiwan in Chapter Two. This area is also explored through data gathered from questionnaires and interviews on teachers' and students' experiences and expectations of English language education in VHSs.

2. The extent to which English language education in VHSs prepares students for their intended employment. This area is explored through an examination of the English language syllabus within the curriculum for VHSs, and also through data gathered from questionnaire and interview data on teachers' and students' perspectives on the relationship between English language education in VHSs and students' intended employment.

It is noted that the extent to which English language education in VHSs prepares students for future employment cannot be solely based on teachers' and learners' perceptions of needs. There are many aspects involved in determining the appropriateness of the provision of English language education in terms of preparing students for future employment. For example, feedback from students' chosen industry is essential in determining whether the provision of English language courses matches what is required or expected by the industry. Also, graduates' and employees' experience within the specific industry is also essential in terms of an understanding of the actual use of English language in employment (Kassim & Ali, 2010). However, due to practical considerations, this study is based on the students' and teachers' perceptions. This is sufficient to allow us to reach important initial conclusions in understanding the current state of English language education in VHSs in Taiwan. However, it would not be appropriate to assume that this reflects their students' actual English language needs. This is discussed in the thesis, and Chapter Nine outlines the areas for additional research that is needed to address this.

1.3 Globalisation

Globalisation is not a new concept and was identified some considerable time ago (Mrak, 2000). However, the continuous and accelerating developments of globalisation have had a remarkable impact on societies worldwide. For example, from the economic and financial perspective, globalisation represents a new transnational phase of capitalism from the nation-state phase (Robinson, 2001), which has led to the development of multinational companies or transnational corporations. The globalisation of economies has a significant effect upon the pattern of diversification of global industrial production, which results in changes in the nature of employment

patterns (Oliver, 2005). There is an increase in the mobility of skilled workers, whose skills are sought across the world (Little & Green, 2009). Also, as many jobs can be carried out through the Internet, there is a rise of global outsourcing (Zimmermann, 2005).

The changes brought about as a result of globalisation have implications for societies, industries and individuals. It has created a need for individuals to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately with others who speak a different first language. This issue is discussed later in this chapter and also addressed in Chapter Five (see Appendix A for detailed discussion on Globalisation and the proliferation of the English language).

1.4 Globalisation and English language ability

The multi-dimensional nature of globalisation has led to a demand for the appropriate use of the English language in a variety of contexts globally. The dominance of English derives largely from the history of the British colonial expansion throughout the world in the 19th century, and the economic, technological and cultural power of the USA in the 20th century (Boampong & Penova, 2005; Crystal, 2003; Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008). Globalisation reinforces the dominant global language status of English.

The intense competition in a globalised environment, combined with the changing pattern of a global labour market, has created demands for individuals having "high levels of technological skills and knowledge as well as sophisticated levels of linguistic and communicative competence" (Rassool, 2007, p. 3).

Literally, communicative competence is competence in communication. There are two key words involved: communication and competence. Communication is defined as "a continuous process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning" (Savignon, 1997, p. 14), which is a dynamic rather than a static process taking place in specific context, and is presented in both written and spoken language, as well as many other symbolic systems (Savignon, 1997). Competence is regarded as "the identification of behaviours of people considered successful at what they do" (Savignon, 1997, p. 9),

which is a "presumed underlying ability" rather than "the overt manifestation of that ability" (Savignon, 1997, p. 15). Accordingly, communicative competence involves the characteristics of good communicators, which is an interpersonal trait, dependent on the cooperation of all the participants involved (Savignon, 1997). In reference to language, Brown (1994a) defines communicative competence as the "aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts … knowledge that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively" (p. 227). In other words, communicative competence is an aspect that enables language learners to interact with others meaningfully in carrying out communication in a specific context.

Within the context of English language teaching and learning, the development of the concept of communicative competence has shaped second/foreign English language pedagogy, with communicative competence being used as the central theoretical concept for justifications and explications of communicative language teaching (Celce-Murcia, 2007), and with a major focus on "developing learners' abilities to use language appropriately in context" as the goal for this language teaching approach (Savignon & Wang, 2003, p. 223). This is discussed further in Chapter Four.

Because of the increasing use of English in the globalised world, and the consequential impact on the nature of interaction between speakers of other languages and cultures, the importance of the intercultural competence has been recognised by some academics in additional to the importance of communicative competence, especially since the 1990s (Alptekin, 2002; Byram, 1997; Robatjazi, 2008). However, it is noted that while intercultural competence can be largely developed through foreign language education, it can also be developed through other subjects, such as geography or history (Byram, 1997). Whilst I recognise the diverse cultural element involved in the globalised interaction, and also the important role of cultural awareness in facilitating the effectively and appropriately both interaction and communication, this thesis is more concerned with the English language as taught as a curriculum subject. Therefore, this thesis is only concerned with the language competence element, which is communicative competence.

Some writers see a difference between potential communicative competence and actual communication ability. Communicative competence is a presumed underlying aspect that indicates an individual's potential ability to use language competently in communication (Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1997). It does not entail the actual ability of using language to carry out language behaviour, i.e. communication (Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1997; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). Bachman (1990) goes further and recognises that the ability to use language communicatively should involve both competence in the language as well as the capacity for implementing or using the competence in the context in which language use occurs. He defines this ability as 'communicative language ability'. In the present research, communicative language ability is seen as the ability required in a globalised competitive environment, as it refers to the actual ability of using the language. Communicative competence is seen as a concept used as an educational objective, and to prepare learners with this potential ability for the use of language in carrying out the actual communication.

1.5 English language ability and employability

As mentioned earlier, globalisation has made some changes to and had some impacts on societies, industries and individuals. It has brought about new types of job and work requirements that require the use of English at different levels of employment (Warschauer, 2000). There is a growing expectation and need for English language ability to give domestic companies a competitive edge in the global markets. This can be seen from documented cases all around the world which reveal that job applicants in various industries are being rejected because of their insufficient or inadequate English language ability. For example, in Yemen, a high proportion of petroleum graduates are unable to find work with the oil companies because of their poor English ability, and a government officer in Yemen advised the graduates to improve their English language ability in order to increase their opportunities in getting a job within the oil industry (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009). In Malaysia, except from the government agencies where Malay still dominates, English is used as the language of communication in all of the private sector and in multinational companies (Kassim & Ali, 2010). Poor English language ability is claimed to hinder graduates in respect of their employability. More than half of 3,800 recruiters and managers surveyed by an online recruitment company

in Malaysia cite poor English language ability as the reason for rejecting candidates (Phang, 2006).

A similar case is also found at airports in Europe. There are job vacancies in the area of airport ground staff that have remained unfilled since the beginning of the 21st century. Again, part of the reason for this is because job applicants do not have the required level of English language ability (Cutting, 2012). In India, English language ability is seen as the key which can eventually open doors to the world of professional employment, either within India or abroad (Scrase, 2004). Similarly, Riemer (2002) also noted that there is an increasing number of international projects in engineering, and there is a clear necessity for effective English language communication skills in the engineering industry.

It is also reported that English language ability is one key contributing factor for increasing an individual's probability of employment (Dustmann & Fabbri, 2003; Education First, 2012; Schellekens, 2001). For example, Dustmann and Fabbri (2003) use two UK surveys on ethnic minorities (the Fourth National Survey on Ethnic Minorities, and the Family and Working Lives Survey) to analyse information about immigrants' language proficiency and employment status. Based on their statistics, they estimate that fluency in the English language increases employment probabilities by about 22% (p. 696). A report on a national evaluation of the impact of federally-supported English as a second language instruction program in the United States also shows that English language improvement enhances the employability of people whose first language is not English: with a 6% net increase in employment for individuals after 6 months enrolment in an English language course, and more positive results are shown for those who are employed prior to enrolling in the English course (i.e. improvement in their job performance, or obtaining a better job) (Fitzgerald, 1995).

These examples reveal how important it is to have an appropriate level of English language ability for employment purposes. English language is increasingly becoming a basic skill needed and required for the workforce (Education First, 2012), and plays an increasingly vital role in the employment market. It is often recognised as essential for employment, with particular importance for professional employment (Scrase, 2004). Companies are increasingly requiring English language ability, and individuals see

those with English language ability as having a better chance of securing/obtaining employment, or gaining promotion. Therefore, English language can either be seen to have a strong relation to or be an essential prerequisite for increasing the advantage for individuals to gain employment in this globalised world (Arkoudis et al., 2009; Education First, 2012; ESOL Task and Finish Group, 2008; Nallaya, 2012; Nunan, 2003; Schellekens, 2001; Shafie & Nayan, 2010).

Consequently, individuals increasingly perceive English language ability as a practical tool for employment, either domestically or abroad. This then naturally influences their desire/reason to study the English language for practical employment reasons. It is thus no surprise to see that there is an increased interest, from the younger population in particular, to study the English language (Euromonitor International, 2012). For example, Schellekens (2001) carried out research on 178 learners from 53 countries whose first language is not English, and who attend ESOL courses in England and Wales. His study reveals that the majority of interviewees (90%) expressed that their reason for studying English is associated with employment: with 71% of them were learning English in order to find work and 19% to improve their job prospects (XII). In the Middle East and North African region, it is also noted that most young people have a clear understanding of the important role of English language ability in helping them to gain employment, either within their country or abroad. Similarly, in Indonesia, it is noted that English language maintains its position as the primary and favourite foreign language studied in schools because English language is perceived to play a critical part in determining and securing a position in the job market (Lie, 2007). These examples confirm Lihani's (1955) statements that people are interested in languages more for practical purposes. Also, even though people choose to study languages for many reasons, employability is widely cited as the key reason behind such a choice (Canning, 2009).

Studying the English language for the purpose of practical employment is also reflected in students' motivation towards learning English. For example, Al-Tamimi and Shuib's (2009) study identifies a greater instrumental (including utilitarian and academic reasons) than integrative motivation for Petroleum Engineering students to learn the English language, and the primary source of utilitarian reason is related to employment, i.e. enable them to get a job more easily (p. 44).

The importance of English language ability in a globalised world is also reflected and emphasised in different aspects of the employment market such as

1) Companies' recruiting strategies

In a 2012 Economist Intelligence Unit global survey of 572 executives, two-thirds of executives consider English as the one essential language that companies expect their workforce to have for the company to succeed on an international scale. Nearly 70% of the executives said their workforce will need to have English language ability to realise the company's international expansion plans (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012). This is also reflected in employees' experience of their working environment. In a 2010 survey of 26,000 global employees in 152 countries, 84% of them reveal that they need to use English on the job every week, and 55% need it every day (GlobalEnglish, 2012). The fact that companies are recruiting employees with English language ability can be explained from the results of the Business English Index (BEI) in the global workplace (GlobalEnglish, 2012), where it reveals that employees' lack of Business English proficiency threatens the productivity of companies, industries, and country-specific economies.

2) Salary gap

A research project commissioned by the British Council to better understand the benefits of English language for individuals and societies in eight Middle Eastern and north African countries reveals that salaries vary between 5% and 95% between similar-skilled individuals who speak/ do not speak English (Euromonitor International, 2012). In Dustmann and Fabbri (2003)'s study, they also found that English language ability is associated with higher earnings for ethnic minority immigrants in the UK. Similarly, Shields and Price (2002) argue in their study that fluency in (speaking) the English language has a positive effect on occupational wage among ethnic minority immigrants in the UK, with a 16.5% rise in the mean occupational wage. Recruiters and HR managers around the world also report that employees with good English language ability for their country earn 30%-50% higher salaries than otherwise similarly qualified employees (Education First, 2012). English language ability has shown to improve individuals' earning power.

3) Employee position

English language ability is considered particularly important for the middle- and senior-level positions (Euromonitor International, 2012), or as Schellekens (2001) states, English language ability is required except for low skilled jobs, such as cleaning, driving buses, and kitchen portering (Schellekens, 2001).

The relation between English language ability and an individual's employee position can be seen, for example, in the Swedish transport manufacturer Volvo in South Korea, where English language is the required language for managers (Riemer, 2002).

It is claimed that individuals with poor/no English language ability may be passed over for promotion (Education First, 2012). This is expressed, for example, by graduates from textile and clothing in Hong Kong, in which they state a need to acquire better English language ability to help them cope with more demanding communication tasks upon promotion (So-mui & Mead, 2000).

It is clear that English language ability is linked to individuals' employability in today's globalised world. There is an increased demand for English language ability in the work environment, and individuals consequently perceive English language ability as a practical tool for their employability. However, it needs to be noted that the growing needs of English language ability is in different levels and types of employment across various fields, from professional jobs (such as symbolic analysts) to routine production work (such as factory workers) (Nunan, 2003; Warschauer, 2000). And an individual needs to bear in mind that such English language requirements will vary according to the context or application. For example, the English required by an academic, a computer programmer, and a business person may all be different (the relation between language and context is further discussed in Chapter Three). Accordingly, there is a wide range of demands upon the English language, and thus English language teaching (ELT) has to change to meet the new demands. This raises the question as to how far English language education meets these English language demands – a question that this thesis is concerned with from the point of view of its provision in VHSs in Taiwan.

Up to this point, this chapter has discussed several aspects that help us understand the current demand for English language ability in the globalised job market. Figure 1 below shows a conceptual model based on the above discussion. In diagram A, the starting point is globalisation followed by the key impacts and changes that drives and embodies it. These result in intense competition in a globalised environment and the changing pattern of a global labour market. Diagram B shows the other influence of globalisation, which is its reinforcement of the spread of and pre-eminence of the English language, which has led to its dominance as a global language. The outcomes from Diagrams A and B create a need for communicative English language ability in a globalised world. In addition, the realities of the globalised environment (as shown in Diagram A), and the dominance of the English language as the global language (as shown in Diagram B), lead to the importance of English language ability for employment (Diagram C). Jobs require English language ability and thus individuals desire English language ability for their practical employment purpose. Furthermore, the use and requirement of English language among different types and levels of employment will vary according to the context or application, so there is a wider range of demand upon English (Diagram D). Therefore, ELT has to change to meet the new demands (Diagram E).

The need for ELT to meet the new English language demands in the globalised world has also drawn attention to research in areas related to English language education and employment, and this is examined in the following section.
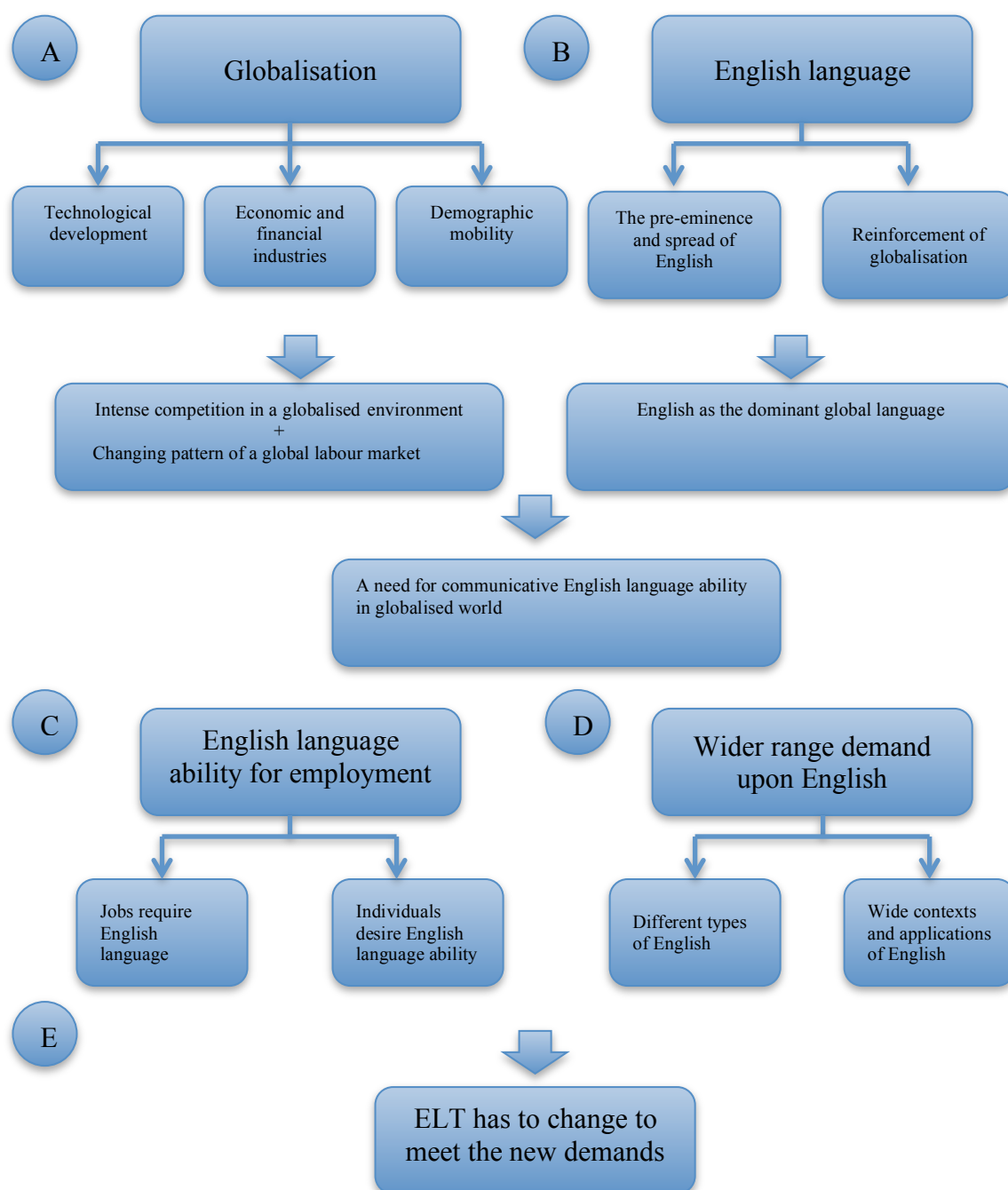
Figure 1. A conceptual model of the current demands of English language teaching and learning

1.6 Research in areas related to English language education and employment

The concerns about English language ability and an individual's employability have become a major issue in the academic and industrial sectors. Attention and emphasis has been put on preparing learners with English language ability that meets the needs and demands of industry (Nallaya, 2012).

English language courses that are focused on employment are typically delivered via two main methods: courses provided in the workplace and designed for the employment needs of that particular company, and courses provided at educational institutions (i.e. schools, universities) to meet the requirements of a particular industry. Much research has been carried out that investigates the relationship between English language education and employment. For example, Cowling (2007) helped a corporate language training provider at a large Japanese industrial firm to set up intensive English language courses for its year 1-3 employees. The courses were intended to give employees practical English language training, focusing on language used in business situations that they may encounter in their workplace. Through the use of interviews and questionnaires to gather and compare relevant data from different sources, four key areas were identified to be included in the syllabus: nine topics useful to the students' working lives; a communicative course for students to adapt their current general English knowledge to business situations; consideration of cultural issues in communication with foreign businesspeople; and realistic examples of language.

The above study focuses on developing an English course for the current employees to familiarise themselves with and master the English language they will encounter in their later working lives. Starting from a different focus, a European Commission Leonardo project was carried out with the aim of opening the doors to employment opportunities for those job seekers, and for those currently employed as ground staff in European airports (Cutting, 2012). Through observing the four trades (security guards, ground handlers, catering staff, and bus drivers) at work, and interviewing the managers, trainers, and workers about their daily routines and problem scenarios, the learning materials were then designed from the grammatical and the functional point of view.

Dialogues illustrating typical daily routines and problem cases are included, and the similarities and differences between the four trades are also outlined.

Both of these studies emphasise the importance of incorporating the English language use and performance in the industry into the course content. However, in Cowling's (2007) study, he points out that in many cases of the planning and designing of English as a foreign language course, the importance of understanding and examining the specific language needs and use in the targeted field is greatly overlooked.

Evidence has indicated a lack of direct correlation between graduate skills and the skills required by industry (Riemer, 2002). Several studies have been carried out to improve this situation by, for example, adding the English language requirements of industries to existing English language programmes (Kassim & Ali, 2010; So-mui & Mead, 2000).

In order to update the existing English language programmes of two higher education institutions, and familarise teachers of the programmes with the communication needs of personnel in the textile and clothing industry, So-mui and Mead (2000) investigated the communication demands placed on merchandisers working in this business environment. The data was collected through questionnaires, follow-up telephone interviews with graduates from the two institutions who are working as merchandisers in the industry, and their supervisors. Collection of authentic workplace texts, and visits to the workplace were also used to collect data. The interview responses from the supervisors reveal that the graduates' English language and communication skills seem inadequate when it comes to performing more demanding tasks, and also highlights a lack of proficiency in written English.

Their findings help to improve the current English language courses by 1) raising current students' awareness of the English communication demands placed in this industry, particularly in written English; 2) addressing the English language course content more on the practice of the most common and preferred use of fax as a channel of communication, and reducing the coverage of the more conventional content of the courses, e.g. letter writing; 3) focusing on the main purposes of written communication and activities in this industry to help students to concentrate on the specific areas of language and communication at work.

Similar to So-mui and Mead (2000)'s study, in which feedback from the English language use and demands from the targeted industry are sought, Kassim and Ali (2010) use self-developed questionnaires to collect information on the important communication skills and communicative events frequently faced and utilised by engineers. Their findings identify specific communicative events that are considered important for engineers, and also the emphasis on oral rather than written communication skills required by engineers. The results from this study are useful in assisting them to develop English language communication syllabus and curriculum for engineering undergraduates in Malaysia, and helping them to prepare students with the English language necessary for becoming professional global engineers, and to enhance the students' competitive advantage in the job market.

Starting with a different approach, Shafie and Nayan (2010) investigate whether through the use of an English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) approach in teaching English to undergraduates in Malaysia can help to enhance students' employability skills. The idea of EOP courses is that they are designed to concentrate on workplace interactions in vocational related situations. Learning activities and tasks are based on students' disciplines, and students are taught to be conscious of structures of texts in their disciplines. Their study concludes a positive outcome for the EOP courses in enhancing students' employability skills.

The research on English language education/courses and employment suggests that the outcome of English language education is often disappointing (Lie, 2007; Wedell, 2008). Industries and higher education are making an effort to improve their employees'/students' English language ability to better meet the English language demands in employment. Steps are being taken to understand the nature of English language use and performance in the targeted industry to ensure the quality of English language learning.

These studies try to inform and improve English language courses so they become more specifically focused, or tailored to be more domain-specific. Arguably, one of the key aspects these studies try to achieve is to increase the focus on English language ability for employability. However, general English language courses, which focus on English language in general situations, is the type of English generally offered in schools (Orr,

1998). This trend has attracted some negative and critical responses. For example, the English proficiency index for companies 2012 (data are gather from 1.7 million adults in 54 countries over 3 years) (Education First, 2012) shows that employees around the globe struggle with English, particularly those students leaving secondary schools who often do not have sufficient English to function effectively in employment. The report further points out that in lower proficiency countries, English is not considered as an essential skill for employability, but is taught as a secondary academic subject in school, with outdated drilled rote learning, and emphasis on grammatical accuracy and memorisation rather than the English language skills needed in employment. Thus, "school systems carry much of the blame for the low levels of English proficiency among adults" (p. 22).

Another criticism about general English can be seen in Chia, Johnson, Chia, and Olive's (1999) study on the English language needs for medical college students in Taiwan. Their study indicates that general English language courses are not sufficient, and students need additional emphasis on aspects of medical English. General English courses have been criticised for a lack of awareness of the specific needs of students (Cowling, 2007). As a result, most learners do not "see the connection on what they do in class with the real job world that they will venture into later" (Shafie & Nayan, 2010, p. 119).

The above discussion reveals that there has been much discussion and research concerning English language education/courses and the learners' employability, and much attention given to the importance of preparing learners with the English language ability necessary for their chosen domain. However, the majority of discussion and research has mainly concentrated on adult or university learners, with much less attention given to the secondary school sector, particularly the general English language education offered in career-oriented VHSs.

1.7 English language, English language education, and VHSs in Taiwan

Oliver (2005) suggests that in order to face the changes brought about by globalisation, education systems need to parallel the contemporary changes and adapt to prepare young people to live and function effectively in globalised environments. Arguably, major educational changes are already taking place at university and in the elementary school sector. For example, there is the tendency towards an 'Englishisation in higher education' (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008), with an increasing use of English language as the medium of education in universities worldwide (Graddol, 2006). There is also a trend of national education policies supporting an early start to teaching of English within elementary schools (Enever, 2008). However, there seems to be less attention given to the secondary level of education, where vocational training in Taiwan, and many other countries, is positioned.

1.7.1 VHSs in Taiwan

Technical and vocational education in Taiwan has always been closely linked to social-economic development, and the establishment and development of vocational education is aimed at delivering the manpower needed for national and social economic growth and development, and providing students with adequate professional knowledge and specialised skills for the job markets. For example, there have been different stages of Taiwan's economic development, from a labour-intensive agricultural period, to a skill-intensive industrial period, and currently a capital-intensive knowledge-based information technology period. Different manpower is needed during different developmental stages, and thus different educational missions are specified to fulfil the need at different stages of development. The initial goal of vocational education was to train various types of entry-level workers to provide the highly skilled manpower needed for economic development in the 1960s and early 1970s. Later, when Taiwan shifted from exporting agricultural products to industrial manufactured goods, vocational education was aimed at more specialised technical personnel, and various levels of expertise. Vocational education was expanded at that time, both in the number of students and the number of schools. The ultimate goal of Taiwan's vocational

education system is to cultivate skills needed in the job market, and it is modified according to the country's economic growth.

VHSs are categorised in the senior (upper) level of secondary education in Taiwan. They provide vocational programs for junior high school graduates. Students are normally aged 15-18 years old, and typically choose a single specialism, such as electrical engineering, computer science or hospitality. In principle, students who graduate from VHSs are equipped to take up employment or go on to advanced study, such as a 4-year or 2-year technology college course.

The distinct characteristic of VHSs that differentiates them from academic high school lies in the emphasis on students' ability to meet and acquire work capability, and help students prepare to enter the job market after graduation. However, getting a higher academic qualification has always been a priority in Taiwan, as it is seen as essential for advancement into the upper social classes and well paid jobs (Cheng, 2007). With the launch of educational reforms in recent years along with the higher tertiary acceptance rates at nearly 100%, there are more channels and opportunities for greater numbers of VHS students to move on to tertiary education (Cheng, 2007). There are increasing numbers of students going for university education and decreasing numbers of students are entering vocational education. As a result, the vocational system is suffering a crisis of identity.

Huang (2008) also points out that, because VHS performance is evaluated by the number of students going to the national university system, VHS tend to focus on sending students into higher education. In other words, building employment-oriented skills and work capability should be the core of the Technological and Vocational Education (TVE) in Taiwan; however, continuing to pursue higher education appears to become the primary focus and also the indicator of VHS effectiveness. The vocational education system in Taiwan seems to lose a clear direction, which differentiates it from academic high schools.

The basic framework of VHSs in Taiwan can be illustrated from four aspects: (i) Purpose: VHSs in Taiwan have a very clear intention and purpose. They aim to give students basic technical skills and help them join the work force right after their

completion of study; (ii) Intention: VHSs' intention is to take students who may not achieve the academic criteria for entering senior high schools, or students who have aspirations of employment and would like to learn practical, career-oriented skills. In other words, this alternative educational path provides them with a vocational orientated education, which helps them to obtain employment; (iii) Who: Students from junior high schools who often struggle with homework and do not manage to get into an academic stream can instead cultivate occupational skills by entering VHSs. These schools have a specifically devised curriculum that addresses students' needs and allows them to receive the relevant occupational training that they require, as well as equip them with skills which could lead towards employment; (iv) Curriculum: In order to suit the varying personal interests and social tendencies, VHSs in Taiwan offer a wide range of subfields, including agriculture, industry, business, maritime studies, marine products, medicine, nursing, home economics, drama and art. It can generally be divided into three components. (1) Core subjects: These include Chinese, English, and mathematics; (2) Technical subjects: These include technical theory and practical experience within students' chosen field; (3) Options: This allows VHSs to have a more flexible curriculum design.

Clearly, students at this schooling sector have chosen their specific field for their future, and VHSs aim to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge in employment. Unlike their technical subjects, where students are provided with the opportunity to engage in relevant work experience, and which serve as preparation for their potential future careers, English language is provided as a common core subject across various departments. Apparently, such provision does not address or differentiate English language in various domains. However, when Cutting (2012) explores the English language use of ground staff in European airports (security guards, ground handlers, catering staff and bus drivers), he reveals that there are differences between trades. Each trade has its own most frequently used grammar and functional dialogues. Also, as mentioned earlier, numerous studies have been carried out within industry and at university level to tailor their English language courses to be more domain-specific so that they address the demands of the specific field.

1.7.2 English language and VHSs

Evidence has shown that there is an increase in the English language ability requirements in the job market in Taiwan, and English language ability is a large factor in an individual's future career development in Taiwanese society. For example, a report in 2005 from 104 Job Bank learning sector (a leading online recruitment service in Taiwan) shows that 53% of its total job vacancies require the applicants to have foreign language skills, and 95% of these jobs ask specifically for English language ability. Furthermore, 88% of the industries approved of, and would like to set up, "English proficiency requirements for different positions" (Liu, 2005). Four years later, the report shows that nearly half (47.5%) of its total full-time job vacancies require the applicants to have English language ability. This percentage rises by almost 20% if the applicants apply for a leadership position (67%), with a further rise to 75% for a directorship position. This shows that not only is there an increasing requirement for English language ability in the Taiwanese job market, but also the higher the position in industry, the greater the demand for English language ability.

Sommers (2008) also points out that the use of English among Taiwan's workforce can be categorised as (1) intensive use: the use of English is essential to an individual's job performance, (2) elective use: the use of English is not necessary for job performance but is necessary for promotion from entry-level to management positions, and (3) assessment-based use: English is not generally used in companies and workplaces but is used as an assessment of merit or potential in recruitment (p. 56). English language ability certainly has a direct impact on many aspects of one's life in Taiwan, especially career-wise, i.e. better jobs, job promotion, salary rise, etc. (Gao, 2002).

Since the goal of the vocational education system in Taiwan is to train the manpower to meet the demands of national economic growth, industrial changes and social needs, English language ability should be considered as one of the VHS students' skills that will enhance their competitive edge in employability. It is essential to cultivate and develop VHS students' English language ability in order to secure a place in the global and national economy. If VHS students have adequate English language skills and competencies applicable to their desired job, it will give them a better opportunity to

apply for jobs or even higher positions. It can be said that English is a tool for survival, and should no longer be regarded as a mere school subject in VHS. However, the scoring system in the TVE Joint College Entrance Examination gives double weighting to professional technical subjects compared to English. Furthermore, students can gain extra points by having additional technical certificates in the alternative route of entering college by recommendation from school. Because of the overemphasis on vocational training, it is no surprise that the status of English language in VHS is regarded merely as a required school subject. What is even worse, it is only seen by students to be a minor or unimportant subject compared to the so-called technical core courses (Wang & Liao, 2010).

1.7.3 English language education in Taiwanese VHSs

Su (1997) surveyed the entrance examination papers for the technical college in 1997. She found that up to 70% of the total score could be achieved only when students had very clear concepts of grammar and mastery of rules. The entrance examination for technical college focuses on language knowledge, and does not include speaking and listening sections. The effect of this is that English language teachers in VHSs focus on instructing the skills related to the testing types (multiple choice questions) and on language knowledge (vocabulary and grammar in particular).

The entrance examinations for English language have undergone a change towards a more communicative-oriented framework. Examination in 2001 was constructed following the basic principles of communicative language testing. Conversation items were added, whilst the number of grammar items decreased. Even though official policy documents state that communicative competence is the main goal for teaching English language, the reality may well be different. Students in Taiwan still have difficulty having basic conversations in English (Chu, 2011), this can be explained by firstly, the deep-rooted test culture, which focuses on written test results; secondly, the style of examinations, which leads to the tendency of focusing on reading.

Furthermore, as the entrance examinations in Taiwan are not orally based, reading comprehension skill is a necessity for students to prepare for the university entrance

examination (Celani, 2008). The examination system in Taiwan determines what is important to study by what is to be examined. In addition, teachers have to prepare students for passing the examinations based on the requirements of the examination system, where all too often, as Findley and Nathan (1980) claim, "the need of the student to functionally communicate in the language has been overlooked" (p. 222). Language teaching becomes a process of practising and acquiring sufficient vocabulary and grammar rules to pass the exam, which hardly considers the English language need and use in reality. This may explain the low level of English language performance in Taiwan when it comes to communicative language use (Nunan, 2003). Taiwanese learners may be good at recognising and memorising grammatical rules of English but are often not able to use English for communication.

Based on a report by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Taiwan (2011), oral communication skill is being placed as the most important English language skill by Taiwanese industries when recruiting and interviewing new employees. Savignon and Wang (2003) also point out, "learners and the society as a whole expect and value communicative skills" (p. 240). The ability to use English language in communication is strongly perceived by the government and people of Taiwan as a very important element of English language ability. More and more education institutions, businesses and organisations in Taiwan have adopted the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC, a global standard test developed to test everyday language skills in the workplace to measure and evaluate English communicative ability for non-native English speakers). It is used for assessment and promotion purposes, and also in some universities for admission purposes or as a graduation requirements (Nan, 2011; Newsletter, 2009). However, comparing TOEIC test results of different stages of students in Taiwan to other counterparts in Asia, VHS students have been pointed out as the most disappointing group due to their inadequate English performance (Chang, 2009). In VHSs, English seems to be taught as a discipline rather than as a communication tool. The priorities of the development of certain aspects of English language skills need to be reconsidered in the English language education in VHSs in Taiwan.

It can be seen that it is necessary to enhance VHS students' English language ability in terms of promoting their post-graduation employability. While there are substantial

requirements for English language ability in employment, the disappointing English ability results of Taiwanese VHS students pose serious questions on the quality and effectiveness of English education in VHSs, particularly in regard to its connection to students' potential English requirement and use in employment.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, there is a problem with the emphasis on written examinations in schools. Whilst good grades may appear to demonstrate satisfactory English language knowledge in the range that the examination covers, it is not an indication of good English language competence in terms of desired actual English language use. Holmes (2001) discusses general employability in UK, and states that employers want the graduates they recruit and employ have desirable performance rather than skills in a general term. If this is the case in the English language ability requirement in the Taiwanese job market, then it is necessary to understand and provide the relevant English language skills demanded by the employment that VHS graduates enter. This leads to the question of whether the English language courses provided in VHSs are relevant enough to support and prepare VHS students with the desired English language ability in employment, as well as understand the complexity of English language use in their potential job.

1.7.4 VHS students and teaching

VHS students in Taiwan are considered to be poorly motivated to learn English (Su, 2003; Wang, 2002). Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) said that "without sufficient motivation even the brightest learners are unlikely to persist long enough to attain any really useful language ability, whereas most learners with strong motivation can achieve a working knowledge of the L2, regardless of their language aptitude or any undesirable learning conditions" (p.153). There is no doubt about the great importance that motivation plays in terms of language learning. The existence of motivation definitely helps the process of language learning.

Warden and Lin (2000) claim that Taiwanese students are motivated to learn English because of the potential benefits it will bring at some point in the future. Also, the instrumental motive associated with potential career improvement is highlighted in

Taiwanese students' English language study. If this applies to VHS students, then using Feather's (1990) class of motives, which include values and needs, English language study that is relevant to what students need and value would appear to be helpful in stimulating VHS students' desire and motives of learning English.

Similar ideas can be seen in Wilkins (1973) and Goodman (1986). Wilkins (1973) states that if language learning is related to the needs of the learners and the way they use the language, they will have greater sustained satisfaction in language learning, as they are able to see the practical benefit of what they are doing through language learning. Goodman (1986) advocates that schools make language hard to learn because schools do not put priority in the 'communication of meaning'. When the learning is sensible and relevant to learners' needs and experiences, it becomes easier. When learners use language meaningfully and purposefully, learning has purpose for learners. In other words, language learning should be meaningful, relevant and has purpose for learners. Therefore, it is worth bearing in mind what aspects and types of language are required to fulfil language learners' expectation of their language learning. These are essential in terms of language learners' desire and motivation in language learning.

Furthermore, in Cheng and Dörnyei's (2007) survey of 387 Taiwanese teachers of English in a wide range of institutional contexts (from elementary schools to universities) and teaching in several different educational sectors at the same time, they found that English language teachers in Taiwan show a "lack of recognition of the utility of goal setting" (which in traditional motivation research, it has been labelled as 'orientations', and the most frequently mentioned types of orientations are 'instrumental' and 'integrative') (p. 163). It appears that it would be useful to explore VHS teachers' English teaching goals, and VHS students' reasons and purposes to learn English. If English language teachers in VHSs could be aware of the reasons behind VHS students' English language learning and could make good use of the potential motive exist in VHS students, it would possibly have powerful influence on VHS students' English language learning in Taiwan.

In summary, this section looked at the relationship between English language, English language education, and VHSs in Taiwan. Figure 2 attempts to summarise the above discussion. As we can see in diagram A, the starting point is the appreciation that the

VHSs place emphasis on the ability of students to meet and acquire work capability, and help them to prepare for future employment. Given that situation, the diagram next to it shows the English language ability requirements in career-wise aspect in Taiwan, and moves on to show how this then affect VHS students' need to become proficient in English language for their careers. From diagram B, we can see that the argument has looked at the contradictions between what VHSs intend to focus on and what the current reality is. It then moves on to see how this leads to the unimportant status of English language in VHSs. Diagram C looks at the language skills that are needed by Taiwanese industries and society, and how VHSs prepare students with these language skills. It then moves on to discuss the problems that arise as a result of the disparity between the two. The whole discussion then moves on to look at VHS students and what research has suggested (Diagram D), and leads to one aim of this study. The last diagram E looks at English language teachers and what this study aims to find out from them.

Figure 2. The relationship between English language, English language education, and VHSs in Taiwan

A.

VHSs
1. Emphasis on students' ability to meet and acquire work capability.
2. Help students prepare to enter the job market after graduation - equip them with professional technical knowledge and abilities required for the job market and career development.

English language ability
1. There is an increasing requirement for English language ability in the Taiwanese job market.
2. The higher the position in industry, the greater the demand for English language ability.
3. The use of English language among Taiwan's workforce is a fact; it is only a matter of whether it is intensive English use, elective use or assessment-based use.

Relationship

1. Enhancement of competitive edge in employability
2. A better opportunity to apply for a job or even a higher position

B.

VHS core:
Employment-oriented and work capability building

1. Primary focus: sending students into higher education

2. Scoring system: overemphasis on vocational training

The status of English language in VHSs:
1. A required school subject
2. A minor or unimportant subject compared to the technical courses

C.

English language skills needed
1. Oral communication skill is placed as the most important English language skill by Taiwanese industries.
2. In Taiwan, learners and the society as a whole expect and value communicative English language skills.

English language skills provided
1. The style of examination is written but not orally based - reading comprehension skill is a necessity for students to prepare for the examination.
2. Students are good at recognising and memorising grammatical rules of English but are often not able to use English for communication.

Problems:
1. English language need and use in reality is hardly considered.
2. English is taught as a discipline rather than as a communication tool in VHSs.

D.

VHS students
1. Identified as the most disappointing group because their inadequate English language performance in the TOEIC as compared to other groups of students in Asia.
2. Less motivated students.

Research reports about Taiwanese English language learners
1. Taiwanese students are motivated to learn English because of the potential benefits it will bring at some point in the future.
2. The instrumental motive associated with potential career improvement is highlighted in Taiwanese student's English language study.

What aspects and types of language are required to fulfill VHS learners' expectation of their language learning?

E.

| English language teachers in Taiwan 'lack of recognition of the utility of goal setting' (instrumental and integrative motivations). | → | This study aims to explore
1. VHS teachers' English language teaching goals.
2. VHS students' reasons and purposes to learn English. |

Therefore, considering the contextualised reality of the English language demands in employment, the purposes of VHSs, and their arrangements for English language courses, there is a need to gain a deeper insight into how such arrangements prepare students for their intended employment, and also to explore what VHS teachers' and students' perspectives are of their English language education in VHSs (as research question two seeks to find out). This exploration will also help to find out whether current English language education in VHSs in Taiwan has evolved in tandem with the changing economic growth.

1.8 Structure and content of the remaining chapters in this thesis

There are eight further chapters in this study. Chapter Two looks at the impact of globalisation on English language education. It first examines the realities of English language used in global and national contexts, and its pedagogical implications, which helps to clarify the Taiwanese context of the present research. It then moves on to look at English language in the Taiwanese context, and examines the English language syllabus with the curriculum of VHSs. This is relevant to understanding to what extent the English language curriculum prepares students with the English necessary for their intended employment, as stated in research question one.

Chapters Three to Five review relevant literature on English language education. Chapter Three looks at literature on English language learning, and examines the concept of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) (as it is the English language learning context of the current study). This review generates several important aspects that are relevant to the discussion of EFL education, and which have been used to guide the construction of the questionnaires and interviews for this study. Chapter Four reviews literature on English language teaching, and examines the major developments

in foreign English language teaching. The literature review of these two chapters lead to a further examination of English language purposes and needs, and what/how English language education can offer to students in terms of preparing them with the desired/required types of English language and needs. This is presented in Chapter Five on a discussion of the general English and English for Specific Purposes.

Chapters Six to Eight discuss the research methodology, and the findings relating to the relationship between English language education and VHS students in Taiwan, and the extent to which English language education in VHSs prepares students for future employment. Chapter Six discusses the research questions, the research design and methods, the sample and population choices of this study, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapters Seven and Eight deal with the presentation and analysis of data, which seek to answer the two research questions of this study. Chapter Seven presents data and findings from the student participants, and Chapter Eight presents data and findings from the teacher participants. Students and teachers' perspectives on English language education in VHSs, its importance for employability, and the relationship between English language education in VHSs and students' future employment are analysed and presented in both chapters.

Chapter Nine draws on the findings from both Chapters Seven and Eight, and provides a summary of major findings and discussions, reaching a conclusion that answers the main research question of this study. It also discusses the implications of the research findings and offers recommendations both in terms of suggestions for improving current practice and ideas for further research in this area.

2

The impact of globalisation on English language education in Taiwan: policy implications for VHSs

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the impact of globalisation on English language education, with a particular focus on Taiwan and its VHSs. It consists of three parts. The first part looks at English language in two different global and national contexts, which provides an understanding of the realities of English language in use, and its impact on English language education. It not only provides wider contextual background information to this study, it is also useful for policy makers and practitioners when thinking about language planning and curriculum, and the teaching of English language, which further helps to understand and clarify the second part of this chapter: the Taiwanese context of the present study, as well as its pedagogical implications.

The second part of this chapter looks at the context of English language in Taiwan, for example, the impact of globalisation on Taiwan. It first looks at its economical planning, and language policy and reforms, and then the status, use, role, and the purposes of English language in Taiwanese society, which provides the necessary contextual background to this research. This contextualisation sheds light on the policy implications to VHSs and English language education. The third part of this chapter examines the English language syllabus within the curriculum of VHSs, and therefore answers research question one stated in Chapter One.

2.2 The impact of globalisation on English language use

As discussed in the previous chapter, globalisation has led to the further spread of English language around the world, and influences the use of language. It has resulted in the increased use of English language worldwide, both in terms of numbers of speakers, and in the geographic and functional expansion of contexts of use. Worldwide, non-native English speakers (NNES) outnumber native English speakers (NES) three to one (Gagliardi, 2010; Sasaki, Suzuki, & Yoneda, 2006). The English language is no longer seen to be dominated by the native English speaking countries (Gagliardi & Maley, 2010; Warschauer, 2000), and there is a transition in the function, contexts of use, and ownership of English (Jenkins, 2000). Accordingly, the goal of English language teaching and learning is no longer simply and primarily to be able to communicate effectively with NES. The goal and focus to achieve the native standard has also been questioned (Jenkins, 2000; Young & Walsh, 2010).

The growth, spread, and dominance of English language has implications for language policy, language planning and curricula, and the teaching of English (Seidlhofer, 2003; Young & Walsh, 2010), and it has claimed the attention of both researchers and practitioners in the field of English language teaching and learning. One area of growing interest is in respect to how the English language is used around the world. Since there is an increasing proportion of communication in English between NNES, the English language can and will be changed by all its users (Young & Walsh, 2010). To correspond to the reality of English used worldwide, new terms emerged: World Englishes, English as an International Language (EIL), and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). These different types of Englishes are discussed in further detail in section 2.3.1. below.

2.3 The English language in the global context: EIL and ELF

McArthur (2002) defines a language as lingua franca when the language is "common to, or shared by, many cultures and communities at any or all social and educational levels, and used as an international tool" (p. 2). Even though other languages, such as Chinese and Spanish, have more native speakers than English (Graddol, 2006; Young & Walsh,

2010), the dominant status of English as a global language has led to the term ELF emerging as a way of representing its current position and role (Seidlhofer, 2005). The global spread of English has also resulted in the emergence of 'new English', which means world English use and the varieties of non-standard English, and this is one of the features studied under the category of ELF.

Much research has focused on different aspects, implications, and consequences of the development of World English varieties in ELF (Gagliardi & Maley, 2010; Graddol, 2006), the intelligibility in world Englishes in the global context (Jenkins, 2000; Kachru, 2008; Smith, 1983b), and the maintaining of national and local identity in the face of globalisation (Graddol, 2006; Kachru, 1992). For example, Seidlhofer (2003) discusses the function of English as the world language and outlines its likely consequences in pedagogy, such as re-orientation of English language from achieving native standard towards focusing on skills and strategies useful in international contexts, and also exposure to a wide range of varieties of English to facilitate the acquisition of communicative abilities. Jenkins (2000) states that flexibility is the key priniciple in facing the World English varieties, and proposes pedagogical procedures to help speakers of English to acquire such flexibility. She argues that Received Pronunication (RP) or Genearl American (GA) English would serve as a reference or guidance in teaching, and as a commom pronunciation core for intelligibility. Speakers (learners) need to be flexible to adjust and adapt their speech according to the context of interaction, and so do speech receivers (teachers).

However, Maley (2010) argues against the claim that ELF brings about new varieties of English use across a wide variety of interactions between NNES. She states that this kind of claim focuses primarily on interactions between NNES. Although there are statistically more NNES-NNES interactions than those between NES-NES, there are other more complex types of interaction that need to be taken into account (see details on p. 28-29), as well as the status of the users' English needs, because competent users of English are less likely to resort to other forms of English. Therefore, Maley (2010) states that "the sheer range of variability in the use of English is phenomenal" (p. 31). This appears to be the case in terms of English as a second/foreign language teaching.

These concerns about World Englishes or English varieties in ELF do not seem to have much influence on its practice. For example, Jenkins (2000) pointed out that in English as a foreign language countries, the teaching profession still follows standard English criteria (Jenkins, 2000). Also, Yung and Walsh's (2010) study, in which they interviewed 26 NNES teachers from different countries and explored their beliefs about the usefulness and appropriateness of EIL and EFL varieties, found that "most participants are more concerned with ways of selecting, adapting and exploiting a variety which is appropriate to their local context than with issues around the usefulness and appropriateness of EIL/EFL" (p. 136). Their investigation indicates a general trend suggesting that participants were taught the local variety of English at lower levels, for example, Taiwanese English in terms of pronunciation and grammar in schools. However, once they became more advanced learners, i.e. in colleges or universities, they have more access or exposure to authentic British or American English, which is dependent on local conditions and expectations. Therefore, their finding shows that teacher participants are not concerned about ELF issues, rather, they report a practical and pragmatic perspective on varieties of English, with a need to believe in a standard form of the language. In other words, teacher participants would want to teach English which would approximate as closely as possible to the native standard. Thus, their study suggests that a clear understanding of local contexts should be the first consideration in terms of English education.

While ELF focuses on the use of English primarily among NNES, EIL highlights the international use of English, and it applies to both NES and NNES. According to Smith (1983b), English, when used as an international language, it is no longer dominated by NES but by anyone who speaks English. English native speakers need to be aware of the English varieties because English is used as a function to communicate with people worldwide.

Smith (1978) suggests that "English as an international or intranational language (EIIL) is a more accurate term of how English language is being used in most of the world" (p. 5), and further claims that EIIL "should become the classroom subject rather than ESOL" (which is the umbrella term for ESL or EFL) (p. 5). His two main arguments for the educational differences between ESOL and EIIL are, firstly, EIIL learners include both NES and NNES while ESOL refers to NNES only. Secondly, the emphasis is on

the study of culture. ESOL emphasises mainly native English speaking culture while EIIL allows wider cultures to be involved.

However, when Kachru (1986) described English language teaching and learning, he proposed the concentric circles model to represent the situation: the inner circle represents English as a first language (i.e. Australia, Britain, the USA); the outer circle represents English as a secondary language in a multilingual environment (ESL) (i.e. India, Singapore, and the Philippines), and the expanding circles represents English as a foreign language (EFL) (i.e. China, Japan, and Korea). Judd (1981) had earlier identified and proposed four distinct contextual categories determined by the language environment in which the NNES were studying: ESL (English as a second language), EFL (English as a foreign language), EAL (English as an additional language) and ELWC (English as a Language of Wider Communication) (p. 60-63). Judd's categorisation is determined by the language environment in which the NNES were learning English. Therefore, in terms of the groups mentioned above, Judd excludes NES.

Of course, we cannot neglect the notion of EIL. As Kachru (1992) proposes, teaching English as an international language is "an awareness of the fact that most ESL/EFL today relates to NNS populates requiring English for their internal purposes, or for dealing with other NNS populations, without the presence or intervention of native speakers" (p. 41). Educators need to bear in mind the function of English as an international language to facilitate communication between different countries and cultures (communication facilitator), which can certainly have some pedagogical implication. Current English language teaching and learning studies often refers to ELF and EIL, and these terms are generally used when considering English language in a global sense. However, they cannot represent other aspects of English language positions. This is because different sociopolitical, cultural and economic backgrounds will make considerable difference in terms of the role, function, and status that English language holds in a nation. Therefore, thinking of English as an international language does not help us to understand the position of English language within a nation where English language is not a native language. If we narrow down English language to national level, the role and functions of English language in a specific nation context may vary. Accordingly, the fundamental contextual factor of how English language is

perceived and functions in a nation needs to be examined and looked at from its national context.

2.4 The English language in a national context: ESL and EFL

An initial understanding of the position of English language in a national context will definitely be meaningful and in fact, most appropriate when it comes to the teaching and learning of English language. In terms of English used as a non-native language, this is best achieved by using the categorisation system of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL).

It has been shown that these two situations have considerable differences in terms of English language teaching and learning (Kachru, 1992; Nayar, 1997). For example, Hakansson and Norrby (2010) conducted a longitudinal study comparing different contexts: in a foreign setting or in the target language environment (instructed language learners of Swedish in two different learning contexts: in the target language environment (referred to as second language learners) and outside of the target language environment (referred to as foreign language learners). Their result show differences between the second language and foreign language groups in their pragmatics and lexicon production. Their study confirms that the learning environment is a critical factor. In Kobayashi (2001)'s study, she also reconfirmed the importance of taking the particular social context of the learners in order to gain a proper understanding of learners' learning attitudes towards learning. The distinction between ESL and EFL has been recognised as useful in providing perspectives in developing and discussing English language curriculum, teaching aims, strategies and methods (Brown, 1994b; Christophersen, 1873; Judd, 1981). Therefore, the following sections briefly look at the two terms, ESL and EFL.

2.4.1 ESL

The colonisation of British imperialism in the 19th century triggered the initial spread of English. In many colonial and post-colonial nations, English remains in use due to its advantages and the social prestige status English entitles. Often, these nations are

multilingual and multicultural. English becomes a 'second' language (though not in the order of acquisition), for the purpose of intranational everyday communication. English has some officially approved national status, and it is a vital medium of instruction in the educational system (Kachru, 1992; Nayar, 1997; Smith, 1978). The other ESL situations take place initially from the liberalised post World War II immigration policy in North America. English is being taught to immigrants to interact and integrate into the English native speaking society in the native environment (Nayar, 1997). In short, in ESL countries, "English is used for a range of purposes or has an official status" (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008, p. 13).

In terms of English language learning and teaching, an ESL context provides learners with rich English language exposure, and real-life English language use opportunities outside the classroom, which allows them to "develop their pragmatic ability" (Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan, 2006, p. 51). Moreover, English language is primarily studied for utilitarian reasons (Nayar, 1997).

2.4.2 EFL

The rise and economic influence of the United States in the 20th century furthered the spread of English language in the non-colonised areas of the world. In this way, English gradually won its unique international status. English has been integrated into the education systems of many countries, and is taught as a school subject even though it does not have any official status (Judd, 1981; Kachru, 1992; Nayar, 1997). It has little or no internal communicative function, it is simply "just another language" (Kachru, 1992). English language is studied mainly for its usefulness in international contact and communication (Smith, 1978; Smith, 1983b). In short, in EFL countries, "English is usually learned through education for international and occupational purposes" (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008, p. 14).

In terms of English language learning and teaching, the EFL context provides learners with a limited amount of exposure to English (Smith, 1983b) and restricted English language use (Kachru, 1992). Learners do not have ready-made exposure to and immediate uses for English situations outside classroom, they need to make efforts to

create such opportunities, and may thus "have difficulty in seeing the relevance of learning English" (Brown, 1994b, p. 6).

2.4.3 Views against the ESL and EFL labels

English as a second and as a foreign language are ways to refer to the role of English language position, use, and learning outside the NNES English learning scope (situations). While research highlights the importance of distinguishing ESL and EFL, and its value in informing English language pedagogy, there are some arguments against these two labels. Nayar (1997) argues that ESL and EFL is the reality of history and demography rather than the realities of the changing role of English in today's world. Smith (1978) states the same view, expressing that these two labels do not "fully describe the present state of English language use" (p.13). Examples of its constantly overlapping definition and blurry references can be found in the literature and in the English language teaching materials marketing (Hakansson & Norrby, 2010; Kachru, 2008; Nayar, 1997; Smith, 1978). Nayar (1997) further points out different perceptions and interpretations of ESL from looking at the sociocultural English language acquisition background and objective of learning (see p. 15-24 for further details). He further proposed a new label, English as an associate language (EAL), to differentiate the two dimensions of ESL. It seems that ESL appears to be more controversial than EFL. As Nayar (1997) claims, the use of EFL is "semantically more transparent and less complex in that it is basically referred to a language that is foreign" (p. 12).

So far this section has argued that globalisation has led to the further spread of English around the world and that this has affected how English language is used. The discussion has seen that two broadly different groups of researchers have emerged, both looking at the realities of English language in use. One line of research, which sees English as either an international language or lingua franca, has raised such issues as the emergence of varieties of World English, their intelligibility, local and national identities and their consequences for English language pedagogy. A different line of research has looked at the same issues from a more context-bound perspective, in which understanding and responding to local, national and social contexts for English language led to seeing issues of English language teaching and learning through the

more traditional approaches of EFL and ESL. Figure 3 below sums up these two positions.

English seen as a global language (international/lingua franca)   **English seen as a second/foreign language**

Global level

The English language in a global sense

National level

How English in NNES countries is perceived and functions in a national sense

1. ELF - English is used as a worldwide communication language between NNES.

2. EIL - English is used as a function to communicate with people worldwide.

3. World Englishes - the emergence of World English varieties.

National position
1. ESL - (1) Intranational everyday communication (2) Officially approved national status (3) A vital medium of instruction in the educational system.
2. EFL - (1) Little or no internal communicative function (2) No official status (3) It's simply just another language and it's taught as a school subject (4) Mainly studied for its usefulness in international contact and communication

Consequences and pedagogical implications

1. Intelligibility - Intelligible communication among speakers from different nations and culture.

2. Identity - Maintaining national and local identity in the face of globalisation.

3. English varieties

English language teaching and learning environment

1. ESL - (1) rich English exposure (2) Rich real-life English use opportunities outside the classroom (3) English is primarily studied for utilitarian reasons intranationally and domestic motivation.

2. EFL - (1) Limited amount of exposure to English (2) Restricted English use (3) No ready-made exposure to and immediate uses of English situations outside classroom (4) learners may have difficulty in seeing the relevance of learning English.

Figure 3. Two different perspectives on English language teaching and learning: global and ESL/EFL

A suggested conceptual map (see Figure 4) for the two different perspectives on English language teaching and learning is to see these two as contrasting mindsets: outside-in and inside-out. The outside-in view starts from the position that English is a global phenomenon and then considers how this phenomenon affects how the English language appears in local areas in terms of its applications, functions, and local usage. This view considers global issues and uses in order to understand the local reality. The

other perspective, inside-out view, starts with the local reality. It looks at how English occurs in a local, national, or social context. How English is changing in the worldwide setting, i.e. interaction between different groups of English speakers is not their primary concern. This is the perspective that is generally used by teachers, policy makers, and curriculum developers. This leads to a mismatch between what students are being prepared for by their English education, and the world realities or their employer's positions that apply to them.
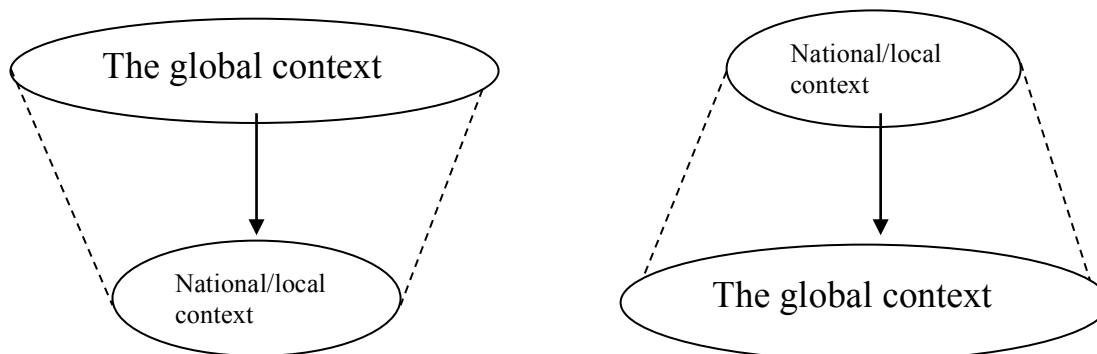
Outside-in view: uses a wide global view to understand English in a narrow national setting

Inside-out view: uses a narrow national to understand English in a wider global setting

Figure 4. Two contrasting conceptual English teaching and learning mind-sets

We can use these two views to simplify the many different classifications of English language teaching and learning that currently exist. For example, ESL/EFL are both inside-out views as they can be seen as working from a specific context to a broader international perspective. By contrast, the more recent global approach, i.e. EIL, EFL, sees English more from the outside-in perspectives. However, both views accept the need for national context to be considered.

As the current context of this study focuses on Taiwan, the following sections aim at clarifying the Taiwanese context of the present study. The role, status and function of English in Taiwan are introduced. In addition, in the context of current study, the researcher proposes a new term: English as an international foreign language (EIFL) in the context of Taiwan from the perspectives of English use globally and nationally, as

well as the role and function of English in Taiwan. This new designation modifies the ESL/EFL terms to include a global perspective. This allows us to consider the local properties and realities of learning and using English in Taiwan, whilst still being aware of the global issues.

As this study is concerned with the English language education in VHSs in Taiwan, the second part of this chapter examines the status, use, rule, and the purpose of English language in Taiwanese society, and the impact of globalisation on the English language education in Taiwan. These help in understanding the situation of English language in Taiwan, as well as later discussion of English language education in Taiwanese VHSs, where this study is conducted.

2.5 The context of English language in Taiwan

As mentioned earlier, one area of English language education research is investigating the development or emerging varieties of English language, and their relevant pedagogical aspects. Globalisation has led to English language education going through rapid changes in different countries, and Taiwan is no exception. The influences and functions of English are increasingly expanding in Taiwan. It is the most commonly studied, and the only required foreign language in schools.

Jung and Norton (2002) state that, "in many non-English speaking countries, a learner's acquisition of English can be profoundly affected by a government's policy toward the role of English in society and also by the procedures for implementing those decisions in its educational system" (p. 246). The role of governments on the national language policy will shape the language use and learning. In order to get a better idea of English language education in Taiwan, it would be essential to first gain an initial understanding of the English language context in Taiwan. Therefore, the following sections look at the effect of globalisation on national and economical planning, some of the government's recent policy regarding English language, and further discusses the status, use, role, and the purpose of English language in Taiwanese society. The impact of globalisation on the English education in Taiwan is also examined, with particular attention given to Taiwanese VHS English language education.

2.5.1 The effect of globalisation on national and economical planning

Globalisation has led to greater integration in international trade. In facing global competition, one of Taiwan's national policy goals is to cultivate localised industries as well as promote globalisation for Taiwan. Taiwan's admission as an official member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in January 2002 is one of the noticeable policy achievements of Taiwan in joining international trade organisations. As a major global exporter of manufactured goods, Taiwan's accession to the WTO ensures an equal opportunity to compete within the international marketplace.

Other major national plans towards global competitiveness in the international market are, for example, the following plans proposed by the Council for Economic Planning and Development (2002):

(1) Developing Taiwan into a global research, development, and supply centre for high value-added products.

(2) Investing in global logistic distribution channels; building Taiwan into a regional headquarters for Taiwanese and multinational corporations to improve the business and investment climate in Taiwan.

(3) Investing and developing an internationalised living environment, and create a barrier-free and sustainable living environment to develop Taiwan into a prime tourist destination.

As for the national economy boost and development, the Executive Yuan (2009) has picked out six main emerging industries, with the aim of 'deepening the development of pre-established industries on the existing foundations of Taiwan's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) industry, while at the same time suitably adjusting Taiwan's over-dependence on the ICT industry'. The six chosen industries are: biotechnology, green energy, travel & tourism, cultural & creative enterprises, medical care, and high-end agriculture.

As stated by the Executive Yuan (2009), to successfully develop each of the six emerging sectors, it will "require high-quality human resources with foreign language ability and a global perspective" (p. 14).

Furthermore, in face of the impact of the global financial storm, the Taiwanese President, Ying-Jeou Ma, in his 2009 New Year's Day address, proclaimed that the government must strive 'to turn Taiwan into a global centre of innovation, an Asia-Pacific economic and trade hub, and an operations headquarters for Taiwanese overseas businesses' (Executive Yuan, 2009). English is no doubt a vital element in increasing the international competitiveness of Taiwan, and in achieving the ultimate goal of shaping Taiwan into a suitable international resources exchange centre.

To sum up, the effects of globalisation on Taiwanese national and economical planning are as follows:

1. One of the national policy goals is cultivate localised industries as well as promote globalisation for Taiwan.

2. High-quality human resources with foreign language ability and a global perspective are required.

3. The ultimate goal is shape Taiwan into a suitable international resources exchange centre.

It is clear from this that English language ability plays an essential role for the promotion of globalisation and international competitiveness for Taiwan. In addition, English language ability is also a key element in achieving those plans proposed by governmental departments. This indicates that English language ability at different levels and in different areas of specialties is needed in Taiwan. The need and use of English in Taiwan is no longer limited to "a small highly educated elite" as Judd (1981, p. 62) defined, but is relevant to a wider range of the population.

2.5.2 The Taiwanese Government's response to the globalisation of English: promotion of English language ability in Taiwan

The British Council estimates that, by 2020, half of the world's population, or 3 billion people, will be able to communicate in English. 70 countries have already designated English as an official language (Executive Yuan, 2009). English has become essential to facilitating Taiwan's connection with the global community.

The Taiwanese government recognises that English language ability is one of the key elements in developing international competitiveness, and thus strives to enhance international language training for those working in national projects as well as citizens of Taiwan.

In view of the English language need for globalisation, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan has promoted the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) as a dependable and objective measure of English language ability, and to encourage students and citizens to learn English (Wang & Liao, 2010). Moreover, the government has begun to sponsor English language courses to help service workers to improve their English (Chern, 2004).

Two recent plans carried out by the Executive Yuan (2002, 2009), which emphasise the promotion of English and the quality of English language in Taiwan are

(1) Challenge 2008: National Development Plan (2002-2007). Its strategies in promoting national English language ability are:
(a) creating an English living environment
(b) promoting GEPT
(c) enhancing Quality of English educators
(d) promoting International Trends in Universities and Colleges
(e) attracting Foreign Students
(f) encouraging Study Abroad

(2) Plan for Enhancing National English Proficiency (Executive Yuan, 2009). The focus is to collaborate with the MOE to map out appropriate measures for creating a suitable environment to enhance the English language ability of citizens of this country, including civil servants.

To sum up, the Taiwanese government's policy regarding English language is to firstly, enhance international English language training for those working on national projects as well as other citizens. Secondly, to implement plans that promote English and raise the quality of English. So on a national level, the Taiwanese government promotes the internationalisation of English to increase global competitiveness, boost the economy and development of Taiwan. All this calls for greater levels of English language ability among Taiwanese citizens.

2.5.3 Policy applications and implementations on the use of English language in Taiwan

The main example of this policy being implemented is seen in the aim to build an English living environment to meet globalisation needs and attract more foreign visitors to Taiwan. It consists of two major approaches for creating an English-friendly environment for visitors: (1) all websites aim to include an English version to give foreigners an understanding of all aspects of Taiwan society; and (2) regional service facilities that provide information in English.

Another example of policy implementation is that Taiwan's city and county governments have set up artificial English learning facilities and programmes in elementary and junior high schools to immerse learners in real world English situations, and to improve their ability to communicate in English. In 2006, the Taoyuan Education Bureau opened the first English Village in Taiwan. At the end of May 2009, a preliminary survey found that 36 schools had established such facilities: 2 were set up by senior high schools, 2 by junior high schools, and the rest were set up by elementary schools (Executive Yuan, 2009). These give learners more opportunities of being exposed to native English speaking teachers and authentic discourse and language use.

From these we can see that the Taiwanese government is actively expanding the use and application of English as a part of daily life. However, despite these official efforts in promoting and making English 'used' in Taiwanese society, the most widely used and spoken language for Taiwanese people is still not English. In other words, English is still not used as a major means for communication in daily life in Taiwan (Chen & Hsieh, 2011).

2.5.4 English language in Taiwan: use and function

The Taiwanese government has a language policy dilemma. On the one hand, there is policy discussion about the promoting of English for global competitiveness. On the other hand, however, it finds itself needing to preserve native languages. Because of the complex socio-historical background, the official language of Taiwan is Mandarin (Chinese). However, Mandarin is not native to Taiwan. Taiwanese mother tongues are Taiwanese (Tai-Yu) and Hakka. Taiwanese is the widely spoken language, around 70 percent of the population; Hakka, around 15 percent of the population (Liao, 2010).

As there are more people becoming aware of the importance of preserving native Taiwanese languages, the Taiwanese government has started to make efforts to promote native education. Elementary school students are required to study one local native language in Taiwan - Taiwanese, Hakka, or an indigenous language. As for junior high school students, such local native language study is optional (Klöter, 2004).

While striving for a balance between national identity and competitiveness, the desirability of English in Taiwan is constructed through the international, national, and local statuses of English language. English is claimed by the government to be a quasi-official language in Taiwan (Chen & Hsieh, 2011). Nationally, it is a vital key element of Taiwan's economic, financial, and technological development. Educationally, it is a leading factor in the educational success of students in Taiwan. Vocationally, it is becoming an essential requirement for more than half of the jobs in Taiwan (104 job bank in 2004, the largest human resources company in Taiwan). Ability in English gives an individual an additional competitive advantage in the Taiwan workplace (Wang & Liao, 2010).

As Celani (2008) maintains, "at present we live in a world where English opens doors to educational and job opportunities at all levels" (p. 421). English definitely holds a unique position in Taiwan. There is an increased requirement and use of English in many sectors of Taiwanese society and life. However, daily communication needs still relies on Mandarin and the native languages in Taiwan. The extent of the function and uses of English in Taiwan are still limited compared to ESL countries, and the native languages used in Taiwan. Furthermore, the exposure and interaction with English language in Taiwan is still more restricted and limited than in ESL contexts.

All in all, English is not a prominent feature of Taiwanese social interaction. Mandarin and Taiwanese are the major languages used on a daily basis. Most people can get by well without speaking any other language. However, English does feature in two other areas of Taiwanese life. One is as a compulsory component in schools and universities examinations, the other is as a requirement in growing and diverse employment situations.

2.5.5 The effectiveness of government policy efforts

So far in this chapter government policy efforts on English language have been presented. However, I will now consider the effectiveness of these efforts, drawing on the evidence from the literature review.

The Taiwanese government aims to provide opportunities to both learn and use English practically, and thus gain English language ability. Huang (2005) claims that English is increasingly used not only for international communication associated with government, business and popular culture, but also for internal purposes in major institutions in Taiwan. Feng (2011) also made a similar statement, saying that the prestigious status of English in Taiwan "has led to an exponential increase in its use in many important sectors of society and in many schools as a medium of instruction" (p.9). This shows the recognition of the Taiwanese's government's effort to promote English. However, it is suggested that there is still a long way to go before English becomes commonly used in Taiwan. Possible reasons why it may be some time yet before this is achieved are:

(1) English is claimed to be a quasi-official language by the Taiwanese government. There is some evidence to show that citizens are still unaware of the political and practical implications of English being a 'quasi-official' language. For example, Huang (2005) conducted six semi-structured focus group interviews with a total of 30 university and college students in Taiwan, and found that "participants did not seem to be cognizant of the political and practical implications of awarding a language 'official status'" (p. 50).

(2) Government's internationalisation plans and programmes are still in the process of improvement and development. For example, creating an internationalised environment is still unsatisfactory. (e.g. Taiwan's former adoption of Tongyong Romanisation in English signage causes complications and confusion to foreign visitors and residents). Furthermore, regulations on recruiting international talent and attracting foreign investment to Taiwan have restricted the government's plan for turning Taiwan into a 'centre of confluence' for Asia-Pacific cultural and creative industries (Executive Yuan, 2009).

(3) Despite the fact that English is actually emphasised in government's policy as an 'internationalisation' key tool, it is still designated and classified as a 'foreign language' subject in schools, and studied for only a few hours per week in public schooling. Taiwan still lacks the English immersion environment that ESL countries have.

The discussion above suggests that English in Taiwan is an EIFL (see 2.3.3.). Nationally, the Taiwanese government promotes greater English language ability of citizens in Taiwan, and actively expands the use and application of English as a part of Taiwanese daily life situations. Locally, however, Mandarin and Taiwanese are the major languages used on a daily social interaction basis. English is a compulsory component in schools and universities examinations, and a requirement in the growing and diverse employment. The extent of the functions, uses, exposure, and interaction with English language in Taiwan is still restricted and limited compared to ESL countries.

Taiwan recognises English as a key strategy for national economic development and regards English language education as critical to its future. The government in Taiwan

has been actively investing in the promotion of national English language ability for each category of citizen, and further strives to provide opportunities for learning English. However, despite the government's efforts and attempts to enhance national English language ability, the Taiwanese government has recently expressed serious concerns about national English language ability and has announced and implemented several new educational reforms (Graddol, 2006).

2.6 Recent educational reform and curriculum changes in relation to foreign (English) language

The overall philosophy of English language education in Taiwan is reflected in the national curriculum guidelines set by the MOE. Recently, the Taiwanese government has announced a series of language policies and initiated several curricular changes and reforms in general in an attempt to improve the teaching and learning of the English language in Taiwan, and also to reflect the needs of society. These reforms and changes can be seen in three educational levels: elementary and junior high school, senior high schools, and higher education.

Elementary and junior high school level

English language education in schools started from the first year of junior high school (equivalent to the seventh grade in America) in 1949 in Taiwan (Su, 2006). In response to the government's strives towards internationalisation, the MOE has extended the teaching of English to the elementary school level. English language has become compulsory in the fifth grade (in which learners are 11-12 years old) in September 2001, and it was later further lowered down to the third grade (ages 8-9) or a lower starting grade-level in some areas (Su, 2006). In addition, teachers from English language speaking countries, such as America, Australia, Britain, and Canada, are recruited to teach English at elementary and junior high schools (Huang, 2003). The aim of this is to improve competitiveness globally (Nunan, 2003).

English is listed as one of the seven learning areas, namely "Language Arts" (Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, and other local languages are all included in this area). Since then,

the MOE has supervised this reform and implemented it step-by-step. Its aims are outlined in its curriculum guidelines for English language, and these provide a very important indicator of expectations relating to subject content and approaches to teaching and learning. The aims are

(1) Develop learners' basic communication skills to apply to real life situations.

(2) Cultivate learners' English learning interest and methods to develop learner autonomy.

(3) Increase learners' understanding of domestic and foreign customs and culture to respect and compare cultural differences (Ministry of Education, 2000).

The policy for English language materials (syllabuses and textbooks) has changed from a 'one outline and one textbook edition' policy (a unified editorial textbook system) to 'one outline and multiple textbook edition' policy It is now one set of curriculum guidelines, and an open market for textbooks. The new curriculum guidelines suggest that the objectives and principles for the design of English language teaching and learning materials should be based on learners' interest and needs. The content should be practical, interesting, and easy to understand. In the first two years (3rd and 4th grades, in which learners are 9-10 years old), emphasis is put on listening and speaking abilities, with gradual integration of reading and writing in the 5th and 6th grade (in which learners are 11-12 years old). At the junior high school stage (in which learners are 13-15 years old), the focus is on developing and integrating the four language skills.

One of the major changes in the new curriculum is the advocation of the Communicative Approach as the main instructional methodology. In the past, the English language curriculum in junior high schools emphasised grammar, reading, and translation. The teaching approach was the traditional Grammar Translation Method. With the introduction of the new curriculum, English language textbooks are now designed and based on the development of communicative competencies and the Communicative Language Teaching Method. The reform of the curriculum places emphasis on the construction of meaning. The focus is on developing communicative competence rather than memorising and delivering knowledge of the language.

Higher education

Chen and Hsieh (2011) also noted that "academic promotion in higher education (in Taiwan) is assessed by publication in three English academic indexes (the science citation index (SCI), social sciences citation index (SSCI) and engineering index (EI)" (p. 71). English language is increasingly used as an academic promotion tool in higher education in Taiwan. Furthermore, an increasing number of higher education institutions are requiring students to pass an English language ability test for a certain level as a condition for application or graduation (Gao, 2002).

Coleman (2006) points out that developing countries can export their educational services through the medium of English language teaching. The need and importance of the use of English as the medium of teaching and learning is recognised by the Taiwanese government which encourages the development of courses that are taught in English. Presently, many higher education institutions in Taiwan offer instruction in English (Clark, 2002). Higher education institutions in Taiwan also strive towards international teaching and strive to attain international standards (Ministry of Education, 2006). Strategies to promote the internationalisation of higher education in Taiwan announced by the Ministry of Education (2006) include the promotion of 'dual degrees', encouraging academic cooperation between domestic and foreign colleges and universities, the pursuit of prestige in worldwide rankings, encouraging the recruitment of international students and staff, provision of professional English language education courses, etc.

High school level

The educational plan to meet the emergence of the global village and to cultivate students' global view in secondary levels is the promotion of second foreign language study in high schools (i.e. a second foreign language other than the compulsory English course). In March 2005, a Five-Year Plan for Promotion of Second Foreign Language Study in Senior High Schools was officially launched to continue the effort, as well as to upgrade the environment and the climate for the learning of second foreign languages in Taiwan. In the first semester of the 2008 school year, 197 schools began 863 classes of a variety of second foreign language courses with 29,339 students signing up. The

language choices students have are French, German, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Russian, and Spanish (Ministry of Education, 2009).

However, educational reforms in technological and vocational education appear not to focus on foreign (English) language. One of the educational reforms in technological and vocational education is the 'Expertise Training Project' (Ministry of Education, 2009). It aims at improving and enhancing the practical aspects of the students' specialised skills training to produce specialised workers required by job markets.

In summary, we can see from the Taiwanese government's policy statements that several plans have been announced and implemented to improve and enhance English language education in elementary schooling and the higher education sector. High schools promote a second foreign language after English. However, in the sector of VHSs, no major plan exists to promote English language learning. The primary focus is still on the specialised technical skills for VHSs. Given that English language ability is needed at different levels and in different areas of specialities in Taiwan, and that the establishment of VHSs is career-oriented, it is certainly important that English language education provided in VHSs prepare students with the ability for their intended employment. Because of this, the investigation conducted in the current research can contribute to whether English language education in VHSs has adapted to suit the changing career requirements of students in Taiwan, as stated in Chapter One. Therefore, the remaining part of this chapter examines the English language syllabus within the curriculum of VHSs in order to better understand the type of English language education provided and how far it can be seen to prepare students for their intended careers.

2.7 English language curriculum in VHSs

A newly developed curriculum guideline for VHS was announced in 2008 and came into effect in 2009 (Ministry of Education, 2008). It stated that subjects taught in VHSs should put a priority on practicality. The goal for foreign language teaching is to build a foundation for further related professional pursuit, develop language related entry-level technical personnel, and enable them to deal with language aspects in work. English

language is taught for 2 lessons per week (50 minutes per lesson) and carries 12 credits (formerly a minimum of 8) for the whole three years.

Students attending VHSs for three years, with two terms per year. Each term has its own curriculum guideline, which are composed of four aspects: subject framework, teaching guidelines, teaching material framework, and implementation. Interestingly though, the guidelines for each term are almost exactly the same, except for the number of new words each term, and two extra topics (global perspectives, and travel and transport) are added in the V and VI courses outlines. Since the six English language guidelines are very much alike, only one of the curriculum guidelines has been translated into English (see Appendix B).

As we can see, the overall aims outlined in Appendix B 1.1. are associated with the general areas of language teaching and learning, with no particular emphasis on vocational context. The primary content is expressed in the form of a list, which could be described as topics or themes. Content covers a wide range of areas, with broad implications in terms of vocabulary. Only one entry, related vocational types of knowledge, refers directly and is relevant to vocational contexts. It is worth noting that communicative skill is listed as one of the topics to be taught in the lesson. As for the teaching guidelines (B 1.2.), communication skills, English language learning strategies, cultural difference awareness, and critical thinking and analysis ability are the four main teaching aims outlined. The teaching material framework in B 1.3. is a list of 'unit topics', which shows that it is a topic-based curriculum. There are 11 unit topics, and each one is associated with a list of examples of what might be included. The unit topics and examples provided are very wide and general. Communicative competence is addressed, with particular emphasis on interpersonal interaction and communication ability. As for language components, phonology, vocabulary and grammar are three aspects specifically listed. Materials compilation in B 1.4. is multi-dimensional, which is based on students' interest and level. This is clearly shown in the wide range of topics presented. No particular teaching methodology is stated, but the application of English language communication skills is mentioned. As for assessment and resources, it states that language application is more important than language knowledge, focuses more on fluency than accuracy. It seems to be orientated towards communicative language teaching (see detailed discussion in Chapter Four).

2.7.1 Critical commentary about the English language curriculum

With reference to the subject framework (see Appendix B), we can see that the curriculum guidelines for VHSs are very general, with a wide range of topics presented. English language teaching and learning research suggests that English is traditionally taught to NNES in schools as a compulsory subject, and that the type of English taught is essentially English for General Purposes (EGP) (Orr, 1998) or English with a general educational aim in mind (Mackay & Mountford, 1978). This type of English covers English language applications in general situations and focuses on the language itself, e.g. the grammar (the general rules of English usage) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). There is a long established acceptance that students learn English because it is regarded as a 'good thing' for them as a part of a broad education (Mackay & Mountford, 1978). In this situation students perceive that English is a required subject, rather than a language that they can make use of in real life. Accordingly, the students' immediate English language learning aim is to pass the examination rather than to achieve any functional language skills, which the students ought to acquire. The emphasis on examinations leads to the memorisation of English knowledge, rather than the realisation of the practical purposes, uses, and applications of English. In other words, this results in students possessing knowledge of English, particularly with regard to the syntactic and lexical rules of how English language operates, but not the communicative knowledge of English language use (Mackay & Mountford, 1978). Also, teachers themselves concentrate on teaching content which will help students to pass their examination.

As a result of the examination-oriented teaching and learning, development in the language skills that the students ought to gain is often neglected. English learning is seen as a school requirement to pass the examination. This is certainly the case in Taiwan. Chen, Warden, and Chang (2005) proposed the "Chinese Imperative" motivator to reflect this cultural specific English learning motivator in the EFL context in Taiwan. Historically and culturally high achievement in examinations is regarded as a success for the individual, as well as the family. This emphasis remains in place today, where standardised examination scores are used as a basic criterion in many situations, e.g. universities establishing English certification exit requirements, corporations

requiring that all potential employees must possess English certificates, or the utilisation of English proficiency tests as a recruitment and promotion criterion. These test could be a Taiwanese local English proficiency test: General English Proficiency Test (GEPT), or other English proficiency tests such as TOEIC, TOEFL, IELTS (Gong, 2008; Pan, 2009).

Consequently, learners could fail to perceive the relevance of General English to their future benefit or professional career. Language learning may merely be considered as a school subject matter. The intention of English learning becomes preparing learners to pass examinations rather than for future use. Furthermore, without a clear vision of the relationship between the English learned in schools and the real world, students do not necessarily acknowledge the importance of the English learned in schools with their future success, nor would the students be conscious of the future application and use of English (Mackay & Mountford, 1978).

It can be seen that General English in schools provide students with a general idea of English, particularly with the rules of how English language operates. However, general rules do not always encompass everything, especially with the specialisations and diversity of today's world. Furthermore, English is used as a communication means to connect to the world. A considerable amount of good general knowledge of English will help learners to build up a foundation to learn English; however, it does not necessarily provide learners with the ability to actually use English successfully. General English in schools, with an examination emphasis, fails to develop the English language skills learners require. Also, it appears that learners' awareness of the practical English use to their future is not addressed either.

The English language curriculum guideline in VHSs appears to be general English applicable to general situations, and this is also indicated by the literature. However, as discussed in Chapter One, the relationship between English language and VHS students is beneficial when English language education in linked to preparing and developing students with the ability for their future employment prospects. This leads to a question of the suitability of the general English on offer in VHSs in Taiwan.

Moving to the teaching guidelines (B 1.2.), we can see that even though they appear to be communicatively orientated, this is not stated in detail. This is unlike the curriculum for elementary and junior high schools, which explains in detail what it means by 'communicatively', and information is given about what a communicative teaching method would be like. There is in fact no specific indication of teaching methodology in the VHS guidelines. This implies that teachers are allowed to adopt any type of teaching methods, including a traditional grammar translation method. Therefore, the goal of teaching English for communicative competence may well be far from the reality.

Following from this, the MOE provide guidelines on the material compilation. They suggest topics that should be covered and allow textbook writers to include other topics relevant to the students' interests and abilities. However, only one out of eleven of the suggested topics is clearly relevant to employment. If the guidelines only provide a small amount of English relevant to employment, how could it adequately build and develop language skills relevant to students' work?

Shavit and Müller (2000) state that, "The preparation of young people for the labour market requires that curricula be differentiated to suit the diverse occupational destinations of students (p.438) … The effectiveness of vocational education also varies by its specificity and relevance to employers requirements (p.440)…The more specific the training, the bigger the impact of vocational qualifications on the labour market prospects of workers (p.443)". Therefore, utility and relevance are the key elements in respect of preparing and enhancing VHS students' employability, and differentiated curricula that suit students' diverse occupational destinations help to prepare learners with the ability required for the labour market.

Applying this idea to English language education in VHSs indicates that learning English that is relevant to the students' chosen field will bring about a positive experience of language learning, as students may gain greater benefit with more specific and relevant English language training. Also, learners will be rewarded by an improvement in future job prospects. However, the key elements of utility and relevance are not reflected in the English curriculum guidelines. The English language curriculum is not differentiated by the type of skills and language required by the diverse occupations VHS graduates may enter. It is a general English curriculum

guideline preparing students for general English applications and purposes. This does not recognise and respond to the communicative English language needs and language using purposes of VHS students' diverse specialisation, nor does it make English language more relevant to the students' intended employment context. It is more usefully considered as providing a broad foundation rather than a detailed and selective specification of English language use for learners to perform in their specific vocational related contexts. Thus, on initial examination of the English language curriculum in VHSs it appears that students are not being provided with the English language required for their intended career.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has examined some of the key issues on the impact of globalisation on English language education. It has also looked at the curriculum changes and reforms in Taiwan: from the changes in curriculum policy to the changes of the curriculum guidelines for elementary and junior high schools and VHSs. It covered different aspects stated in the guideline, such as the aims, principles, instructional methodology, and content, and this is summarised in Figure 5. This chapter has also critically examined the VHS English language curriculum, and concluded that it prescribes general English courses, which provides students with English for general situations. As already discussed in Chapter One, General English has been criticised, but it is still being implemented in VHSs. Learners' specific English language needs and use in their chosen field of specialisation are not addressed. In other words, it does not prepare students for their intended careers. The communicative language needs and practices is not specifically addressed either. This approach needs to be reviewed in Taiwan. Therefore, this research uses both teachers' and students' views, experiences, and perspectives on their English language courses to gauge to what extent the communicative aims of VHS English language courses are being achieved.

| Curriculum Policy | Changed from: One outline and one textbook edition policy (a unified editorial textbook system) to, One set of curriculum guidelines and an open market for textbooks |

| Curriculum guidelines for the new Nine-year Integrated Curriculum for Elementary and Junior High schools | 1. Aims: (a) Develop learners' basic communication skills to apply to real life situations (b) Cultivate learners' English learning interest and methods to develop learner autonomy (c) Increase learners' understanding of domestic and foreign customs and culture to respect and compare the cultural differences
2. Principles: (a) Based on learners' interest and needs (b) the context should be practical, interesting, and easy to understand (c) Emphasis is put on listening and speaking abilities in the 3rd and 4th grades, with gradual integration of reading and writing in the 5th and 6th grades (d) At the junior high school stage, the focus is on developing and integrating the four language skills
3. Main instructional methodology: communicative approach, emphasis on the construction of meaning and focus on developing communicative competence |

| Newly developed VHS curriculum guideline | 1. Guidelines: (a) Put priority on practicality (b) The goal for foreign language teaching is to (1) Build a foundation for further related professional pursuit (2) Develop language related entry level technical personnel (3) Enable learners to deal with language aspects in work
2. Content: (a) Associated with the general areas of language teaching and learning, with no particular emphasis on vocational context (b) The primary content is expressed in the form of a list, which could be described as topics or themes. It is a topic-based curriculum (c) Content covers a wide range of areas, with broad implications in terms of vocabulary (d) Communicative competence is addressed, with particular emphasis on interpersonal interaction and communication ability (e) Language components, phonology, vocabulary and grammar are three aspects specifically listed. |

Figure 5. Summary of curriculum changes and reforms in Taiwan

3

Foreign English Language Learning

3.0 Introduction

Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that language teaching is based on different views of what language is, and how a language is learned. Thus, an understanding of language and language learning is an important element in understanding language teaching. Therefore, it is important to look at language and language learning before looking at language teaching.

This chapter looks at foreign English language learning to try and understand its nature and the situations in which it occurs. It starts with an examination of language, and then links the important elements identified to English language learning. It then moves on to examine some of the issues of first language (L1) learning to provide an introduction to the study of foreign language learning. Research about language learning has attempted to understand the relationship between L1 and second language (L2) acquisition/learning (Cook, 2002), for example, to see if there are any similarities or variations in different situations. However, it needs to be borne in mind that the researcher does not intend to use the L1 acquisition theory to apply to foreign language learning, but rather, to understand L1 acquisition and use it as a source of concepts for looking at L2/foreign language learning. This chapter also clarifies the two terms used in the current study: 'foreign' and 'learning' in foreign English language learning.

The implications for foreign language learning are discussed, and their relevance to second/foreign language learning considered.

3.1 Language and the need for language

Language can be seen as a property of human beings (Cook & Bassetti, 2011), and the ability to use language distinguishes humans from other animals (Gleitman, 1997). It is argued that humans having language abilities superior to those of other animals is a very important part of the uniqueness of humans (Macwhinney, 2002; Pinker, 1997). However, it is of perhaps greater importance to consider what language brings to us and why we need language.

Sekerina, Fernández, and Clahsen (2008) state that "language is the main vehicle by which we know about other people's thoughts" (introduction). Even though Pinker (1997) argues that thoughts cannot be words, language could represent thought (Goodman, 1986). Goodman (1986) maintains that "language begins as a means of communication between members of the group" (p. 11), which enables us to both physically and socially connect to our environment (Gass, 2010). Similarly, Cook (2010) states that the use of language is for doing things (such as communicating ideas to other people, and relating one piece of language to another), and for relating to people, which means language use is for communication and interaction. Goodman (1986) further points out that the natural purpose of language is "the communication of meaning" (p. 7).

However, Bickerton (1996) claims that language has many other uses, and language is not simply a means of communication. This idea that language may do far more than merely serve as a vehicle for communication is illustrated by Gardner (2011). He identifies four different important functions of language use, such as to convince other individuals of a course of action, to help one remember information, to explain, and also to ponder meaning. Regardless of the wide variety of ways in which we use language, language is essentially a tool fashioned by humans for their use (Clark, 1998).

3.1.1 Understanding language

Halliday and Hasan (1985) claim that "understanding about language lies in the study of texts" (p. 5). In other words, a text is a way to understand language. Texts here refer to

language that is functional, and conveys meanings. Texts are seen as a semantic unit which relates to the language as a whole, rather than being treated as isolated words or sentences. It carries out social exchange of meanings and interaction between speakers, and can be treated either as an instance of a continuous process of choices in meaning, or a product of its environment. Whether text is treated as an instance of the process or the product of social meaning, an important aspect that should be noted is that it is the particular 'context of situation' that gives and exchanges the meaning of texts. Text operates in a context of situation, and this is why Halliday and Hasan (1985) further point out that "all language must be understood in its context of situation" (p. 8). Texts, or the functional aspect of language alone, do not give meaning to language, the meaning needs to be unfolded through the accompanying context of situation.

Even though text is one particular instance of language use, the importance of context as critical for language and language learning has been addressed and recognised in the literature. For example, Pennebaker, Mehl, and Niederhoffer (2003) point out that "language is, by definition, contextual" (p. 549), and consequently, language must be considered within its context. Leckie-Tarry (1995) claims that "all meaning is made by contextualisation; the actual occurrence-meaning, use-meaning or text-meaning of a word or phrase depends entirely on its contextualisation" (p. 17). The very same texts or words could express and convey something different in a different context. Similarly, Ervin-Tripp (1996) states that an understanding of contexts of speech is necessary for building up realistic theories of language and of language learning. In addition, from an early age, children start to use contextual information in formulating expression and comprehending language (Loukusa, 2007). Apparently, context plays an essential role in understanding language and language learning. So what does context mean?

The word 'context' originates from 'con-text' in English, which means text that is with another text, or the words and sentences that precede or follow (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Kramsch, 1993). Text and context are two inseparable notions, as "two sides of the same coin and act as such upon each other" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 10). It has influence on the choices of linguistic form to ensure cohesive structure (Kramsch, 1993). It also helps to identify and understand the relationships of the content, intention of the text, and the correct reference (Wiebe, Hirst, & Horton, 1996).

Halliday and Hasan (1985) refer to context as the total environment in which texts are unfolded and interpreted. Kramsch (1993) characterises context in two senses: one is the internal context of utterance, which refers to the intentions, assumptions, and presuppositions of the participants in a language event, and which will determine the form, the appropriateness, and the meaning of utterances; the other one is the external context of communication, which refers to all factors that concern participants and the environment in which the speech event takes place. Loukusa (2007) conceives context in communication as a multidimensional concept including information from social, cognitive, cultural, linguistic, physical, and other non-linguistic context, and the hearer utilises all the information from the contextual factors when interpreting meaning.

Context "determines what people mean by the utterances they make" (Stanley & Szabo, 2000, p. 220), as "all meaning was function in a context" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), and "our choice of words is constrained by the context in which we use the language" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 34). All these make context essential in understanding and interpreting meanings.

There are different levels of context, namely, context of situation and context of culture in terms of its contributions to understanding and interpretation of meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Leckie-Tarry, 1995). The term 'context of situation' comes with the idea that "the situation is prior to the discourse that relates to it" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 5). To convey and interpret meaning of texts, both the verbal environment and the situation in which the text was uttered need to take into account, so that clues of what was actually happening at the time or what is going on are given. It refers more to the "immediate situation of actual language use" (Mohan, 2011, p. 59).

The term 'context of situation' was first put forward by Malinowski (1923) to express the environment in which the text was uttered (including verbal as well as the situation) (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), and produced and interpreted (Leckie-Tarry, 1995). It reveals "the systematic relationship between language and the environment…and relates that situation simultaneously to the text, to the linguistic system, and to the social system" (Leckie-Tarry, 1995, p. 5). The language is all part of the immediate situation; however, the situation does not necessarily need to be the immediate surroundings in which the text or event is unfolding. For example, the narrative lines of a story could

have less direct relation to the particular surroundings or situation in which it takes place (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). The concept of context of situation is later widened to include more components in the contextual factors of the situation, such as the participants, action, the intent of the communication to be used to a general linguistic event, rather than just for the study of texts (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Applying the concept of context of situation to human communication, some argue that it enables the participants to make predictions about meanings (Halliday & Hasan, 1985), as one does not often get the intended meaning and comprehension of utterances from the purely linguistic information (Loukusa, 2007). Context of information also helps to explain how people are able to interact (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). The information provided by the context of situation then contributes to the success with which people communicate (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Furthermore, it is pointed out that children's ability to comprehend language relies on the physical context as well as the utilisation of the diverse contextual information in which the communication takes place (Loukusa, 2007). In other words, contextual information can be utilised to assist language comprehension.

Language can be seen as an "expression of a speech community's knowledge and expectations" and "a reflection of the social order" (Kramsch, 1993, p. 10). To understand and interpret meaning adequately, it is sometimes insufficient to just understand the immediate situations. Information on the broader social context, generated by the participants' culture, also plays a part (Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Leckie-Tarry, 1995). Information on the whole cultural background or knowledge of the participants, social events or practice is called 'the context of culture' (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). These are shared sets of knowledge, including the institutional and ideological, by all members of a speech community (Leckie-Tarry, 1995). It is brought by various participants, triggered by contexts of situations, and articulated in language in systematic ways (Leckie-Tarry, 1995).

From the above discussion, context is an essential element in understanding language. Context gives meaning to language (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). The ways people use words and their choices of words (i.e. the styles and the content of what people say) can convey a great deal of information regarding themselves, the audience, their motives,

and their situations (Pennebaker et al., 2003). Language and context are two inseparable notions. Humans are context-sensitive (Ervin-Tripp, 1996). It is often difficult to understand language purely from a linguistic aspect of language. The same words, phrases, or sentences may all represent or convey different meanings in different contexts. Also, words, phrases, or sentences usually need to be put into context to make sense. Context helps to understand language, and contextual information facilitates language comprehension. However, there is another dimension of language, which changes according to context and purpose, that is, language use. Therefore, in the following section, the relationship between context and language use is examined.

3.1.2 Language use and context

Our choices and decisions on the variations of language use are dependent on the context (Kramsch, 1993), and the particular purpose an individual has (Wiebe et al., 1996). These will affect the meaning and the effect of an utterance (Wiebe et al., 1996). An individual may use language differently to suit the context in which the utterance occurs (Hoff, 2010; Pennebaker et al., 2003). For example, in her investigation on the effect of contextual variables on young children's language use in conversation, Hoff (2010) found that the contextual variables, such as the settings and the conversational partner, will have an effect on children's language use and production. Similarly, Biber, Conrad, and Reppen (1998) state that in participating in different situations and contexts, such as talking to a family member or writing a letter to a friend, we use different varieties of language. Pennebaker et al. (2003) further point out that people have different language tactics and language use in formal versus informal settings, such as differences in word choices in respect of politeness. Therefore, language use varies according to different contexts.

Studies on language use in a range of contexts reveal that there are also other aspects concerning language use that need to be attended to, such as pragmatic language and register. Pragmatic language is a function of language used for a purpose for facilitating or furthering an activity (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). It focuses on using language in socially effective and appropriate ways in various contexts (Hyter, 2003; O'Neill, 2007). In other words, pragmatic language refers to intentional use of language appropriately

for various contexts of social interaction (Abbeduto, 2008). According to Dore (1974), language acquisition should not just involve learning the abstract structures of linguistic competence. The abilities or skills for pragmatic language is essential for an individual to initiate, develop, engage, and maintain social interactions and relationships (Hyter, 2003). This pragmatic language ability is a personal language choice conditioned by the social interaction situation an individual encounters (Erton, 2007). It is claimed that children's acquisition of pragmatic language develops from the ability to use context in language comprehension and expression, and which will be affected by social and cognitive factors (Loukusa, 2007). This seems to suggest that context is a key for the development of pragmatic language, and the relationship between pragmatic language and language use can be seen as we need to make sure that we use language appropriately in the right context. This leads to another aspect of language use, namely register.

According to Biber et al. (1998), register refers to "the varieties of language that we use in different situations" (p. 2). It is "associated with the organisation of situation or immediate context" (Lee, 2001, p. 42), and concerns "lexico-grammatical and discoursal-semantic patterns associated with situations" (ibid, p. 46). Register refers to our choice of language in a specific situation. Describing the characteristics and different types of registers available in a language is an important area of study, for example, the corpus-based approach attempts to find typical patterns of use in a range of contextual factors (Biber et al., 1998).

To sum up, talking about language comprehension and language production, context is an essential element that needs to be considered. In terms of language use, there are also other aspects that need to be considered, such as language choices and appropriateness. Register is one of the language use examples concerning our choices of language varieties used in different situations, while pragmatics is another example concerning the appropriate use of language in the specific context.

Context is an important dimension in any language, including English. Accordingly, when talking about English language learning, the role of context in comprehension and learning certainly needs to be taken into account.

3.2 English language learning, use, and context

Hadley (2001) suggests that "language learning should be contextualized" (p. 139). Learners need to realise that English, as any other language, has different varieties for different contexts. Also, learners should be aware of the effect of the contextual factors on language. Besides, language is used for purposeful communication, so learning a language should not just involve its structural system, but also how to use, express, create, and interpret meanings. Learners need to be given and be motivated to use language in meaningful contexts appropriately, and this is more appealing than isolated and extensive memorisation and drilling (Hadley, 2001). Opportunities to experience language use in a different range of contexts is believed to make learners successful in target language communication (Erton, 2007).

Considerable research has been conducted regarding English language use and context for non-native English learners, such as learners' interlanguage pragmatics (Kasper & Rose, 2001), and language use in different contexts and language variations (Wolfram, 2006). Interlanguage pramatics is defined as "the non-native speaker's knowledge of a pragmatic system and knowledge of its appropriate use" (Jianda, 2006, p. 2). Schmidt (1993) focuses on the ways in which learners become consciously involved in the principles of pragmatics in second language learning, Jianda (2006) has looked at ways of assessing learners' interlanguage pragmatic knowledge, and Rose (1997) proposes pragmatic consciousness-raising as a way to try to allow learners to be aware of context-based variation in language use and the role of variables that help determine that variation. As for language use in different contexts and language variations, some approach it through a focus on language, such as discourse analysis (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2003), some approach it through language variations as a function in society (Wardhaugh, 2010), and others approach it through the role and nature of language in a specific domain, such as tourism (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2010). This demonstrates the necessary role of context in language.

3.3 First language acquisition

We start to acquire our native language from virtually the moment we are born. Goodman (1986) states that children are driven to learn language by their need to communicate with others. Similarly, Cook, Long, and McDonough (1979) state that children use their first language to reflect their own world, and to reflect their need to interact with the people around them. In short, the use of language reflects the child's own needs and interests.

It is claimed that the L1 acquisition emerges through different types of exposure to language and social contact, mainly through interactions between children and adults (Cook, 2002, 2010). Children are exposed to the language all the time, and all the language is spoken in the context of the world around children (Cook et al., 1979). Gass (2010) claims that "no acquisition can take place without some regular and consistent input to feed the growing language system" (p. 194). Children have a lot of opportunities for meaningful and purposeful language input and output (Goodman, 1986), and are provided with rich contextual support to guide them through the process of language discovery (Macwhinney, 2002). At the same time, children are also involved in using language functionally and purposefully to meet their own needs (Goodman, 1986). Therefore, it can be suggested that L1 acquisition is essentially driven by the need to interact and communicate with others. The use of language reflects an individual's needs and purposes. L1 develops through exposure, contact, and use of language.

It needs to be noted that in L1 acquisition, learners will generally achieve perfect mastery or become fluent in the language. However, this kind of guarantee does not necessarily apply, and in general does not apply, with second/foreign language learning (Bley-Vroman, 1990; Cook, 2010). Cook (2010) argues that there is no absolute success with regard to the comparison between the levels reached by L1 and L2 users. Rather, the measurement of L2 success is relative to the goal. Therefore, in the following sections, when the researcher looks at some of the issues of learning English as a second/foreign language, particular attention is given to the importance of

understanding the individual's reasons and needs for learning English, rather than looking at ways for L2 learners to achieve perfect mastery or become fluent in English.

3.4 English as a second/foreign language learning

Many of us learn more than one language as or when a need arises in our lives (Goodman, 1986). English is the most prevalent second/foreign language or lingua franca around the world, as such it has been introduced to schools in most NNES countries, and it is also the language this research is focused on. The terms second language and foreign language are often used interchangeably, which can lead to confusion (Judd, 1981; Smith, 1978). Whilst there is some overlap, it is important to distinguish between the two as they often indicate different methods of teaching and learning (see section 2.4). Definitions of "second" language include the following:

(1) Chronological acquisition sequence - the first language learned by a baby is his/her mother tongue, and other languages acquired/learned after L1 is considered as the second language. In other word, second language is the language acquired/learned in addition to the first or native language (Kachru, 1992).

(2) Priority or dominance - English is given the status of 'second' language despite being maybe the third or fourth language acquired/learned (Nayar, 1997).

(3) Official fiat or law - English is a second language when it has special official status, such as being acceptable in the courts of law (Kachru, 1992).

(4) Function or role - This is usual where ESL and EFL are used to distinguish between different sets of functions and roles (see section 2.4).

In particular, EFL has been used where English is not the official language of the country, and the dominant population speaks a language other than English (Judd, 1981). English is taught as a school subject for many other purposes apart from internal communicative function (Smith, 1978).

It is clear from the definitions above why there is such an overlap in the use of these terms. For example, even if a language use fits the criteria for foreign language, it can also be the language that a person learns after the first, so it can also be considered as 'second' language by the chronological criterion of definition (1). As the role and function of English in Taiwan fits that of the foreign language (as discussed in section 2.5), therefore, in this thesis, we will refer to EFL to highlight the distinction. Accordingly, in the following sections, our attention is given particularly to foreign language learning.

3.4.1 Language acquisition and second/foreign language learning

Most of the time, the terms 'language acquisition' and 'language learning' are used by researchers interchangeably or collaterally (Bley-Vroman, 1990; Lattey, 1994). However, these terms differ. According to Krashen (1981), acquisition is the product of a subconscious process while learning is a conscious process, and is the product of formal instruction. In other words, language acquisition means acquiring the language by being exposed to it with little or no formal training or learning. It is an unconscious internalisation of knowledge or picking up a language that children utilise in acquiring their first language (Bley-Vroman, 1990; Lattey, 1994; Madrid, 2001). As for language learning, it is different in that the learner is being taught rather than simply being exposed to a language. It is a conscious process of knowing about knowledge (Krashen, 1981; Lattey, 1994), and conscious learning of explicit rules correctly (Bley-Vroman, 1990).

The contexts of additional language acquisition/learning, either second or foreign, are many and varied. Even though Ellis (1994) claims that it is difficult to know whether the knowledge learners possess has been acquired, learnt, or both, in most cases, foreign language learning takes place in settings where it is being tutored and taught (Madrid, 2001). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the term learning is adopted.

3.5 English as a foreign language learning

After having had a first language, why would we need an additional foreign language? If language were, as discussed earlier, a tool built for use by humans, what would foreign language bring to us?

Chapter One has highlighted increasing expectations and requirements of English language ability across various fields due to globalisation. These increasing requirements and demands of English language ability suggest that the English language is regarded as a tool for a variety of the worlds of work.

The view of English language as a tool for work has created a social phenomenon of 'English language fever' (Krashen, 2003), where there is an overwhelming desire to acquire English or ensure that one's children acquire English, either as a second or foreign language.

The need for English language ability in today's globalised world has also led to recent educational changes around NNES countries in order to expand a nation's competitiveness worldwide, and to cope with the global economic crisis and recovery. For example, an increasing number of governments worldwide have made policy changes in English language education, particularly with an effort to make English language available for everyone (Wedell, 2008). Accordingly, English language is made to be learned because of the global competition.

As Wilkins (1972) states, "society has its own reason for providing for the education of its young and if it chooses to teach them foreign languages, it is because it feels that in some way society's needs require this. There does not have to be any conflict of interest here, but the reasoning will be different" (p. 150). Society has seen the need for foreign English language ability because of globalisation, and creates the context of learning. English language learning has now expanded to a larger proportion of the population than was the case in the past. English language is no longer learned by an elitist group. However, the pervasiveness of English language learning does not necessarily mean that everyone has the same reasons and needs regarding English language learning, and

as Wilkins (1972) further states "society creates the context of learning and within this we can try to meet the needs of the individual" (p. 150). This is an important point, as things we do are virtually inspired and driven by a sense of purpose (reason) or goal (Brown, 1994b). Stuart-Kotze (n.d.) proposes a useful definition of goals, in which he states that a goal is the end result that we strive to attain. According to him, behaviour arises from unsatisfied needs, and the need is the driving force that spurs us towards the goal. Moreover, one goal may result from a number of different unsatisfied needs. This behavioural perspective sees needs and reasons as interchangeable.

Goodman (1986) also states that "language is easy to learn when it's needed" (p. 16). Similarly, Wilkins (1973) claims that when language learning is related to the use and needs of learners, they will have greater sustained satisfaction in language learning. In this way, learners are able to see the practical benefit of what they are learning. In other words, language learning is necessary and meaningful when it is related to learners' language needs and requirements.

A traditional view of the contributions of foreign language learning is to give an individual access and ease of contact with foreign language speakers outside of his/her daily contact or community circle (Wilkins, 1972). Johnson (2008) describes some of the many reasons for learning foreign languages nowadays. These include studying, integrating with other cultures, strengthening one's cultural identity, and facilitating intra- and inter-national communication (p. 5). Cook (2010) further points out the reason that it is being a set subject in the curriculum. So there may be a variety of reasons for learning a second or foreign language.

Findley and Nathan (1980) point out that "language needs are simply the requirements which arise from the use of the language in the multitude of social and work situations in the lives of individuals and groups of people" (p. 223). In other words, purposes and needs regarding learning English results from the requirements and use of English in that particular environment where the learners are. Indeed, there is evidence showing that the requirements and use of English language in the globalised job market has led to a growing number of individuals seeing the purpose and needs of English language (see Chapter One). However, the English language environment in the current study context, Taiwan, is that of a foreign language. There is restricted English language use

and limited amount of exposure to English (see Chapter Two, EFL context). Also, English language is not a prominent feature of Taiwanese daily social interaction. Most people can get by well enough without speaking English (see Chapter Two, English language in Taiwan). Therefore, even though society and the government has seen the importance of English language, Taiwanese VHS learners may not be as aware of the practical and beneficial need of English language as those who are encounter English language needs at work.

Furthermore, Savignon and Wang (2003) state that successful instructional language programs may depend on a clarification of the needs and expectations of learners. Thus, in discussing English language education in VHSs, it is important to understand how VHS students' perceive their English language learning needs and purposes. This understanding of learners' underlying needs and purposes may help identify possible factors that could stimulate learning, and strengthen the relevance of English language to learners' goals, as well as enhance the success of English language teaching and learning.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has illustrated how language varies according to contexts, which adds to what was explored in Chapter One in terms of the conceptual model for the current demands of English language in today's globalised world. It has also demonstrated that language, language use, and context are interrelated. Language needs to be put into context to understand its meaning. Context not only gives meaning to language, but also shapes language. In other words, both language meaning and use vary according to context. This chapter has also pointed out the important role that context plays in terms of understanding language, language comprehension, and language use. Therefore, considering the wide range of demands upon the English language in the conceptual model in Chapter One, context is definitely an essential element that needs to be considered in English language teaching and learning. In terms of language use, there are also other aspects that need to be considered, such as language choices and appropriateness in different contexts or in a specific domain.

The discussion of foreign English language learning helps us develop an understanding of the nature of foreign English language learning, and what important aspects need to be addressed. It reinforces the importance of exploring VHS students' English language expectations, their reasons, goals, and perceived need to learn English as stated in Chapter One. To ensure that learners benefit from their learning experience, teaching is central to the delivery of this. Therefore, English language teaching is discussed in the next chapter.

4

Major Developments in Foreign English Language Teaching

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines major foreign English language teaching developments, particularly in terms of, the nature of language, the nature of language learning, and recognition of the type of ability that learners need, and the changes in language teaching approaches and methods which reflect these aspects (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The focus is on foreign English language teaching theories and approaches, whereas the detailed practices of language teaching, for example, class management and various teaching techniques, are not the main focus of this chapter.

There is a wide variety of different ways to teach a language around the world (Lattey, 1994), and there has always been a drive in language teaching for more effective ways of teaching second or foreign languages (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Klapper (2006) points out that the approaches and methods of language teaching have shaped classroom practice, as teaching practices "change rapidly according to the changing winds of language teaching" (Cook, 2010, p. 151). Therefore, an examination of foreign English language teaching gives us an understanding of how particular theories influence or contribute to approaches or methods of language teaching, which is helpful in trying to understand and analyse English language education practice, a key part of the current study.

4.1 Theories about the nature of language and its influence on language teaching

There are three principal views of language that explicitly and implicitly inform language teaching approaches and methods. They are the structural, functional, and interactional views (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

4.1.1 Structural view of language

The structural view of language sees language as "a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 20). This system includes various linguistic elements: phonological units (i.e. phonemes), grammatical units (e.g. clauses, phrases, sentences), grammatical operations (e.g. adding, shifting, joining, or transforming elements), and lexical items (e.g. function and structure words) (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Thus, language is seen as a linguistic system, consisting of a list of structures. Consequently, learning a language means mastering all these linguistic elements of the language, and the rules by which these elements are combined (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The goal of language teaching/learning is the mastery of linguistic competency (Ting, 2007). One language teaching approach and methods that embodies this structural view of language is, for example, the grammar-translation method.

4.1.1.1 Grammar-translation language teaching method

The grammar-translation method is a foreign language teaching method derived from the traditional method of the study of Latin to promote intellectuality (Chang, 2011). It was the dominant method in European schools by the nineteenth century (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As its name suggests, the structured-based grammar translation method assumes that "languages consisted of a collection of rules and words that could be readily described and listed" (Klapper, 2006, p. 104). It views language as a list of structures, and as rules and facts to understand in order to manipulate the structure and grammar of the foreign language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It is concerned with the form and structure of language (Mohan & Slater, 2005).

Therefore, its focus is on studying grammatical rules of morphology and syntax, lists of vocabulary (which are selected based on the reading texts used), and sentences for translation (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The main teaching and learning activities rely heavily on teaching grammar and practicing translation (Griffiths & Parr, 2001), with a conscious focus on form (Klapper, 2006). Grammar is taught deductively by presenting a point of grammar in artificially constructed sample sentences, and then reinforced through translation sentence practice (Klapper, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It involves teaching a combination of grammar rules with translation from and into the target language (Stern, 1983), with an emphasis on memorisation and rote learning (Chang, 2011).

Language learning is regarded as an intellectual activity (Stern, 1983). A high priority is given to accuracy, the ability to construct correct sentences and forms (Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Mohan & Slater, 2005) for passing the written examination (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Errors are considered to be due to the learners' imperfect knowledge and application of the rules (Klapper, 2006).

The medium of instruction is the learners' L1. Understanding literary texts is the primary focus rather than a speaking knowledge of the language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Accordingly, oral production of the target language is limited, and often consists of learners just reading aloud the sentences they have translated. Reading and writing are the major focus, and little attention is paid to oral production of the target language or listening (Griffiths & Parr, 2001; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

It can be seen that the structural view of language theory means language teaching is linguistically driven, and gives priority to aspects of language (Bax, 2003), or language form (Wilkins, 1973). It leads language teaching and learning into being primarily about teaching and learning the language structures, rules, and vocabulary. The emphasis of language teaching is on the teaching of language grammar (Stern, 1983).

4.1.1.2 Benefits and drawbacks of Grammar-translation as a language teaching method

The benefits of this structural view of language teaching method are, firstly, it helps learners acquire linguistic competence with regard to the rules of use. With careful attention to the rules, paradigms, and vocabulary lists, students may thus be able to understand the logic of the grammatical system of the foreign language as presented or taught to them (Stern, 1983), and facilitate the learners' comprehension and production of the language (Ellis, 2006). Also, the best students may be adept at dictation and translating texts, and be able to produce accurate and comprehensible translations of the foreign language (though these may not sound natural to native speakers) (Klapper, 2006; Rivers, 1981). Secondly, it helps learners recognise accurate forms of English (Hedge, 2000). As grammatical accuracy is stressed more than fluency, learners are particularly aware of the linguistic details.

However, there are drawbacks in adopting this approach. The structural view of language leads language learning to be the learning of linguistic terms, e.g. grammar (Wilkins, 1973). It is argued that although it helps to improve learners' mastery of the grammatical rules, as there is little active opportunity for the oral practice and use of target languages learners do not necessarily know how to apply the linguistic system (Wilkins, 1973), and are not able to use the rules flexibly and appropriately in communication (Chang, 2011). Learners 'know' the language, but are unable to learn to use it (Widdowson, 1990). In short, the manipulation of structural patterns does not necessarily develop the ability to use the language for the purposes it serves; for that to be achieved, language practice is needed in practical language communication contexts (Rivers, 1997).

Learners tend to absorb monotonous grammar rules, vocabulary learning, and translation (Rivers, 1981), which does not help the enhancement of their communicative ability in the language at all (Brown, 1994a). Learners learn how to analyse sentence structures and how to translate, they have grammatical knowledge of the target language, however, the effectiveness of this method can be questioned by virtue of their inability to apply what they have learned in the classroom to the real world, or communicate in the target language (Ting, 2007).

Also, teachers have a dominant role in acquainting learners with rules and usage of the language, and learners are passive recipients. The vocabulary they teach is in the form of lists of isolated words out of context. Grammar points come directly from the text and are presented in the context of the textbook. Sentences are constructed to illustrate the grammatical system of the language, which consequently bear no relation to the language of real communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). There is a lack of "potential for lively communication" (Wilkins, 1973, p. 2), such as spontaneous, unique, and creative characteristics of language. Therefore, the structural view of language is not sufficient to account for "how language is used as a means of communication" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 1). Language learning is seen as formalistic.

To sum up, the structural view of language emphasises the grammatical characteristics of language. It is teacher-centred and text-bound. Language is taught by rules but not by use. It influences language teaching by teaching and learning language primarily based on structural grammatical rules and vocabulary. On the one hand, it helps to build up learner's grammatical linguistic knowledge, and gives learners a command of target language structures, but on the other hand, its sole focus on the accurate explanation and practices of rules leads to the application of language use in contexts being overlooked (Mohan & Slater, 2005).

4.1.2 Functional view of language

The functional view of language sees language as "a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 21). It sees language as a linguistic system, and as a means for doing things. Language is functional, and it exists to meet functional demands within our lives (Mohan & Slater, 2005).

The grammatical characteristics of language are still included, but more emphasis is on those linguistic features, such as the semantic and communicative dimension of language, which make a difference in functional communicative behaviour that learners need (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The emphasis on how language functions leads to consideration of the importance of understanding meaning in language learning. Language is seen as a tool to make meaning, and it is also a resource for understanding the construction of meaning provided by language functions (Mohan & Slater, 2005).

The functional view of language attempts to show the varying functional uses rather than structures of language forms (Hedge, 2000). The goal of language learning is to provide the functional elements of a language that learners need, and the categories of meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This brings the movement of English for Specific Purposes, which advances a functional account of learner needs (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 21)(see further discussion of English for Specific Purposes in Chapter Five). Some of the language teaching approaches and methods based on the functional view of language are, for example, communicative approaches, functional-notional syllabuses, and the natural approach. Communicative approaches, which have become the most prevalent and are widely accepted around the world today (Forey, 2002), are discussed here.

4.1.2.1 Communicative approaches to ELT

The communicative movement and approach to language teaching emerged in the early 1970s. Its aim is to go beyond the teaching and mastery of the structures of a foreign language by teaching learners how to do things with language, such as use foreign language to communicate meanings in real situations (Littlewood, 1981; Ting, 2007). It is a language teaching approach which will develop the ability to communicate (Widdowson, 1978). It is claimed that communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach (i.e. assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified) and not a method (i.e. theory is put into practice and choices are made about the particular skills and content to be taught) (Richards, 1986). It can also refer to both processes and goals in classroom learning (Savignon, 2002).

In contrast to the traditional emphasis on learners' knowledge of formal language features, CLT focuses on developing learners' abilities to use language appropriately in context (Savignon & Wang, 2003), which is 'communicative competence' (Savignon, 2002), and this competence is the central theoretical concept in CLT. Hedge (2000) points out several key domains of skill or dimensions for communicative competence needed for learners to interact successfully with others: they are linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and fluency (p. 46-54).

The teaching aim for the target language in this type of language teaching approach is to teach language as communication (Widdowson, 1978), and to develop learners' communicative competence which covers both a knowledge of the grammatical system as well as performance, to be able to be communicatively competent to use language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In other words, the CLT approach refers both to the usage (knowledge of the language system, i.e. the ability to produce correct sentences) and use of the language (use knowledge of the language system to achieve communicative purpose, i.e. the ability to use the knowledge of the rules for effective communication) (Widdowson, 1984). (Widdowson's (1978) distinction of usage and use is further discussed in Chapter Five).

Littlewood (1981) points out two fundamental implications of the CLT approach. Firstly, it considers language in terms of the communicative functions that it performs. Language is not just seen as its forms or structures (grammar and vocabulary), but it is also important to consider how these forms function as a means of communication for learners. In other words, what do people do with these forms when they want to communicate with each other? It is argued that the structural view of language, which concentrates on the grammatical system, is "not sufficient on its own to account for how language is used as a means of communication" (Littlewood, 1981, p. 1). For example, one sentence structure can have different functional interpretations depending on specific situational and social factors. It (One sentence structure) can also serve a number of functions, or vice versa, a single communicative function can be expressed by a number of linguistic forms. Therefore, both structural and functional aspects of language need to be considered.

Secondly, language structures are related to the communicative functions of language in real situations and real time. Consequently, plenty of opportunities for learners to use the language themselves for communicative purposes should be provided, so that they do not just manipulate the structures or just develop knowledge of the foreign language, but they actually acquire the ability to communicate through the language.

Savignon and Wang (2003) define communicative instructional practices as engaging learners in meaning making, such as the use of L2 as the medium of instruction, group work on tasks, tolerance of learner errors, and a general classroom atmosphere

conducive to learner participation with a focus on selected grammatical features as appropriate. It is through learners' participation in communicative events that CLT promotes the development of learners' functional language ability (Savignon, 2002).

The goal of foreign language teaching in CLT is to develop learners' communicative ability (Littlewood, 1981; Widdowson, 1978). Language course content is defined by the communicative functions of a language to express, and thus put the language to communicative use (Ting, 2007). Language is not just taught or learned to produce correct isolated grammatical sentences, but also to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose (Widdowson, 1978). Priority is given to the semantic content of language learning. Learners learn the grammatical form through meaningful and authentic language use rather than mechanical practice of language patterns (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In addition, linguistic structures and vocabulary are related and linked with meaning which can be utilised in later language use (Littlewood, 1981; Widdowson, 1978). Also, errors are tolerated: they are not seen as impediments to meaningful communication (Hedge, 2000).

4.1.2.2 Benefits and drawbacks of communicative approaches to ELT

The functional view of language considers the functional use of language, and influences language teaching to consider the semantic and communicative dimension of language. It views language as "a vehicle for the expression of functional meaning" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 21), so language is meaningful, and is to be of communicative use to the learners. In the discussions about the practice and theory of second and foreign language teaching in relation to developing learners' communicative competence, CLT has become the familiar approach to language teaching to this respect (Savignon, 2005).

Despite the prominence of CLT in developing learners' communicative competence, it has been pointed out that there is a lack of reflection on language aspects. It is argued that the pedagogy of this view of language concentrates on getting learners to use language to perform, and believes that learners learn how to use the structural system of the language through experience in communication (language is acquired through

communication) (Ellis, 2003). However, it leaves learners to learn the language by using the language from their communicative activities without assisting them in getting to know the language system, which can result in learners not being able to readily infer knowledge of the language system (Widdowson, 1990). Language itself is not the focus of attention, nor is meaning derived from an analysis of the language itself. Moreover, concentration on language use may also result in the overlooking of important structures and rules that learners need to perform.

However, Savignon (2005) argues that CLT is not exclusively concerned with oral communication. Its principle aim is to allow learners to engage in communication, to express, interpret, and negotiate meaning, and thus develop their communicative competence. The term communicative competence was first proposed by Hymes (1971) to represent "the ability to use language in a social context, to observe sociolinguistic norms of appropriateness" (Savignon, 2002, p. 2), while Savignon used the term to "characterize the ability of classroom language learners to interact with other speakers, to make meaning, as distinct from their ability to recite dialogues or perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge" (Savignon, 2002, p. 3). So, CLT includes both linguistic knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge for meaningful communication, and the curriculum design is based on the identification of learners' communicative needs (Fotos, 2005; Savignon, 2002). Another line of thought is to bridge or reconcile between the two theories: the structural and communicative (functional) aspects of language, in order to provide satisfactory language learning (Jin, 2008; Rao, 1996).

Widdowson (1990) points out a different view with which to consider these two theories. He states two different perspectives of meaning: medium and mediation. When meaning is seen to be contained in language forms themselves (that is, meaning is transmitted through the medium of language itself) emphasis on language structures would promote the communicative purpose of language teaching. Language structures become a means (process of learning) to an end (communicative language purpose). The mediation view of meaning comes from language user's use of language. In other words, what learners actually do with language result in meaning. Thus, the communicative approach of language teaching is seen to be the ends of learning.

Widdowson (1990) further states that knowledge of the language (syntax and semantics) can serve as a back-up for communicative resource (p. 163).

4.1.3 Interactional view of language

The interactional view of language sees "language as a vehicle for the realisation of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individuals. Language is seen as a tool for the creation and maintenance of social relations" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 21). In other words, it sees language as interaction, and puts language in context. The essence of language as interaction leads to a focus on classroom interaction (Seedhouse, 1999). Since interaction implies both "reception and expression of messages" (Rivers, 1987, p. xiii), it is believed to be an essential facilitator element for learning (Rivers, 1997). Thus it is useful to reflect on the ways in which we use language in interaction.

Interactive language teaching stresses the importance of interaction with the target language. Patterns of moves, acts, negotiation, and interaction found in conversational exchanges are the focus in the interactional view of language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, Richards and Rodgers (2001) points out that less attention is on this than structural and functional views of language theory. One language teaching approach and method that embodies this interactional view of language is task-based language teaching.

4.1.3.1 Task-based language teaching

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) refers to an approach in which 'tasks' are the core units of planning, designing, and instruction in language teaching (Ellis, 2009; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

It assumes that learners learn language by interacting communicatively and purposefully in the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). As Rivers (1987) states, "communication derives essentially from interaction" (xiii), and she further claims that interaction is the key to teaching language for communication. It is no

surprise to see that task-based language teaching reflects the application of the communicative language teaching principles, and it is one of a variety of ways of demonstrating or extending version of CLT (Ellis, 2003; Littlewood, 2007).

Tasks are designed as vehicles or tools to carry out communicative language use, which is in an attempt to show meaningful language to learners, rather than form. Thus, tasks can be seen to primarily elicit meaning-focused language use (Ellis, 2003), which is concerned with semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances (Ellis, 2009).

However, in the discussion of task types, we can see that other theories of language, in addition to the interactional view, make heavy use of TBLT. For example, the structural view has been employed for determining and practising specific linguistic features of tasks. The functional view has been employed for functional classifications of task types. The interactional view has been employed for interactional dimensions of tasks (Ellis, 2003; Pica, Kang, & Sauro, 2006; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

4.1.3.2 Benefits and drawbacks of the task-based language teaching method

The interactional view of language stresses the importance of language as interaction. It influences language teaching by the recognition of the learner's engagement and involvement in international processes of natural language use. Through the different varieties of the task-based interaction, learners are provided with opportunities for both language input and output (Ellis, 2009; Rivers, 1987). In addition, learners can be trained and prepared in the use of the target language for practical purposes, which is not only limited in the use of the classroom, but can be used in real-world situations (Seedhouse, 1999).

On one hand, it is claimed that it allows learners to have opportunities for natural language use (Ellis, 2009), but on the other hand, Littlewood (2007) points out several drawbacks of this approach. The approach may fail to stimulate all learners in the rich use of the target language. Learners may not use or avoid using the target language as the medium of interaction. Learners may sometimes get round using the targeted language feature, or only exploit a minimal amount of their language resources

depending on the kind of tasks. Seedhouse (1999) has also pointed out that task-based interaction can also be a narrow and restricted variety of communication. Another concern mentioned is the level of engagement and involvement in interaction. Sometimes specific learners dominate the interaction.

However, Ellis (2009) argues that the key concept of the tasks is that learners should largely have to reply using their own language resources to complete the tasks. Emphasis should be placed on the need for learners to use their language resources to carry out the tasks rather than simply manipulate texts. Also, language is served as the means for achieving outcome rather than an end. Learners with limited language resources could still have pedagogic and language learning value, for example, the development of the ability of finding alternative solutions (strategic competence).

4.2 Theories about the nature of language learning and its influence on language teaching

There are two principal theories about the nature of language learning that teaching methods derive from. One is process-oriented theory, and the other is condition-oriented theory (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Each of them emphasise a different set of factors that play a critical role in language learning.

4.2.1 Process-oriented theories of language learning

Process-oriented language learning theory focuses on the process involved in language learning, or to be more specific, it looks at the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes involved in language learning, such as habit-formation, induction, and inferencing (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The following section discusses the habit formation learning processes, and illustrates one methodological practice: audiolingualism, which is shaped by it.

4.2.1.1 Habit formation learning process

One view of language learning processes is provided by behaviourist learning theory. According to behavioural psychologists, all learning takes place through the process of habit formation (Lee & Vanpatten, 2003; MacWhinney, 1997; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Habits are formed through repetition, imitation, and reinforcement (Lee & Vanpatten, 2003). Reinforcement is seen as a vital element in the learning process, because it increases the likelihood of the reoccurrence of behaviour, and later on become a habit (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Stern, 1983).

4.2.1.2 Audiolingual methodology

The view of considering language learning processes as habit-formation processes leads to the development and implementation of audiolingual language teaching methodology. The central principle of the audiolingual method is that foreign language learning is essentially a basic mechanical habit formation or training process, which involves learning a new set of language habits, and performance of learners' habits (Demirezen, 1988). Therefore, the language learning process is habituation (Stern, 1983). This approach emphasises the formation of habits through memorisation, repetition, and reinforcement. Its teaching practice is centred on mechanical pattern drills. In other words, the language habits are formed through repetition and drills to memorise dialogues, or to practice sentence patterns (Brown, 1994a; Lee & Vanpatten, 2003; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

It is believed that drills allow learners to imitate and repeat what is being taught (Lee & Vanpatten, 2003), thus memorisation and mechanical pattern drills are the essential features of the practice techniques (Stern, 1983), and where the teaching practice is centred. It is also believed that foreign language learners can be trained through a system of reinforcement. The reinforcement system places emphasis on linguistically correct or acceptable production and the receipt of positive reward, which reinforces the speed of learners' habit formation of accurate formation of structure and pronunciation, while errors are seen as deviated behaviours, which must be avoided (Brown, 1994a; Demirezen, 1988; Stern, 1983).

4.2.1.3 Benefits and drawbacks of audiolingual as a language teaching methodology

The benefit of this language teaching methodology is that it allows learners to have the opportunity to repeat after instructors and memorise, in which some features of language, such as pronunciation, stress, and intonation, may be learned successfully (Brown, 1994a; Xiangui, 2005). However, Brown (1994a) also points out that learners may overlearn language forms by repeated drilling practice, and it could easily lead to rote learning. In addition, behaviourism focuses on learners' observable behaviour, but it lacks consideration of the cognitive operation of learning, which is to do with an individual's production and comprehension of a new language (Stevick, 1996). It is argued that "meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning" (Brown, 1994a, p. 13).

Moreover, even though imitation may be very useful in learning new vocabulary items, it is argued that imitation of structures may lead to no innovation of learning (Demirezen, 1988). For example, Larsen-Freeman (2000) points out that learners are not readily able to transfer language habits they mastered in the classroom to communicative language use outside of classroom.

Furthermore, Chomsky (2006) argues that the use of language is a creative activity, and should not be restricted to habitual responses. In other words, language should not be considered as "a product of habit formation" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), and accordingly, language learning should involve cognition and allow for the discovery of rules.

4.2.2 Conditional-oriented theories of language learning

Conditional-oriented language learning theories primarily address the conditions that serve the learning process, which will activate the learning processes and promote successful language learning. Natural occurrences of human and physical contexts in which language learning takes place are emphasised (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The following section looks at one language teaching method: the Silent Way, which exemplifies this learning theory.

4.2.2.1 The Silent Way

The conditional-oriented language learning view influences language teaching by the consideration of conditions, which will help learners to learn or facilitate language learning. The language teaching method of the Silent Way uses silence as a tool to facilitate language learning, and physical visual devices as language learning aids. Varvel (1979) points out that teachers' talk "is not necessary for language learning to take place - just the contrary: It is the teacher's talking that is ineffective and blocks the way to student growth" (p. 487). Therefore, the Silent Way language teaching method addresses the idea that the teacher should be silent in order to encourage learners' language output production and practice as much as possible (Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Through the use of silence as a tool, teachers are removed from the centre of attention (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), and learners are given conditions to learn (Stevick, 1980). For example, learners will concentrate on accomplishing the task, and the potential means to its accomplishment, whereas repetition encourages the scattered mind to remain scattered (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Gattegno's (1976) idea of the Silence or the Silent Way approach is to subordinate the teaching to the learning. It is believed that teachers can help, create, and set up conditions to facilitate the learning process. Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest the conditions that will facilitate language learning underlying this method are, firstly, the learner needs to be a principal actor to discover or create rather than be a passive listener to remember and repeat what is to be learned. Secondly, physical objects, such as visual devices, could aid language learning by creating memorable images, which will serve as associative mediators for learners' learning and recall. The devices are used in an attempt to eventually develop in the learner an unconscious awareness of himself as a learner (Varvel, 1979). Thirdly, a problem-solving approach involves learners in learning, and thus is central to the effectiveness of this method.

4.2.2.2 Benefits and drawbacks of the silent way as a language teaching method

The idea behind the silent way is that it allows learners to learn the language for themselves without interference (Gattegno, 1976). It allows learners to have the opportunity to function as learners by learning how to learn, which will lead to independent, autonomous, and responsible learners. In this way, teachers are able to listen to learners talking and alertly observe the individual's problems and needs, which is a/the strength of this method (Varvel, 1979). However, it is argued that the lack of feedback from teachers through this method does not necessarily produce desired result, for example communicative value (Li, 2012).

4.3 Current English language ability needs and recognition

From the previous discussion, we can see that foreign English language teaching has gone through many changes. It has moved from an emphasis on learners' linguistic knowledge to the stress on communicative language competence; it has also not only put emphasis on learner's leaning processes, but also on learners' learning conditions, which will facilitate language learning. However, as Cook (2002) rightly points out, "teachers should aim at getting people to use the second language effectively" (p. 335). So how do teachers prepare learners with the English language demands in today's globalised world, and use the language effectively?

The discussion so far shows that different theories of language and language learning have influenced the aims of different teaching methods. However, learners' English language ability needs appear to be unquestioned in the literature related to major foreign English language teaching development. The following section looks at examples of how the current trend of English language teaching practices reflect and move on in regard to learners' English language ability needs. It concludes with the need for educators to place value on the learners' needs.

4.3.1 Current English language ability needs and foreign English language teaching

As discussed in Chapter One, the current demand of English language in the globalised world is communicative English language ability. In the discussion about the practice and theory of foreign English language teaching in relation to developing learners' communicative competence, CLT has become the familiar language teaching approach in this respect (Savignon, 2005). However, in the current English language teaching approach, traditional grammar translation and the newly developed CLT approach appear to rival each other.

Grammar-translation versus Communicative language teaching

Even though the development of English language communicative ability and skills is increasingly needed in a global society, Fotos (2005) points out that the most commonly found teaching method in the classroom in an EFL context today is the grammar and translation method. It is noted that:

> L1 is the medium of instruction, a structural syllabus is generally used, accuracy is emphasised, grammar is taught deductively through rule learning, speaking and listening are generally neglected, vocabulary is drawn from the reading texts, and the sentence is the unit of teaching and practice (Fotos, 2005, p. 664).

Fotos (2005) further points out that because of the highly competitive nationwide examinations system, English language teaching in an EFL context is often aimed at mastery of the English language components required on the examinations, such as reading comprehension, knowledge of grammar rules, vocabulary, and translation skills. As a result, a major part of English language instruction in an EFL context is based on the development of knowledge about the English language, including grammar rules, vocabulary, translation, and test-taking skills. Students are therefore more focused on the accuracy of grammar and vocabulary with the objective of passing examinations. The development of English language communicative ability and skills, which is increasingly needed in a global society, is minimal (Fotos, 2005). This is one of the

main criticisms of the Grammar and translation method. Consequently, communicative approaches, which adopt the CLT method, have been recently introduced and adopted in many EFL contexts.

However, Savignon and Wang (2003) expressed the same view as Fotos, stating that the multiple challenges of the development of CLT in various EFL contexts may sometimes lead to a return to established practice, form-focused teaching (attention is on the forms of language, L1 explanation, and practice of grammatical rules. L2 use is limited to sentence repetition and L1 to L2 translation). For example, teachers' lack of communicative competence in English, and lack of adequate teacher preparation are generally difficulties of implementation of CLT. Savignon and Wang (2003) also point out that research has also shown that there is inconsistency between teachers' perceptions of CLT and their actual in-class behaviour.

4.3.2 Recognition of the kind of ability the learner needs in language teaching

Despite the large amount of theories, innovation, and debate about improving English language teaching and learning, Rivers (1987) states that the shifts in English language teaching "have little relationship to needs in particular countries, districts, or schools" (p. xii). Indeed, during the preceding discussion on major developments in foreign English language teaching, the only occasion when learners' needs was mentioned was in Richards and Rodgers (2001)'s statement of the recognition of the kind of ability learners need (see section 4.0). This is only reflected in the goal of language study, for example, moves from reading comprehension towards oral ability.

However, as Warschauer (2000) states, teachers will need to vary their approach depending on the particular learners and their purposes in learning. For example, he points out that economic and employment trends will change the way English is used, and the changing English language needs in many countries have resulted in different approaches to foreign language teaching. However, despite all the discussion of theories and development in foreign language teaching practices, what is still left largely unexplored is the learners' own understanding of their own reasons and needs for

learning English language in EFL contexts: the needs of the learners from the learners' perspectives. Therefore, this research looks at how VHSs in Taiwan produce English language courses, and their suitability for preparing students with the English language ability for their intended employment. To do this the research considers the English course itself, teachers' opinions about the courses, and their teaching practices. Most importantly, students' views about their courses and their understanding of the English language ability they need are examined.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the theory and concepts that underpin and inform decisions on language teaching, which gives us an understanding of what lies behind the practices of the classroom.

Foreign English language teaching theories and approaches have gone through many changes: from the emphasis on learners' linguistic knowledge, to the importance of understanding meaning in language learning, and then to the stress on communicative language competence. It has also moved from an emphasis on learners' learning processes to the consideration of conditions that will facilitate language learning.

However, all these changes are mainly based on different views of what language is and how a language is learned, attention to recognition of the changes in the kind of ability that learners' need is not largely addressed in foreign English language teaching. As such, this chapter concludes with the need for foreign English language educators to place value on the learners' English language needs. In order to shed further light on the learners' English language needs, which is a central component for this thesis, it is useful to consider related literature on this subject. Chapter Five looks at how learners' English language needs are addressed.

5

English For Specific Purposes

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the changing and diversifying needs of the English language learners in today's globalised world are addressed in the ELT literature. Previous chapters have demonstrated that there are various reasons, needs, and purposes behind the growing demand of English language ability. To reflect the expanding spread, use and demand of English language around the world, there have been several major shifts in the development of ELT, and one of these shifts is the diversity of ELT, which is English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

5.1 ESP

All language use serves a specific purpose (Widdowson, 2003). However, English language used in real life communication does not "entail adherence to a set of universal rules" (Hyland, 2002, p. 393). Instead, its application varies from one context or situation to another (see Chapter Three). Various disciplines require specific linguistic competency (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001), and certain language features, such as grammatical and lexical forms, are more likely to occur and to be used more frequently in a particular context or field (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Therefore, it is essential to be aware of and understand language used in specific contexts and situations.

The field of ESP emerged to address "the communicative needs and practices of particular professional or occupational groups" (Hyland, 2007, p. 391). Its emergence is a response to the increasing demand of diversifying English language learning needs and purposes from NNES in different disciplines and contexts. It focuses on the application and requirements of English language in specific contexts (Gatehouse,

2001). It is the teaching and learning of English for utilitarian purpose (Mackay & Mountford, 1978), which could be academic, occupational, vocational, or professional. Also, it is not teaching English to a generalised language learner. Instead, it targets specific learners in specific situations (Belcher, 2006). Its starting point is to meet the learners' specific language needs in different fields of specialisation, and to raise learners' awareness and realisation of the diversity of language use in different contexts.

The fundamental principle of ESP is determined by the specific learning needs of the language learner (Belcher, 2006). It attempts to prepare learners to participate and engage effectively in their target disciplines or communities (Hyland, 2002). The teaching and learning content is informed by the specialised curricula designed and implemented in response to identified needs. It does not necessarily involve specialist language and content, but is guided by what the demonstrated needs analysis suggests (Robinson, 1991). Therefore, ESP is an approach to teach specific English to specific learners for a practical purpose. It prepares learners to use the acquired English in a particular context. It can also be seen that ESP as well as EGP are a division of English language teaching (ELT) (Master, 2005).

ESP combines the language and language learning needs analysis in diverse fields of specialisation, with specialised curricula in response to identified needs, and relevant materials to identifiable group of learners' target communities and contexts. It looks at the various important elements in the genuine language situations that English language learners will encounter (Master, 2005). In reference to English language teaching and learning, it does not just involve specialist language and content, but is guided by the results of a needs analysis (Robinson, 1991). The idea behind ESP is that we need to understand the needs and purposes of the learners, so that we can prioritise specific language competencies accordingly.

5.2 ESP and EGP

The distinction between ESP and EGP rests in an awareness of need (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), and the stress on the need to prioritise competencies and learners' target goals and purpose (Hyland, 2002).

ESP courses are "designed to a specification derived directly from a description of the required target repertoire, and so can exactly define the language that the teachers need to deal with" (Widdowson, 1984, p. 175). In other words, it is the awareness, identification, and priorities of the learners current and future specific target situation needs for English language, which the course content is informed and based on, and this distinguishes ESP from EGP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), as well as on the ways in which purposes and needs are defined (Widdowson, 1984).

ESP is currently used in vocational language training programme for refugees and asylum seekers, and also used by businesses, all of which are associated with adult learners, and are not of relevance in this study. Within the standard educational framework, ESP is mainly offered at university level, and General English is still prevalent at the school level.

Numerous ESP studies have been conducted at university level. For example, Crosling and Ward (2002) conducted a survey questionnaire in 1998 to 24 relevant employer companies of Monash University business graduate employees. They used a survey-by-questionnaire to establish the oral communication skills required by undergraduate business and commerce curricula in Australia. Their study confirms the significant role of oral communication in the workplace and points out that university courses which emphasise oral skills typically seen as appropriate, e.g. formal presentation skills, do not adequately prepare students for the oral communication skills actually required in the workplace. Also, Kaewpet (2009) used an ESP theoretical framework to analyse engineering students' English language communication and learning needs in Thailand. She further applied the results to curriculum development and improved the outcomes of the course offered at her university.

The vast majority of the development of ESP and its pedagogical practices is carried out at university level (Hyland, 2002), and this comes from the idea that the instruction of ESP is built on learners having a solid background in General English (Orr, 1998), and that learners would find it difficult to study ESP without this. Indeed, Marshall and Gilmour (1993) point out that many learners' problems in reading comprehension are not caused by the lack of technical words, but are mostly due to the shortage of general English words, and this situation is even worse for NNES.

This perception has led to ESP being adopted mainly at the university level, while General English is the standard English language education provided in junior and senior high schools. However, there are arguments against the practice of reserving ESP primarily for higher education, particularly for vocational-oriented high schools.

Firstly, as mentioned in Chapter One, General English has been criticised that it tends to teach either too much of the language and skills that learners do not need, or too little that learners do need (Long, 2005a). For example, Barber's (1985) analysis of scientific English courses, where he found that although typically all of the English tenses were covered in the language syllabus in the early sixties, progressive verb forms in particular are used very infrequently in scientific English writing, and so priority should be given to other more common tenses.

Secondly, vocational-oriented high schools provide specialised curricula to meet the requirements of different disciplines, but this is not the case for English. The provision of specialised topics presupposes a need for developing specialised field of comprehension and training. However, General English does not provide the specific vocabulary and language skill required to complement this specialised knowledge. ESP, however, focuses on students' target goals and the need to prioritise specific competencies, and 'centred on the language and activities appropriate to particular disciplines, occupations and activities and required by particular learners" (Hyland, 2002, p. 386).

Lastly, one argument against adopting an ESP approach for secondary level students is that they are not ready to learn ESP as they do not have the relevant general English. However, language learning happens when the learning suits the learners' needs and purposes (Widdowson, 1984). As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claimed, 'the clear relevance of the English course to learners' learning needs would improve the learners' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster' (p. 8). The focus should be on learners' English language learning needs. This is in line with the discussion in Chapter Three, where learners' language learning needs and purposes are highlighted as very important elements in stimulating their learning and strengthening the relevance of learners' English language learning to their goals.

5.3 Learners' English language Learning needs

Learners' specific target situation needs for English is not simply the language and skills that are required to function successfully, but also the manner in which learners learn them. Therefore, learners' English language learning needs, which is the central emphasis of ESP, is the investigation into the linguistic characteristics of a particular area of work or study that learners need to communicate in English. It also includes learners' reasons for learning English (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), and recognises the importance of relating the actual classroom procedures to the learners' reasons for learning English (Tomlinson, 2005). This needs awareness can help determine the language most needed by students, and the syllabus can be designed accordingly. As a result, English is taught according to the students' real-world aspirations and is not a traditionally designed school subject.

Needs analysis is fundamental to course design and teaching that adopts an ESP approach (Robinson, 1991). This is because the ESP approach assumes that learning English that is relevant to the learners' target needs would motivate learners. Needs analysis can be broadly described as identifying "what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situations, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training" (West, 1994, p. 1), and should be an onging process (Cowling, 2007).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) consider target situation needs in two ways, one is the target situation language needs: what the learners will have to do in the target situations. The other is the target situation learning needs: how do learners learn to achieve their goals (see details on p. 59-60 and p. 62-63), which is a process-oriented definition of needs (Robinson, 1991). In this sense, ESP is not a product or goal oriented approach, but a process-oriented approach to language teaching. In other word, ESP is an approach based on the specific linguistic aspect of language learning, an understanding of the processes of language learning, and the learner's reason for learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

In considering the concept of needs, there are different levels and meanings attached, for example, desirable or actual needs. 'Necessities' are defined by Hutchinson & Waters (1987) as needs identified by the target situations, which the learner has to know in order to function effectively. In addition, there is deficiency analysis, which refers to the assessment of the learning gap between learners' actual knowledge and the necessities demanded by target situations. This may seem to be no different from judging learners' current ability levels with the help of test scores, however, ESP is explicitly targeted to address the specific target needs that learners will likely to encounter (Belcher, 2009).

Deficiency analysis in ESP reveals information about the target situation needs or the desired competence that learners lack. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) classified this type of needs as 'lack', and classroom practitioners should also be aware of it in terms of needs analysis (Belcher, 2006). In addition to necessities and deficiency needs, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) further point out subjective needs. Learners have a view as to what their needs are, and their perceptions of needs are defined as 'wants'. Tomlinson (2005) claims that learners' wants need to be satisfied, otherwise learning will be restrained. However, he also pointed out that this part, learners' wants, is very rarely researched or taken into consideration.

Long (2005b) claims that careful considerations of learners' target situation needs could give a direction to the English language courses as well as make the course design more effective. This is evidenced, for example, in So-mui and Mead's (2000) study. Their detailed investigation into the use of English in the workplace of textile and clothing merchandisers has enabled course designers and developers of teaching and learning materials to provide more specifically focused English courses. For example, their investigation on the extent of English usage reveals that fax is the most preferred channel of communication and written English is of far greater use compared with spoken English. This knowledge enables the development of teaching and learning materials to match the specific workplace needs of learners, and also gives students the opportunity to adapt their English language skills and knowledge to the contexts or situations they will come across during their later working lives.

Another element to look at, which also informs the direction of the English courses, is learners' English language learning purposes.

5.4 English language learning purposes

Learners' English language learning purposes could lead to different course orientations, and there are two main English language learning purposes developed in ESP. One is required English for academic purposes (EAP), and the other is required English for work/training (EOP/EVP/VESL: English for Occupational Purposes/English for Vocational Purposes/Vocational English as a Second Language) (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Hutchinson and Waters further point out that learners' specialism is also one of the ways to determine the course orientations, such as English for Science and Technology (EST), and English for Business and Economics (EBE) (ibid).

5.4.1 EAP

The teaching of EAP aims to prepare and support international students for their specific academic language needs in the English medium institutions of learning at tertiary education, which takes place primarily in Great Britain (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Jordan, 2002). It emerged and developed initially when overseas students, whose first language is not English, had language problems in the process and the completion of their academic studies in the major English-speaking countries. Attention is given to students' specific language needs in order to enhance their English language ability to better cope with their studies, conduct research, or teach in that language (ibid). It is now taught in a variety of types of international settings in the tertiary sector, with students having various reasons for studying academic English (Carkin, 2005). EAP can be further divided into English for general academic purposes (EGAP) and English for specific academic purposes (ESAP). EGAP is largely associated with broadly relevant academic skills across multiple disciplines, with the emphasis on 'common core' skills, while ESAP is associated with different disciplines, with specific academic disciplinary traditions emphasised (Carkin, 2005).

One controversial aspect of EAP is whether the broad core features of language skills and forms across different academic disciplines are adequate enough to prepare international students for their academic target situations. The concept of general EAP is that there is a basic common set of linguistic structures and items that exist in any linguistic register. It assumes that learners can first master the common core, increment their language acquisition, and finally broader their competencies (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). However, as language learning is not presented to learners in a predetermined sequence. Instead, it takes place when learners need to acquire the competence. Common core grammar, forms, and genres are not the necessary elements that would affect learners' ability to acquire the demanded subject specific communicative language skills. Instead, learners acquire the demanded subject specific communicative language skills through engagement in various relevant activities. Therefore, Hyland (2002) argues that instead of the wide angle perspective that general ESP approach takes, there is a need for the specificity of specialised ESP teaching.

Along the line of a similar argument, Dudley-Evans (2002) suggests that there are considerable variations in essay requirements across different disciplines or subjects. A general set of structures and items would run the risk of not helping students to meet the actual writing genres required by the department. It is essential to consider the appropriate academic stance or positioning expected by the department. It appears that a considerable awareness of the kind of language acquisition and expectations that are actually required by the learners would lead to better learning achievement.

Huckin and Olsen (1984) further propose that English taught for academic purposes should also address the kind of English usage and skills learners are likely to need for their future professional career. Their argument lies in the fact that learners' English language ability might be sufficient enough to survive in their academic courses, but this will not necessarily be good enough for their future professional occupations. Indeed, the need and use of English language ability does not only exist in academic situations. For example, adequate English language training is needed when learners leave schools and move on to professional careers where English is required. This idea is reflected, for example, in the English for Business discipline in the university. EAP courses in this discipline not only assist learners in their studies, but also seek to prepare learners for their business careers (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). This shows that ESP

courses can help learners with their studies, and at the same time, be directed towards learners' professional preparation. In other words, EAP courses can also have vocational-oriented aspects to it. However, the goal is still directed towards learners' academic study.

5.4.2 EOP

Orr (1998) raises the idea that the identification of the learners' aim and use of English, either at the university or in their jobs after graduation, can help to specify the target skills and language required to function successfully in target English language situations. Normally, EAP courses take place in the academy. However, the use of English is not only limited to academic and professional disciplines (the domain of academia), it has wider functional uses outside academic circles, such as occupational uses.

A broad distinction between EAP and EOP is that EAP is concerned with the disciplines, and EOP is concerned with occupations (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). The early stage of EOP development is, for example, from the context of immigrants and refugees in an ESL situations, who need English language skills for career development. Several studies have been conducted around this area, with particular interest in looking at the language support that these ESL learners need. They investigated the functional language skills and effective communication strategies these ESL learners need to succeed in the U.S. workplace (Franco, 1986; Gage & Prince, 1982; Wyatt-Beynon, Llieva, Toohey, & Larocque, 2001).

Workplace English is another area that an increasing number of studies are conducted (Forey, 2004). As English is seen as an important element in the workplace, learners are learning English for their occupational purposes. This is particularly true in international business (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). Through relevant work situations, and recognition of technical terms, EOP courses relate learners to their own specific workplace English (e.g. So-mui and Mead, 2000).

5.4.3 Wider application of the ESP approach

Belcher (2006) states that as any individual and community is a member of a larger socioeconomic and political system, English could serve wider purposes beyond work and study. Cadman (2002) interprets this as English for academic possibilities, which he refers to as the empowerment that English brings learners as part of the target community.

In line with this, ESP has been widened to include more than language teaching. Belcher (2004) claims that through classes offered on-site (the workplace settings where language learners are already functioning), the support of ESP helps learners to develop the English language ability needed to function effectively in their target situations. At the same time, ESP practitioners also help learners build their self-esteem, facilitate upward mobility, and people relations. Hoekje (2007) also demonstrates that ESP can not only facilitate learners' language learning needs for their work, but also support and address L2 issues as they arise in language use. She investigates the utility of ESP courses to meet the socialisation and communicative needs of international medical graduates (IMGs) during and after their residency training in the U.S. health care context. The courses provide IMGs opportunities to learn from key texts and language use in medical practice, the patient community, and general U.S. culture contexts. Evaluations of the courses offered show that IMGs appreciate the opportunity to work on specific skills related to their professional work, and the opportunity to discuss U.S. culture, healthcare issues, and personal concerns. Their difficulties, such as cultural problems in socialising, and language problems in communication and interpretation skills, are both improved with ESP approach.

To sum up, ESP courses focus on learners' specific language needs appropriate to the target disciplines, occupations and situations. The courses are designed to meet the specific needs of the learners, and their content is related to learners' particular disciplines, occupations and situations. Learning English is seen as a means to the pursuit of academic or vocational purposes. In other words, ESP courses are purposeful courses, in which teaching/learning materials are tailored to learners' specific English

language learning needs. It is a pragmatic response to the many reasons that learners have for learning English (Mackay & Mountford, 1978).

One of the distinguishing features of ESP from General English is that learners' particular English language requirements and purposes are being addressed, and relevant materials are prepared for use. Therefore, learning is relevant to the learners. This is claimed to make English learning more effective than General English (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001), as well as more motivating, because learners perceive the learning to have a high degree of usefulness for them (Huckin & Olsen, 1984).

The other distinguishing feature is that General English tends to focus on language structure (see Chapter Two), while ESP also focuses on language functions, which are learners' needs to learn to use the language. English is considered as a resource for communication. The specification of particular communicative needs relevant to learners' specific contexts or situations is identified, and thus prepares learners to communicate in the specific situations when they want or need to use the language (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001).

5. 5 Language use and analysis in ESP

Deciding on a course objective is the first step in the construction of any language course (West, 1994), and identification of the students' expected use of language will help to define the course objective (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). However, the use of language has considerable variety depending on the context of use. Thus, instead of using generalised summaries of linguistic features, ESP research and practitioners attempt to find out the nature of the language to be taught and used in the learners' specific contexts. This key consideration establishes a basis for the design and selection of teaching content in ESP, and it is also one of the distinguishing factors that contribute to the effectiveness of ESP courses.

ESP research adopts various approaches to identify different types of language used in diverse contexts. Linguistic language use analysis in ESP evolves as ideas, focus and needs of what is to be included in language and its description change. Different

approaches are developed, for example, register, pragmatic, context, discourse, and genre analysis. Each approach of language use analysis makes us more aware of different issues at stake and has applications and influences on the variety of ESP pedagogical materials.

Register analysis is the identification of the linguistic forms, such as grammatical and lexical features, that learners would commonly come across within their specialised fields. It focuses mainly on the elements of sentence. This analysis reveals the particular forms that are favoured in one specific discipline or context, but not any distinctive linguistic features (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Also, this analysis describes the frequency of the use of linguistic forms, but does not show the functions of those forms in the specific register, nor does it show the explanations of the presence or absence of those forms (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001).

Accordingly, the use of register analysis allows greater precision and less generalisation in terms of the description of the registers in each specific settings of language use. It could prioritise the language forms learners would meet in their discipline or context, and thus make the ESP course more relevant to learners' needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). However, the language of specific registers, which is different by specific discipline, is criticised for its focus on a restricted range of language forms, such as grammatical or lexical patterns, rather than language use (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Also, register studies only reveal the probabilities of particular language form choices, but there is little explanation of the reasons behind the favoured choice by specific discipline (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

It is also argued that the meaning and use of a language are situated in the context in which they are used. Thus, it is essential to understand language use in specific contexts (Belcher, 2006). The meaning of words should be taught through the relations between structure and context (Marshall & Gilmour, 1993). When learners understand and engage in the particular conventions of the language used in their target situations, they would make use of their language learning effectively (Hyland, 2002). Therefore, further investigation into the structures and meanings of texts has been developed to explore the practical utility of English language (Hyland, 2002), such as contextual and pragmatic analysis.

Contextual analysis is another way to look at the use of language in discourse analysis. The frequency data of the use of linguistic forms is still presented, but it is used to support the rhetorical and communicative purposes of the use of those linguistic forms applied to the specific context (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). It uses context to understand the real life language use, such as how and when speakers select particular linguistic forms, and their specific uses. It focuses on the ways that context influences the choice of syntactic forms (Hatch, 1992).

Instead of starting with the examination of linguistic form and its specific uses, pragmatic analysis starts with a particular rhetorical function, such as defining and describing, and examines the linguistic forms present in the particular function (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). It can also be seen that pragmatic analysis is a meaning-focus approach. It looks at the meaning that the speakers intend to convey when they use a particular structure in context. It looks at the pragmatic meanings (what is implied) rather than literal meanings (what is said) (Hatch, 1992). However, language may vary across different types of text. Thus, this type of analysis may not be able to differentiate the specific situations in which a given function was used (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001).

The other two approaches carried out to analyse language beyond sentence level in ESP are discourse analysis and genre analysis. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) give a clear distinction between the two terms:

> Any study of language or, more specifically, text at a level above that of the sentence is a discourse study. This may involve the study of cohesive links between sentences, of paragraph structure, or the structure of the whole text. The results of this type of analysis make statements about how texts - any text - work. This is 'applied' discourse analysis. Where, however, the focus of the text analysis is on the regularities of structure that distinguish one type of text from another type, this is genre analysis and the results focus on the differences between text types, or genres (p. 87).

Rather than considering sentences as a collection of unrelated units, discourse analysis considers text as a total entity, and each type of text differs from other types. It looks at

the overall pattern of text and understands the operations of sentences that are combined in discourse. Discourse analysis focuses on the text, and the meaning or purposes of the sentences used to perform the acts of communication (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). The identification of the organisation patterns in texts, and the linguistic methods of how these patterns are signalled could then be applied to generate ESP materials (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). This approach focuses on the texts and how they operate in discourse. However, the context in which communication takes place is not being taken into sufficient account (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) consider genre as "a particular type of communicative event which has a particular communicative purpose recognised by its users, or discourse community" (p. 15). The genres that appear in classical literature on rhetoric are concerned with the types of rhetorical organisation, such as narrative and descriptive discourse. This is the classification that language teachers have followed to demonstrate the structure of each genre. However, linguistics has a much stronger interest in the link between rhetorical form and syntax (Hatch, 1992).

Each genre has a slightly different structure to express the intent of the writers and speakers. The analysis of genres identifies the syntactic structures and its connection to discourse, and thus distinguishes between text types (Hatch, 1992). The primary focus of the analysis has been further broadened by researchers to place equal importance on both the actual text, and the members of the discourse community, to confirm the linguistic interpretation (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). Through this, the description could apply to the specific situations and participants.

There are different approaches to genre analysis. The Swalesian tradition of genre analysis approach looks at the formal characteristics of genres in academic settings, using linguistic or rhetorical methods to analyse texts. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) state that the concerns of genre analysis focus too much on the surface features in the text, and less attention is given to other factors, such as the context.

With the emphasis on the social constructivist view of language, the other approach to genre analysis is North American New Rhetoric studies. It is concerned with "composition studies and professional writing in an L1 context" (Flowerdew, 2005, p.

323). It pays more attention to the sociocultural aspects of genres and looks at genres in a way that is shaped and influenced by other related texts and utterances of the sociocultural context. In other words, it focuses on genre as social action, and gains perspectives through the understanding of the social contexts that genres perform (Master, 2005).

Each approach of analysis mentioned above has its own goal, and serves different purposes. The analysis of the use of language provides a description of the English required to carry out certain academic or occupational activities. The identification of specialist vocabulary, the common occurrence of certain function words, tenses, and forms reveals the grammatical and semantic properties of different registers of English typically favoured in certain academic disciplines or occupations. However, this kind of identification only provides different varieties of English usage, it does not explain by itself the purposes in producing such forms (Widdowson, 1984). In other words, manifestations of linguistic forms do not help the realisation of communicative functions of language that are typically used.

Language analysis transitioned from the lexical and grammatical properties of register, to the practical language use, because of consideration of communicative purposes in discourse. A consideration of appropriate contextual language use and communicative competence that people perform with language is taken into account, along with the recognition of intended meanings that the speakers intend to convey when they use a particular structure in context.

The research findings of discourse analysis could be then applied to pedagogy to teach the language that learners need to fulfil their roles (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). It allows us to understand what language and tasks are appropriate to particular disciplines, occupations, and contexts required by particular learners. In this way, learners are better prepared with the language and skills they are likely to be exposed to and encounter. Also, this kind of learning can help to raise learners' study to their personal relevance (Hyland, 2002).

5.5.1 Language usage and use

Analysis of the use of language recognises and demonstrates the varieties of language favoured or used in diverse disciplines or occupations in different contexts. Specific linguistic aspects or particular areas of language usage are addressed through different approaches of analysing the use of language. However, these analyses of the linguistic components of the learners' desired performance only present a part of the language knowledge that the learners need to acquire in their ultimate goal and language behaviour. They look at rules of usage, which develop learners' grammatical rather than communicative competence (Widdowson, 1984).

The ability to produce grammatically correct sentences is only one aspect of learning a language. Having a good knowledge of English does not mean that learners really know the language. Widdowson (1978) points out that correct language usage does not equate to meaningful communicative use of the language. Accordingly, language teaching and learning is not simply a demonstration of correct usage in terms of language structure, but also the appropriate use of the language for a required communicative purpose. Moreover, analysis of learners' English language needs includes finding out what language skills learners need in order to accomplish a task in a specific role, and thus teach them the language and skills they need to fulfill their role. Therefore, acquiring a language involves not only learning isolated linguistic units, but also the ability to realise, understand, and apply knowledge of the grammatical or linguistic rules appropriately to achieve a desired outcome, which often refers to a communicative purpose, or language use (Widdowson, 1978).

It is believed that "language use promotes acquisition" (Widdowson, 1984, p. 198). Widdowson (1978) states two kinds of abilities in terms of language use. One is the ability to select the appropriate sentence form for a particular linguistic context. The other is the realisation of the sentence's function in a particular communicative situation. In other words, language use requires both appropriate contextual sentence forms, and also that the sentence functions appropriately in the situation. Therefore, it would be sensible to teach learners the language they will actually use for situations that will actually occur. ESP not only includes knowledge of the language features, but also

the appropriate tasks and practices for particular contexts and situations. It is concerned with the real application of English in communication, rather than just language knowledge (Hyland, 2002).

Many studies have noted the requirement of English as a means of communication across different disciplines and occupations (Crosling & Ward, 2002; Kaewpet, 2009). Learners need to exploit the knowledge of rules, both usage and use, to arrive at the intended communicative purposes and objectives.

Widdowson (1984) points out that teaching language as communication is not essentially different from teaching sentence patterns. He argues that the notion of teaching English as communication presents language in a way that preserves aspects of the communicative character of language. It presents the communicative properties of language, which constitute the essential content of courses. However, it remains, in principle, teaching language knowledge. The communicative properties of language are derived from the analytic findings of language. Such analytic description of language, as Widdowson (1984) claims, does not arise from normal situations, and hence is not authentically presented as communication. Learners are learning the language in a recommended manner; however, the ability to acknowledge or authenticate the language taught as communication is not addressed.

The act of communication involves the knowledge of certain language rules as well as the realisation, engagement, application, and employment of the language (Widdowson, 1984). It is not a demonstration of structures of English, but a function of the discourse process (Widdowson, 1984). In other words, communicative competence, or the capacity for using language, involves the acquisition of linguistic forms as well as the use of language communicative functions to get the intended meaning or purpose of utterances across.

To realise and acquire communicative competence, learners need to work out the rules and the natural language used for a purpose. Teaching language for communication places emphasis on the activity of using language to achieve communicative ends. It focuses on learning objectives, and the desired outcome of teaching activity. It develops

learners' capacity to achieve their learning objectives to use the language for effective communication and their abilities to cope with real life situations (Widdowson, 1984).

In pedagogy, teachers need to engage learners in the realisation of applying the rules for a particular purpose, and turning language knowledge into use. Adopting the criterion of occurrence frequency of language usage is not sufficient, the common or potential use of language needs to be taken into account. Teachers should equip learners not just with a collection of linguistic or language items, but engage learners in the contingent use of language as well as the ability to cope with any dynamic problems so that they are able to communicate their intended meaning effectively (Widdowson, 1984). In short, language teaching and learning involves understanding the language system, how it works, and what learners should be able to do with the language. Language teaching is based on a view of language as communication, and then teaches the language for communication purposes.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has reinforced the importance of understanding learners' English language learning needs and purposes, as stated in Chapter Three, and pointed out that these are addressed and emphasised through the ESP English language teaching approach. Learners' different English language learning needs and purposes through this approach are identified and examined, as well as different phases and movements of language use analysis in ESP, from its earlier focus on elements of the sentence and their construction, to the later focus on cohesion and meaning of forms, and then the rhetorical and communicative purposes of language use. Most importantly, this chapter points out that in respect of effective English language course, research is needed to address learners' subjective needs: their 'wants', which reinforces the need for the current study.

This chapter has also pointed out that within a standard educational framework, there is a lack of research and development of ESP at school levels, and argued the need for ESP particularly in the vocationally oriented high school context. More importantly, it

argues that ESP could be promoted as a viable alternative to the General English teaching and learning traditionally offered to NNES as ESL/EFL in schools.

6

Research Methodology

6.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify the methodology and research design of this research. It starts with a discussion of the general philosophical assumptions and their associated research methodologies. It then moves on to address the methodological position of this research, focusing particularly on the methods used for data collection and analysis, and practical considerations in conducting research.

Specifically, the methodology and the design of this research are based on the research purposes and research questions. As described in Chapter One, the purpose of this study is to explore aspects of how English language education at VHSs in Taiwan prepares students for their intended employment. In particular, the research questions underpinning the study are:

1. What are the ways in which the English language curriculum in VHSs in Taiwan aims to equip students with the English necessary for their intended employment?

2. What are the teachers' and students' perspectives on the English language education provided in VHSs, and what are their perspectives on the extent to which English language education prepares students for future employment, particularly in terms of providing them with the English language skills necessary to compete in a global job market?

The rationale for these research questions is the need to build a further understanding of what English language education in VHSs can contribute in terms of preparing students with the English language ability for employment, and a need for further guidance and

examples of how VHSs can strengthen the relation between English language ability and employability.

The researcher began to address research question one in Chapter Two, where she looked at the English language curriculum in VHSs in Taiwan. However she sees that this is not sufficient to provide an answer in itself, and in order to address research question two, she also has to consider the reality of teaching and learning in the classroom. For example, even though the teaching guidelines appear to be communicatively orientated, no particular teaching methodology is stated. This implies that teachers are allowed to adopt any type of teaching methods, and the goal of teaching English for communicative competence may well be far from the reality.

Therefore, to address research question two, teachers' and students' views, experiences, and perspectives on their English language education in VHSs are gathered to gauge to what extent the VHS English language courses are preparing students with the English necessary for their chosen field or intended employment.

6.1 Philosophical assumptions

It has been noted that the methodological choice a researcher makes and how the research is carried out and designed is influenced by or based on both a researcher's philosophical assumptions about ontology and epistemology (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Matthews & Ross, 2010), and the research purposes, problems, and questions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2009). Thus, one should consider the philosophical assumptions a researcher may bring to a study (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, this subsection gives an overview of the main ideas involved in ontology and epistemology, and states the philosophical assumptions underpinning this study.

6.1.1 Ontology and epistemology

Ontology is concerned with claims and assumptions that are made about the world or the nature of reality (Creswell & Clark, 2007), namely what exists and how it exists

(Clough & Nutbrown, 2007; Hughes, 1980). It can be broadly defined as "the ideas about the existence of and relationship between people, society and the world in general" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 13).

There are different perceptions of what constitutes reality, and the central ontological discussion point lies in:

1) Whether the existence of the social world is distinct and separate from reality, and is independent of the individuals who are involved, or

2) Whether the existence of the social world does not exist outside individuals, and reality is shaped or constructed by individuals (their perceptions, experiences, and interaction), which implies that social reality can change.

The first ontological position is referred to as objectivism and the second one is referred to as subjectivism or constructionism (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Grix, 2001).

The view a researcher takes about social reality and the assumptions about what exists in the world is important because they lead us to think further about the question of how do we know and make sense of what exists in the world. This is what epistemology is concerned with: how we understand reality.

An epistemology is a theory of knowledge (Creswell, 2009; Grix, 2001; Matthews & Ross, 2010). It represents a view and a justification for what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman, 2012; Matthews & Ross, 2010), and how is it acquired and validated (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Grix, 2001; Matthews & Ross, 2010).

It is claimed that epistemology is shaped by or is closely related to an individual's ontological assumptions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Williams & May, 1996), as how an individual views about social reality has implications for the ways he/she comes to know about the social world, and thus determines what he/she regards as legitimate knowledge. Thus, the two primary ontological assumptions, objective and subjective, pose respectively two distinct epistemological positions: positivism and interpretivism

(Grix, 2001), and most educational research can be seen to fit into one of these two positions (Freeman & Jones, 1980).

With objective ontological assumptions in mind, positivism treats the social world in the same way as the natural world (Creswell, 2009). It is an epistemological position that advocates the application of scientific methods to study social reality and beyond (Bryman, 2012; Grix, 2001). In other words, positivism uses scientific methods of inquiry to objectively carry out investigations. However, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argue that positivism disregards the fact that there are subjective human decisions involved throughout the research process, and thus "the conduct of fully objective and value-free research is a myth" (p. 16).

On the contrary, interpretivism holds subjective ontological assumptions in mind, and it reflects and emphasises the difference of the subject matter: human beings in social science, as compared to the objects of natural science. Interpretivism grasps the subjective meaning of social action with interpretive or empathic understanding (Bryman, 2012; Grix, 2001). However, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) point out that sometimes it is not a matter of the opinions or views of different people and different groups as there are cases "where subjective and objective realities directly meet and clash" (p. 16). They further state that the subjective state of reality can, in some situations, simply be multiple perspectives, opinions or beliefs. Therefore, what is claimed as subjective reality is not necessarily unique, and they argue that all realities have room for mental and social reality as well as material reality. This is the position the researcher for the current study holds.

With regard to the main research question (How does English language education at VHSs prepare students for future employment?), the researcher recognises the existence and importance of an external and objective reality for the situation under investigation. On the other hand, she also recognises the existence and importance of subjective meanings from/through human being's perception of it, especially when the research involves gathering participants' experience and perspectives.

6.2 Research methodology and its associated worldview

Different views of the world, and different understanding of what constitutes knowledge, lead to or guide a researcher to employ different methodologies in a study (Creswell, 2009; Grix, 2001). However, one needs to bear in mind that while a researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions can represent the kind of methodologies that will be employed in a study, it is certainly not a determinative connection (Williams & May, 1996).

This section introduces basic research methodologies and the typical epistemological and ontological assumptions that underlie them. The basic set of epistemological and ontological assumptions or beliefs that guide a research or a researcher holds will be called 'worldview' hereafter in this thesis. This worldview term is adopted from Creswell's (2009) use, while others have called them paradigms (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The two dominant worldviews, positivism and interpretivism, have resulted in two primary research orientations: quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research is more typically associated with the positivism worldview, while qualitative research comes more from the interpretivism or constructivism worldview (Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

6.2.1 Research methodology

A research methodology is concerned with how a particular piece of research should be undertaken (Grix, 2001). Specifically, research methodologies govern the choice, decision, and use of methods (Creswell, 2003), which will influence how the overall research process of the research is conceived and actually conducted (Smith, 1983a). Research methodologies are often confused with research methods (Grix, 2001), so before embarking more on research methodologies and its associated worldview, the distinction between these two terms: methodologies and methods is made, which aims to shed light on the research methodology used in the present research.

Research methods are concerned with the procedures, techniques, or tools a researcher uses for data collection and analysis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Mackenzie &

Knipe, 2006). It can involve a specific instrument, such as questionnaire, interview, or observation (Bryman, 2004). Research methodologies, as Newby (2010) states, are "how the toolkit of research methods is brought together to crack an individual and specific research problem" (p. 51). In this sense, research methods can be seen as part of the research methodologies, and can be used as a basis "for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 47), whereas research methodologies can be seen as the justification for research decisions, and which provides reasons and explanation for the particular decisions or methods used from the outset to the conclusion of the enquiry (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002).

6.2.2 Research methodologies and its associated worldview

Tending to derive from a positivism worldview, quantitative research uses the scientific approaches to study the social and human world (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Smith, 1983a). The subjects of the investigation are treated as 'objects' of the study, and the relationship between the investigator and what is investigated is subject-object, and thus the investigator can maintain scientific objectivity (O'Leary, 2010; Smith, 1983a). Objects are selected based on the common features they hold (Smith, 1983a). It views data collectively in an attempt to extract, identify, or explain some sense of the patterns revealed by the data (Newby, 2010; Tolmie, Muijs, & McAtee, 2011).

In contrast to quantitative research, the relationship between the investigator and what is investigated in qualitative research is subject-subject relationship (Smith, 1983a), which comes from an interpretivist or constructivist worldview (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As Stenbacka (2001) states, qualitative research is carried out "with the purpose of generating understanding of a social phenomenon", because "one is interested in understanding another person's reality based on a specified problem area" (p. 552). It seeks the essence by clarifying and understanding the meaning, values, and point of view of the individual from the perspective of the people who are being studied (Bryman, 1988; Creswell, 2009; Smith, 1983a).

Therefore, quantitative research allows researchers to "explore specific issues in which they are interested" (Bryman, 2004, p. 451), and the results of quantitative research

typically have quantification tendencies on 'how many', or reveal the patterns of the investigated data; whereas qualitative research allows researchers to "gain access to the perspectives of the people they are studying" (Bryman, 2004, p. 451), and the results of qualitative research typically have the tendency to give us some indication as to 'why' and 'how' things occurs.

Coming from such different worldviews, there has been much debate between quantitative and qualitative research concerning important conceptual issues, such as the nature of reality (Bryman, 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). However, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) advocate the importance and predominance of the research question over the worldview debate. Rather than strictly follow one worldview and methodology exclusively, a researcher should ask what and when each research is most helpful and works for the particular research problem in their research studies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This view is what the current researcher of this thesis has in mind when planning her research.

6.2.3 Pragmatism and mixed-methods research

The emphasis on the importance of research questions has led to a third and different worldview: pragmatism (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This offers a middle position between the two main opposing philosophies and methodologies, and recognises both subjective and external objective realities (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Pragmatists consider truth to be 'what works' at the time (Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), and thus use whatever worldview and/or methodological approaches work or are appropriate to provide the best understanding for the particular research problem under study (Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Accordingly, pragmatists take a pragmatic and balanced position to consider the elements and insights from both quantitative and qualitative research, and decide how to make best use of them in their research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

The research methodologies underlying the philosophical orientation of pragmatism is mixed methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Mixed methods researchers attempt to draw on the strengths and minimise the weaknesses from both quantitative and qualitative research (Creswell, 2009), and mix them in a way that offers the best opportunities for answering research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

6.3 Methodological position of current research

Considering the nature, purposes, and research questions of the current study, the researcher decided to use elements from both quantitative and qualitative research in an attempt to better understand the situation under investigation, and thus best answer the research questions. For example, the characteristic of quantitative research of remaining uninvolved with the subjects of the study can help this study to obtain an objective reality, such as by objectively identifying certain factors considered important in the relevant research literature, i.e. participants' English language learning needs, goals, and purposes (see Chapter Three, Four, and Five). It can also help to objectively and systematically gather a broad picture of participants' experience of English language education at VHSs, and their perspectives of the relevance of English language education at VHSs to students' future employment. In addition, some sense of the patterns of responses might also be revealed from the investigation through quantitative research (Newby, 2010; Tolmie et al., 2011).

The characteristic of qualitative research of seeking understanding of the world from the perspectives of the people who are being studied can help the researcher to tap into participants' perspectives through their own point of view. The researcher can gather participants' subjective meanings and perspectives they ascribe to the situation under investigation, and thus make sense of (or interpret) the meanings from their views. In this way, the researcher can also gather multiple views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2009).

Therefore, in this thesis, the researcher takes the pragmatism position, and adopts mixed methods research as its methodology to explore the situation under investigation. In order to mix research in an effective manner, it is important for researchers to consider

the relevant approaches and methods which quantitative and qualitative research undertake, and gain an understanding of how they work, and their strengths and weaknesses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Moore, 2006). Therefore, quantitative and qualitative research approaches and methods will be discussed next.

6.3.1 Research approaches and methods

Quantitative and qualitative research approaches are each characterised by the procedures used and the methods designed (Newby, 2010). O'Leary (2010) proposes different ways of looking at theoretical quantitative and qualitative research approaches. He argues that the terms, qualitative and quantitative, can refer to the data collection and analysis methods if we see them as adjectives for types of data and their corresponding modes of analysis. He states that if data is presented through numbers and analysed using statistics, they are quantitative; if data is presented through words, pictures, or icons, and analysed using thematic exploration, then they are qualitative data. Therefore, the terms: quantitative and qualitative, can be defined as research approaches when we look at them as to how they respond to, for example, the relationship between the facts and values in the process of investigation, or the goal of investigation (Smith, 1983a). They can also be defined as research methods or strategies when we look at them as the way of data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2004).

It is argued that mixed methods make use of the most valuable features of each (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2003; O'Leary, 2010), and can help the researcher understand a research problem better than either quantitative or qualitative data alone (Creswell, 2012). Similarly, Bryman (2004) points out that both can be combined within an overall research project, and can complement each other (Smith, 1983a), or be seen as alternative ways to produce knowledge (O'Leary, 2010). Bryman (2004) further states that when different research methods or strategies are employed in an investigation to cross-check the results, it gives confidence to the findings.

6.3.2 Research strategy for the current study

Considering the purpose and aim of this study, two research strategies: survey and interview, are selected as the most suitable for the following reasons:

<u>Survey</u>

Surveys are typically used to measure, describe, or identify any generalised features, such as trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics, and can represent a wide group of a target population (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2012). A survey generally selects a relatively large sample of people from a pre-determined population of interest in a particular study (called the target population), followed by the collection of a relatively small amount of data from those selected population (called the sample), and makes some inference about the wider people (called the population) (Creswell, 2012; Kelley, Calrk, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). Therefore, a survey typically relies on large-scale standardised form of data, such as questionnaires and test scores, to gather context-free data and make generaliations (Cohen et al., 2007). It can be exploratory (with no assumptions or models being postulated) to explore aspects of a situation, or confirmatory (test a model or hypothesis) to seek explanation and provide data for testing hypotheses (Cohen et al., 2007; Kelley et al., 2003). Its focus is directed more toward "learning about a population" (Creswell, 2012, p. 376). There are two basic types of research surveys used in education: cross sectional (i.e. data about current attitudes, opinions, beliefs, or practices), and longitudinal (i.e. used to study individuals over time), both serve quite different purposes (Creswell, 2012).

Questionnaires are widely used and are useful for collecting survey information (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007). They allow researchers to survey a population of subjects with the aim of "establishing a broad picture of their experiences or views" and allows them "seek to create generalisations from its data" (Clough & Nutbrown, 2002, p. 118). Many authors and studies have used this instrument to establish general concepts that could represent the majority of the population (Celani; Crosling & Ward, 2002), or as an initial stage of data collection (Forey, 2002; So-mui & Mead, 2000).

The use of a cross sectional survey in a quantitative questionnaire form is selected for the current study because of its benefit of gathering and establishing an initial objective broad picture, and an understanding of current English language education practice in VHSs in Taiwan. Specifically, it helps to objectively explore, identify, and gather an initial understanding of how participants perceive English language learning and English language education in VHSs, and what their perspectives are on its relevance to students' future employment.

Larger sample sizes could lower the likely error in generalising (Robson, 2002), and so give greater reliability (Cohen et al., 2007), and increase the likely precision or accuracy of results (Bryman, 2004). Although there is no definite or clear-cut answer to the required sample size for a survey (Kelley et al., 2003), Cohen et al. (2007) advise a sample size of thirty to be the minimum number of cases for researchers using statistical analysis on their data, and Bryman (2004) suggests larger sample sizes are better up to a point as any increase in precision diminishes once the sample size is beyond 1,000. The size of optimal sample is sometimes difficult to reach, depending on a number of considerations: the nature of the samples, the resources available, constraints of time and cost, criteria the researchers set up for their study. It would also differ by the response rate (Bryman, 2004; Kelley et al., 2003). In the case of current study, the sample size would depend on the accessibility to participants, and their willingness to cooperate. Also, it has to be large enough in order to attain validity and generalisability of the findings. However, it would be difficult to presume the sample size in advance.

Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the larger size sample may use the more structured questionnaire (questionnaire consists of closed question with predefined answers), and it will need to be piloted and refined so that the final version of the questionnaire accommodates as full a range of possible responses as it can, and minimise bias in results (Kelley et al., 2003). Therefore, in the current study, a structured questionnaire is adopted to produce quantitative and numerical findings, which allows the researcher to tackle the large sample size and offers validity of results. In addition, the principles of the procedures for constructing a structured questionnaire are adopted and applied to the current study, and these are explained later in this chapter.

<u>Interview</u>

Hartas (2010) defines an interview as literally "an *inter view*, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (p. 224). Cohen et al. (2007) defines research interview as "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation" (p. 351). Interviews can provide rich, in-depth qualitative data (O'Leary, 2010), and thus the interview research method is often used to obtain detailed information (Cohen et al., 2007).

It is essential to know in advance the purpose and function of the use of interview and decide which form of interview is better suited to particular kinds of situations (Cohen et al., 2007; Richards, 2003; Robson, 2002; Silverman, 2001). There are three forms of interview: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interview. The main distinguishing characteristic of these three interviews is the flexibility of the interview questions. A structured interview is where the content and procedures are organised in advance, and exactly the same predominantly closed questions are asked in the same sequence. Also, questions are framed in the way to gain the knowledge and information required (Cohen et al., 2007; Hartas, 2010; Robson, 2002). An unstructured interview can be changed or adapted to better meet or be more appropriate at that time as the interview is conducted (Robson, 2002). Thus, it allows greater flexibility, freedom (Cohen et al., 2007) and free-flowing (Hartas, 2010). A semi-structured interview has elements of the two (Robson, 2002), with flexible structure (O'Leary, 2010), and tends to include a number of specific questions, both closed and opened. The interviewer is free to depart from the predetermined list of questions according to issues raised by the interviewee (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer to cover the research agenda, and at the same time, to provide opportunities for interviewees to talk about what is significant, of interest, or important to them (Creswell, 2012).

Cohen et al. (2007) point out that the use of the research interview can be helpful in "going deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do" (p. 351). Sometimes an interview is used after conducting a questionnaire-

survey, so that the researcher can delve deeper and further look at or clarify some points that are raised but not fully explained by the questionnaire (see examples of Forey (2002)).

The use of interview is selective for the current research because the researcher needs to obtain qualitative data to gather more in-depth insights on participants' attitudes and thoughts (Harris & Brown, 2010), and to allow interviewees to reflect their own experience, and articulate their own points of view. With the use of a qualitative interview, the researcher can go beyond the general concept and initial understanding of the situation gathered from the questionnaire data, and gain deeper insight behind the responses gathered. Also, new questions may be brought up during interview as a result of what the interviewee says during the interview, which can provide information beyond pre-set categories or ideas in the questionnaire.

The semi-structured interview is the preferred method for the current study because it allows the researcher to have a list of pre-set questions covering specific related topics, such as students' perceptions of English language learning, that are based on the research questions and also the questionnaire design, so the data gathered can serve as two complementary sets of data. This helps the researcher to look at the situation in more than one way, and thus facilitate her in capturing varied perspectives, and to allow for triangulation. The semi-structured interview also gives the researcher flexibility in terms of ordering, omitting or adding questions as the interview unfolds and of probing interviewees further if necessary.

Accordingly, the research design for the current study is a sequential mixed methods design. The researcher conducts a quantitative phase of this study, and then a separate qualitative phase. The questionnaire is useful in providing a broad picture, but because of the nature of self-completion questionnaires, the results will tend to be rather superficial. This is overcome by the use of interviews, to provide a more detailed picture of the key issues. Therefore, the follow-up semi-structured interview does not intend to generate confirmatory results; rather, it is to add depth and insight to the numerical questionnaire results. Overall, this research design helps to build a broader picture of the situation under investigation (O'Leary, 2010).

Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire and interview

The advantages of questionnaires can overcome the disadvantages of interviews and vice versa. The advantages of a questionnaire that would potentially benefit the current research are, for instance,

- More reliable because it is anonymous (Cohen et al., 2007).
- More economical in terms of time and money (Cohen et al., 2007).
- More objective in producing generalisable results (Harris & Brown, 2010).

The advantages of an interview that would potentially benefit the current research are, for instance,

- The direct interaction of the interview allows for greater depth (Cohen et al., 2007), as both parties can explore and negotiate understanding and meaning of the questions and answers involved (Brenner, Brown, & Canter, 1985).

- Diminish any misunderstandings experienced by the interviewee (as the same questions can have different meanings for different people) (Cohen et al., 2007).

The advantages of questionnaires and interviews help the researcher to gather the intended information. However, the researcher is also aware of and recognises the potential disadvantages and limitations of using questionnaire and interview for gathering data. For instance, the disadvantages of a questionnaire are

- The respondents may not answer all the questions in the questionnaire.

- The researcher cannot prompt, probe and ask many questions that are relevant to respondents, and cannot collect additional data.

The disadvantages of an interview are

- It is prone to subjectivity and bias (Brenner et al., 1985; Cohen et al., 2007), i.e. information is filtered through the views of the interviewers (Creswell, 2012).

- It is an unreliable method of data generation, for the inevitability of researchers' influence on data generation (Hartas, 2010), i.e. interview data may be deceptive and provide the perspective the interviewee wants the researcher to hear. Also, the presence of the researcher may affect how the interviewee responds (Creswell, 2012).

However, the mixed methods research designs used in the current research would help to complement strengths and weakness of one of these two methods. For example, the questionnaire has some merits in comparison to the interview in its avoidance of interviewer biases and effects.

On the one hand, there are ways in which interviews can complement the limitations of questionnaire, for example,

- Interviews, including open-ended questions, might be helpful in the difficulty of anticipating the possible range of types of answer that research participants might give;

- Interviews can help to explain the meaning of any terms the participant may not understand;

- Interviews can enable the interviewer to probe participants' responses to gain more detailed data, and also seek clarification regarding the meaning of particular answers (e.g. Hartas, 2010).

On the other hand, the use of a questionnaire helps eliminate interview effects on bias the answers or exhibit social desirability (Bryman, 2004). Furthermore, the researcher is conscious of the specific disadvantages of each research method, and attempts were made to solve them (which is illustrated in the following sections).

In the current study, one limitation of using questionnaires is that respondents are restricted in space and time for providing opinions or reasons for their chosen responses. As Ritchie and Lewis (2003) state, "there are many instances where statistical enquiries present findings that need further explanation or where more detail or depth about a phenomenon is needed" (p. 42). Therefore, a semi-structured interview

was conducted for further exploring detailed information gained from the questionnaire, as well as for backing up and assisting interpretation of the quantitative data. This gave respondents the opportunity to speak his/her own thoughts.

The researcher is aware that there can be discrepancies between what people say they do, and their actual behaviour (Bryman, 2012; Robson, 2011). Thus in investigating social behaviour, such as the behaviour of teachers and students, the observation research method is sometimes employed. However, the main focus of this thesis is on the participants' views and perspectives of the current English language education rather than the actual teaching practice takes place in the classroom. Therefore, the researcher decided to adopt questionnaire and interview as two complementary research methods in this initial exploration stage.

The weighting decision of this study

Weighting refers to the relative importance or priority of the role that the quantitative and qualitative components play in a study (Bryman, 2004; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). When selecting a mixed methods approach, researchers must answer the question: What will the weighting of the quantitative and qualitative methods be? (Bryman, 2004). The researcher can give equal weight to quantitative or qualitative component, or give one component dominant status (Bryman, 2004; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It is not always easy to establish issues of priority, however, it is useful as a way of thinking about fundamental aspects of the design of mixed methods studies (Bryman, 2004).

One of the aims of the current research is to elicit VHS teachers' and students' perspectives on English language education, the importance of English language for employability, and on how English language education provided in VHSs in Taiwan might prepare students for employability in their chosen career or field (see Chapter One). The purpose of quantitative data from the questionnaire is to provide an initial understanding of the situation under investigation (see section 6.1.3.1.), and to give broad answers to the research questions. The reason for using qualitative data from the interview is to gather participants' perspectives on English language education in VHSs through their own views, and also help to illustrate, as well as explain, the findings from

the questionnaires. Therefore, the major focus of this research is on participants' perspectives gathered from qualitative interview data.

Accordingly, the current study can broadly be seen as pragmatism in epistemological orientation, with its emphasis on considering its methodological approaches in terms of what works or is appropriate to provide the best chance of answering the research questions. However, since the major focus of this study is on participants' views on English language education in VHSs, the findings have interpretist, rather than objectivist, overtones.

6.4 Research population and samples

The terms: population, target population, and sample are introduced and clarified in section 6.1.3. In this section, the researcher embarks on describing the targeted population and the choice of sample for the present study.

The population for the current research consists of students and teachers in VHSs in Taiwan. Teachers are chosen as part of the research population because teachers' beliefs have a direct effect on pedagogical practice (Young & Walsh, 2010). Also, as Donaghue (2003) points out, "it is generally agreed that teachers' personal theories, beliefs, and assumptions need to be uncovered before development can occur, enabling critical reflection and then change" (p. 344). Students are chosen as the other part of the research population because the learners are "one of the biggest stakeholders in English language teaching" (Lee, 2010, p. 24). The researcher also believes that teachers and students are those who are directly involved in and experience the English language courses, and thus can provide first-hand information. In other words, exploring both teachers' and students' experiences and perspectives of English language education offered in VHSs can help to identify how the English language education is implemented in practice.

The sampling process in this study involves two stages. The first stage is opportunity sampling (Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher has been resident in Taoyuan County in Taiwan for many years, and has worked in one of the VHSs in this county for three years. Because of their familiarity, accessibility, and availability, four VHSs in Taoyuan

County in Taiwan were chosen as the targeted actual population of questionnaire and interview.

Since there are many different vocational subjects offered in each VHS, and each vocational subject could have more than one class of students, in consideration of the time and money constraint, it is necessary to further reduce the scale to a manageable level. Therefore, a second stage of sampling is to choose a subset of this targeted population, and the pilot study helps this process. The parameter of choosing a subset of this targeted population is based on first the information from the pilot questionnaire on the level of English language required for work. Tourism and Food Managements were chosen, as they require the most English language. Students on Data Processing and Automobiles courses were chosen because they provide equivalent number of students to the already chosen two subjects.

6.5 Reliability and validity of this research

An important issue in any research is whether the instrument (questionnaire and interview for current research) is valid and reliable. This issue is clarified here.

<u>Reliability</u>

Reliability is concerned with issues of consistency of measures (Bryman, 2004). In other words, if the method were to be applied to a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results should be found (Cohen et al., 2007).

The researcher applied a consistent coding method, and constantly compared the data with the codes to make sure the definition and meaning of the codes is consistent during the process of coding, and thus enhance the reliability in the qualitative study (Creswell, 2009). In addition, the methods of coding and interpreting were checked by independent researchers to ensure consistency throughout the whole process.

At the last stage, analysed data provided by the interviews and the questionnaires were compared and contrasted between the participants' perspectives and views, so the current research employs more than one method for rounded and reliable data.

Validity

Validity deals with whether a particular instrument accurately measures what it claims to measure (Bryman, 2004; Cohen et al., 2007), and thus be able to draw meaningful and useful inferences from the data (Creswell, 2009). Cohen et al. (2007) claim, "Validity is an important key to effective research .... and a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative research" (p. 133). There are different types of validity, researchers can employ different ways to check and account for the validity of their research methods, and all types of validity can contribute significantly to the quality of any research. Bryman (2004) states that a researcher who develops a new measure should establish its face validity. Therefore, content validity is more relevant and important for the questionnaire used in this study.

Content validity refers to whether the measure used adequately reflects and represents the content of the objective feature or concept in question. It can be achieved by asking professionals, experts, or people with experience in the field to judge (Bryman, 2004; Cohen et al., 2007). In addition, Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that "validity should be seen as a matter of degree rather than an absolute state, and we should strive to minimise invalidity and maximise validity" (p. 133).

To ascertain the validity of both set of questionnaires used in the current research, two supervisors, who guided this research, were consulted as well as other views sought from colleagues in Taiwan. Attention is particularly given to the questions, the spread of questions, and what information could be elicited from them. Valuable comments and feedback was given and considered. Revised versions were examined again by those professionals and experts. The translated version of the questionnaire was consulted, checked, and revised by two colleagues who are both fluent in English and Chinese. In addition, both set of questionnaires were piloted to identify issues of validity as well as other possible problems (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Comments gathered from piloting

the questionnaire, such as questions and format improvement, were incorporated into the final questionnaire revisions.

The validity of the qualitative part of the current study is established by employing certain procedures, such as triangulation of the data (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Clark, 2007). This study takes mixed methods research design, in which advantages of triangulation and complementarity are taken through the mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, and thus enhances the validity of the overall research. For example, evidence from the questionnaire data in this study is crosschecked with interview data. Students' data is also crosschecked with teachers' data. In addition, negative or discrepant information is presented in the study, which helps to establish the validity of the account (Creswell, 2009). An example of contrary information revealed through data triangulation in the current study is teachers' concerns about vocational subject related English (see Chapter 9).

6.6 Ethical issues

In carrying out any piece of education research, some potential ethical concerns should be considered. A major ethical dilemma is a balance between "the demands placed on researchers as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 51). There are three issues in the ethical field of education research that traditionally surround the questionnaire and interview method, and which are relevant to and should be considered in the present study. They are informed consent, access and acceptance, anonymity and confidentiality (right to privacy).

In much social research, it is necessary to obtain the consent and cooperation of subjects (Cohen et al., 2007). Informed consent allows the research participants to make an informed decision on whether or not they wish to participate in a study (Bryman, 2004). In a sense, it is also used for the protection and respect of the subject's right of the freedom and self-determination to refuse or to withdraw (Cohen et al., 2007).

Relevant to the principle of informed consent is the access and acceptance to the institution or organisation, where the research is to be conducted (Cohen et al., 2007). Researchers cannot expect access and cooperation for granted. Official permission must be sought, and researchers need to clarify the precise nature and scope of their research, which will place the researchers in a stronger position to gain permission, acceptance, and support (Cohen et al., 2007).

In the course of an investigation, individual 'right to privacy' may easily be violated (Cohen et al., 2007). Anonymity and confidentiality of a participant or subject are two ways of protecting a participant's right to privacy (Cohen et al., 2007). Also, the right to privacy goes beyond this to include an individual's freedom from, as well as freedom for, taking part in any or all of the research (Cohen et al., 2007).

The sequence of stages in securing ethical approval for the current research:

1. First of all, the researcher filled in the 'Research Ethics and Data Protection Monitoring Form' provided by the School of Education and submitted it to the 'Department's Research Ethics and Data Protection Sub-Committee' with a copy of the research proposal which details methods and reporting strategies. Also, a copy of the consent form for interview was also attached. The Sub-Committee assessed and approved the research, and issued a certification that the research meets acceptable ethical standards.

2. This study involved going to the various schools, and getting help and cooperation from the schools. Once suitable schools were identified, the researcher contacted the principals in person to explain about the purposes and the scope of the research, and obtained official permission to access the schools and participants. All teachers from the four VHSs would be sent questionnaires. However, as first year students do not have much experience in VHS English courses yet, and the third year students would have graduated before the conclusion of the data gathering period, it was decided that only second year students would participate in questionnaires. The schools handed out the questionnaires and contacted the researcher when they were ready for collection. Suitable times for follow-up interviews were arranged after the collection of the questionnaires.

3. The researcher introduced the questionnaire by including a covering letter clearly stating the purpose of this research, and making it clear that they have the right to withdraw at any stage without giving any reasons (See Appendices C).

4. Before embarking on interviews, the researcher also clarified the aims and purposes of the research, how their contribution would be important to the research, and any likely consequences of the publication of any findings. Interviews were then scheduled at agreed times.

5. All the interviewees were clearly informed that they have the right to withdraw cancel or change what they agreed upon at any time, or any stage (See Appendix D).

6. The researcher assured the participants that all the data would be treated with complete anonymity and would only be used to serve the purpose of this research. The responses were treated anonymously and they cannot be identified, traced or divulged to anyone.

7. The researcher also assured the interviewees that all recording would be treated confidentially, and would only be used to serve the purposes of this research. It may be revealed to the supervisors or examiners to discuss any issues arising and then subsequently be destroyed.

To sum up, the researcher fully followed the ethical guidelines laid down by the School of Education, Durham University, and all three ethical issues are considered throughout the process.

6.7 Instrument design of this research

This section introduces and discusses the procedures and steps taken to design the questionnaire and interview for the current research. Specially, the present quantitative and qualitative research instrument design follows the principles stated by Cohen et al. (2007) as such: "quantitative data are much more formal and pre-planned to a high level of detail … they require all the categories and multiple choice questions to worked out

in advance. This usually requires a pilot to try out the material and refine it. Once the detail of this planning is completed, the analysis of the data is relatively straightforward because the categories for analysing the data have been worked out in advance" (p. 355). While "qualitative data are much more end-loaded, that is, it is quicker to commence and gather data because the categories do not have to be worked out in advance, they emerge once the data have been collected. However, in order to discover the issues that emerge and to organise the data presentation, the analysis of the data takes considerably longer" (p. 355). This is indicated fully later in this section.

6.7.1 Questionnaire construction

The questionnaires used in the current research are designed for self-completion, where respondents complete the questionnaire without the presence of the researcher and without intervention from the conductor. There are two main parts in the questionnaires. The first part deals with general background information about the respondents. The second part deals with the information required for the purpose of the research.

In constructing questionnaire items, Hartas (2010) points out three areas that require clarity in the use of language and structure. They are question format, the content of the survey questions and items, and the layout of survey items. Therefore, the construction of the questionnaire items is introduced in these three areas.

Question format

The question format for the first part of the questionnaire is mainly based on the nature of the question, i.e. to gather background information of the respondents. Dichotomous, multiple-choice, and open questions are used.

Questions in the second part of the questionnaire are designed mainly in two formats. The first set of questions requires respondents to answer questions about their English language learning and teaching by ticking boxes indicate the responses that they felt applied to them, with an 'other' option provided to allow them to add options not anticipated by the researcher. The second set of questions requires Likert-scale responses to a set of statements about English language courses in VHSs.

The content of survey questions and items

The content of the questions in the questionnaire is concerned with operationalising the research questions in a form appropriate to be addressed. Thus, questions were developed to capture the research questions and aims. Generally speaking, the questionnaire is divided into two main parts. The first part is respondents' background information, and the second part is concerned with issues relevant to the research

questions, namely (1) what are VHS students' expectations from their English courses and to what extent are they being met? (2) What are VHS teachers' perspectives on English courses offered in VHSs and on its connections or benefits to students in terms of competitiveness in their future job? Each research question involves two sub-questions, hence, the second part of each questionnaire (students' and teachers') both involve two sub-sets of questions.

The first set of questions and items in the second part of students' questionnaire asks about their English language learning expectations. The questions are designed to find out students' perspectives of their English language study: their purposes, goals, and needs. The second set of questions and items ask about their English language courses in VHSs, and are designed to find out their experience of, and perceived needs from, their English language study, the relationship between English language learnt in school and English language required in workplace, and their views about English language learning in VHSs. This further helps to examine the main research question: how does English language education in VHSs prepare students for future employment (see Appendix C)?

As for the second part of the teachers' questionnaire, the first set of questions and items ask about the teachers' perspective on English language teaching in VHSs. The questions are designed to find out the teachers' perspectives of their English language teaching, their teaching goals, purposes, and the English needs for students in VHS context. The second set of questions and items ask about the English language education provided by VHSs, and are designed to find out the teachers' thoughts on the English language courses offered in VHSs, and on their connection or benefits to students in terms of competitiveness in their future job (see Appendix C).

The relationships between the survey questions and theoretical constructs are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1a. Relationships between students' survey questions and theoretical constructs

SURVEY METHOD (STUDENT)		
Theoretical construct	**Aim**	**Questions asked**
* Foreign language learning reasons, needs, and goals (See Chapter 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5, and Chapter 5.1. and 5.4).	To explore students' expectations of English language education in VHSs by identifying reasons, needs, and goals of English language learning that are important to them.	AQ6: Would you choose English if it were optional? BQ4: Why do you learn English? BQ5: What are your goals for learning English? BQ6: What are your individual English learning needs? BQ7: What are the general English learning needs for students learning EFL in VHSs?
*Awareness of language use contexts (See Chapter 3.1.1.and 3.2. and Chapter 5.5.). *Recognition by learners of the kind of abilities that English language learning requires (See Chapter 4.3. and Chapter 5.3).	To explore students' perceived perspectives on the kind of abilities that English language learning requires, and also on the relationship between English language education in VHSs and their intended employment.	BQ1: On average, how often do people in Taiwan use English? BQ2: Which of the following options do you think is the most common situation that people in Taiwan need to use English? BQ3: (If your answer to question 2 includes 'at work') Specify the type of job you refer to. BQ8: English learned in school is relevant to your anticipated career. How far do you agree? BQ9: English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare/develop your English competence to meet anticipated occupational English. How far do you agree? BQ11: What do you think the effect would be if the English curriculum were redesigned especially/ more for vocational related English that is relevant to students' anticipated career? BQ12: Would you like to see the curriculum designed especially/made more relevant to students' anticipated career?
* Foreign English language teaching in VHSs as perceived by learners (See Chapter Four).	To explore students' experience of English language education in VHSs, and examine English currently learned and students' perceived English needs/preference.	BQ10: I am interested in the current English learning content in textbooks. How far do you agree? BQ13: Please tick any of the following options that you think are neglected in TEFL in Taiwan. BQ14: Please tick any of the following options that you would like to learn in TEFL in Taiwan.

Table 1b. Relationships between teachers' survey questions and theoretical constructs

SURVEY METHOD (TEACHER)		
Theoretical construct	**Aim**	**Questions asked**
* Foreign English language teaching (See Chapter Four).	To explore what lies behind the practices of the classroom by identifying teachers' English language teaching goals and emphasis.	BQ4: What are your English teaching goals in VHSs? BQ5: What are the main emphases for teaching English to VHS students in school?
*Awareness of language use contexts (See Chapter 3.1.1.and 3.2. and Chapter 5.5.). *Recognition by teachers of the kind of abilities that English language learning requires (See Chapter 4.3. and Chapter 5.3).	To explore teachers' perceived perspectives on the kind of abilities that English language learning requires, and also on the relationship between English language education in VHSs and students' intended employment.	BQ1: On average, how often do people in Taiwan use English? BQ2: Which of the following options do you think is the most common situation that people in Taiwan need to use English? BQ3: (If your answer to question 3 includes 'at work') Specify the type of job you refer to. BQ6: What are your students' English learning needs? BQ7: English learned in school is relevant to students' anticipated career. How far do you agree? BQ8: English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare/develop students' English ability to meet future needs of English at work. How far do you agree? BQ10: What do you think the effect would be if the English curriculum were redesigned especially/more for vocational related English that is relevant to students' anticipated career? BQ11: I would like to see the curriculum designed especially/made more relevant to students' anticipated careers. How far do you agree?
* Foreign English language teaching in VHSs as perceived by teachers (See Chapter Four).	To explore teachers' perspectives of English language education in VHSs, and examine English currently taught and teachers' perceived English needs/preference for VHS students.	BQ9: I think the majority of students are satisfied with the content in textbooks. How far do you agree? BQ12: Please tick any of the following options that you think are neglected in TEFL in Taiwan. BQ13: Please tick any of the following options that you think your students need to learn in TEFL in Taiwan.

<u>The layout of survey items</u>

This section is concerned with the organisation of the questionnaire items. There are two main aspects involved to ensure its clarity and cohesiveness: one is the covering letter, and the other one is organising the survey items.

Hartas (2010) states four important components to be included in a covering letter or an introductory statement written on the questionnaire itself, which are

- The purpose of the survey research.
- Ethical considerations, which include the importance to assure respondents about the confidentiality of the information provided, anonymity of the respondents, and the voluntary nature of respondents' involvement.
- Contact information as well as the researchers' professional affiliation, to offer credibility to the study.
- Return date.

The covering letter for the questionnaire used for the current study follows the above statement, except the last point regarding the return date. For the pilot questionnaire, the return date was specified in the e-mail sent to participants. For the questionnaire for the main study, a return date was agreed with each individual school. The school then made their own arrangements to have the questionnaires completed and returned within the agreed timescale.

6.7.1.1 Piloting the questionnaire

It is important to pilot data collection tools because that helps to identify problems, refine the items, and evaluate the instrument (Creswell, 2012; Hartas, 2010). Furthermore, piloting research instruments is also another significant procedure for increasing its validity and reliability (Cohen et al., 2007).

Both teachers' and students' questionnaires used in the current research were piloted to improve its internal validity, test its adequacy, and identify any problems. As the

questionnaire was designed to explore respondents' perspectives and experiences of English language courses offered in VHSs, much attention was given to its content validity during the pilot stage. At the end of the pilot questionnaire, space was provided for feedback and comments on ambiguities and difficult questions, and evaluation of the questionnaire, so that questionnaire could be refined and modified where necessary.

There were 36 pilot questionnaires received from students from 8 subjects, including Data Processing (13), Cosmetics (2), Automobiles (3), Electronics (6), Computer Science (3), Chemistry (2), Restaurant Management (2) and Comprehensive school students (5) in different schools. There were 11 pilot questionnaires received from English teachers. As English is a core subject in VHSs, English teachers usually teach students from the full range of vocational subjects offered by the school.

Changes were made to inappropriate or overly complicated aspects, such as the wording and instructions of the questions, the range of answers to questions, the order of the questions, and elimination of questions that did not yield usable data. For example, question 6 in part B of students' questionnaire, the wording was changed from 'what are your English learning needs? to ' What are your individual English learning needs'? This gives the question a clearer distinguishing feature comparing to question 7 (What are the general English learning needs for students learning EFL in VHSs in Taiwan?) Percentages were used to give a basic analysis of the data and give an initial overview of the results. Useful feedback was gained through revising and examining the responses and comments from the piloting samples.

The questionnaire was structured in both English and Chinese versions. Feedback gained from the students and teachers indicated that they preferred the Chinese version, as it was clearer and easier to understand. However, amongst those teachers who expressed their preference for the Chinese version there were some who also expressed the desire to have the English version to hand. Accordingly, the decision was made to provide the questionnaire for the main study in Chinese for students, and in both Chinese and English versions for the teachers.

6.7.1.2 Administration of the questionnaires for the main study

Full explanations about the nature and the aims of the study were provided to the head teacher of each school, and teachers who were nominated to distribute and collect the questionnaires. The nominated staff member distributed the questionnaires, and was responsible for the collection and return of the completed questionnaires by the agreed deadline.

6.7.1.3 Processing questionnaire data

After receiving the questionnaires from the schools, a preliminary general screening was done by going over the completed forms and checking for the completeness of the questionnaires. A total of 1309 questionnaires were collected from students from the four schools, of which 49 (3.7%) were either incomplete or instructions were not followed. These were discarded, leaving 1260 valid student questionnaires. As for teachers' questionnaires, 51 valid completed questionnaires were collected. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 was used for data analysis of the questionnaire, and Excel 2007 was used to produce graphs.

The questionnaire data analysis techniques and procedures are as follows:

1. Coding the data provided by the questions on the questionnaire by giving each category a number, which serves as a tag.

2. Entering coded data into computer using SPSS version 17.0.

3. Frequency counts and percentages were used, which achieved the aims behind employing the questionnaire and could be used to answer the research questions.

4. Transferring figures derived from SPSS to Excel 2007 to produce graphs where necessary.

5. Detailed examination to discover any themes present in the responses given in 'the other' category.

6.7.2 Design of the interview

A semi-structured interview was conducted to further explore issues raised in the questionnaire. This gave respondents the opportunity to respond in their own words. Twenty-nine students and 9 teachers participated in the interviews. All of them were part of the larger sample that participated in the earlier survey. One of the benefits of the mixed-methods research design is that it allows the researcher to address the same research issue through different research instruments, which can provide "a different reading or form of calibration on that issue" (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 43). Therefore, the researcher used the questions in the questionnaire as a basis from which to design an interview schedule. Various questions were asked to extract more detailed information and to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind the responses from the questionnaire. For example, questions on teachers' and students' perspectives of English language education in VHSs, and its relevance to students' future employment are asked in both the questionnaires and the interviews.

The participants were interviewed in Mandarin, as this is the native language for both the researcher and the interviewees. Open-ended questions were used as they have a number of advantages, such as their flexibility, and allowing the interviewer to probe whether to go into more depth or clear up any misunderstandings. Also, the participants can better articulate their views in an unconstrained manner, which can result in unexpected or unanticipated answers (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2012). The participants were encouraged to express their thoughts freely, and to describe their thoughts and opinions in detail. Generally, the interview started with an initial question followed by questions intended to probe their responses further.

6.7.2.1 Piloting the interview schedule

Careful piloting of interview schedules can enhance their reliability and highlight potential issues (Cohen et al., 2007; O'Leary, 2010). Two steps were involved for preparing the interview schedules. Firstly, the researcher's thesis supervisors conducted a critical examination of the schedule and gave their approval. Secondly, pilot semi-structured interviews were conducted with two students and three teachers before the

main interviews. Because of access and time considerations, the pilot interviews were conducted via telephone. After the interviews, all participants were asked to give their comments and feedback about the clarity of the questions and the length of the interviews. The pilot interviews helped the researcher to identify logistical and content-oriented refinements to the research design, and helped the interview schedule become more logical and practical. For example, it was suggested from the pilot interviews that when asking question 7, the availability of textbooks would help participants generate their thoughts. As a result of the pilot interviews the interview schedules were altered, and the modified version was used for the actual interviews (see Appendix D).

The interview schedule in the current study contains 3 main areas (participants' understanding of the contexts of vocational English language application, their experiences and views of English language learning, and their views on the relationship between English language learned in VHSs and students' future employment), with 5 to 9 scheduled questions, and several questions asked to probe responses further (e.g. "what do you mean by…?" and "why?"). The relationships between the interview schedule and the theoretical constructs are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2a. Relationships between students' interview schedule and theoretical constructs

INTERVIEW METHOD (STUDENT)		
Theoretical construct	**Aim**	**Questions asked**
*Foreign language learning reasons, needs, and goals (See Chapter 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5, and Chapter 5.1. and 5.4).	To explore students' expectations of English language education in VHSs by identifying reasons, needs, and goals of English language learning that are important for them.	Q1: If English language were optional course rather than compulsory, will you still choose to take it? Why? Q2: Why do you want to, or have to learn English? Q3: What is your motivation for learning English?
*Awareness of language use contexts (See Chapter 3.1.1.and 3.2. and Chapter 5.5.). *Recognition by learners of the kind of abilities that English language learning requires (See Chapter 4.3. and Chapter 5.3).	To explore students' perceived perspectives on the kind of abilities that English language learning requires, and also on the relationship between English language education in VHSs and their intended employment.	Q4: What is your definition of workplace English? Q5: What level of English do you want to achieve? Q6: What level of English do you think employers expect or require? Q7: What are your opinions (thoughts) on English courses in VHSs?
* Foreign English language teaching in VHSs perceived by learners (See Chapter Four).	To explore students' experience of English language education in VHSs, and examine the English currently learned and students' perceived English needs/preference.	Q8: What are your opinions of English teaching in VHSs? Q9: What area of English do you want to learn?

Table 2b. Relationships between teachers' interview schedule and theoretical constructs

INTERVIEW METHOD (TEACHER)		
Theoretical construct	**Aim**	**Questions asked**
* Foreign English language teaching (See Chapter Four).	To explore what lies behind classroom practices by identifying teachers' English language teaching goals and emphasis.	Q1: What do you think of English language education in VHSs (teaching goals, purposes, emphases, problems, etc.)
*Awareness of language use contexts (See Chapter 3.1.1.and 3.2. and Chapter 5.5.). *Recognition by teachers of the kind of abilities that English language learning requires (See Chapter 4.3. and Chapter 5.3).	To explore teachers' perceived perspectives on the kind of abilities that English language learning requires, and also on the relationship between English language education in VHSs and students' intended employment.	Q2: What is your definition of workplace English? Q3: What is your perspective on the English language education provided by VHSs? (English taught in VHSs, VHS students, teaching and learning situations) Q4: What are your views of English courses in VHSs? (Teaching content, textbooks, students' ability, language skills training)
* Foreign English language teaching in VHSs perceived by teachers (See Chapter Four).	To explore teachers' perspectives of English language education in VHSs, and examine the English currently taught and teachers' perception of the English needs/preference of VHS students.	Q5: What are your views of English learning in VHSs? (What is good? What could be improved?)

6.7.2.2 Procedure for the interview

Before embarking on interview, both students and teachers were informed individually by the researcher to explain the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, as well as to verify if there were any questions or concerns. All participants were given an informed consent form and were asked to sign the form to indicate that they completely understood the purpose and content of my interview, as well as their rights as participants in this study. After the confirmation, the researcher reassured each participant that his/her involvement in this study will not have any

impact on the evaluation of their academic performance, and that the data provided would be anonymous and would be dealt with confidentially. All of interviewees were reminded again about their right to withdraw from or stop the interview at anytime.

6.7.2.3 Conducting the interviews

Interviews were conducted individually and recorded with the participants' consent in private rooms on the school property, lasting 15-30 min each. 2 digital pen recorders were both used simultaneously to ensure the quality of the recording.

Questions varied slightly across the interviews, depending on the nature of participants' responses to each question, but they all start with the same general demographic and background questions. Prompts and probes were used to obtain additional information or for the clarification of points raised (Creswell, 2012).

The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated into English by the author. The translation was double-checked by colleagues. Careful attention was given to retain the original meaning and sense as far as possible.

6.7.2.4 Processing interview data

The broad aim of the analysis was to look for meaning and understanding, and go beyond the face value to fully understand what is actually said in the data. Firstly, transcribed data was elicited from the recordings of the interviews. The whole data set from the interview scripts were read through in order to gain an overall sense of the participants' perspectives and experiences regarding the English language learning and teaching in VHSs in Taiwan. A coding scheme was used at this stage of data analysis. Participants' responses were read through question by question in order to search for common themes and patterns across their responses to a particular question. An initial list of categories or themes was generated at this stage, with a reference to the themes and patterns revealed by the questionnaire data. The coding links all the collected data fragments to a particular idea or concept. Open and axial coding was used to develop a system of classification. Open coding gives selected sections a code, while axial coding

identifies and creates coding categories and themes to sort codes into groups. Computer software, NVivo version 8.0, was used to facilitate the data analysis and help to structure the data in an organised and meaningful way. During the coding process, the researcher applied a consistent coding method to enhance the reliability of the qualitative study. The final stage was to consider the research questions, so that themes and categories are refined, distilled and reclassified in a descriptive and interpretative way.

It needs to be noted that as the interview data was collected in Mandarin, whereas the findings are presented in English, there is potential for some translation related issues and problems to arise, which can have an impact on the validity of the research and its report (Birbili, 2000). For example, the issue of connotation and meaning may occur (Marshall, 2007). Pan (2004) encountered this issue when she translated the interview data between Mandarin and English. For example, the phrase 'arrive at' in English has a figurative meaning of emphasising the process of reaching a result, decision, or solution to a problem. However, there is no direct translation in Mandarin for stating this meaning in a simple phrase. Therefore, if one uses direct translation, it would not only sound very unnatural but also the connotation and meaning could be lost in translation. In this case, the researcher may need to reword the original language in order to ensure that meanings do not get lost in translation (Filep, 2009).

The researcher is aware of potential challenges and issues that may emerge during the translation process, and in order to minimise the potential for distortion or loss of meaning during the translation process, interviews were jointly translated and transcribed by the researcher and a professional translator to allow opportunities to explore some of the different views about translation (Temple and Young, 2010). A colleague of the researcher who is fluent in both Mandarin and English later rechecked the translated transcripts to establish the validity of the research.

In this thesis, the results of the quantitative study are reported first, followed by the results of the qualitative study. Both are then brought together to answer the research question. The integration of findings from both methods enables results from one approach to complement the other. For example, the interview data helps to explain why students from the Food Management and Tourism show strong agreement on the

relevance between English language learnt in schools and English language required in the workplace, which is impossible to find out from the quantitative data (see Chapter 7).

6.8 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological decisions the researcher made and the overall procedures for data collection and analysis. The underlying philosophical assumption is addressed at the beginning of the chapter. The researcher takes the pragmatism worldview in this study based on her emphasis on the importance of research questions, and 'what works' at that time (Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). This worldview makes the adoption of mixed methods research in this study possible. The researcher believes that, given the research purposes and the general research question, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods in the current study makes it possible to take advantages of triangulation and complementarity, and enhances the validity of the overall research.

7

Data Analysis (1): Students' Perspectives and Experiences of English language Courses in VHSs

7.0 Introduction

The data analysis of this study is split into two chapters, namely, students' perspectives and experiences of their English courses in VHSs (Chapter 7), and teachers' perspectives and experiences of English education in VHSs (Chapter 8). These two chapters present, discuss, and interpret the data by identifying salient themes and patterns obtained by the two research methods: questionnaires and interviews. Each chapter consists of two sections of data analysis and results: The first section presents the questionnaire data and the second section presents the interview data. A discussion of the findings from each set of participants is presented at the end of each chapter.

This chapter aims to analyse and interpret the students' questionnaire and interview data, and present their expectations and perceptions of their English study in VHSs in Taiwan. An attempt is made to explore to what extent these courses are perceived to be appropriately vocational oriented, so that further examination can be carried out on the issue of whether current English courses in Taiwanese schools that specialise in vocational education are perceived as appropriate in preparing students for their intended employment.

7.1 Questionnaire data

This section involves five subsections. Subsection 7.1.1 describes students' learning context and subsection 7.1.2 describes their background information. Subsections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 present the data gathered relevant to research question 2. Subsection 7.1.3

presents the students' expectations from their English courses. Subsection 7.1.4 concerns the extent to which students' expectations from their English courses are being met. Section 7.1 ends with a discussion of the findings from the students' questionnaire data in 7.1.5.

7.1.1 Learning context

The questionnaire was sent out to year two students from four schools offering vocational education in Taoyuan County in Taiwan (Table 3).

Table 3. AQ1: Distribution of students from different schools

	Number of students	Percentage
School Alpha	223	17.7 %
School Beta	151	12.0 %
School Gamma	603	47.9 %
School Delta	283	22.5 %
Total	1260	100.0 %

Two subjects, Tourism and Food Management, were chosen as they were identified in the pilot questionnaire as the subject that students perceive as requiring the most English use in the workplace (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Pilot study: Types of job in which Taiwanese people need to use English
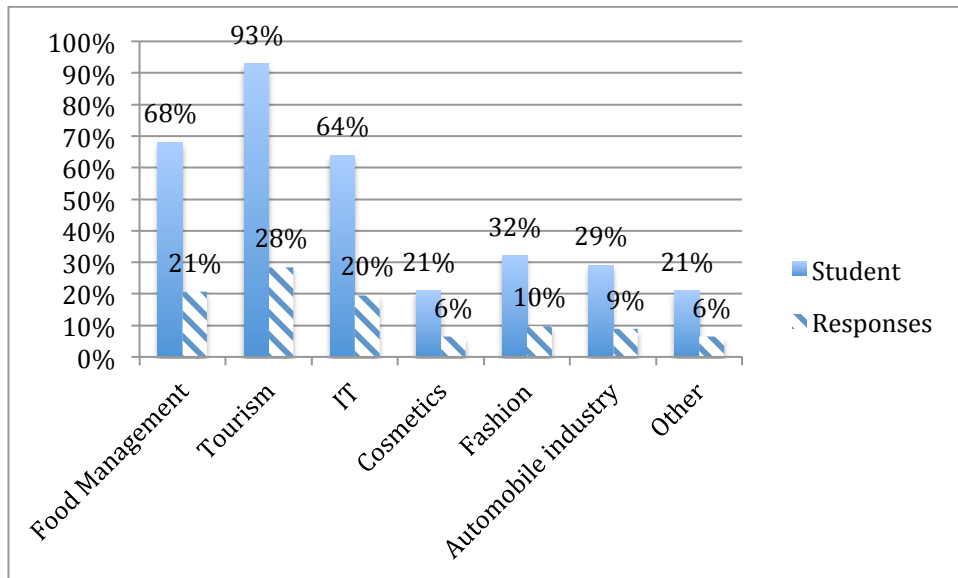
The other two subjects, Automobiles and Data Processing, were chosen because they provide a similar number of students as the two subjects already chosen, so that the number of students in each of the four chosen subjects is roughly equivalent (Figure 7).

Figure 7. AQ2: Percentages of students from different vocational subjects
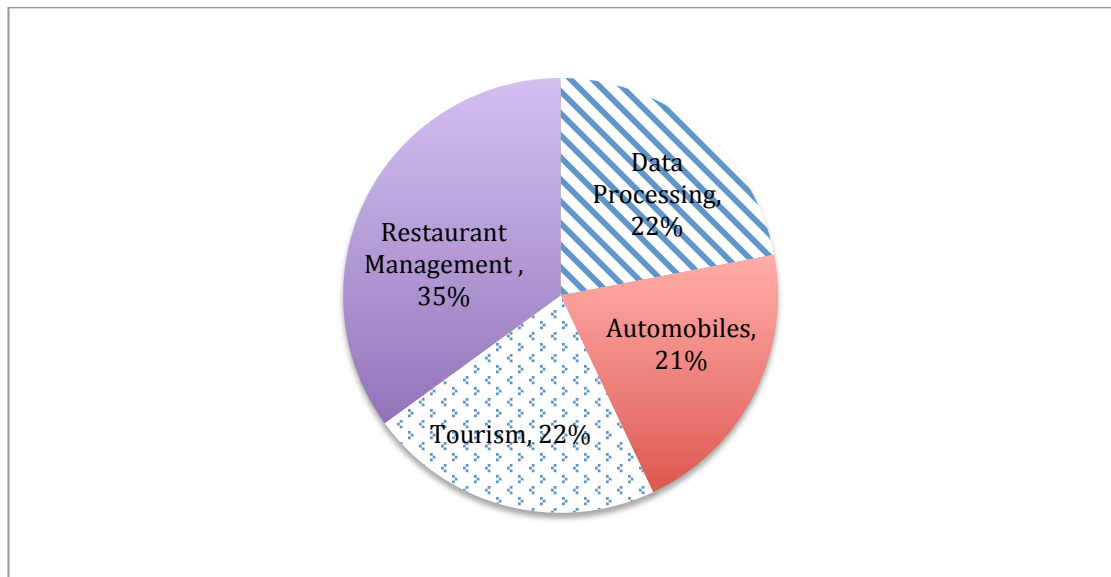
1309 questionnaires were collected. Of these 49 were invalid, leaving 1260 valid questionnaires for the study. Two of the schools use the same version of textbook, namely the Dong Da version, one school uses the Far East version and the remaining school uses the Lungteng version. Combining these numbers we have that, 603 students

use the Far East version textbook, 506 use the Dong Da version, and 151 use the Lungten version.

7.1.2 Students' general background information

Nearly 70% of students start to learn English in elementary school (AQ4), and their average number of years learning English is 9 (AQ5). Slightly more than half of the students (55%) would still choose to study English if it were optional rather than compulsory, as it is now (AQ6).

Students believe that people in Taiwan use English in 43% of the situations they encounter, which is slightly less than half (BQ1). When asked about the most common situation that people in Taiwan need to use English (BQ2), 'At work' was the most frequent response (40%), followed by 'Going abroad' (25%). 'Interaction with foreigners' (21%) and 'Daily life situations' (10%) received a comparably low number of responses. There were 3% of students who think that there is no need to use English in Taiwan (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Responses to BQ2: Most common situation in which Taiwanese need to use English
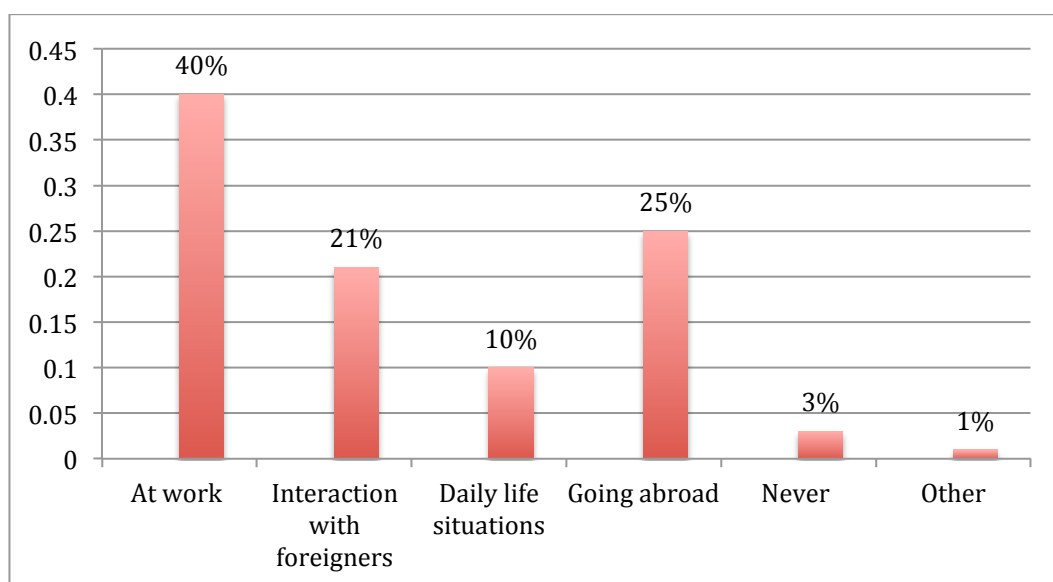
The results remain the same when the responses are analysed within each of the four subjects. Students in Tourism appear to be those who think the need to use English at

work is high, followed by Data Processing and Restaurant Management. Automobiles is slightly lower than other groups (Table 4).

Table 4. Responses to BQ2: Most common situation in which Taiwanese need to use English (by vocational subjects)

Situations → Vocational subjects ↓	At work	Interact with foreigners	Daily life situations	Going abroad	Never	Other
Data Processing	43%	20%	8%	27%	2%	0%
Automobiles	34%	21%	13%	25%	5%	1%
Tourism	44%	20%	8%	26%	2%	0%
Restaurant Management	39%	22%	10%	24%	4%	1%
Total	40%	21%	10%	25%	3%	1%

When students were further asked to specify the type of job they refer to (BQ3), Tourism was chosen as the one using English at work the most (79%), followed by Food/Restaurant Management (68%). The other options received considerably fewer responses (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Responses to BQ3: Job requiring English
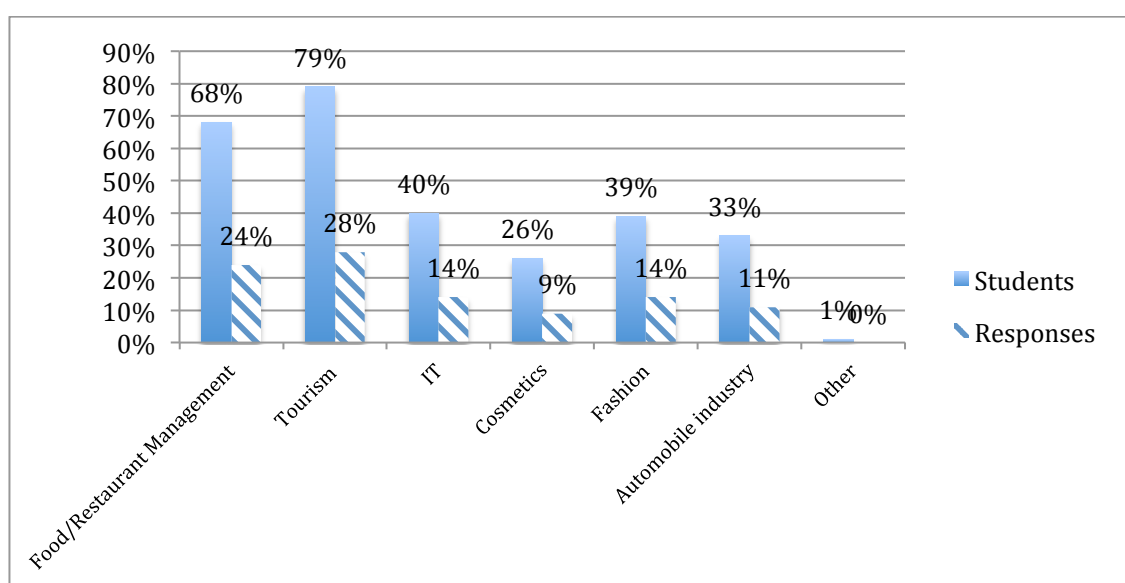
These results indicate that while daily interpersonal communication may still operate in native languages in Taiwan, on average VHS students recognise there is a need to use English in Taiwan, and see English skills as particularly important at work.

7.1.3 Students' expectations from their English courses

Four questions (BQ4, BQ5, BQ6, BQ7) associated with students' English learning purposes, goals, and needs were asked in order to investigate students' expectations from their English study. The students were given multiple choices and they were asked to tick the options that applied to them. As more than one option could be selected for these questions, percentages are given both in respect to the total number of responses, and in respect to the total number of students[1].

Figure 10 shows the reasons VHS students give for learning English. In an initial overview of the results based on the total number of students, learning English for 'career development' is the students' top reason, followed by 'learning another language'. Excluding 'parents'/society's expectations', which is the lowest, the remaining five options show roughly the same percentage. Since the average number of responses per student is 3.6, each student seems to have a number of different reasons why they learn English.

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[1] There are a number of questions which allowed for multiple responses, and so the total number of responses for each question can be higher than the number of respondents. If we calculate percentages with regard to the number of respondents this can lead to percentages that do not add up to 100%. Due to feedback received during peer review of a previous publication, the researcher has included percentages shown both in regard to number of respondents, and in regard to number of responses. This has the benefit that the percentages with regard to the responses will add up to 100%. We note that the two different methods always produce the same pattern, as they differ by a constant ratio. This ratio is simply the average number of responses per person for that question, and so it can give a useful interpretation when deciding on the relative importance of the ordering (e.g. if the average number of responses per respondent is high, we should ensure that we consider more than just the top one or two highest options).

Figure 10. Reasons to the question BQ4: Reasons for learning English
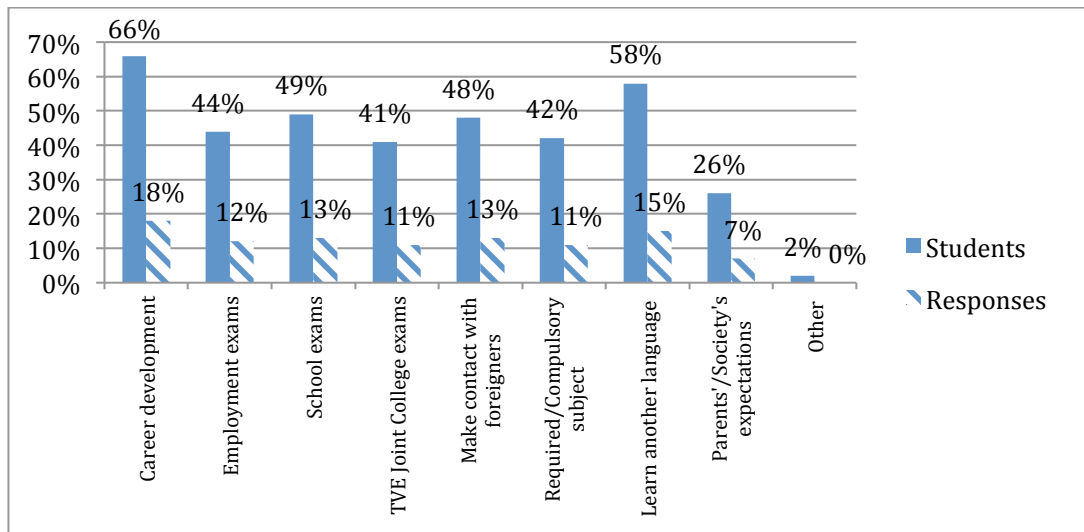
Looking at the percentages of different groups of students' responses to this question (Table 5), learning English for 'career development' and 'learning another language' remain the first two responses. These results support the study of Warden and Lin (2000), i.e. for students from the vocational education system, instrumental motivation appears closely associated with career development.

Table 5. Responses to BQ4: Reasons for learning English (by vocational subjects)

Reasons → Vocational subjects ↓	Career development	Employment exams	School exams	TVE Joint College exams	Make contact with foreigners	Required/ Compulsory subject	Learn another language	Parents'/ Society's expectations	Other
Data Processing	68%	52%	54%	47%	47%	48%	62%	24%	0%
Automobiles	57%	37%	46%	35%	40%	41%	45%	28%	1%
Tourism	76%	55%	47%	47%	62%	42%	71%	28%	2%
Restaurant Management	64%	37%	49%	37%	45%	38%	56%	26%	2%
Total	66%	44%	49%	41%	48%	42%	58%	26%	2%

VHS students' most preferred goal for learning English is 'For future career development' (Figure 11), which matches their main reason for learning English. The

remaining responses are roughly the same percentage. Since the average number of responses per student is 3.3, students seem to have a number of different goals for learning English. This finding remains consistent among students from all four groups (Table 6).

Figure 11. Responses to BQ5: Students' goals
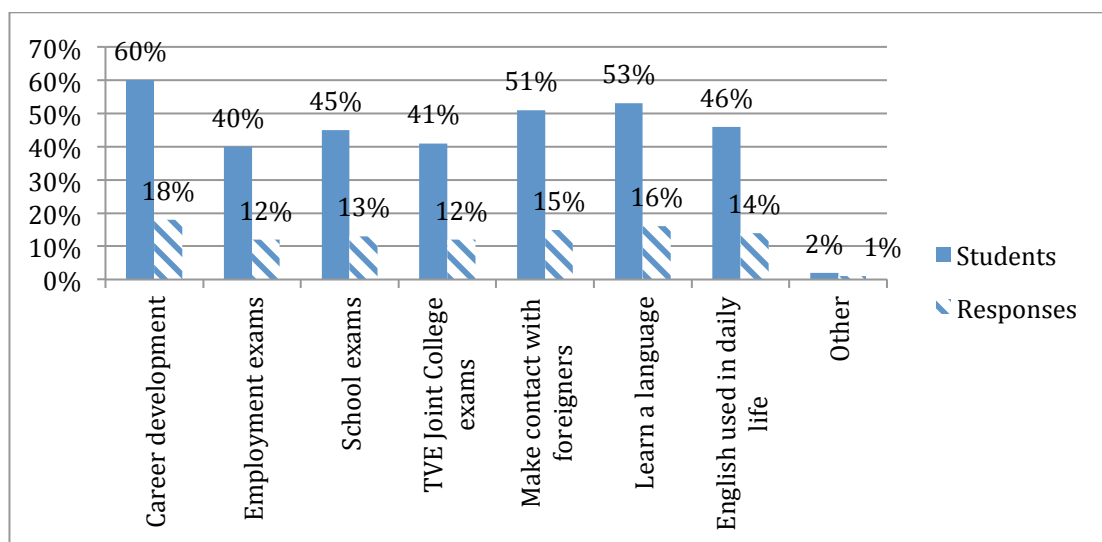
Table 6. Responses to BQ5: Students' goals (by vocational subjects)

Goals→ Vocational subjects ↓	Career development	Employment exams	School exams	TVE Joint College exams	Make contact with foreigners	Learn a language	English used in daily life	Other
Data Processing	64%	46%	50%	46%	56%	54%	48%	1%
Automobiles	52%	40%	43%	36%	41%	39%	38%	3%
Tourism	69%	47%	40%	45%	63%	68%	62%	1%
Restaurant Management	55%	32%	45%	38%	47%	52%	41%	3%
Total	60%	40%	45%	41%	51%	53%	46%	2%

This indicates that VHS students aim to learn English to benefit their future career development, by gaining the language ability to interact with foreigners. It seems to show that they learn English for practical considerations rather than the 'academically-oriented' reason of passing exams.

The question BQ 6: 'What are your individual English learning needs?' revealed two groups (Figure 12). Most responses were associated with instrumental and practical needs: 'daily life English', 'English relevant to intended jobs', and 'make contact with foreigners'. Fewer responses were associated with academic needs: 'pass school exams', 'pass TVE joint college exams', and 'pass employment exams'.

Figure 12. Responses to BQ6: English learning needs
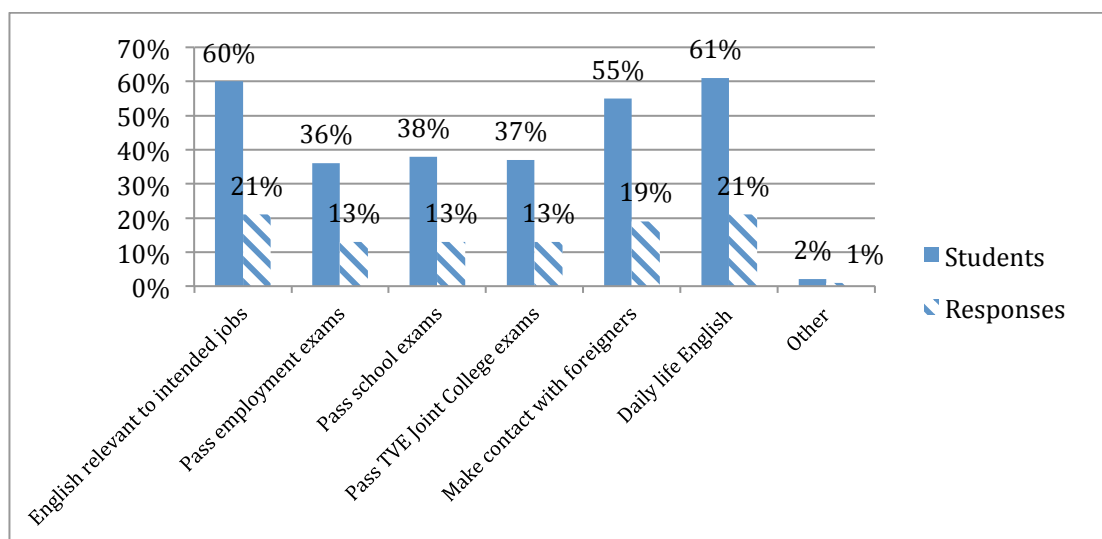
The top three learning needs for the students as a whole are also the top three learning needs when the students are split into different subject groupings (Table 7).

Table 7. Responses to BQ6: English learning needs (by vocational subjects)

Needs → Vocational subjects ↓	English relevant to intended jobs	Pass employment exams	Pass school exams	Pass TVE Joint College exams	Make contact with foreigners	Daily life English	Other
Data Processing	62%	41%	42%	39%	56%	63%	1%
Automobiles	50%	32%	39%	32%	46%	48%	3%
Tourism	73%	43%	33%	40%	71%	79%	0%
Restaurant Management	56%	31%	39%	37%	51%	57%	3%
Total	60%	36%	38%	37%	55%	61%	2%

It seems that VHS students' intention of learning English for its future practical use is stronger than the need to pass examinations. This finding also agrees with Findley and Nathan (1980) who see language needs arising from the use and requirement of the language in the learners' particular environment. It seems that VHS students recognise the increasing demand of and requirement for English ability in their job market, and match their English needs accordingly.

Most students saw their main English learning need as 'Vocational English relevant to students' subject'. 'Daily-life English' came second, with the rest of the responses showing only slight differences from each other (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Responses to BQ7: VHS students' learning needs
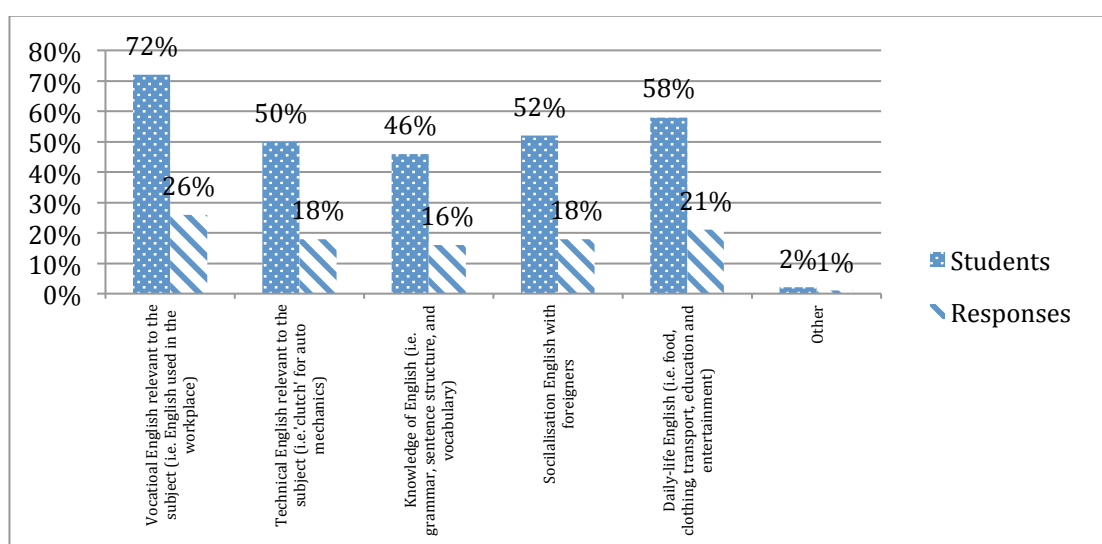
This suggests VHS students' priority English need is 'vocational', while other types of English have less importance. For type of English relevant to students' subject, 'Vocational English' received more responses than 'Technical English'. This suggests VHS students have needs that are specific and typical for their intended job contexts.

In Table 8, 'Vocational English relevant to students' subject' remained top choice for students in Data Processing (72%), Tourism (87%), and Restaurant Management (73%), while for students in Automobiles it was very slightly behind Technical English (6% difference).

Table 8. Responses to BQ7: VHS students' learning needs (by vocational subjects)

Needs→ Vocational subjects ↓	Vocational English relevant to the subject	Technical English relevant to the subject	Knowledge of English	Socialisation English with foreigners	Daily life English	Other
Data Processing	72%	43%	58%	50%	61%	0%
Automobiles	56%	62%	36%	41%	50%	3%
Tourism	87%	52%	50%	68%	72%	0%
Restaurant Management	73%	46%	41%	49%	53%	4%
Total	72%	50%	46%	52%	58%	2%

So far, this chapter has looked at students' expectations of their English courses in terms of purposes, goals, and needs. Although there are slight differences among the results for these three aspects, the overall results show that 'Learning English for career development' is regarded as the students' top purpose, goal, and need for learning English. Taiwanese VHS students recognise that there is a need for English use in Taiwan, particularly at work. They expect their English learning in schools to benefit their future career development most. Also, VHS students show instrumental motivation, associated with career improvement in their English learning. Moreover, they prefer to learn English that is specific and typical for their intended job context, which is 'vocational' rather than merely 'technical' English.

It is important to note that when students were given a specific context, e.g. thinking of English learning needs for 'the majority of VHS students' in Taiwan (as shown in Figure 13), 'vocational English relevant to students' subject' stands out as the most frequent need. The other two aspects, such as 'interacting with foreigners' and 'learning English that is used in daily life situations', are less important in students' questionnaire responses. However, the researcher noticed at this stage that this type of general question, asking students to think about what other VHS students' English learning needs are, may be not as reliable as the previous question asking an individual's view

about his/her own English learning needs. Students may just not be able to disassociate themselves from this type of general question.

7.1.4 To what extent are VHS students' expectations from their English courses being met? Sub-question I: What are students' views on the relationship between the English learnt in school and English required in the workplace?

Students were asked to rate their degree of agreement/disagreement of the following statements:

BQ8: English learned in school is relevant to your anticipated career.

BQ9: English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare or develop your English competence to meet anticipated occupational English.

BQ10: I am interested in the current English learning content in textbooks.

BQ12: I would like to see the curriculum designed especially or made more relevant to students' anticipated careers.

Also, students were asked to respond to:

BQ11: What do you think the effect would be if the English curriculum were redesigned especially or more for vocational oriented English uses that are relevant to students' anticipated career?

Responses to BQ8: English learned in school is relevant to your anticipated career. How far do you agree?

Table 9. Responses BQ8: Career relevance of English curriculum (by vocational subjects)

Table 10. Explanation for negative responses to BQ8.

Responses→ Student groups ↓	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Data Processing	4%	49%	44%	4%
Automobiles	3%	36%	51%	10%
Tourism	17%	40%	40%	1%
Restaurant Management	8%	52%	34%	5%
Percentage of total responses	8%	45%	41%	5%

Unlikely event in Taiwan	52%
Not adapted to the local English needs	34%
Not practical English uses in reality	42%
Doesn't cover relevant English used in employment	35%
Other	4%

Overall, 53% of students agree or strongly agree that the English they learned in school is relevant to their anticipated career (Table 9). Those who disagree or strongly disagree with the statement cited two reasons: The events included in the textbook seldom occur in English as used in Taiwan, and the English they encounter in textbooks is impractical in reality (Table 10). In addition, students from Tourism and Restaurant Management agree more than the other two groups that the English learnt in school is relevant to their anticipated career (Table 9).

When the researcher looked further to see whether students using different textbooks provided by three different publishers would give different views on the relevance between English learning in schools and students' anticipated employment (Table 11). The result remains the same. The three textbook publishers all receive a slightly higher percentage of agreement (55%, 55%, and 50% respectively) than disagreement.

Table 11. Responses to BQ8. Career relevance of English curriculum (by textbook versions)

Responses→ Publishers ↓	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Version A (Far East)	10%	45%	40%	4%
Version B (Lungteng)	11%	44%	42%	3%
Version C (Dong Da)	5%	45%	41%	7%
Total	8%	45%	41%	5%

Responses to BQ9: English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare or develop your English ability to meet anticipated English needs at work. How far do you agree?

Table 12. Reponses to BQ9: Necessity of textbooks revisions

Responses→ Student groups ↓	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Data Processing	11%	77%	11%	1%
Automobiles	14%	71%	10%	4%
Tourism	15%	69%	13%	1%
Restaurant Management	14%	69%	11%	3%
Total	14%	71%	11%	2%

Table 13. Explanation for negative responses to BQ9.

Current textbooks prepare students for using English in the occupational setting	52%
Not the focus of English lessons in VHS	26%
Other	5%
No response given	17%

Table 14. Responses of BQ9: Necessity of textbook revisions (by textbook version)

Responses→ Publishers ↓	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Version A (Far East)	16%	67%	11%	3%
Version B (Lungteng)	7%	72%	16%	5%
Version C (Dong Da)	13%	76%	9%	0%
Total	14%	71%	11%	2%

As shown in Table 12, a very high percentage (85%) of students agree or strongly agree that they would like to see their English textbook revised to be more helpful in preparing their English competence for anticipated occupational English needs. Students who disagree or strongly disagree with this statement think that the current textbook is adequate, and of these some think that VHSs do not put English competence for anticipated occupation as the main focus of English lessons (Table 13). This finding remains the same if viewed by different groups of students and by different versions of textbooks (Table 12, 14).

Although 53% of students felt that the English learned in schools was relevant (Table 9), 85% of students agreed that the textbooks need revision (Table 12). An explanation for this may be that General English courses cover a wide range of topics, which appear to be relevant to students' anticipated careers. However, the strong agreement on the need for English textbooks to be revised to better meet anticipated occupational English needs demonstrates students' strong needs to have English that meets their intended career requirements.

Responses to BQ10: I am interested in the current English learning content in textbooks. How far do you agree?

Table 15. Responses to BQ10: Interest in English textbooks

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students' responses	2%	33%	52%	11%

Table 16. Explanation for negative responses to BQ10

Beyond my English level	18%
Designed only for passing school exams	37%
Not relevant to my intended career	20%
Not realistic in the Taiwanese EFL context	19%
Not meet my English learning needs	16%
Other	3%

More than half of the students (63%) are not interested in the current English learning content in textbooks (Table 15). The main reason for this is because they think the textbook is designed for the exams, followed by the textbook not containing vocational related English, and the English in textbook not being realistic in the Taiwanese English application context (Table 16). Referring back to the previous findings regarding students' English learning needs and goals, practical-oriented English is what VHS students would want rather than English for exam purpose.

Responses to BQ12: I would like to see the curriculum designed especially or made more relevant to students' anticipated careers.

Table 17. Responses to BQ12: Desire for more relevant curriculum

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Students' responses	20%	70%	6%	2%

Table 18. Explanation for positive responses to BQ12

This is my main purpose for learning English	27%
This will raise my English learning motivation	35%
Vocational related English better meets my English learning needs	50%
Vocational related English increase my chances of anticipated career development	52%
Other	2%

Ninety percent of the students would like to see the curriculum designed to be more relevant to their anticipated career (Table 17). The two main reasons are students believe that vocational related English would be beneficial to their career development (52%), and that it would better meet their English learning needs (50%) (Table 18).

Responses to BQ11: What do you think the effect would be if the English curriculum were redesigned especially or more for vocational oriented English that is relevant to students' anticipated career?

Figure 14. Responses to BQ11: Effect of more relevant curriculum
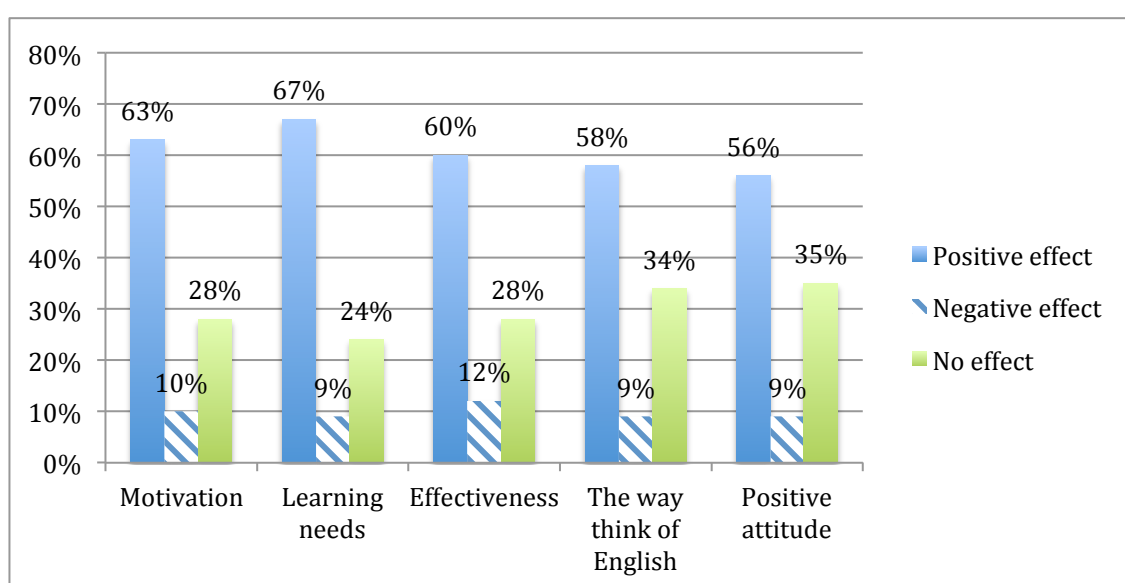
Most students favour this change, and Figure 14 shows the range of student percentages for such a change. The majority of students feel that this change would result in a positive outcome in 5 different aspects of their English education (Figure 14). This is particularly clear in regard to their motivation, meeting their learning needs and its effectiveness, where more than twice as many students thought it would bring a positive outcome than those who expected a negative outcome. The finding remains the same for different student groups (Table 19).

Table 19. Responses to BQ11. Effect of more relevant curriculum (by vocational subject)

Row Labels	Positive	Negative	No effect
A positive attitude towards learning			
Data Processing	57%	4%	38%
Automobiles	55%	12%	33%
Tourism industry	62%	5%	33%
Restaurant management	51%	13%	36%
Change the way students think of English learned in school			
Data Processing	60%	3%	37%
Automobiles	55%	12%	33%
Tourism industry	63%	6%	31%
Restaurant management	54%	13%	33%
English learning in school more effective			
Data Processing	63%	10%	28%
Automobiles	54%	16%	30%
Tourism industry	66%	6%	28%
Restaurant management	59%	15%	26%
Students' English learning needs			
Data Processing	70%	6%	24%
Automobiles	64%	13%	23%
Tourism industry	72%	5%	23%
Restaurant management	64%	11%	26%
Students' motivation to learn English			
Data Processing	62%	6%	32%
Automobiles	56%	14%	29%
Tourism industry	67%	6%	26%
Restaurant management	64%	12%	24%

This indicates that VHS students have positive attitudes and high expectations regarding vocational oriented English. This finding aligns with students' previous responses about their English learning needs, goals, and purposes, where practical English that is vocational oriented and associated with their anticipated career development is their top response. It also agrees with their high level of agreement on the need for revision of English textbooks to be more vocational oriented to meet their anticipated occupational English.

So far the examination on the relationship between English learnt in school and English required in the workplace shows that even though 53% of students agree that the English they learned in school is relevant to their anticipated career, 90% of students

would like to see their English textbook revised to be more helpful in preparing their English ability for their anticipated occupational English needs, and this result is further supported by the positive attitudes (ranging from 56% to 67%) towards a more vocational related English curriculum. It seems to be that a wide range of topics covered in the English curriculum may appear to be somehow relevant to students' intended career, but it is actually not seen by students as satisfactory. A strong positive view is shown towards the ideal of a specific focused English curriculum, which is tailored to students' specific vocational subject and intended career.

7.1.5 To what extent are VHS students' expectations from their English courses being met? Sub-question II: What are students' views about English learning in VHSs?

The last issue addressed in the first part of this chapter is students' perception of their English learning in VHSs.

When asked what types of English they would like to learn in VHSs (BQ14), socialising and vocational English are the two main responses (67% and 64%) (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Responses to BQ14: Preferred types of English
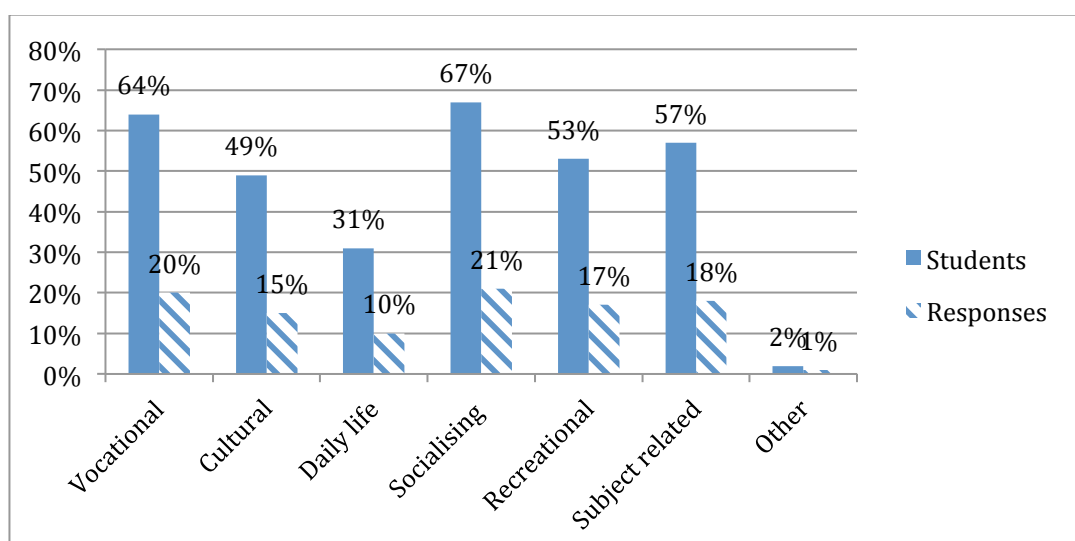
This finding held across students from each of the different course groups (Table 20), indicating that VHS students want to learn English that would enable them to interact with foreigners and would be useful for the English requirements of their intended

career. This result is similar to students' English learning goal (Figure 11 and Table 6). It also appears that VHS students prefer to learn English that they can put it into practice.

Table 20. Responses to BQ14. Preferred types of English (by vocational subjects)

Types of English→ Vocational subjects ↓	Vocational	Cultural	Daily life	Socialising	Recreational	Subject related	Other
Data Processing	58%	44%	31%	39%	46%	36%	1%
Automobiles	52%	39%	34%	42%	35%	40%	1%
Tourism	44%	26%	38%	40%	43%	43%	1%
Restaurant Management	43%	34%	35%	37%	38%	41%	2%
Total	49%	36%	34%	39%	40%	40%	1%

While 'Vocational English' is the type of English students would like to learn in VHSs, and which is also their English learning goal, this type of English is regarded by students as the most neglected area in English language education in VHSs (Figure 16). The result remains the same among students from different subject groups (Table 21).

Figure 16. Responses to BQ13: Neglected areas of English learning
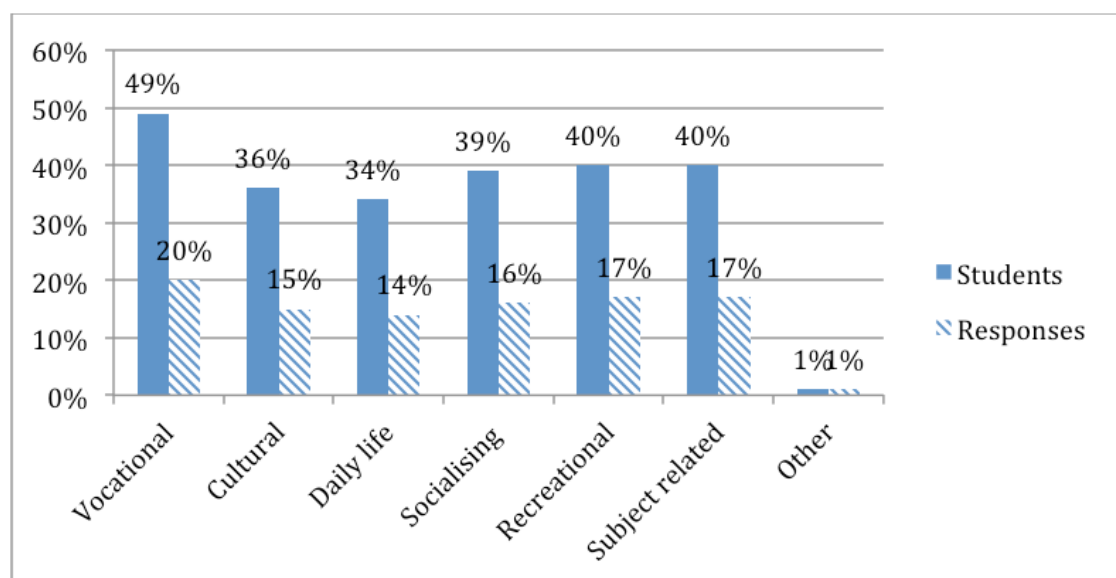
Table 21. Responses to BQ13. Neglected areas of English learning (by vocational subjects)

Types of English→ Vocational subjects ↓	Vocational	Cultural	Daily life	Socialising	Recreational	Subject related	Other
Data Processing	66%	46%	31%	67%	54%	56%	1%
Automobiles	57%	47%	29%	59%	47%	52%	1%
Tourism	72%	58%	39%	81%	67%	65%	0%
Restaurant Management	61%	48%	27%	62%	49%	55%	4%
Total	64%	49%	31%	67%	67%	57%	2%

7.1.6 Discussion of students' questionnaire data

The analysis of the students' questionnaire data reveals that even though students believe that people in Taiwan use English in less than half of the time (43%), more than half of the students (55%) would still choose English if it were an optional subject rather than compulsory, as it is now. This results from their practical consideration of English.

The data also shows that English for use at work is regarded as a very important aspect in terms of students' English learning purposes, goals and needs. However, it is surprising that students consider it to be the most neglected area in the English language education in Taiwan. Students would like to see a change of English curriculum design so that it becomes more vocationally related.

In addition, analysis of the questionnaires indicate that there might be a discrepancy between the Taiwanese VHS education authorities and the students as to what the emphasis of the English language education in VHSs should be. In all, 85% of the students who responded revealed their willingness to see their English textbook revised to be more helpful in preparing students for their future occupational English needs. A

further examination on the effect this change may bring about shows a positive effect in 5 key aspects of their English education (Figure 14).

The high percentage of agreement on the need to change the English curriculum to be more vocationally relevant, and the positive feedback reported on the change it will bring show that current English language curriculum in VHSs in Taiwan is perceived to be of particular concern in the development of students' English language ability for future intended job purpose, which suggest a need for the English curriculum to be changed.

One issue this study raises in particular is the contribution of English textbooks in preparing VHS students' English ability at work. The first stage of the exploration of this study emphasised the need for further enquiry on the role of the English textbooks and curriculum in VHSs in Taiwan in relation to preparing students' English ability for future work. This further enquiry was conducted in the interviews.

7.2 Interview data

This section reports the findings from the students' interview data, which is presented in four subsections. Subsection 7.2.1 tries to establish the students' awareness and understanding of the context in which vocational English operates. Subsection 7.2.2 relates directly to research question 2: what are VHS students' expectations from their English courses? Subsection 7.2.3 is concerned with whether VHS students' expectations from their English courses are being met? Section 7.2 then ends with a discussion of the findings from the students' interview data in 7.2.4.

7.2.1 VHS students' awareness and understanding of the contexts of English language use

This theme is generated from three questions: what is your definition of workplace English? What level of English do you want to achieve? What level of English do you think employers expect or require?

What is your definition of workplace English?

Students think that workplace English is English that is used at work, which varies and depends on the profession one is in. In general, it is more practical than general English, with basic general English ability and additional advanced English knowledge in a particular area, which students refer to as professional, vocational subject related vocabulary. Most students see communication ability as an important aspect involved in workplace English. Typically statements were:

(Workplace English varies and depends on the profession)
" It might be different for everyone. For example, if I'm in the field of commerce, I learn English that is related to commerce" (Student 17).

(Professional, practical, vocational subject related English)
"The average person knows less about English in the professional area" (Student 3).

"The more useful, practical type and commonly used English. Like conversation. Related to tourism and work" (Student 7).

(Requires communication ability)
"Ability to communicate with other people, and learn some professional vocabulary. Well, just being able to talk to others in fluent English" (Student 5).

"It has more professional terminologies, and I need to perk myself up to directly talk with people in English" (Student 18).

What level of English do you want to achieve?

Eleven students said that they want their English ability to enable them to communicate with others. Among these students, 3 of them express their hope to speak English fluently. Understanding what others say is the second most important part of English ability that students are concerned with, with 10 students saying that. Other aspects mentioned are, to be able to apply English at work, to know the most commonly used English, and to acquire basic reading and writing skills. Typical statements were:

"Be able to have conversation with others, at least they can understand me" (Student 8).

"I want to be able to chat with foreigners fluently and not to stammer" (Student 13).

What level of English do you think employers expect or require?

Communication ability is the most important skill they think their potential employers would expect (9 students), with listening skill in second place (6 students). Students' response to this question is aligned with the question they answered previously: what level of English ability do they want to achieve. There are a few students who expect basic reading and writing skills as well (4 students for reading and 3 students for writing). Typically statements were:

"It might be necessary to contact foreign companies in business, so at least we should be able to communicate with foreigners" (Student 26).

"Perhaps being able to have a conversation with others, including understanding what others say" (Student 17).

The responses of the students' show that their understanding of workplace English is that it is the type of English used at work, which involves professional and vocational subject related English, with conversational skill of primary importance. Students want to achieve the English ability according to their perception of what is required at the workplace.

7.2.2 VHS students' expectations from their English courses

This theme is generated from three questions: If English were not mandatory would you take it? Why do u want to, or have to, learn English? What is your motivation for learning English?

If English were not mandatory would you take it?

The same question is asked in the questionnaire where slightly more than half of the students said yes (55%). However, students' interview responses toward this question provided a deeper understanding behind the reasons. 10 of the students identified the potential benefit, advantage and usage of English in the future as the reasons they would continue to take English. Of these 10, 4 students thought that English might be useful to their future career. One student in the Tourism department revealed that he/she knows the chances for them to meet foreigners are significantly high, so he/she needs to have English ability. Another student said that being able to understand some technical terms related to his/her vocational subject (Automobiles), he/she needs English. However, one student expressed that if he/she cannot see the potential use of English, then English is not of that importance anymore.

Another 9 students said that they would still take English if it were not a mandatory course because of the international status that English holds now. Four students expressed their interest in learning English, therefore, no matter whether English is designated as a compulsory subject or not, they would still take it. One student said that since English is included in junior high school, it is generally believed that it is necessary to learn English and he/she does not have any further thought about this issue, he/she would still just keep taking the course.

As for students who answered no to this question, four of them said that difficulty in understanding the lessons discourages them from learning English. In particular, forgetting vocabulary learnt in the past, difficulty memorising new vocabulary, low or no interest in English, and not finding English useful at all are some of the reasons given.

Overall, students would still like to take an English course even if it were not mandatory, which is in accord with the students' questionnaire responses. This result indicates that English language could be seen not just as a requirement of an externally imposed syllabus for VHS students, but as a subject that they would like to learn because of the potential benefit and advantage of English language itself.

Why do you want to or have to learn English?

In asking students why they learn English, 10 students said that it is because English is the language that most widely used in various situations, which is really useful. For example, the communication function of English: to make friends and do business across countries, to be able to read vocational subject-related or professional terms in English, and to be useful when going abroad. 7 students think that learning English would be beneficial to their future career. Learning English out of personal interest is the next highest reason given. Other reasons mentioned are: it provides a learning opportunity (4 students), it is one of the fundamental and mandatory subjects in school (2 students), for exam purposes (1 student), worry about falling behind if not taking English (1 student), English is generally believed important (1 student), and 'no idea' (1 student).

It is clear to see that two important purposes for students' English learning are the recognition of the global status of English, and the potential benefit of having English ability for their future career development. It is noted that the importance of 'learning English for career development' is evidenced from both the questionnaire and the interview findings. Typical statements were:

(Global status of English)
"Because it is now a universal language. If you don't learn you'll fall behind" (Student 4).

"I think English is important because English has become an international language" (Student 20).

"English is very important. It is a language commonly used in the world" (Student 18).

"Because English has become the most widely accepted international language" (Student 21).

(Potential benefit for future career development)

"English is quite important, because it will be useful in almost every career" (Student 3).

"It is important in the workplace, very important! It also helps you to find better work" (Student 7).

"Well, it's an international language. Having good English gets you a good job" (Student 11).

"I hope to get a better job with my English skills" (Student 23).

What is your motivation for learning English?

Having the ability to communicate with foreigners is the top motivator for VHS students to learn English (7 students). The potential of more opportunities to get a better job is the second motivator (6 students). As GEPT exam results are one of the recognised English ability assessment in Taiwan, and some employers tend to use its result to judge the English ability of applicants, two students among those 6 express that their goal in learning English is pass that exam. On the other hand, difficulty in understanding the lesson frustrates students in learning English (6 students). In short, communication practice for interaction with foreigners and having the English ability to gain better career prospects are the two main motivators for learning English, whilst students can lose motivation due to their difficulties in understanding the lesson content.

An examination of students' expectations from their English course reveals that Taiwanese VHS students recognise the global status of English as well as the increasing demand for English ability in employment. They expect their English learning in schools to benefit their future career development, enabling them to have sufficient language ability to interact with foreigners. This finding is in accord with the students' English learning needs, purposes, and goals shown in the questionnaire. In addition, communication practice is something students would like to engage in, and this comes from their perception of workplace English requirements and needs.

7.2.3 Whether VHS students' expectations from their English courses are being met?

This theme is generated from three questions: what are students' opinions (thoughts) on their English course? What are your opinions of English teaching in VHSs? What area of English do you want to learn?

What are students' opinions (thoughts) on their English course?

There are three main points drawn from students' responses regarding the English course in VHSs.

1. English course content: Repetitive content and focus on vocabulary

Students feel that they keep on learning the same content as they did in junior high school, particularly with grammar. For example, students state that

"It's like junior high school English grammar being recycled" (Student 9).

"I feel like we are always reviewing vocabularies and grammar that we'd already learned before" (Student 20).

Too much repetitive content makes students feel like they are not learning anything new. Students' responses also reveal that 'vocabulary' is one of their main focuses in terms of the English course and what they think of English learning.

"I think they are just a list of words to memorise… You just memorise words without understanding. I think some of the stuff is totally useless" (Student 8).

"Classes shouldn't be boring, and keep asking students to memorise vocabulary without understanding" (Student 20).

It appears that the students' experience of English language learning is mostly memorising vocabulary rather than acquiring other English language skills. For example, students state,

"I personally feel I don't build enough vocabulary, and I think it is a matter of memory ... some vocabulary words are not used frequently, so it's not easy for me to memorise them" (Student 18).

In this case, students memorise vocabulary mechanically without knowing and applying any strategies to help and perhaps not even know how to apply those vocabularies flexibly. Students do not see the value of memorising vocabularies mechanically.

Furthermore, students' responses indicate that being able to understand the lesson is essential for students to see the value of sitting in class. This point was mentioned earlier as one of the elements that influences students' English learning motivation. Whether the student understands the lesson can determine whether the student feels they can learn anything from the course. For example, students express that

"Those parts I don't understand in class, I'm not keen on, but I feel that if I can understand it, it'll be much more interesting" (Student 7).

"Sometimes I can't understand what my teacher says in class. Maybe it is because of the teacher's pronunciation, or perhaps it is because most of the students are just there to pass the class, so the teacher doesn't really make an effort. I really don't like that feeling" (Student 20).

"I don't understand a thing. I only learn a bit when I can" (Student 24).

2. Practicality, applicability, and flexibility of English learnt in school

Currently, English textbooks in VHSs cover a wide range of topics. However, many students mention that the content, such as individual articles and stories, is not practical or vocational enough to show students the real application of English and employment-relevant English use, nor is it flexible and creative enough to show students the various

and alternative expressions or ways they can use English in real life. However, whether students are able to apply what they learn at school to real life situations is one of the aspects that students consider to be most important. Typical statements were

(The practicality of English learnt in school)
"Even though the stories in English textbooks contain many common words, I still feel they do not really approach our daily life conversations. That's just how I feel. I think the content should be more practical. The words and expressions we have used in daily life are different from what are presented in textbooks' stories or other forms of text content. I feel they are not commonly used in our everyday life and conversations with friends" (Student 18).

"Most of the text in the textbooks tells you an event, a story. But at work, people might need to compete, to visit or to have interaction that is different from storytelling and the structure of a story ... I don't think we need those stories and originated stories at work. We need something more close to the reality instead of fairy tale" (Student 27).

"I think we can use it [the English we learn at school] abroad, but it is not much use in Taiwan" (Student 3).

(The applicability of English learnt in school)
"Inspirational stories, stories about helping others or success through hard work aren't helpful for improving English, but probably for other things. In the course of learning English, let me think ... poetry, I guess, English poetry isn't really that important in terms of now" (Student 14).

"I heard some other people said that the future progressive tense is not helpful at all. It is even rarely used by foreigners ... I think some of the content in the English textbooks is quite important, no doubt on that, but then my English teacher sometimes say the words are rarely used even by Americans. It is not spoken language in America. It's too formal for daily use in the US. Even foreigners don't use those words often" (Student 13).

(The flexibility of English learnt in school)

"The article in the text is some kind of story telling showing some scenario, for which I can give a correct answer if a question is asked according to the text content. But it seems to lack creativity… It's just I want to give another form of answer to the question stated in the text, but the text is designed one by one which is fully compact and makes me no other alternative ways in answer" (Student 18).

"They are exactly the same patterns without any variety. I don't know how to say, but I guess they are just for preparing students for exams" (Student 26).

"When you are conducting a real conversation with an English speaker, you'll realise that there's a lot more and alternative meaning, ways and feelings to the English. English teachers only mention those which they believe to be important in a point-by-point format" (Student 19).

"What we learn at school is mostly like a formula" (Student 28).

"If I work in a car maintenance company, I can't always ask my customers 'how are you?' and other unnecessary questions. I should be able to ask 'what's wrong?' or say 'the battery doesn't work'" (Student 21).

(The importance of English in real life)

"Sometimes I think English is important, but sometimes not. For example, when I ran into foreigners at MRT station, I feel English is important. But if I don't see foreigners, I don't feel the importance of English" (Student 25).

3. Additional vocational subject related conversational English courses

Students point out that VHSs mainly focus on students' subject specific technical skill development; however the English they learn is not necessarily related to their subject. Two departments, Food Management and Tourism, do receive additional vocational subject related verbal hospitality English lessons, and these courses gain positive feedback from the students. The interview responses help to explain the reasons why in the questionnaire, students from the Tourism and Restaurant Management departments

agree more than the other two groups on the relevance between the English learnt in school and their anticipated career (Table 9). For example, students state that

"I think they (the contents) won't help me in the future, or of any help to my work ... because I am in food and beverage, I think Hospitality conversational English will be more practical and more helpful for my future work and conversation with others" *(Student 8).*

"The English in the hospitality conversation course is helpful. But the English in English classes don't seem too helpful" *(Student 24).*

As students point out, hospitality conversational English is closer to situations students might encounter in their potential future work, such as *"how we can host and treat our guests at the job, and when the guests ask us something we will be able to react and reply"*, and students express that they think English would become more meaningful if they could see its relevance to their specific vocational subject, and their potential future career which would help to increase their competitiveness in the workplace.

Students from other departments feel that their General English courses are neither useful nor helpful for their future job prospects. For example, students state that:

"As I am in the Information processing department, I should be practicing English that is related to Commerce. However, the English I'm currently learning isn't related to it, so it is unlikely that it will be of any use in my future career. As I might be working in jobs related to Commerce in the future, I think that the content in the English class fails to meet my future requirement, which means I'm not learning at all" *(Student 17).*

"I basically just want to learn some English and use it at work" *(Student 28).*

"...the school's English course does not really provide subject-relevant (specific) English, because there's less English relevant for the Data Processing Department. There's more for the Tourism Department" *(Student 14).*

"The lessons in the English textbooks are pretty much unrelated to future careers. As for the 'conversation for hospitality' textbook, it's more likely to be related" (Student 25).

"...students in the Hospitality Department study more vocational subject related English than those in the Business Department. There are fewer vocational subject related English courses in Business related courses" (Student 15).

It seems that the General English taught in VHSs lacks a specific focus on preparing students for their future employment, which leads to students failing to perceive the relevance of General English to their future benefit or career. Additional vocational subject related conversational English courses provided to Food Management and Tourism departments are regarded by those students as more useful than General English.

The current General English courses appear to not be providing students with the English ability that they require to be competitive in the workplace. This leaves students unable to recognise neither the connection of English learnt in school to reality or its applicability in real life. For example, students say that

"Connection? There is no connection". "Um...because the things we learned are not related to our career, they are very common [general]" (Student 3).

"Yeah, it is slightly different [English learnt at school and workplace English]. Sometimes they have nothing to do with each other" (Student 25).

Furthermore, the view that the demand for English ability in the workplace is increasing seems to be shared by students, as they agree that English ability is essential in getting a better job.

To sum up, students' perception of English learning in school is that vocabulary is the most emphasised part of their English classes, and 'memorising vocabulary mechanically' is the strategy that most students apply or were asked to do. English application in real life is one important element for students to see the value of learning English, however, students' perceived view on the English learnt in school fails to make

them realise the applicability, flexibility, and practicality of the English that they learnt. A lack of specific focus on preparing students for their future English requirements in their career is one of the reasons that leads to this result. The English course provided by VHSs is not specifically related to the vocational subject that students are taking, and the content presented in textbook is sometimes just general articles in English, these make students feel that English course in school does not help them to best prepare for their future career. Students doubt if non-vocational subject related English would be of any use in their future career. Students express positive views on additional vocational subject related conversational English courses, which is in accord with the findings from the questionnaire.

What are your opinions of English teaching in VHSs?

Students mention that the content and method of teaching and learning are regimented and exam-oriented, without too much interaction involved.

(Descriptions of exam-oriented English course)
"The content of the textbook is to fulfil the TVE Joint College Entrance" (Student 27).

"The English course is more or less for exam purpose only" (Student 29).

"I am in the 3rd year of my vocational high school education, so I need to prepare for the unified entrance examination. In this case, the textbook is actually enough for my further academic pursuit" (Student 18).

(Descriptions of teacher-centred method)
"He'll read one line, and we follow" (Student 6).

"When our teacher reads it once, we repeat" (Student 20).

"The teacher lectures, and you take notes" (Student 5).

"In most of the classes, the teacher does all the talking and we just sit there and listen, and memorise words at home" (Student 8).

(Descriptions of interaction in class)

"Well, it's kind of boring, that's what it is with classes. Then you memorise vocabularies, I think just to cope with tests. The teacher talks, you listen. No interaction" (Student 8).

"Most of the students don't really talk in class, they just listen and take notes" (Student 14).

The atmosphere created in the class is one of the influential elements, which determines a positive or negative opinion of the English course. Students say that if a lesson involved more interaction between teachers and students, it would be more appealing for students to join and participant in the lesson.

The English skill training is given more to writing and reading rather than speaking skill. However, communication skill is the skill that students would like to improve and practise the most.

(Descriptions of language skill training)

"It's more about writing and reading and hardly about speaking. It'd be difficult for us to learn how to speak ... I think the education now always focus on writing. But honestly, I think speaking is much more important and practical" (Student 29).

"Um, not really [any conversation practices in class now]. We just read vocabulary and the text" (Student 7).

"Vey few [oral practices]. I was only orally tested in year three. We are asked to read some sentences. Only in the hospitality English class. Not much in general English classes" (Student 8).

Briefly speaking, students find that the current English course is rigid and exam-oriented. The English lesson is led in a traditional teacher-centred way, there is not much interaction involved, and students appear to just sit in class passively, sometimes without understanding the lesson. The English skill training is mainly focussed on

reading and writing, but students would like to see more speaking practice, which corresponds to their perceived workplace English requirements.

What area of English do you want to learn?

In response to this question, professional English that is related to students' current vocational subject is the area of English that VHS students want to learn the most (13 students). 8 students wanted English that can be used at work. 6 students named English that is commonly used in daily social life, whilst others wanted English that is practical, useful and commonly used, and English for conversation.

Apparently, vocational subject related English is the most popular English type for VHS students. This finding is aligned with the one in students' questionnaire response towards the type of English they would like to learn in VHSs (Figure 15, Table 20). Practical English that is commonly used in reality is students' considered element in deciding the type of English they want to learn.

Further examination of the students' interviews reveals that their reasons for preferring vocational oriented English are mainly the potential benefit, advantage and use of English in work. Beyond that they give a need or desire to understand some technical terms related to his/her subject. For example, students said that:

"If you study tourism, you will become a tour guide or work in hotels, and you'll definitely meet foreign tourists, so you need to speak in English" (Student 6).

"I want to be able to read something about cars online, to understand proper nouns that relate to auto" (Student 13).

"In the Business Department, many of the professional terms come from English, so one needs to be able to read English and not be limited to Chinese. So the reason for studying English is because Taiwan is an island nation and English is often necessary for importing and exporting, and also because it's a language of communication... Maybe because in our department we need to use certain software, such as Microsoft

Office, which is from the USA. English is used in the USA, so many things are in English and not just limited to Chinese" (Student 15).

"For the workplace, maybe it's necessary to know some evaluation or software-related terminology" (Student 15).

In other words, students see the practicality of English learning for their future English use and have a positive attitude towards it. Students perceive their English study as a benefit and advantage for their potential English use in their future career. However, it appears that VHS students' English courses do not equip them adequately for their future employment. Students fail to see the connection between the General English course provided to them and English used in the workplace. Students point out that vocational subject related English course is more useful and helpful to them. This is also evidenced by the overwhelming positive attitudes towards a more vocational related English curriculum in the questionnaire (Table 19).

7.2.4 Discussion of students' interview data

The interview responses not only confirms the findings from the questionnaire, it also gives us a richer picture of the reasons behind the questionnaire data, such as why students from food management and tourism departments agree more on the relevance between English learnt in schools and English required in the workplace, and helps us understand why students prefer the vocational subject related English. The interview responses further give us an understanding of how students perceive their English application in context and provide additional information on their views on what is happening in English classes.

In general, students' interview responses are in accord with the findings from the questionnaire in terms of the importance of learning English for their future career development. However, the current English courses in VHSs fail to prepare students in this respect. The focus is on grammar and vocabulary, writing and reading, and for preparing for academic examinations. Teaching tends to be traditional teacher-centred, which fails to provide students with adequate communication skill practice which the

students desire. It is also not aligned with the curriculum guideline of promoting communicative language teaching and learning.

7.3 Summary from the students' data

The results from the students' questionnaire and interview data showed that

(1) Students think that English is most used and required at work. Their understanding of workplace English varies according to the profession, but communication ability is necessary and important for any work. Students' English learning needs, purposes, and goals are therefore closely associated with the potential benefit English will bring to their future career development. Students expect and express the desire and preference for specific vocational oriented English courses, which they see as having greater relevance than their current English courses to situations they might encounter in their future. However, it is surprising to see that while this type of English course is of primary importance for VHS students, it is the most neglected area in formal curricula in EFL in Taiwan, as evidenced by questions about textbooks.

(2) It appears that the general English courses that VHS students receive provide little help in understanding the complexity of English use in their potential jobs, because school language teaching tends to focus more on general cultural and life experiences. It attempts to cover a wide range of English situations, but may lack consideration of the English practices appropriate to the kinds of occupational settings into which VHS graduates tend to be recruited. In addition, without a specific focus, the wide range of topics, such as stories and poems, appears to not be of much practical use for students, which then may lead to students not seeing the value of English learnt in schools.

(3) The current English courses are oriented towards passing the exams required for advancing to higher education. The focus is on learning vocabulary and grammar, rather than on practising English appropriate to the kinds of occupational settings into which VHS graduates tend to be recruited. Teaching stays in the traditional teacher-centred method, with not much interaction involved. The curriculum guideline clearly states that the goal is to cultivate students' communicative competence and the objective is

communicative language teaching, however the findings show a different story. In addition, it seems that the current general English curriculum is at odds with the aim of training students for specific professional competency. Specialised language learning needs and purposes are not addressed.

The overall finding from students' data is that a large mismatch exists between VHS students' perceived needs from their English course, and the actual course of study they receive.

8

Data Analysis (2): Teachers' Perspectives and Experiences of English Language Courses in VHSs

8.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse and interpret teachers' questionnaire and interview data, and present their perspectives and experiences of English language education in VHSs in Taiwan. Section 8.1 deals with the questionnaire data, and section 8.2 deals with the interview data. In a similar way to the students' data analysis, an attempt is also made in the teachers' data to explore to what extent English language education at VHSs prepares students for their intended employment so that further examination can be carried out on the issue of whether current English courses in Taiwanese schools that specialise in vocational education are perceived as appropriate in preparing students for their intended employment.

8.1 Teachers' questionnaire data

This section presents the data from the teachers' questionnaire. Subsection 8.1.1 describes the teachers' general background information. Subsections 8.1.2 and 8.1.3 present the data gathered relevant to research question 2. Subsection 8.1.2 gives the teachers' perspectives on English education provided by VHSs. Subsection 8.1.3 concerns the extent to which teachers think that the English courses benefit students in respect of competitiveness in their anticipated job. Section 8.1 ends with a discussion of the findings from the teachers' data in 8.1.4.

8.1.1 Teachers' general background information

The questionnaire was sent out to English language teachers in four different schools. 51 valid questionnaires were collected. 38% of participant teachers had masters' degrees (AQ2), and the average number of years of teaching English was 6.5 years (AQ3). 'Data Processing', 'Computer Science', 'Restaurant Management' and 'Automobiles' are the four most common subjects that participant teachers teach. The 'other' category consisted of Distribution Management, Aeronautical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Applied English, Japanese, and Cosmetics (Figure 17), none of which ammounted to more than 8%.

Figure 17. Responses to AQ4: Subjects teachers currently teach at school
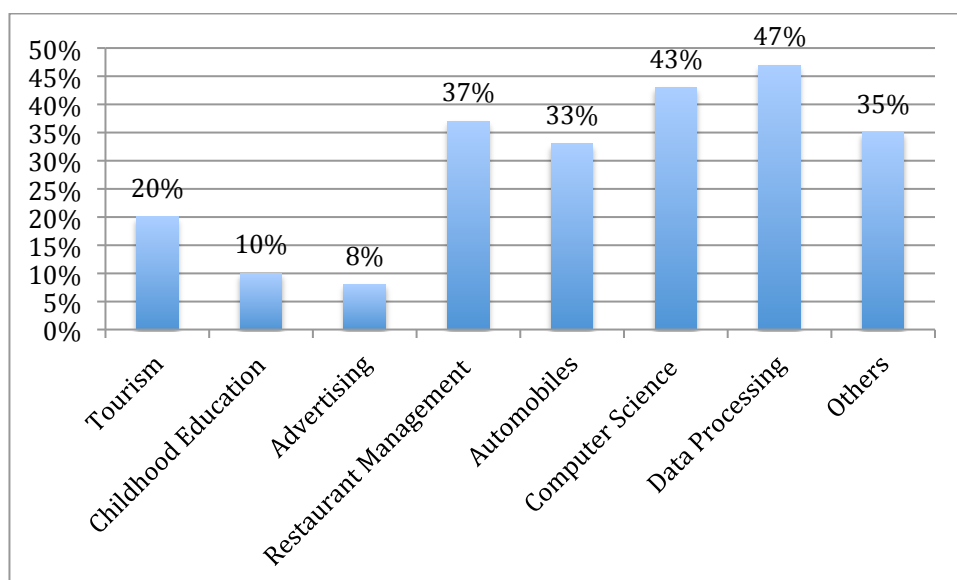
Teachers think that the opportunities to use English in Taiwan are around 34% (BQ1), which is lower than students' answer to this question (43%). 'At work' is the most frequent response (48%), followed by 'Going abroad' (30%). 'Daily life situations' (14%) and 'Interaction with foreigners' (9%) receive comparably low reponses (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Responses to BQ2: Most comment situation in which Taiwanese people need to use English
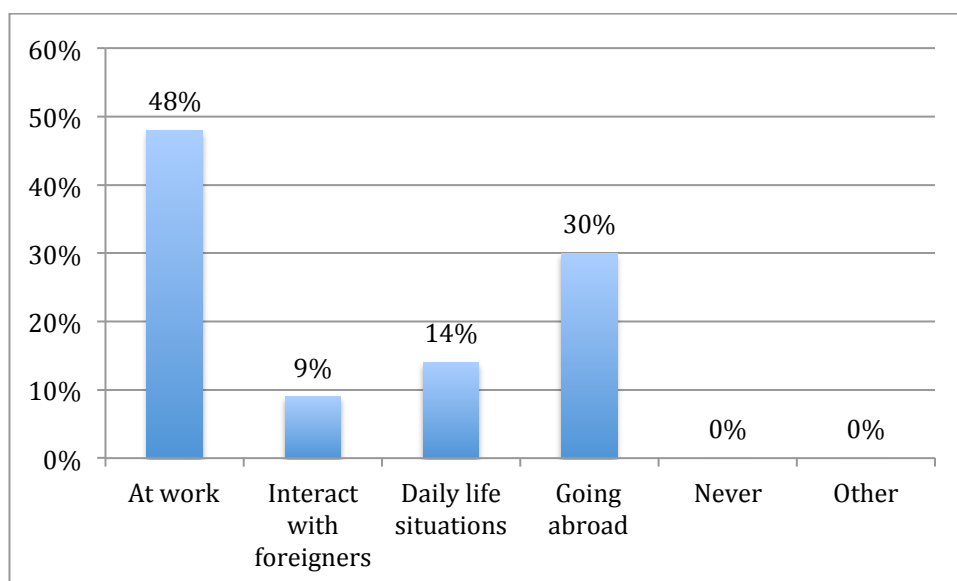
The scores for the first two responses are the same as the students' responses to this question. Furthermore, while there are 3% of students who think that there is no need to use English in Taiwan, all teachers believe that there is some degree of need or opportunity to use English in Taiwan.

When teachers were further asked to specify the type of job they refer to, Tourism received the highest number of responses (82%), followed by Food and Restaurant Management (71%). The rest of the options received considerably lower responses compared to the first two (Figure 19). The same pattern of responses is also shown in students' responses to this question. These results indicate that both sets of participants recognise that there is a need to use English in Taiwan, particularly at work. Two industries, Tourism and Food /Restaurant Management, appear to be perceived as the types of jobs which require English ability most.

Figure 19. Responses to BQ3: Jobs requiring English
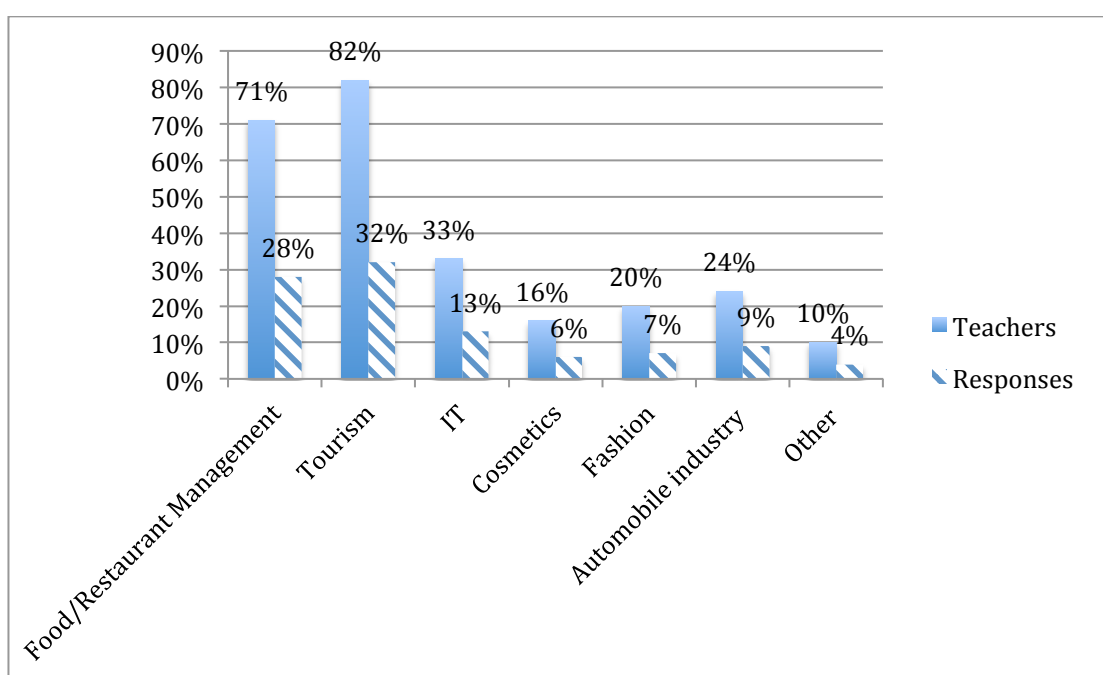
8.1.2 Teachers' perspectives on English courses offered in VHSs

Teachers were asked three questions about their perspectives on the English courses offered in VHSs. One was their English teaching goals in VHSs, another was their main emphasis in teaching English to VHS students in school, and the other was what do they think their students English learning needs are. Teachers were given multiple choices and they were asked to tick any of the options that applied to them. As more than one option could be selected for these questions, percentages are given both in respect to the total number of responses, and in respect to the total number of teachers.

Figure 20 shows VHS teachers' teaching goals. In an initial overview of the results based on the total number of teachers, the first goal for teachers to teach English in VHSs is to help students 'Pass their Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) Joint College Entrance Examinations' (69%), followed by 'English relevant for students' intended career' (63%), and then 'English used in daily-life situations' (59%). The category of 'Make contact with foreigners' is the lowest (28%). Teachers perceived that there are few opportunities to make contact with foreigners in Taiwan (see Figure 18), and this may have an influence on their teaching goals.

Figure 20. Responses to BQ4: English teaching goals
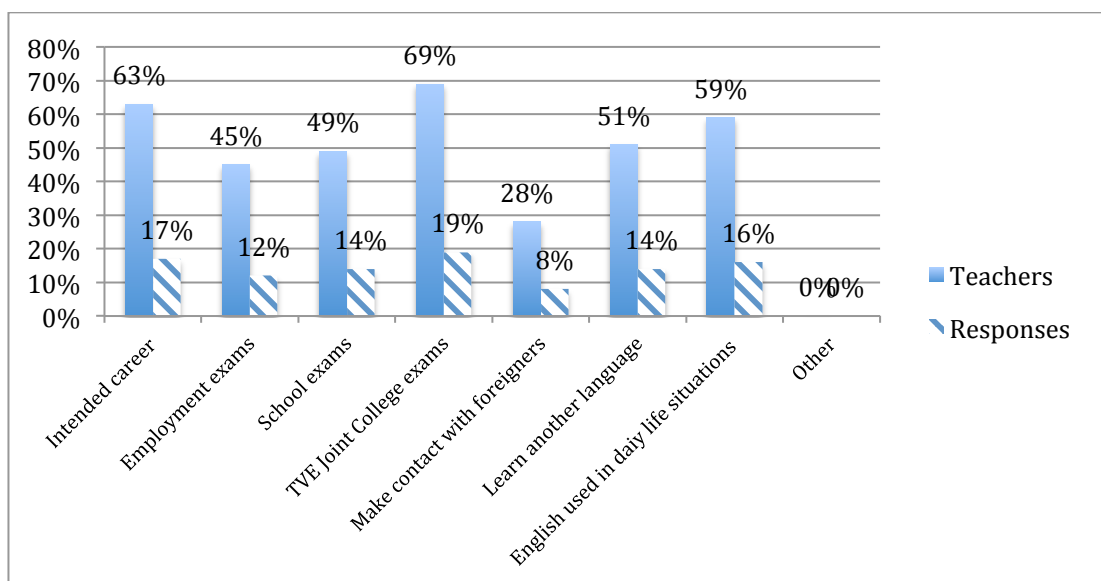
Figure 21 shows that the main emphasis for teaching English to students in VHSs is academic exams for advancing to higher education. Occupational English for students' intended careers is the second emphasis. The top two responses of teachers' main emphases on the English language education they provide match their personal teaching goals (Figure 20).

Figure 21. Responses to BQ5: Main teaching emphases
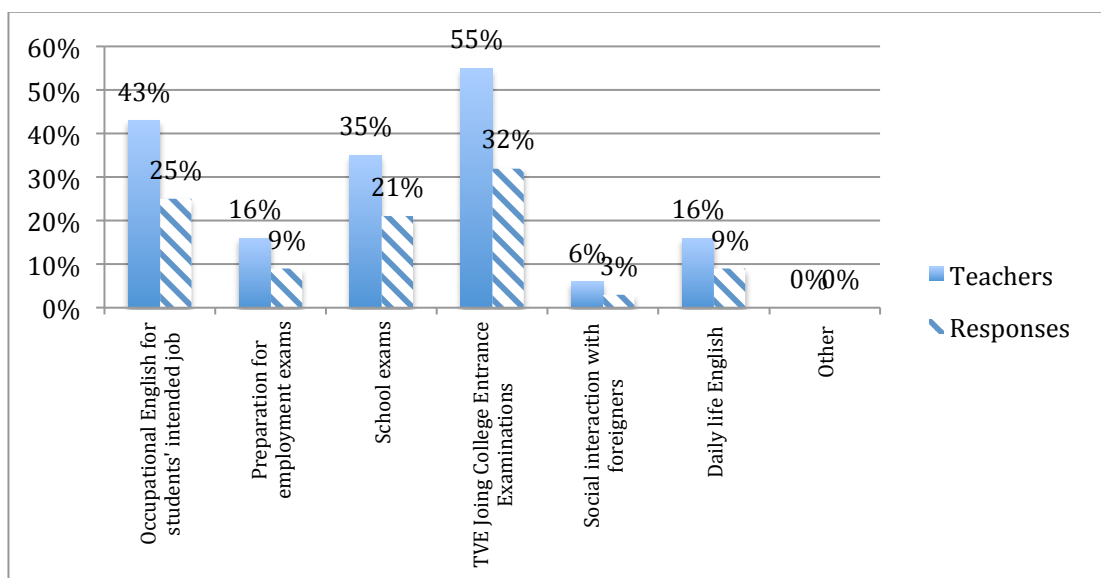
While questions regarding teachers' teaching goals show that helping students with their 'Daily-Life English' is their third response (59%), this goal receives considerably lower importance in their teaching emphasis (16%), and is over taken by 'School exams'. This indicates that VHS teachers pay more attention to examinations.

When thinking of the English learning needs for the majority of VHS students, 'Vocational English' (75%), 'Daily-life English' (61%) and 'Technical English relevant to students' subject' (59%) are the top three responses, with other options receiving comparatively lower responses (39%) (Figure 22). Students' responses to this question are that 'Vocational English relevant to their intended career' stands out as the first response, with other options receive similar responses.

Figure 22. Responses to BQ6: Students' English learning needs
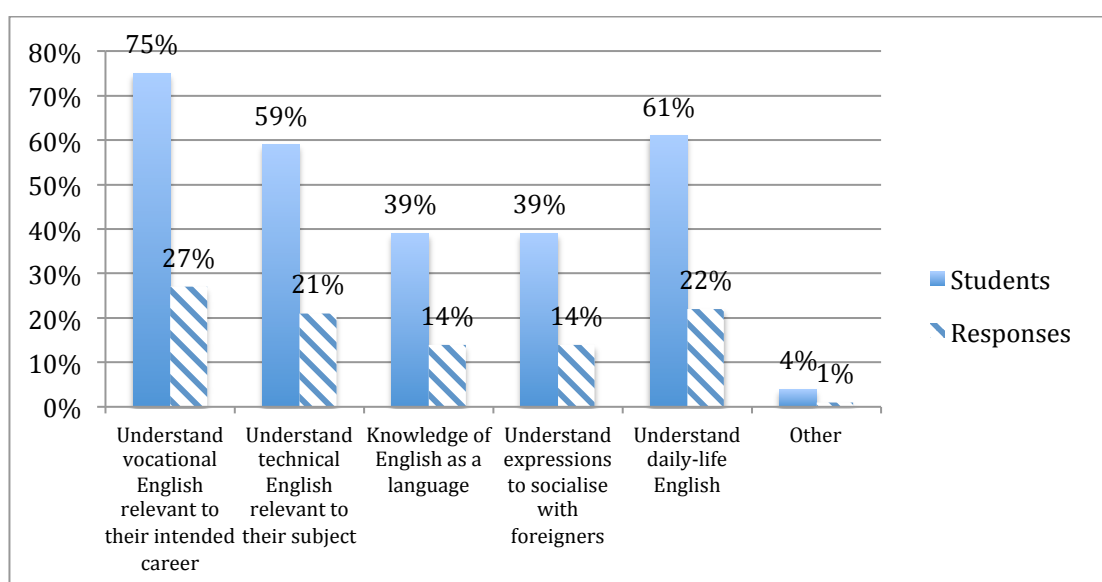
Teachers think 'Vocational English' is what students' English learning need is. This may come from their perception of 'at work' being the most likely situation to use English in Taiwan, which is the same result as the students' data. However, it is interesting to note that teachers' priority in teaching is preparation for exams for advancing to university.

8.1.3 To what extent do teachers think the English courses benefit students in respect of competitiveness in their anticipated job? Sub-question I: What are teachers' views on the relationship between the English taught in school and English required in the workplace?

Teachers were asked to rate their degree of agreement/disagreement of the following statements:

BQ7: English taught in school is relevant to students' anticipated career.

BQ8: English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare or develop students' English ability to meet anticipated English needs at work.

BQ9: I think the majority of students are satisfied with the content in textbooks.

BQ11: I would like to see the curriculum designed especially or made more relevant to students' anticipated careers.

Also, teachers were asked to respond to:

BQ10: What do you think the effect would be if the English curriculum were redesigned especially or more for vocational oriented English uses so that it is relevant to students' anticipated career?

Responses to BQ7: English taught in school is relevant to students' anticipated career.

Table 22. Responses to BQ7: Career relevance of English curriculum

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers' responses	4%	53%	41%	2%

Table 23. Explanation for negative responses to BQ7.

Unlikely event in Taiwan	18%
Not adapted to the local English needs	12%
Not practical English uses in reality	29%
Doesn't cover relevant English used in employment	16%
Other	2%
No response given	23%

Overall, slightly more than half (57%) of teachers think that the English taught in school is relevant to their students' anticipated career (Table 22). Those who disagree or strongly disagree with the statement cited two main reasons: The events included in the textbook seldom occur in the English as used in Taiwan, and the English presented in textbooks is impractical in reality (Table 23). These two reasons given by teachers are the same as the students' responses to the same question.

Responses to BQ8: English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare or develop students' English ability to meet anticipated English needs at work

Table 24. Responses to BQ8: Necessity of textbooks revisions

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers' responses	12%	77%	12%	0%

Table 25. Explanation for negative responses to BQ8.

Current textbooks prepare students for using English in the occupational setting	67%
Not the focus of English lessons in VHSs	50%
Other	0%

Even though previous results show that 57% of teachers agree or strongly agree on the relevance between English taught in schools and students' English needs in their anticipated career, 89% of teachers agree or strongly agree with the need to revise English textbooks in order to help prepare or develop students' English ability to meet future needs of English at work (Table 24). Out of the 6 teachers who did not agree with the statement, 4 of them think that vocational related English is not the focus of English lessons in VHSs, and 3 think that current textbooks already include this aspect of English language training (Table 25).

The responses from the above two questions remain the same for both teachers and students. They both show agreement on the relevance between English lessons in schools and students' anticipated careers (57% from teachers and 53% from students respectively). However, 89% of teachers and 85% of students think that there is a need to revise English textbooks to better prepare or develop students' English ability for their needs at work.

Responses to BQ9: I think the majority of students are satisfied with the content in textbooks?

Table 26. Responses to BQ9: Students are satisfied with English textbooks

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers' responses	0%	16%	73%	10%

Table 24 Explanation for negative responses to BQ9.

Beyond students' English level	39%
Designed only for passing school examinations	31%
Not relevant to students' future intended career	37%
Not realistic in the Taiwanese EFL context	28%
Not meet students' English learning needs	26%
Other	4%

Eighty three percent of teachers disagree or strongly disagree that students are satisfied with the content in textbooks (Table 26), which agrees with the results from the

students' responses. The top three reasons teachers chose to explain this are that the textbook standard is beyond students' English level, the textbook does not contain vocational related English, and the textbook is designed towards exams (Table 27).

The results reveal that, from the teachers' perspective, they do not think the current English course content is appropriate to VHS students. They think that there is a mismatch between the level of English expected by the exams and followed in the textbooks, and the students' actual English level. Furthermore, the design of the textbooks is so oriented towards the examinations that they become irrelevant to the students' intended career, and not of interest to students' English learning needs.

This finding shows that the English curriculum in VHSs is exam-oriented, and does not meet students' English learning needs and levels. This finding also corresponds to those discussed above about teachers' teaching goals and emphasis, and teachers' perceived English learning needs of VHS students'.

Responses to BQ11: I would like to see the curriculum designed especially or made more relevant to students' anticipated careers.

Table 25. Responses to BQ11: Desire for more relevant curriculum   **Table 26. Explanation for positive responses to BQ11.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers' responses	16%	77%	6%	0%

This is students' purpose for learning English	24%
This will raise students' English learning motivation	63%
Vocational related English better meets students' English learning needs	61%
Vocational related English increases students' chances of anticipated career development	61%
Other	2%

Ninety three percent of the teachers would like to see the curriculum designed to be more relevant to students' anticipated careers (Table 28), because they believe that vocational oriented English is what VHS students want and need to learn, and it is beneficial for students' anticipated careers (Table 29). The result is the same as students' responses.

Responses to BQ10: What do you think the effect would be to redesign the English curriculum especially or more for vocational oriented English uses that is relevant to students' anticipated career?

Figure 23. Responses to BQ10: Effect of more relevant curriculum
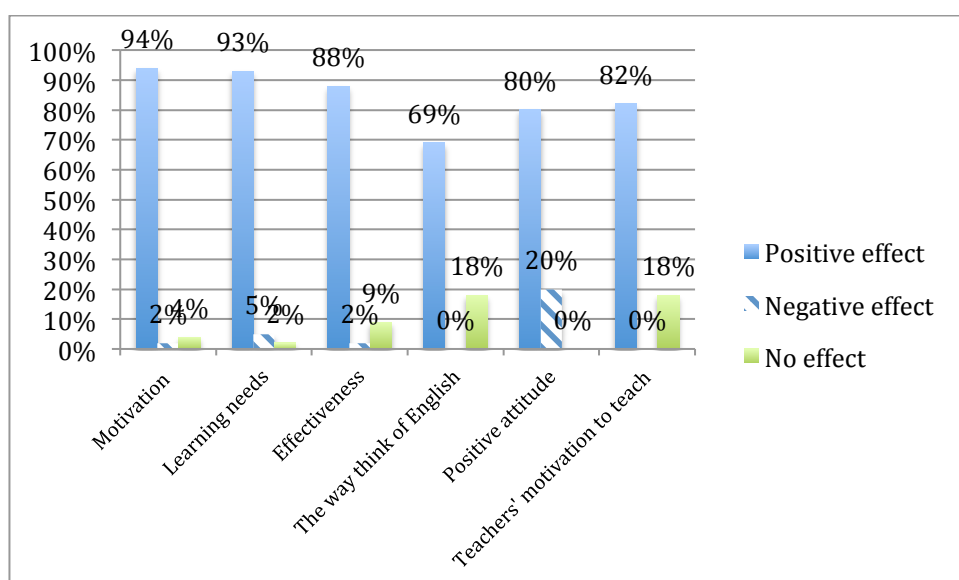
Most teachers felt that each option in itself would have a positive effect (Figure 23). The two most favoured positive outcomes this change would bring were raising students' English learning motivation (94%) and meeting students' English learning needs (93%). Furthermore, it is important to note that teachers thought this change would also produce a positive impact on their motivation to teach (82%). With the exception of the final option (teachers' motivation to teach), these findings are aligned with students' responses about their preferences for this change. Teachers had a higher positive view towards the effect of changing the curricula to be more vocational oriented. This result also matches the result of previous questions on the need to revise textbooks and the desire to see such change (Table 24 and 28).

So far the examination on the relationship between English taught in school and English required in the workplace shows that even though 57% of teachers agree that the English taught in school is relevant to students' anticipated career, 93% of teachers would like to see English textbooks revised to be more helpful in improving students' English ability for their anticipated occupational English needs, and this result is further supported by the positive attitudes (ranging from 69% to 94%) towards a more vocational related English curriculum. This agrees with the results from the students' responses.

The overall results indicate that both teachers and students had a positive attitude towards vocational oriented English in the VHS setting, and would welcome a change to the course in this direction. Both sets of respondents not only feel a need to revise textbooks to better prepare students with the English ability required in students' intended job, but also they would like to see this change. This is evidenced by an optimistic point of view towards this change, particularly from teachers. However, the current English language education in VHSs does not put a lot of emphasis on this aspect, as revealed from an examination of English curriculum in VHSs (see section 2.7.).

8.1.4 To what extent do teachers think the English courses benefit students in respect of competitiveness in their anticipated job? Sub-question II: What are teachers' views about English learning in VHSs?

The last issue addressed in section 8.1 is teachers' perception of English learning in VHSs. When asked what types of English teachers think their students need to learn (BQ12), 'Vocational English' is the first response (80%), followed by 'Daily life English' (71%) (Figure 24). However, when asked the types of English neglected in VHSs (BQ13), 'Vocational English' stands out as the top response (73%), while other options receive considerably few responses (Figure 25). These results highlight an inherent discrepancy in the current provision of English language courses in VHSs, namely, vocational English is perceived as the most needed type of English, but at the same time, it is the most neglected. The same discrepancy is shown in students' responses to the same questions.

It is clear that although vocational related English is regarded as of primary importance for VHS students, it is recognised as the most neglected area in English language education in VHSs.

Figure 24. Responses to BQ12: Preferred types of English
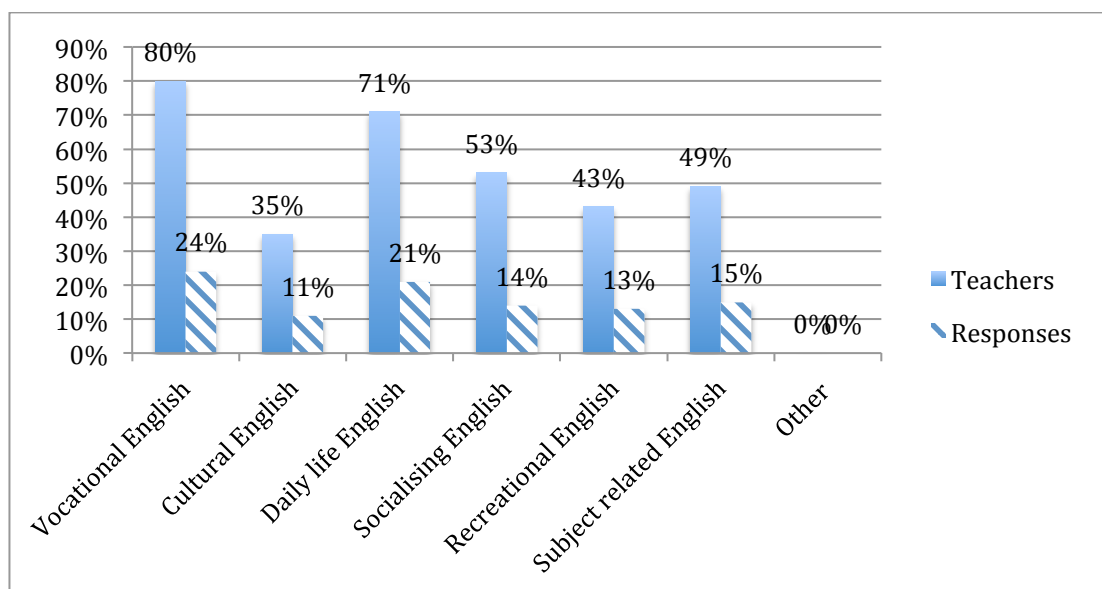
Figure 25. Responses to BQ13: Neglected areas of English learning
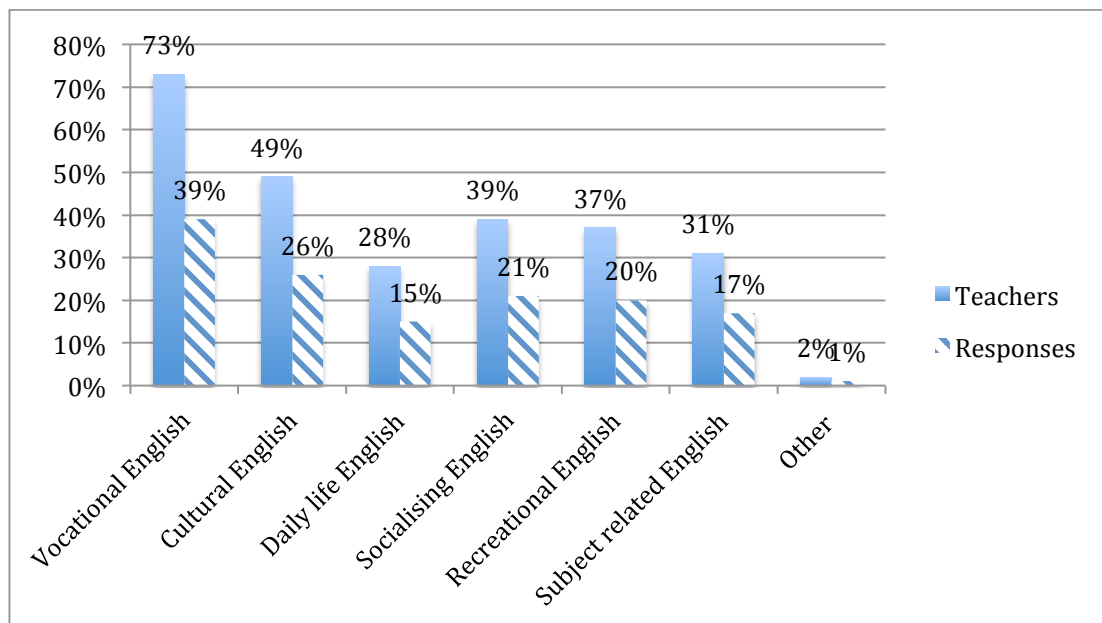
8.1.5 Discussion of teachers' questionnaire data

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire data shows that teachers think the opportunity to use English in Taiwan is lower than what students think (students' data

show 43% and teachers' show 34%), and this may explain why teachers put English for interaction with foreigners as the least important in their teaching goals, whereas students regard it as an important element.

Even though teachers think that there are not many opportunities to use English in Taiwan, they recognise the importance of English at work in Taiwan (with 57% of them regarding the workplace as the most common situation people in Taiwan need to use English). Because of this, they think vocational related English is what their students' English learning need is. However, in conflict with this is their main teaching goal, which is to put emphasis on helping students pass the exams for advancing on to universities. This discrepancy could be accounted for by considering the greater level of pressure and competition among schools to enhance their rate of students going on to further education. In addition, this discrepancy demonstrates that English teaching is not necessarily based on what teachers perceive to be their students' English needs.

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire data further indicates that there may be a difference in attitudes between the Taiwanese VHS education authorities and the teachers as to what the emphasis should be. This accords with the students' questionnaire data. This difference is evidenced by the facts that (1) 93% of teachers were willing to see the English textbook revised if it were to be more helpful in preparing students' English ability for future occupational English needs; (2) between 69% and 94% of teachers believed this would have a positive effect; (3) 89% of the teachers agreed on the need to revise English textbooks in order to help prepare or develop students' English language ability to meet future English needs at work, while only 57% agree on the relevance between English learned in school and students' anticipated career; (4) 80% of teachers regarded vocational English as a very important aspect for students' English learning needs and preference. However, 73% of teachers considered it to be the most neglected area in English language education in VHSs in Taiwan.

This seems to demonstrate a problem with the current English language curriculum in VHSs in Taiwan in terms of matching students' English needs with workplace requirements. This in turn indicates that there is a need for a change in the English language curriculum.

8.2 Teachers' interview data

This section reports findings from teachers' interview data, and is presented in four subsections, similar to students' interview data presentation. The first subsection tries to establish what the teachers' awareness and understanding is of the context in which vocational English operates (8.2.1.). Subsection 8.2.2 relates directly to research question 2: What are VHS teachers' perspectives on English language education provided by VHSs? Subsection 8.2.3 is concerned with whether teachers think that the English courses benefit students in respect of competitiveness in their future job (8.2.3.). Section 8.2 then ends with a discussion of the findings from the teachers' interview data in 8.2.4.

A small amount of biographical data was collected because the sample of interviewees was self-selected (i.e. they volunteered). However, the following facts exist:

The sample ranged between 25-45 years of age. One was male and eight was female. The average number of years teaching experience of the teachers completing the questionnaire, and from whom the sample of interviewees was produced, was 6.5 years. All teachers taught General English to students of various tracks, i.e. no teacher specialised in teaching General English to one track. All teachers possessed a first degree. All teachers possessed a teacher training qualification. If their degree subject area is not English, then they would have completed a course in English as part of their teacher training programme.

8.2.1 VHS teachers' awareness and understanding of English language use context

This theme was explored by asking teachers their definition of workplace English. Teachers think that workplace English is English used at work. It varies according to the profession and job one is doing, and it is mainly about communication skill. Teachers' awareness and understanding of workplace English accord with students' responses to this question. Typical statements were:

"The English that you need at work, such as simple English that fulfils the needs at work" (Teacher 8).

"I think the ability to talk in English. That's very important ... to use simple, fluent English to communicate to others" (Teacher 2).

Teachers' responses further reveal two views of workplace English. One view considers workplace English in a general sense of 'occupational contexts', and includes English language use in all sorts of situations that occur in that particular occupational context. The other view considers workplace English from the 'professional position' perspective, and sees English language use as technical terminology specifically used in that particular position in that occupation. Typical statements were:

"It should be in accordance with specific topics as required by different work fields, such as commercial, industrial, food and beverages, service industry...etc." (Teacher 4).

"It is mainly focused on specialised English. It's English that a person will be more likely than others to use in his or her work environment" (Teacher 1).

8.2.2 VHSs teachers' perspectives on English language education provided by VHSs

This theme was generated by asking teachers their perspectives on English language education in VHSs. Their responses are grouped into the following three categories: types of English taught in VHSs, teachers' perception of VHS students, and their ways of dealing with students' English learning situations and attitude.

Types of English taught in VHSs

Teachers' responses reflect three types of English taught in VHSs.

 (1) Everyday English

English provided by VHSs is perceived by teachers as general and lifestyle related English, so-called everyday English. Teachers reveal that the majority of content is not practical enough. Typical statements were:

"I don't think it has much use in the future. In regard to articles, first of all they aren't used that much ...there are some articles, and there's some vocabulary that we don't use much in everyday life" (Teacher 3).

"Although the editor tries hard to show the 'common' expressions used in daily life, but it really isn't used in real life. We live in Taiwan, and what we see is all about this land. I am not sure if what we learnt in Taiwan can be useful when we go abroad. It is unlikely to use the conversations in the daily life in Taiwan because it is not how we usually speak. I should say that it can be used on several occasions, but the situation doesn't always go as it is. If so, then we might need to speak in another way" (Teacher 5).

With such a broad range of English provided in the curriculum, some will of course be relevant for students, and some could just be potentially relevant. For example, one teacher states, *" it can potentially involve related topics of discussion in daily life or work"*. This explains why in the questionnaire slightly more than half of teachers (57%) think that the English lessons in school are relevant to their students' anticipated career (Table 22), but still the majority of teachers (89%) think that there is a need to revise the English textbooks to better prepare students for their English ability to cope with English used in employment (Table 24).

 (2) Exam-oriented English

The teachers' responses illustrate the fact that examinations are the focus of the English teaching in VHSs. The purpose and final goal is to prepare students for the examinations required to enter university.

"Taiwanese people strongly believe that study and academics are the best way to go, and therefore a lot of what is studied in the technical and vocational education system,

whether English or other subjects, has deviated from the industry to focus on progressing through the education system" (Teacher 3).

"I don't want exam to be the leading element in teaching. But this is the education environment in Taiwan; we cannot escape from this frame. I sometimes really want to teach something else, for example, conversational English and English that students need in their domain, but then those things are not in the exam. There should be a focus on this problem" (Teacher 6).

Teachers' interview responses confirm the responses gathered from the questionnaires, where exams for advancing to universities are shown to be teachers' first teaching goal and emphasis (see Figure 20 and 21).

(3) Vocational subject related verbal conversational English

Teachers' interview responses reveal that there are two departments in VHSs, Restaurant Management and Tourism, which provide additional English in the form of a Hospitality conversational English course, where students can learn extra vocational subject related conversational English that they would not learn in the general English course. Teachers think that the reasons why such an English course is only provided to these two departments may be because the higher probability of their using English in their future workplace. Typical statements were:

"For example the automobile faculty and the information processing faculty, the two faculties do not need much English. Therefore there is less connection to the English lessons. I think students in other faculties do not need English as much as students in the hospitality faculty, and that is why the school does not provide any additional conversation course for other faculties" (Teacher 7).

"Students in the food and beverage and tourism departments have a higher probability of using English in their future workplaces" (Teacher 1).

Teachers think that this kind of course can improve students' competitiveness and better prepare them for their future career. However, some teachers feel that this course would

not be a benefit to other departments as their need for English at work is not as high as students from those two departments. Typical statements were:

"Perhaps only for one course, the hospitality English conversational lessons in the hospitality faculty help students to be better prepared for future career and improve their competitiveness. Besides this faculty, there is rarely similar content in other faculty. Other faculties are focus on vocabularies. Unlike the hospitality faculty, there are lessons on food and beverages" (Teacher 1).

"I think it should target different departments, such as the Food and Beverage Departments, I think I've taught them (the English requirement for students when they enter the work field in the future), if they do end up in the Food and Beverage field, I think it is very helpful for them. As for the students in other professions, I cannot offer such guarantee. I think it does not help them too much" (Teacher 4).

Teachers also recognise that vocational subject related conversational English appears to be more appealing to students as it is something that relates to students' specialised vocational subject and would be relevant to or used in their intended occupations.

"Students are more interested in conversational English in their specific domains, or specialised English related to their subjects, because they may use such English in their professional practice. For example, some English words taught in the food and beverage department may be used in students' practical bartending practice course, and this increases students' interest in such English. But with regard to English learning in general, many students are not that interested in learning grammar and other aspects because they may not use such knowledge in regular life" (Teacher 1).

Although the other departments, such as Automobiles and Aviation Repair, also have a professional English course, it focuses mainly on vocabulary rather than conversational skills, which are the skills thought to be the basic occupational English ability requirements for VHS students.

"The Aviation Repair Department has Aviation English and Automotive has Automotive English as well. They focus just on professional English and we haven't really paid

attention to the conversation ... I think the basic occupational English ability requirements for vocational high school students is that they're capable of mutual communication in English, and also that they are familiar enough with terminology specific to their domains. If students can respond to English-related requirements in their jobs, that's a good thing. It means they're equipped with sufficient ability" (Teacher 4).

Several teachers state that they would welcome a change in English language education in VHSs to move towards more vocational related English, or a combination of general and vocational English. Some teachers suggest the possibility to establish some foundation in grammar and vocabulary for workplace English, or add some English that students might use later in their intended workplace.

"I think it'd be very good if vocational high schools integrated occupational English into their courses, not very professional English but work related English, according to each department. It can be said that English is currently no longer seen as a professional ability but a basic ability; it's the most important foreign language. So I think it's a key skill that each young person who will enter the workforce should have" (Teacher 1).

"Actually, within workplace English we could establish some foundation in grammar and vocabulary, and then add some English that they might use later in the workplace. This would give students more confidence, because they'd be more familiar with English that they might use in their future occupations. So I'd be quite optimistic about moving in this direction" (Teacher 1).

"It might be more helpful, so they can put what they learn into practice. If they have good English ability and plus certifications from their subject of study, it is actually better for students" (Teacher 5).

Teachers emphasise that the lessons are mostly based on reading and writing exercises. Although the textbooks often include conversational English, it only makes up a small proportion of the content, and is rarely used in class. As conversational skill is recognised as the most highly required English skill in the workplace, teachers

recommend that lessons should include more conversational English, as this will correspond to situations that students might encounter later in the workplace and would be more suitable for VHS students.

Whilst positive opinions towards vocational related English are given in both the teachers' questionnaire and the interview data, teachers pose concerns regarding making changes to the curriculum in line with this.

Firstly, teachers are unsure about how much, if any, specialised English or conversational skills are required in each specific subject. If the school knows what type of English is needed in a specific subject, then they can prepare students accordingly. For example, one teacher states that this already occurs in 'Tai-Ger dual system' courses. These courses combine study and work placement in a 40%/60% ration. As the students are already working in the vocational environment during their study the school knows what English is required, and in this particular example the school additionally prepares 100-200 frequently used occupational English sentences in that job for these students to cope with.

Secondly, teachers recognise that it would be a good idea to have vocational subject related English. However, since there are many professions, teachers are unsure of what the focus should be.

"I think the application and the usage of career English is quite wide and useful. Because the uncertainty of every student's future path in different faculties, therefore the focus is also different, by which I mean the professional English is also different. But perhaps it is possible the English ability they need at work might be common for all faculties" (Teacher 6).

Another concern revealed from teachers' interview data is that since the English required in every vocational subject is different, teachers are not sure of the usefulness of vocational subject related English if students change their subject in the future.

"There is a difficult point, because you cannot forecast what road the student will take in the future, therefore we can only use the present textbook and focus on its contents when we teach" (Teacher 4).

"Within the information administration faculty, there might be 10 students going for foreign language faculty, 10 going for business faculty, and 10 going for information administration or computer related faculties. How do you think I can teach them career English? It's a bit… you know… For students who are going for foreign language faculty, I will need to put emphasis on literature, and teach advanced and in depth English. But for students in business, career English means a different thing. Students in computing are also doing different things. How would I know which subject are they going to study in the future" (Teacher 6).

One teacher points out the other possible reason for not having career English in VHS is the low chance of English being needed in the workplace for VHS graduates.

"It is more likely to happen to students who graduated from general high school. But for students at vocational high school, the chances that they might need English at work are rare. These students have low achievement. That is why the school does not focus on teaching career English. The vocational high school students can earn money with their skill, they are very skillful. But they do not have many chances to be in touch with foreigners. They might be working for factories, environmental company, or all kind of company that requires only their mother tongue language in this society" (Teacher 6).

Teachers' interview responses towards English language education in VHSs suggest that the broad range of topics covered in the general English courses currently offered in VHSs lack practicality and applicability for VHS students, and this is also reflected in the students' interview responses. Teachers would like to teach students English that is more practical and helpful for them, i.e. the English that students are most likely to encounter in their life, and particularly in their intended career.

The teachers recognise the importance of vocational subject related conversational English for VHS students, and consider that such type of English is more desirable for VHS students than general English courses because (1) It gives students higher chances

to put what they learnt in school into practice, which will increase students' understanding, interest, and confidence of English learning; (2) It gives students an opportunity to practise English according to their specific subject and future career, which will build up the connection between VHSs and the workplace, and increase students' competitiveness in the future job market. Teachers show positive views towards the potential of English courses to be either a combination of general and career English, or more vocational subject related English direction, which is the same result shown in the teachers' questionnaire (Figure 23). However, teachers also pose concerns regarding vocational subject related English. Furthermore, VHSs' main focus on preparing and passing examinations dominates the teachers' pedagogical practice.

Teachers' perceptions of VHS students

Teachers perceive most VHS students as having low motivation and desire to learn or achieve in English. They are more interested in professional technical subjects and skills and think that these courses are more important than general courses. Typical statements were:

"A lot of them are learning with the attitude as a beginner and they are more interested in technical courses. They like to learn new technical skills and new technical subject. But when it comes to English learning and you ask them to take exam, they start to memorise without real understanding" (Teacher 9).

As one teacher indicates, VHS students are more inclined towards kinaesthetic learning rather than a more academic type of studying. They like to learn through doing hands-on practice, such as making models or baking bread, etc.

"Students like the technical subjects more, because the professional subject is hands-on practice. I think the students here like to make models or have hands on practice. The students here are more tactile sense oriented. Even though they are not good at studying, but when they bake bread, it's really tasty and nice. They gain confidence from there and they will share their bread with others. They are very into this type of practice, if they don't do it well enough, they will try and try and develop their own recipes. But their attitude is very different in general subject. If they face any problem,

they just give up. They will not want to find out or clarify the problem. The attitude is very different" (Teacher 9).

Students gain confidence and build up a sense of achievement through practical practice and training, which allows them to realise and understand what they learn. However, when it comes to English learning, teachers state their frustration teaching VHS students. VHS students have a poor English learning foundation, which starts from junior high school English education, and they also have limited vocabulary and difficulty in understanding English grammar. As a result, some students may just sit in an English class to pass the subject, guess in exams, or just give up learning English completely.

"The students are relatively poor in English, so it is difficult for me to teach a class. I have to start from the most basic. I know it because I have taught a group of students for a whole process of three years… sometimes I feel very frustrated. It feels like I have been working hard to teach them, but they have received differently from what I have taught" (Teacher 5).

"One of the problems comes from their junior high English lessons. Most of the students do not have good basis from junior high"(Teacher 7).

One teacher shares their early stage teaching experiences, which shows how they had to adjust their expectations and the only knowledge gained in their teacher training courses when confronted with the reality of teaching in practice.

"The first year I was here I realise how different it is from my expectation and what I learned from my education training courses. I couldn't get used to it in the first year. But then I slowly changed my mind-set, and adjust slowly every year. The kids hated me in the first year, but then have slowing gotten into their heart and guided their heart. At the end, I have to adjust myself to fit the need of the kids, because the kids here are not motivated to learn" (Teacher 9).

Teachers further point out that English courses in both junior and vocational high schools are too difficult for these students. Many of them cannot even spell or

pronounce words. Students just memorise vocabulary without understanding, and the same for grammar and sentence structure. One of the reasons might be that what is presented in textbook is not of much use in students' daily life.

"The problem they face is because they cannot use those words at proper time and place- or you can say students are just memorising without real understanding" *(Teacher 7).*

"They only know the meaning of the word; they can't use the word. Words need to be used in our conversations. They might not know which words will be used in conversation and feel like the word or grammar pattern they're studying won't be used, so why study it? It won't help" *(Teacher 3).*

"I don't think English taught in school has much use in the future. In regard to articles, first of all they aren't used that much and second not all our students have a high enough level to understand them. Even after they finish the course they don't understand what they studied today. There are some articles, and there's some vocabulary that we don't use much in everyday life. Students have a poor understanding of grammar, and it isn't so necessary in daily life, unless you're writing letters back and forth with clients, then of course you need to emphasise grammar. They won't use this vocabulary and grammar much in daily conversation" *(Teacher 3).*

Another explanation given in the teachers' responses is that students give up on learning, or their teachers in junior high schools have given up on them.

Some [students] told me that the teachers in junior high are quite some slackers, but not all, of course. Some students told me that teachers in junior high schools give up on some students and just ignore them and just put them in the back of the classroom. I think in one way the students have bad grades, but some of them already have low self-esteem" *(Teacher 7).*

Teachers' interview responses show that they perceive VHS students as tending to have a poor level of English level, and they do not understand the current lessons. Frustration from previous English learning results in students' low self-esteem, poor participation,

low achievement, lack of motivation, and a lack of confidence in English learning, and they tend to give up easily. The frustrations, discouragement, and difficulties VHS students have may change their interest and attitude towards English learning.

VHS teachers' ways of dealing with students' English learning situations and their attitude

Teachers state that VHS students have more negative than positive experiences in learning English. Thus, it is very important to pay attention to aspects such as how to re-build and development students' interest and acceptance in learning English, and how to build up students' confidence. Suggested ways revealed in the interviews are, for example, teachers need to start with the basics, with the appropriate amount and level of content to match the students' aptitude (ability); teachers need to allow time to repeat and review lessons to allow the students to absorb the information. In addition, easy and simple vocabulary quizzes can help students to build up their sense of achievement, and help students to believe that they can learn English and pass tests.

Teachers' interview responses also show the difficulties they face in dealing with English learning situations. Teachers state that it is hard to teach in such a big class size, with mixed level of students in each class. It is difficult to look after students with both higher and lower levels.

"*Shared subjects or courses are of course very simple for some, while it completely confuses those who are not even familiar with the alphabets. The latter group would have a low desire to learn because they don't understand. But if you target these students, the students at a higher level will be bored during class. So I think the first problem is too many students per class, which makes it difficult to design a teaching method. Schools require certain teaching progress from the teachers, and they also have a bigger problem with resources. Classes will run better if they have fewer students or are separated by English level. For example, students at a higher level can learn more widely and in-depth, whereas for those at a lower level, teaching materials will be only supplemental, and simpler resources will be provided*" (Teacher 3).

Normally, 2 to 3 hours are assigned to English lessons per week, with an extra 3 to 4 hours of English lessons given after school time, or during the winter and summer

vacations for academic-intensive class. Teachers need to cover a certain amount of lessons and have a scheduled target to achieve for examinations in each semester. Teachers state that they are generally only able to cover two thirds of the topics in textbooks in one semester.

"There are too many topics in the textbook, the students would not be able to complete the program when considering their levels ... you would like to finish the textbook, but it would be nearly impossible within the time limits. First and Second Year students only have two English classes per week, and it is the same even for Third Year students. Viewed from this perspective, the number of lessons is actually very few. It is difficult to teach a lot of things within such a short time" (Teacher 5).

8.2.3 Whether teachers think the English courses benefit students in respect of competitiveness in their future job?

Data for this theme is generated from two questions: what are teachers' views of English learning in VHSs? And what are teachers' views of English courses in VHSs?

8.2.3.1 What are teachers' views of English learning in VHSs?

There are two aspects revealed from teachers' responses to their views of English learning in VHSs.

Firstly, teachers state that it is important for students to see the applicability and practicality of English learnt in school. Considering the English language need and use in Taiwan, teachers state that it is important for students to understand the potential English use they learnt in schools, and have opportunities to practise using it. English is a foreign language in Taiwan, so students actually have little or limited chances to use English. Without using it, it is easy to forget what has been learnt.

"Students also don't meet many foreigners in their everyday lives and this makes it very easy to forget what's been learned, as Taiwan doesn't have an environment that allows for a lot of real practice" (Teacher 1).

"Actually if you don't use it for one, three, or five years, you will forget it. Our environment also doesn't provide students enough chances to practice. The only time students get to use English is at work, even if they want to learn it; there would be too little chances to pick up. When they need it, they will try to get it back. There are a lot of things they learn at school but have no chance to use, and it will fade away after years of little practice" (Teacher 6).

Teachers also state that there is a need to relate the English learnt in school to students' need in real life situations. They point out that they need to give additional authentic examples to show students how the English taught can be applied in circumstances relevant to them.

"For example, [this word] – they only know this means "flavour," but they might not be able to use it in a sentence. In my classes I teach this word by telling students that in their daily life, when you're out eating ice cream with somebody, they'll ask you what "flavour" do you want. We or students in certain departments will use this in daily life, and they'll know this word is useful in daily life. But if they only run across this word in a sentence in the lesson, they might think it's just another word. Even if there's an article, they're not going to think, "Hey, I can use this word in daily life" (Teacher 3).

Teachers think that without connecting English vocabulary to real situations that students may encounter, students would struggle or fail to realise the application, and understand the usefulness of the English learnt in school. Indeed, students' interview responses reveal that they are not satisfied with the current English course in VHSs because they cannot see the practicality and applicability of English they learn.

Secondly, teachers think that it would be good if students could practise English relevant to their subject or intended career context. However, the current English courses in VHS do not have such provision. Extra effort is needed to connect the English learnt in schools and the English required in workplace. Typical statements were:

"Since students chose the technical and vocational education system, they're actually learning a trade for their future profession, which should be different from students trying to progress on to university" (Teacher 3).

"The current textbook isn't designed to satisfy the occupational purpose, we would need to fill the gaps between Academic English and Workplace English ... the English taught in school is alright for the examination for going onto further studies ... as for the required English ability for the future career, that would require extra work" (Teacher 5).

8.2.3.2 What are teachers' views of English courses in VHSs?

This theme is discussed in four aspects: The role of English subject in VHSs, teaching content, language skills training, and the level of English textbooks and the students' English ability.

1. The role of the English subject in VHSs. Teachers state that students start to learn professional technical subjects in VHSs, and focus is put on these technical subjects. Students can earn money with their technical skills learnt in school without the need of English. On top of this, as mentioned earlier in teachers' perceptions of VHS students, English learning frustrations experienced from junior high schools leaves students with low motivation to learn English. Thus, English in VHS is merely a supporting subject for advancing to further education. Students think technical subjects are more important than English, as the return on investment in professional technical subjects is much higher than in English.

"Most students feel that learning English in vocational high school does not seem that important, perhaps because they may have started to study a lot of new professional courses. For example, students from the food and beverage department may want to learn things related to food and beverage, and students from the automobile department want to learn new automotive information. They feel that these professional courses are more important than learning English, Chinese, or mathematics now" (Teacher 1).

2. Teaching content. As mentioned earlier, teachers state that English learning and teaching in VHS is exam-oriented. The selection of textbooks in schools is based on the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education with multiple versions provided by different book publishers.

Most of the teaching follows the presentation given in the textbooks. It is no surprise to find out that the teaching pattern and content is oriented by the TCTE (testing centre of technology and vocational education) exam, which is mainly concerned with grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension, with very little conversational elements involved.

Furthermore, one of the teachers notices that the technical English taught in the industrial faulty mechanically asks students to copy down notes without further explain or illustration of the words' pronunciation and application. Consequently, students feel like they just study it for exam purposes and fail to understand its practical use.

"They only know the meaning of the word; they can't use the word. Words need to be used in our conversations" (Teacher 8).

Teachers also point out that some of the vocabulary and grammar listed in textbooks may not necessarily be used in context in Taiwan, or even used naturally in English speaking countries. This is also reflected in the questionnaire responses (Table 23). Teachers also indicate differences between English and Chinese grammar, for example, 'present unreal conditional and past unreal conditional' and 'future continuous tense', none of which exist in Chinese.

"The culture learned is more Western based, but we're in Taiwan. I personally think the curriculum maybe a bit unrelated to what we can use in Taiwan. The course curriculum is based more on what they would use in the West. But considering the situation in Taiwan, there is less content" (Teacher 2).

3. Language skill training. Teachers point out that language skill training focuses on reading and writing, and less on speaking, which is not helpful when it comes to students applying their knowledge in conversational uses in daily life. Because of this,

students tent to have more ability in reading and writing compared to their ability in speaking.

"The ability to converse in English will be the most helpful with regard to English requirements in students' future jobs, but the focus of teaching placed on grammar. The focus is on grammar and vocabulary" (Teacher 1).

"Taiwanese students may be pretty good at English, their ability mainly consists of reading and writing English for exams, while listening comprehension and speaking are very hard for them" (Teacher 1).

Furthermore, teachers state that the length of the lesson does not give them sufficient time to cover conversation practice. One teacher mentions that the speaking practice in class is simply students repeating after the teacher. *"In the class, I always tell them to repeat after me. That is speaking" (Teacher 6).* This is repetitive pronunciation practice rather than speaking. The same type of teaching method is also mentioned in the students' interview responses.

Even though the teachers state that conversational skill is more practical and useful, the reality is that the teaching is exam focus, and conversational English is not featured heavily in the exam, then the teachers face a dilemma whether or not to include instructing students in English conversational skill.

"It would be good if vocational high school students also possess basic conversational skills. It would be good if they can speak. But we only have two classes a week and we also need to cover what they need to learn for the exam. It is going to be very hard to find a balance" (Teacher 6).

Apparently, teachers think that the VHS English language education does not provide students with sufficient conversational skill, which is a skill that teachers would like to put more emphasis on, and also a skill which plays an essential role in terms of the practical application of English in the Taiwanese workplace context.

4. The level of English textbooks and the students' English ability. Teachers point out that the students' English level and the level presented in the textbook do not match. Teachers need to simplify the lesson in such a way that students that understand the content and use it in the future.

"It is almost not possible to teach them three or four thousand words all of sudden when they start with only a thousand" (Teacher 6).

"They will not need some of the things in the textbook in the future, for example some difficult words or grammar. I will transform them into things they might need in the future, for example synonyms. For the difficult words, I will tell them other ways to express the same meaning so that they can accept it. Not everyone in the vocational high school has a good basis. Therefore I like to simplify my lesson in a way that they can use in the future" (Teacher 7).

Teachers think that it is not necessary to teach difficult content, as only half of the students can understand vocabulary and grammar. Besides, the content in the textbook is too long, rigid, and not applicable for the students. Thus, some of the teachers change the examples shown in the textbooks into simpler and more realistic ones. It is also interesting to note that teachers find that whilst vocabulary might be useful for students in the future, the rest of the textbook content is not helpful.

"Perhaps only the vocabularies are helpful, the texts are not, because the students are not capable of reading the text themselves. I do teach them some phrases. They cannot learn that much, even if you teach them again and again they still can't remember. I think reading is less helpful for them. Reading is too much for them, they cannot absorb that much. I think reading. Because reading is too long. If it is about sentence structure we can perhaps talk about it and circle what they need to remember and write it out" (Teacher 8).

"I think most textbooks are still test-oriented. I think workplace will still require a certain amount of vocabulary, and that's the part these textbooks could help. They also aid students in their reading skills. The rest I think is not that helpful" (Teacher 2).

8.2.4 Discussion of teachers' interview data

Teachers' interview responses confirmed the findings gained from the questionnaires, which were that their teaching goals and emphasis is on exams. Both interview and questionnaire findings also demonstrated that vocational subject English would be beneficial for VHS students in terms of preparing them for future employment. However, the findings also confirmed that the exam oriented teaching focus on advancing to higher education fails to provide what is perceived to be beneficial for VHS students in terms of their future career development. English language courses as they are currently structured do not aim to prepare students for their intended employment. Teachers' preference for teaching vocational related English is in line with the aims of VHS vocational tuition, however, teachers found that this conflicted with the need to give adequate preparation for academic examinations. .

The interview responses also gave us a richer picture of the reasons behind those findings. For example, they show why teachers recognise that their students' English learning need is vocational related English but their main teaching goal and emphasis is on exam related English and its corresponding skills, with the aim of preparing students for universities. The interview responses further gave us an understanding of the reality of the current English language teaching arena, i.e. teachers' perceptions of VHSs and problems, and the difficulties they face in providing effective English courses, largely because of time constraints and student ability levels.

8.3 Summary from teachers' data

The results from the teachers' questionnaire and interview data are summarised as follows:

(1) There are three types of English which are characteristics of English taught in VHSs. Firstly, the course teaches 'Everyday English', which covers a broad range of English and may be useful at some time in students' future lives. However, it is, in fact, not of much practical application for students in Taiwan, since English is not commonly used in Taiwanese daily life in which students commonly use Mandarin or Taiwanese. For

example, teachers use poetry as a device for the teaching of English as it appears in the textbook, yet its practical use is debatable. Secondly, exam-oriented English, which is the de facto English teaching and learning focus in Taiwan, and is oriented toward examinations. Thirdly, vocational subject related conversational English, which is offered only to two departments, Food management and Tourism, is believed to be more useful for students in terms of competitiveness in their future job and their understanding of the real application of English learnt in school to the post high school vocational world.

Teachers think that vocational related conversational English is desirable for VHS students because it gives students greater chance to apply what they learn in school in vocational contexts, which will increase students' understanding, interest, and confidence in English learning. This type of English sets a vocational context and therefore gives students an opportunity to practise English according to their specific vocational subject and future career, which will build up the connection between VHSs and the work market, and increase students' competitiveness in gaining employment in the future.

Teachers show positive views towards English courses when they are comprised of either a combination of general or vocational English or more vocational English. However, teachers pose three concerns about these courses. Students may change direction in the future, which then makes teachers unsure of how useful career specific English is since teachers perceive that it may limit the students' language ability. The wide range of professions is so wide that teachers are unsure how much specialised English and verbal conversational skills would be required in students' specific vocational subjects, and they also worry about the focus and time needed to cover students' needs adequately. Teachers' motivation may also be undermined because they think that English may not be needed for the majority of VHS graduates.

(2) Teachers' perspectives on the English courses in VHSs are that they appear to support students advancing to further education, which means that the content is exam-oriented and fails to provide practical and realistic English usage close to students' needs in Taiwan. The emphasis on reading and writing practice does not provide sufficient verbal conversational skill practice which is what teachers would recommend

as being more useful to students' English learning needs. Lastly, teachers mention that the level of textbooks and students' English ability is mismatched.

(3) Teachers' remarked on their perceptions of VHS students, solutions, and problems. Their perceptions of VHS students can be grouped into two aspects: one is students' English learning characteristics and the other is students' English learning ability.

Students' learning characteristics in relation to English are that they have low motivation to and interest in learning English, and that they take English classes in order to pass the subject. Students also have low self-esteem and low sense of participation and achievement, and pay more attention to or have more interest in professional technical subjects than English. Students' levels of English are so low that they are de-motivated, do not try to pass examinations and are lacking in effort.

Students' English learning abilities are undermined because they have a poor foundation in English language learning and acquisition. For example, they cannot spell or pronounce words, they do not understand the lesson, and they are hampered by setbacks experienced from previous English learning in junior high schools.

Teachers' ways of dealing with students' English learning situations and low levels of motivation are to boost confidence, and teach according to students' aptitudes (for example, teach basic content, give appropriate tests, examine a manageable amount of content). Teachers also try to develop an interest in or acceptance of learning English.

The difficulties teachers faced in conducting an effective English course relate to big class sizes, mixed-ability within classes, and time factors for practical review, examination targets and course coverage.

(4) Teachers' perceptions about workplace English requirements are that students should develop verbal communication ability, specialised English, and professional English, which consists of deeper technical, terminological terms for specific professions. Some teachers also suggest that career English needs to be taught and that this is mainly about communication ability, with the use of general English in vocational context.

(5) Teachers think the connection between English learnt in school and English required in the workplace is weak because VHSs focus on examinations rather than career English which means that not enough practical vocational related English is provided, that students lack practice of skills required in the workplace, and further that they lack realistic and practical presentation of English application.

The overall findings from the teachers' data are that firstly, teachers recognise that vocational subject related conversational English is what their students' English learning needs are, but at the same time they recognise that their actual teaching emphasis is different. This is because of the limitations of the current system. The current curriculum mandates general English applicable to general situations, and this dilemma is exacerbated by practical considerations, i.e. time constraints, students' English ability, and the exam focused teaching style. This focus on exams not only limits the teaching content, but also limits the teaching methods to mainly reading and writing skill training, at the expense of conversational skills. Secondly, there is a conflict in teachers' outlook on vocational subject English in VHSs. While teachers recognise its potential usefulness and benefits in terms of students' career development, they have reservations on the practical use of and need for VHS graduates. They also voice concerns about the usefulness of a focused curriculum if students were to change their study or career in the future since this would restrict students' career options.

To conclude, teachers are conflicted as they have concerns regarding the demotivation of the students, students' actual English need, future potential and career limitations of vocational subject English. Whilst they recognise a need for vocational subject English, they doubt the extent of its usefulness and whether it is possible to teach a vocationally based English programme within the current exam oriented education system.

9

Major findings, conclusion and reflections of this research

9.0 Introduction

English language ability is widely accepted as having a strong relation to, or being an essential prerequisite for, increasing the advantage for individuals to gain employment in this globalised world. This poses a question to VHSs, whose aim is to equip students with the skills and competences necessary for workforce, if they have evolved in tandem with the changing needs. Therefore, this study has explored aspects of how English language education in VHSs in Taiwan prepares students for their intended employment. The summary and discussion of the overall findings, and the conclusion draws from the findings are presented as below.

9.1 Summary of major findings and discussion

This section summarises and provides discussions on the major findings of this research. It is grouped into three categories, which is based on the aims set out to conduct questionnaires and interviews (see Table 1&2 in Chapter 6).

1. Students' expectations of English language education in VHSs, and what lies behind the teaching practices of the classroom.

The findings show that VHS students have clear expectations that their English course will provide them with vocationally relevant knowledge and skills, but in fact the English course they receive does not necessarily equip them for their anticipated employment.

As mentioned in Chapter One, work requirement skills in Taiwan and worldwide has changed to increasingly value English ability in employment. English language is a tool for students' employability. VHS students recognise the increasing demand of and requirement for English ability in the work market, and match their needs and purposes accordingly (see section 7.1.3.). However, the policy position adopted by the Ministry of Education in English language education in VHSs is that all students take a general English course, and this is academically oriented. This compulsory status of general English has been unchanged since VHSs were first established in 1932. This shows English language education in Taiwanese VHSs is out of date with modern English needs. Therefore a finding from this study was that it supports Long's (2005b) appeals for courses to be or be seen to be relevant to learners' specific needs (see section 1.5).

As regard to current English language teaching and learning, agreements and discrepancies are revealed in teachers' and students' responses. The findings reveal that it is teacher-centred, rigid, and exam-oriented, without too much interaction involved. Students sit in class, passively practising grammar drills, and memorising vocabulary mechanically. Students state their dissatisfaction with repetitive content, particularly with grammar, which makes them feel like they are not learning anything new. However, teachers argue that institutional factors such as class size, mixed-ability, time factors, examination targets and course coverage are difficulties they face in conducting an effective English course. Also, teachers report that VHS students' English levels are low, and they need to strengthen their language skills from junior high schools and build up their confidence. Therefore, teachers teach basic content and vocabulary because this seems to be the first easy step to start with (see section 8.2.2). In addition, both groups felt that English textbooks are not suitable for their purposes. Students felt that the problem was the overly exam-oriented design (Table 16), and teachers felt that the problem was the language level.

Furthermore, even though teachers recognise the importance of developing and preparing students with the English ability required in employment, the emphasis on examinations produces exam-oriented teaching, and exam-oriented students. In other words, students are fixated on test scores rather than language competencies. Even though VHS students recognise the global status of English as well as the increasing demand for English proficiency in employment, as teaching is dominated by exams, the

teachers' focus is on vocabulary and grammar for a wider range of topics. Both teachers and students state that English courses do not equip students adequately in terms of students' future career prospects, and both of them recognise that there seems to be a lack of connection between the General English students are taught and the practical use of English in real life.

The current English language teaching and learning practice in Taiwan is very similar to the traditional grammar-translation language teaching method (see section 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.1.2). This finding is consistent with Fotos's (2005) observation of the prevalent English language teaching exists in an EFL context (see section 4.3.1), and agrees with the comments made by Warden and Lin (2000) on the form-focus instructional practice in Asia .

Apparently, English language teaching focus is on grammar and vocabulary (knowledge and structure system of language) in Taiwanese VHSs rather than delivering learners' communicative ability. This focus may due to the examination focus/targets. Most importantly, it is inconsistent with VHS English language education curriculum rhetoric (see section 2.7).

English learning in the classroom is passively practising grammar and doing vocabulary drills, and memorising mechanically. Students are not given opportunities to practise and use language in meaningful contexts. Research literature in language teaching and learning has stressed the importance of allowing learners to realise how language is used in context, and providing them with plenty of opportunities to practise language in their targeted context and thus develop leaners' ability to use the language for their intended purposes or need (e.g. Littlewood, 1981 in section 4.1.2.1 and Rivers, 1997 in section 4.1.1.2, also section 5.4 and 5.5). However, the role of context in language and awareness of context-based variation in language use are neglected in English language education practices in Taiwanese VHS classrooms. Consequently, effective and appropriate language comprehension and production are not delivered and achieved. This explains the low level of English performance in Taiwan when it comes to communicative use.

Savignon and Wang (2003) have pointed out some reasons EFL teaching in some

contexts has stayed focused on form, such as teachers' lack of communicative competence in English and the lack of adequate teacher preparation generally (see section 4.3.1). This research shows other factors that could contribute to the challenges of implementing communicative language teaching approach in the classroom: class size, mixed-ability with classes, time factors for practical review, examination targets and course coverage as reported by teachers (see section 8.2.2).

The other issue in this finding concerns examination. Evidence in this research reinforces the fact that the test culture, which is mentioned in Chapter One, plays a major role in VHS English language education, and what is examined affects what is important to teach and study. As the current examination system does not set out to measure students' English ability in employment conditions or contexts, the way English is taught in reality is incompatible with students' English learning expectations as well as teachers' desirable teaching preferences.

If VHS education is to equip students with the skills and ability for employment, then clearly the examination system has to change with English curriculum to measure and evaluate English skills and ability needed in reality. Again, this can be done through needs analysis (see section 5.3.).

2. Students' and teachers' perceived perspectives on the kinds of abilities that English language learning requires, and also on the relationship between English language education in VHSs and students' intended employment.

The findings show that both sets of participants favour English, which is useful and relevant in employment. This is probably due to the fact that they think people speak English mostly at work in Taiwan, so learning English in employment plays an essential role. This phenomenon has also been noted by Kim (2008), who points out that English is an essential and practical skill for success in employment in East Asia countries including Taiwan.

Both sets of participants perceive workplace English as English used at work, and note that the type of English will vary according to an individual's profession. Conversational ability is regarded as the most important skill. Students' English

learning needs, purposes, and goals are shaped by what they perceive is required in the workplace. Both teachers and students favour a vocational subject related English course, which is believed to be more useful to students in terms of their anticipated work competitiveness and their understanding of the real application of English learnt in school. However, it should be pointed out that teachers also raise concerns for what might potentially happen if this kind of course were used (see section 8.2.2).

Even though teachers have concerns about vocational subject related English, this is in contrast with the fact that all other subjects taught in VHSs are vocational. Also, it must be borne in mind that VHS students have chosen their specific subject knowing it will lead to a certain occupational route. Therefore, teachers' concerns about students changing or not knowing their final vocation contradict not only students' own views of their needs but also the whole system of provision of different programmes in VHSs.

In addition, while some teachers think that majority of VHS students will not need English at all in their future employment, evidence has shown that English language requirements in the workplace in Taiwan are increasing (see section 1.7). This indicates that teachers may be out of touch with the current English requirements in the actual workplace.

Teachers' responses also bring up two views of English use in employment (see section 8.2.1), which raise the questions of how specific vocational English should be, and whether 'occupational context' and 'professional position' views of vocational English will lead to any differences in terms of English teaching and learning. This finding further extends previous discussion of ESP in Chapter Five.

This issue can be looked at from two standpoints (see example Figure 26 below): One is from the scope of an industry: how specific does the coverage of vocational English need to be in an industry? For example, the scope of tourism covers government tourism departments, immigration and customs services, travel agencies, tour operators, airlines, etc. Should vocational English cover all or some of the divisions under tourism?

The other standpoint is from the context within a sub-division: what areas of vocational English should it cover? For example, should it cover the English use/usage in an

overall context within a sub-division (i.e. travel agencies), or should it focus on a specific context within the sub-division (i.e. receptionists), as raised by participant teachers.

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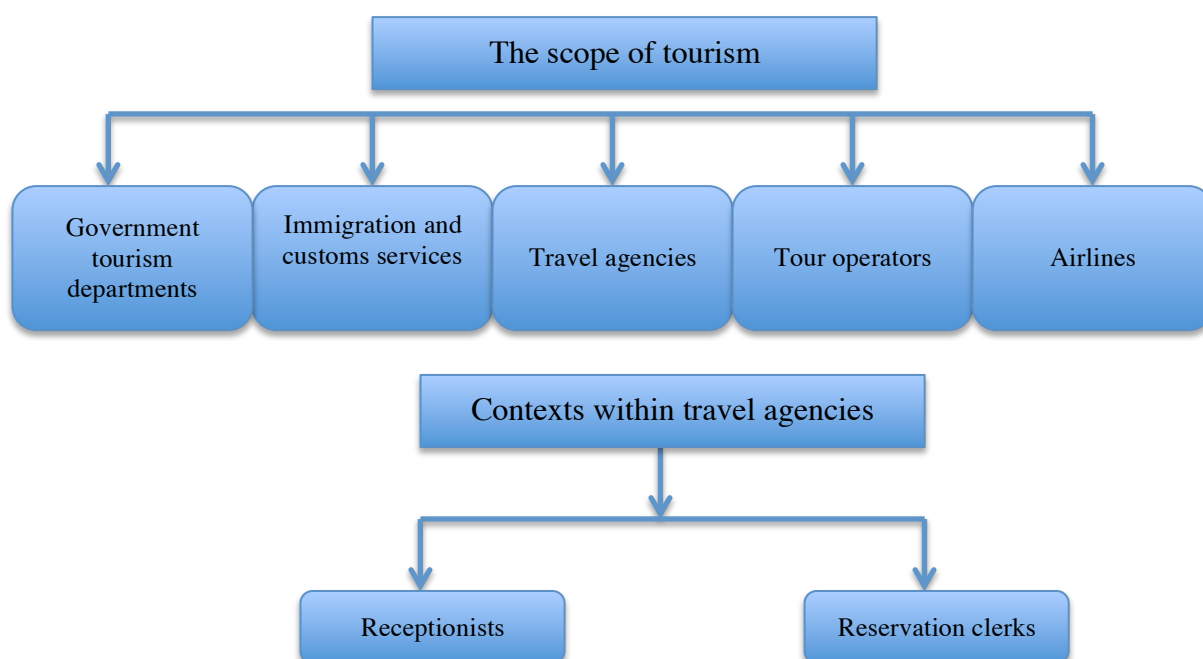

Figure 26. Teachers' perceptions of vocational English

A similar issue of whether the focus of a course should be broad or narrow has been much discussed in the literature (Flowerdew, 1990). For example, Hutchinson and Waters (1980) state that learners need a basic underlying competence: transferable general linguistic skills and competences, to comprehend the information they are expected to cope with in the target situation. Hyland (2002), however, criticises the idea of transferable language skills and features across disciplines and occupations. He argues that such a common core could offer inadequate foundation for understanding disciplinary conventions, and thus he maintains discipline-specific and profession-specific variation. Huckin (2003), on the other hand, considers this issue from the learners. He argues that a narrow-focused course is appropriate with a single learner or homogeneous groups of learners, as their focus and purpose for taking the class would be uniform comparing to those learners from different disciplines and/or language backgrounds. Similarly, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) state that learners' motivation for taking the course would have an effect on how specific the course is.

High motivated learners would find a narrow-focused course be useful, while learners without clear needs for taking the course would find such course demotivating. Cianflone (2010) discusses the degree of specificity for ESP courses in EFL contexts, and states that the following factors can all influence the specificity of an ESP course:

- The position of ESP classes inside the whole curriculum,
- The proficiency of learners in the target language,
- The context of the learning situation,
- The amount of time available,
- The educational requirements, and
- The language needs.

If employment context were the context where English is used or required mostly in Taiwan, it would be reasonable to suggest that the main purpose and focus for English learning in VHSs should be put in the 'vocational context', where students are likely to use and apply what they learnt in schools in practice, and to achieve the English ability required in their chosen field.

Tailored vocational English could prepare students to have the English skills and ability that are applicable to their chosen route or specialised field. It could build students' awareness and understanding of language use/usage in their chosen field, and serve the same purpose as their professional/technical courses offered in VHSs: to help students gain entry into and become successful in employment.

It needs to be stressed that the arguments put forward in this research is that English education in VHSs should have a focus/direction that is more relevant or closer to VHS students' chosen subjects and needs, and this is supported by the theoretical position of ESP (see Chapter Five).

As discussed in Chapter Five, needs analysis is an important and fundamental part of such a tailored English course. The identified needs of English teaching and learning (whether to take a broad or narrow focus) should be informed and guided by what the demonstrated needs analysis suggests. Perceived wants and needs from different perspectives and multiple sources, such as stakeholders', institutions', employers', and

students', etc. as well as the actual English needs and demands from the students' chosen field, all need to be clearly defined and identified beforehand. This is, however, beyond the scope of this research.

3. Students' and teachers' experience of English language education in VHSs, and their perceived English language needs and preference for students.

The findings demonstrate that students are not satisfied with the broad range of English topics covered in the English curriculum. Students fail to see the value of learning English, as they do not see the practicality and applicability of the English they learned in schools. This is also reflected in teachers' responses, as they report that they need to find alternative ways to show students how to apply the words in practice (see section 8.2.3.1). This finding adds to what was discussed in Chapter One in terms of criticism of General English in the literature (see section 1.6).

In EIFL learning contexts, there is a limited amount of exposure to English, as well as restricted opportunities to use English outside the classroom (see section 2.1.3.2). Therefore, it is important for English language courses to respond to local, national and social contexts for English language use, as well as the context in which learners are going to use English, so that learners are able to see the practicality and applicability of English learnt in schools. However, the broad range of topics currently presented in Taiwanese VHS English curriculum fails to serve this aspect, and thus students suffer to see the value of learning English. In addition, the aim of English language education in VHSs is to develop the students' ability to apply what they learn in school into communicational practice in real life situations. However, the broad range of topics covered in the curriculum is too diffused to allow students to communicate effectively, especially in their chosen field. In other words, the reality of English language education does not reflect what is expected by the educational authority.

There is a need to strengthen the relevance of English language course content to the context in which learners expect to use English, which in this case, is their anticipated career. This view is supported by Shavit and Müller (2000), where they state that specificity and relevance to students' anticipated employment will enhance the effectiveness of vocational education (see section 2.7). Instead of having a broad range

of topics, the English curriculum can have topics relevant and specific to students' chosen field or anticipated career. This could allow students to recognise English language course content as a part of their own discipline, see potential practicality and application of their English language course, and consequently give the English language course face validity in students' eyes. Students are then likely to be satisfied and motivated to learn as well (Huckin, 2003; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Wilkins, 1973).

9.2 Conclusion of this research

This section addresses the research questions set out in Chapter One and presents the conclusion of this research.

English has become dominant in a variety of contexts, i.e. business, technology and science, advertising, etc. However, this study's examination of the English language curriculum in Taiwanese VHSs suggests that it is General English, which is not differentiated by the type of skills and language required by the diverse occupations VHS graduates may enter, nor does it address the English language use in students' specific chosen field and context. Literature has suggested that context is important in terms of understanding language and language use (see sections 3.1.1, 3.1.2, and 3.2.). Such provision of courses is less likely to accommodate or develop students' English language ability for their chosen field or intended employment, as it is English applicable for generalised situations. So in addressing research question one, therefore, this study has found that VHS English language curriculum does not prepare students with the English language context or use they are likely to encounter. So a major conclusion of this study is that the English language curriculum in Taiwanese VHSs does not aim to equip students with the English necessary for their intended employment. This echoes the criticism of General English pointed out in Chapter One (see section 1.3.)

In response to research question two (what teachers' and students' perspectives are on English language education), this study found a clear discrepancy between what is expected by students and what is happening in reality. Data from both students and

teachers supported this finding. So a second conclusion is that the aim of VHSs to train students for specific professional competence is not being met and needs to be re-examined.

Finding relevant to research question 2 lead us to further conclusions. One is that teaching practice is inadequate. As indicated in the literature review (see sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2, and 2.5.4), the generally found situation of learners from EFL contexts still having less opportunity for English language output compared to ESL contexts is echoed in this study's evidence. Teaching practice in Taiwanese VHSs remains traditional and teacher-centred, with little interaction happening in the classroom. The other conclusion relating to research question 2 is that students passively receive English language input, and do not have enough opportunities to produce English language output, which is particularly important for EFL context. This in turn does not provide students with enough practice in English to compete in the global work markets.

Finally, this study's answer to the central question of 'how does English language education at VHSs prepare students for their intended employment' is that VHSs need to focus on employment language skill training. This reinforces the earlier conclusion I made in the literature review in Chapter Four (see section 4.3.3.). As the current exams are written-based, English skill training focuses on reading and writing for university examination preparation. There is a lack of emphasis on communicative English language ability training, which is regarded as the current English language demand in the globalised work markets. The current English language skill training may put those students whose intended employment requires/needs oral or listening skill most in disadvantage.

9.3 Implications

As far as the researcher is aware, this study is one of the first of its kind, and the policy implications of the findings are very great. No previous study has examined the general English curriculum in VHSs, the needs, experiences, and the attitudes of VHS students and the teachers regarding the relationship between English courses and students' anticipated career competitive in depth. This study has major implications for policy

reforms. Examination of the general English education in VHSs shows that it is inadequate. Policy needs to address this mismatch between the needs of the students and the English courses.

It would seem advisable, then, for governments and educational bureaucracies to review their policies on English curricula. If vocational English is an appropriate alternative to better prepare VHS students for their future careers, steps should be taken to ensure that appropriate vocational English usages/uses in the workplace are being thoroughly taught.

The literature suggests that the vocational subject related English courses preferred by students and teachers in this study are offered by ESP courses, but not in traditional general English courses. A possible solution to bridge the gap between the English curriculum offered in VHSs and students' perceived needs and wants towards their English courses is an ESP approach, in which learners and their specific purposes and reasons for learning are addressed.

Another implication of these findings is that research has noted that communication skills in English are regarded as the most required skills in the workplace in various domains, such as business (Maes, Weldy, & Icenogle, 1997), and engineering (Kassim & Ali, 2010). English as the main worldwide communication language is being recognised. This study reconfirms that communication skills are the skills favoured by both teachers and students as the most important and needed skills in employment. Particular attention should be given to the development of learners' English language communicative ability, in which learners are engaged in the use of language appropriately in contexts, and are provided with opportunities for meaningful communication.

Policy on English language education needs to make changes in response to the pressure from globalisation. The general English courses provided in VHSs appear not to train and prepare students adequately with the English ability required in their particular chosen domain. With a wide range of contexts and application of English, and the increasing emphasis on communicative language ability in English, the term: English for Specific Communicative Purposes (ESCP) is proposed to meet the new demands.

Therefore, policy on the examination of the globalisation and English language teaching and learning presented in chapter 1 may be refined in response to these needs (see Figure 27 below).
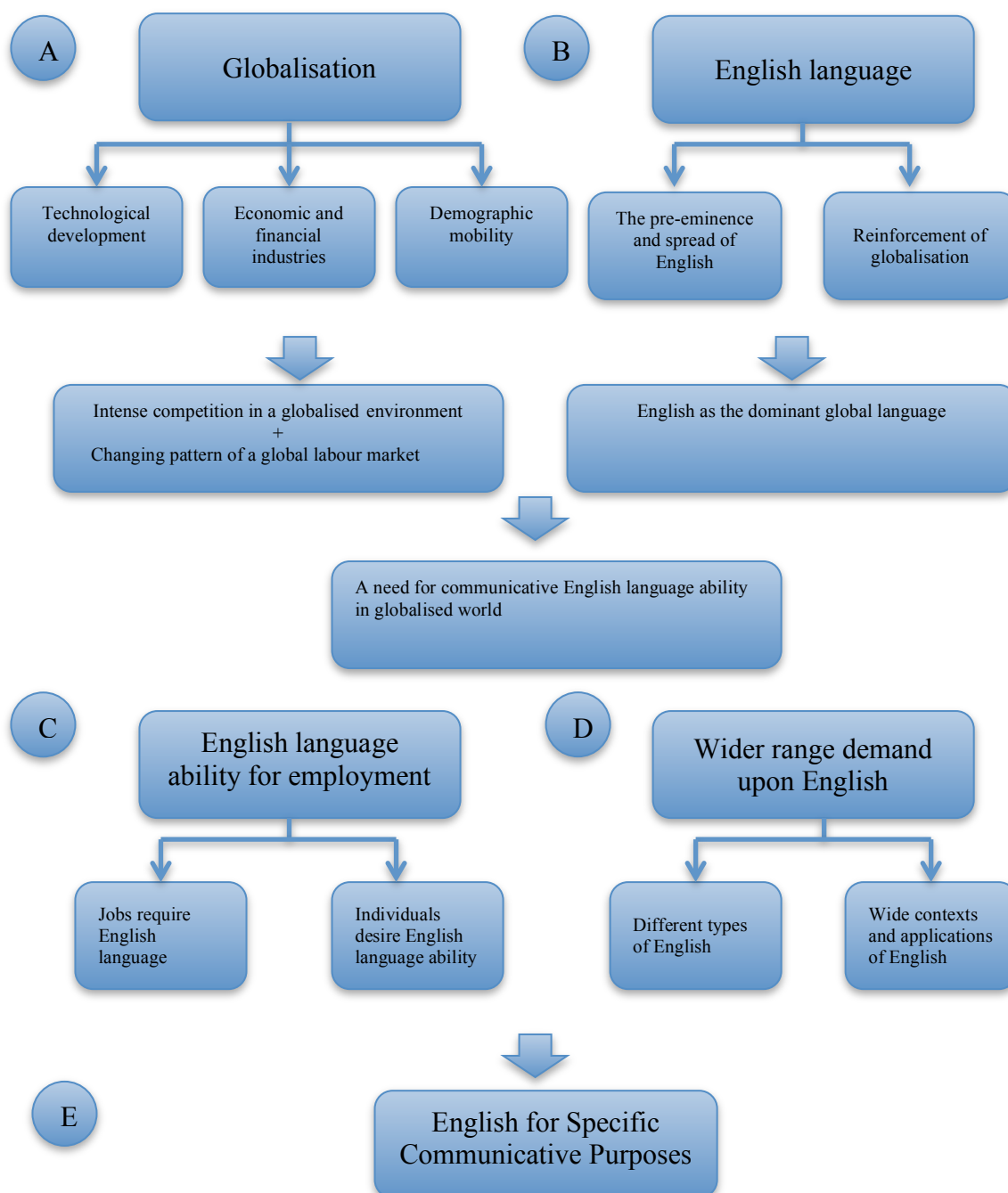

Figure 27. Revised model in light of the findings

This study therefore suggests that general English courses on offer in Taiwanese VHSs should be replaced by an ESP approach focusing on ESCP, where learners' targeted communicative English needs are addressed, and particular contexts for English use are specified. This will enhance the quality of VHS English education. Accordingly, this study suggests that ELT has to change in terms of two separate but related issues.

(a) Content-specific vocational language, which focuses on the specific English language and skills geared to the target language use situations (the workplace). The specific English language and skills learners need for their anticipated career need to be recognised and developed to prepare them to use language appropriately in the specific targeted workplace contexts. For example, English contents should be designed specifically to meet the needs of the targeted groups of learners for their anticipated career, and should prioritise English skills required in the workplace.

(b) Teaching focus and instruction, which addresses and reflects learners' specific needs for English learning and allow learners to understand what is taught. Davidko (2011) points out that understanding is of primary importance for learning because an individual easily forgets what s/he does not understand. Learners need to understand what is taught/learned in order to construct their knowledge of new-coming information and be able to store in their memory. Applying this idea to English language learning, putting language into contexts of use is one of the ways to facilitate learners' understanding of language use, which is better than mechanically memorising the lesson (as revealed in section 7.2.3.). Taiwanese VHS learners should learn and engage with English language through interacting communicatively and purposefully, and eventually carry out communicative language use. They should be provided with opportunities to demonstrate their communicative English ability.

It needs to be pointed out that while focusing on learners' communicative English ability required for their anticipated career, attention to linguistic elements should not be neglected completely. This does not mean a return to discrete-point grammar teaching (as revealed in section 7.2.3.), but allowing linguistic structures to assist learner's comprehension and learning while the overriding focus is on meaning and communication.

Also, this change does not involve any teaching approaches/methods. While teaching methods are important (as they are ways teachers carrying out/implementing the curriculum content), teachers' beliefs and their teaching focus are the fundamental issues that need to be looked at first. Each teaching approach/method has its benefits and drawbacks (as covered in Chapter 4), so if teachers' beliefs and teaching focus are on learners' opportunities to develop English communicative ability required for their anticipated career, then teachers need to be able to adopt approaches/methods to best develop this ability.

The most important point, however, is that learners' needs analysis guides curriculum content and teaching focus respectively.

9.4 Justification for inserting English for Specific Communicative Purposes in the model

As has been shown, English language education in VHSs needs to be adapted to meet the current demands of English.

The principle of ESP relates very closely to the findings, which have emerged in this study, as the main characteristic of ESP is it recognises and addresses the English needs and practices of particular professions or occupations by identifying the specific language features, discourse practices, and communicative skills of the target groups. It also prioritises learners' English needs and competencies in the target contexts. An ESP approach attends to course content to meet specified needs of the learners, and also the language appropriate to the particular targeted contexts.

VHS students have chosen their career domain and have clear expectations that their English course will provide them with vocational knowledge and skills required in their anticipated career. This research found a great demand among students for vocational related English, which is also favoured by teachers. Furthermore, if as Kim (2008) claims, two crucial factors that lead to effective and meaningful learning were the consideration of the needs and interests of the learners, then the emphasis on extensive investigation of language usage/use in the target situations in ESP meets both sets of

participants' preferences. The tailored ESP course can relate closely to their course of study and intended employment, and thus allow VHS students see greater relevance (than their current English courses) to situations they might encounter in their future lives.

English is a common language to enable communication in global contexts. Many studies have noted the requirement of English as a means of communication across different disciplines and occupations (see Chapter 5). This study also found that both sets of respondents perceive communicative ability in English as the most desirable skill in the workplace. There is clearly a great demand for such ability. Borrowing the theoretical underpinnings of CLT (see Chapter 4), it is important for learners to understand the communicative functions of English in real situations and real time, and more importantly, have opportunities to actually acquire this ability through learners' participation in communicative events and engage in communication. Therefore, particular attention and emphasis are needed to ensure learners' opportunity to actually use and thus acquire the necessary communicative ability; in other words, to be the users of the language. Again, this is one of the main concerns in ESP (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

In short, ESCP not only attends to tailored course content but also focuses on the importance of developing learners' communicative ability appropriate to the specific purposes and understandings of particular communities. It prepares learners with the specific English language communicative competence required in their targeted context. Fundamentally, ESCP concerns with learning English to improve vocationally related language ability and skills, with particular attention to communicate better in vocationally related contexts. The eventual goal is to cater to learners' specific communicative English demands in employment and thus enhance learners' competitiveness in employment.

9.5 Recommendations for improvement in the curriculum

This research concludes that if the aim of English language education is its practical application and use, language pedagogy needs to come to grips with a range of fundamental issues:

1. Where the language is used? This considers the context in which the language is used, and how this is addressed by contextual realities and situations of the language (see Chapter 1).

2. What role does the language play to the learners? This considers the relationship between the learners, the language, and the learners' specific purposes for learning the language, and how this is addressed by general English language learning, and English for specific purposes (see Chapters 3 and 5).

3. How can learners acquire the ability to actually use this language? This considers the teaching of the language to learners, and how this is addressed by language teaching (see Chapter 4).

By exploring these issues, this research argues for an ESP approach focusing on ESCP to recognise and address learners' specific English language communicative purposes, needs, and use in their targeted contexts. So how an ESP approach focusing on ESCP can benefit the current English language education in VHSs:

Firstly, the content-specific vocational English language recognises and identifies the language and skills required in students' intended career, and develops students' English needs in their chosen expertise. In this way, students are able to understand the application of English they learnt in school, and also increases the practicality and connection of English learnt in schools to the contexts in which students are likely to use English, namely their intended careers. It could thus bridge the gap between English education in schools and the English requirements in students' anticipated career. Also, the content-specific vocational English language could potentially help to increase students' English learning motivation and interest, as they can see the relevance, application, and practicality of English learnt in schools.

Secondly, the focus on students' specific communicative English ability required in their intended career facilitates their success in the workplace. It also allows them to explore the functions of English in a meaningful way, treats English as a communicative tool rather than a school subject, and thus makes English language learning worthwhile.

However, it needs to be pointed out that communicative events which take place in real world are often unpredictable, so learners need to be able to modify their speech acts to perform appropriately in different contexts (Stalnaker, 1998). Therefore, the idea of focusing on learners' specific communicative English ability is that learners should be encouraged to express their own ideas coherently. The grammatical structure should not be neglected, but instead, it should be related to the communicative events learners need to perform, and thus generate communicative competency, which fits different situations.

Accordingly, issues to be considered for improvement in the VHS curriculum are presented as follows:

Issue 1: contextual realities

There are three levels of contextual realities need to be attended to, namely:
(a) English in a global context: awareness of the function of English as an international language to facilitate communication between speakers with different first languages.
(b) English in a national context (Taiwan): English is not the medium of daily communication, but a tool for social survival, namely career development in Taiwan.
(c) English at an institutional level (VHSs): Recognition of English for career development aspect, bearing in mind the limited exposure and use of English outside the classroom.

Accordingly, curriculum guideline should
(1) Treat English as a communicative language and tool, rather than a school subject.
(2) Cater for students' occupational English needs, and look into the specific occupational English for students from different subject backgrounds.

(3) Ensure the use of English in the classroom, and provide learners with the opportunities to actually use and practise the language specifically for their chosen anticipated occupational settings and requirements.

Issue 2: English language learning

Recognition of the English language learning needs in Taiwanese contexts, which has a greater need for English to cope with working situations and requirements than in daily life.

Accordingly, curriculum guidelines should include content-specific vocational English. This involves identifying the specific contexts of students' current and future uses of English, and distinguishing the specific language features, discourse, and language skills required. By doing so, students are able to understand the practicality and application of English learnt in schools, as well as how English functions in their targeted range of occupational contexts.

Issue 3: English language teaching

Focus should be put on the development of students' communicative language ability rather than English language knowledge only.

Accordingly, curriculum guidelines should specify the implementation of ESCP, such as the use and engagement with communicative tasks and activities for specific occupational settings and events. Steps should also be taken to examine learners' progress of actual communicative performance; for example, different formats of assessing learners' English ability. Instead of just having one type of written examinations, interactive oral assessment could be one of the alternative ways to monitor learners' generative competence.

Also, teachers need to recognise the needs arising from the cognitive learning process of learners and assist them to understand the lesson rather than passively receive description of language.

9.6 Reflections and limitations of the research

On reflection on this study, I think I could make improvements to the setup of my pilot questionairre. I think if I were do it again, I would do it along a slightly different line. For example, I would try to get a range of different employment types to gather students' views on the type of jobs most require English at work (see Figure 9 in Chapter 7). The other point is that in hindsight I would have liked to undertake a more sophisticated statistical analysis but the design of my questionnaire did not really allow me to. Given the chance again, with what I know now, I would probably have designed the questionnaire differently.

Clearly, there are limitations to this research. Firstly, it would have been interesting to include employers' opinions regarding VHS graduates' English proficiency and their views on VHS English education. This would help to strengthen the finding of the research question as to the extent to which VHS English education is adequately prepare VHS students for their anticipated career competitiveness. Unfortunately, with a limited amount of time available for the planning and execution of the research, and analysing the obtained data, the researcher is unable to include this resource in the current study. In the same vein, VHS graduates' retrospective feedback on English education they received in VHSs, and their experiences and perspectives on the use and requirements of English they encounter at work, would have helped to provide valuable insights into the relationship between English learned in schools and English required in the workplace.

A second limitation of this research relates to the questionnaire. The reliability of the data gathered from the questionnaires could be improved in the following ways. For example, phrasing of questions. General questions in the students' questionnaire, such as question 7 asks students about their opinions on what they think of the general English learning needs for students learning EFL in VHSs. Students may not be able to generalise away from their own experiences in order to answer the question. The other area is related to the structure of the questionnaire. If the research were repeated, this might be overcome with the development of more sub-categorised questions. For example, instead of asking students one question to find out their English language

learning needs, more questions relating to this categorisation, such as what do you need English for? And what kind of situations/contexts do you need English? This would allow the running of a statistical reliability test, and thus further enhance the quality of this research. However, as this was an exploratory research in a new area, there is no previous construct that could apply to this research.

9.7 Research contributions

In spite of the limitations, there are a number of areas in which the current research makes a contribution to existing knowledge and understanding of English education in VHSs:

1. This research proposes different mind-sets to look at English language in global, and national contexts, and defines the current research context with a new EIFL term (see section 1.1.3.3.). This clarification not only helps the readers to adequately understand the current research context, but the proposed mind-sets simplifies the many different classifications that currently exist, and helps the readers to look at English language teaching and learning in a simpler way. The EIFL term can potentially apply to wider international contexts where English language holds a similar position.

2. The results of this research bring out possible reasons why EFE outcomes are unsatisfactory for vocational students. The general English courses that VHS students receive apparently provide little help in understanding the complexity of English use in their potential jobs, because current English language teaching in schools tends to focus more on general cultural and life experiences. General English courses attempt to cover a wide range of English situations, but may lack consideration of the English practices appropriate to the occupational settings into which VHS graduates are recruited.

3. Exposing the nature of the gap between the English curricula offered in many schools and the actual need in work places is the main driving force of this research. The current research has not only suggested why this gap exists but also suggested solutions that can bridge the gap. This means that the reasons and solutions for a well known gap is now available for discussion much more widely than would otherwise be the case. This

research offers policy and practice insights into what is already a 'well known' but under researched problem: a gap between the English curriculum offered in schools and the actual need in work places. Most importantly, this research provides some solutions that can bridge the gap.

4. This research makes a contribution to an understanding of the current English education practice in VHSs in Taiwan: the problems and concerns that exist, particularly the fact that there is, and has been, a crisis of identity for the vocational system. Some light is thrown here on some factors that are worthy of considerations in facing the crisis. These include the type and focus of English courses offered in VHSs, the scoring weight of English as a subject given by the college entrance system, and the focus of English education in VHSs.

5. The suggestion and implication of this study can potentially be applied to other Asian countries, where English is taught as a foreign language in the vocational forms of high school education, such as China, Japan, and Thailand.

9.8 Recommendations for future research

<u>Issues arising</u>

There are some issues which cannot be answered from the data obtained in this research and perhaps need a further examination or different choices of research method. These are

1. Why English is taught the way it is, and what are the barriers to change?

Even though teachers' interview responses point out the difficulties they face in teaching, there is little knowledge in Taiwanese VHSs about their adoption of current English language teaching approaches and methods: what influence/could have an impact on their beliefs and teaching focus, how confident teachers are in terms of their communicative competence in English, and their knowledge and training in various teaching methods/approaches. These points need further investigation.

2. Teachers' concern about students changing or not knowing what their final vocation will be.

It needs to be borne in mind that these are the students who have already made their choices on the specific subject that will leads to their anticipated career. Therefore, teachers' concerns are at odds with the aim of training students for specific professional competency. However, the researcher is aware of a more general issue as to how specific vocational English should be and how a balance is struck between specific and general English. This needs further research.

3. *There is a question of face validity on how students see English courses as being relevant to them.*

Even though Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claim that "the clear relevance of the English course to learners' learning needs would improve the learners' motivation and thereby make learning better and faster" (p. 8), the question is how do learners see English courses as being/not being relevant to them? What are learners' perspectives on relevance? Would a broad or narrow focus view of vocational English has any effect on how learners see English courses as being/not being relevant to them? These are example questions that need further investigation.

4. *It is not clear why the Ministry of Education prescribes General English to VHSs.*

The type of English traditionally offered to non-native English speakers in schools is General English, which teaches a wide range of English applicable to generalised situations for general purposes (Orr, 1998). However, there are now varying English requirements for different purpose, use, and needs. Also, there are different types of high schools (i.e. Academic High Schools and VHSs) established with different educational purposes and focus. Therefore, there is a need to look into the reasons for prescribing General English to VHSs, and this is a point which needs further investigation.

Therefore, the recommendations for future research included here relate, in part, to the limitations of the present study and, in part, to issues emerging from it.

<u>Specific recommendations for further research</u>

Firstly, the range of the samples in current research could usefully be extended and supplemented to include wider population. For example, information from VHS employers and graduates can provide further insight on the suitability of English education on offered in VHSs, and the relationship between English learned in VHSs and English required in the workplace. Also, information from the Ministry of Education regarding the concept behind general English to VHSs can help identify and understand potential problems which exist.

Secondly, questions in questionnaires could be designed differently to allow the use of statistical analysis to run the reliability test. For example, including more questions under one categorisation: the investigation of learners' English learning needs can be explored by not only asking directly what are their English learning needs, but broader and related questions can also be asked, such as the context in which students need English (what are the contexts in which you need English?), and the English language skills they need (what are the English skills you need?), etc. This could then enhance the quality of the current research.

Thirdly, research can be carried out to further investigate the actual teaching practice in the classroom, particularly on teachers' language teaching beliefs, approach, and challenges, and if training is provided to equip teachers with the skills and confidence to prepare students with the language ability in employment. For example, classroom observation could be one of the research methods to explore the actual teaching practice in the classroom, and gather information on teaching problems and approaches, so that answers to the existing teaching approaches can be solved. Also, group interviews to explore teachers' pre- and in-service teacher training can provide insight into why traditional grammar-translation teaching method or form-focused instructions are prevalent in an EFL teaching context.

Similarly, further investigation on how students see English courses as being relevant to them is needed. Possible ways to do this could be asking students for feedback and opinions on different/specific types of English, and gather their thoughts on how they see English courses as being relevant to their intended career. Also, a number of

questions could be asked to gather quantitative opinion, which then will allow the calculation of means, standard deviations, and other possible statistics, and thus get a degree to which the course looks relevant to them. As the test of face validity involves the subjects' input, caution is necessary and may need other/further information to support the existing evidence.

Further research on how to better connect VHS English education to real world English demands is needed. As an ESP needs analysis is not just based on learners' perceived needs, and this study only looked at VHS students' and teachers' perspectives and experience of English education in VHSs, further study should be carried out to determine the actual English needs for VHS students in their chosen career, so that a balance can be struck between specific and generic English. For example, research on the nature of the English language requirements for students from different subject background and for their intended career, so that the gap of language requirements between the English education offered in VHSs and the workplace can be identified, and practical English use in the workplace can be addressed. Further research can also be carried out to investigate language usage/use in the target situations, such as terminology, which serves as mutual knowledge or shared information in certain professionals, or special words or expressions used in a particular profession.

As this study was only conducted in one city in Taiwan, one possible direction for future research is to expand the scope of the research and to gain a deeper understanding of the role of subject related vocational English in VHS settings in other cities or rural areas. A comparison between cities and rural areas can also be carried out, or even a comparison between public and private VHSs in Taiwan.

Also, as mentioned in Chapter One, in addition to communicative competence, intercultural competence has been recognised as an important element in terms of communicating effectively and appropriately in intercultural contact situations in today's globalised world. However, because of the scope of the current research, focus is given to the language competence element, which is communicative competence. Indeed, the absence of any in-depth consideration of the role of intercultural competence is a matter that the researcher now appreciates is possibly of greater significance than at first realised. Therefore, further research could be carried out to

address the element of intercultural dimension in language teaching within the specific context of VHSs in Taiwan and the English curriculum that would best benefit VHS students.

Appendix A

Discussion of globalisation and the proliferation of the English language

Globalisation

Globalisation is not a new concept and was identified some considerable time ago (Mrak, 2000). However, the continuous and accelerating developments of globalisation have led to a rapid pace of growth that has had a remarkable impact on societies worldwide.

Globalisation is a term used in a variety of ways and forms (Gunn, 2005) to explain or interpret issues in particular contexts in the changing world (Lawal, 2006). On the one hand, it can be described as a general phenomenon where changes in the context of the world as a whole shift how we see and explain the world (Gunn, 2005), and re-shape and affect modern societies (Hallak, 2000; Moloi, Gravett, & Petersen, 2009). On the other hand, it can refer to various processes by which the peoples of the world are interconnected, interdependent, linked, and united into a single global society (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008; Robinson, 2001). Globalisation can also be described as the central driving force behind all those rapid changes in modern societies (Moloi et al., 2009).

Globalisation involves complex changes at many different levels, and manifests itself in many different ways. Depending on the perspective or reference one uses, globalisation can be defined in different ways, and as such there is no precise or universally accepted definition (Dale & Robertson, 2009; Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008; Mrak, 2000; Nicolae-Balan & Vasile, 2008).

Three key aspects that drive and embody globalisation

Globalisation is reflected in many domains, and involves "almost everyone, everything, and every place, in innumerable ways" (Ritzer, 2011, p. 3). Three key aspects that are consistently identified as impacted on by globalisation are: the economic and financial industry (Gunn, 2005; Hallak, 2000; Kaczurba, 2000), demographic mobility (La Croix,

Mason, & Abe, 2002; Ndulu, 2004), and technological development (Gunn, 2005; Hallak, 2000; Kaczurba, 2000).

From the economic and financial perspective, globalisation can be seen as a process of "integration of goods and capital markets across the world in which barriers to international trade and foreign investment are reduced" (Crafts, 2004, p. 45). It represents a new transnational phase of capitalism from the nation-state phase (Robinson, 2001). The process of globalisation can also be seen as "the necessary consequence of the economic development" (Lawal, 2006). There is increased integration of economies, particularly through trade and financial flows around the world (Lawal, 2006). A nation's economy is no longer restricted to the national economy but is extended and integrated across national boundaries to integrated international markets. Consequently, economic strategies within a nation can no longer be restricted to the national economy, but need to be refined to meet the new conditions, which they face in the world market and the world economy. National economies are facing much more intense competition due to globalisation (Mrak, 2000). The free exchange of goods, services and capital create intensifying competition at global level, which is one of the main driving forces in promoting globalisation (Onwuka & Eguavoen, 2007).

This transnational state of the global economy has led to the development of multinational companies or transnational corporations, which changes the ways in which products are produced and marketed. This involves multi-locational and transnationalised production, worldwide circuits of distribution and exchange, and global division of labour (Robinson, 2001). For example, multinational companies may export the manufacture of product to countries where labour and investment costs are lower (Oliver, 2005). Along with improvements in transportation networks, the handling requirement and transit time are reduced and so, the cost is lower. The transnational state of the global economy and the improvements in transportation networks have promoted global capital flows and the expansion of the organisation of world production (Onwuka & Eguavoen, 2007; Robinson, 2001). Also, changes in the pattern and structure of global industrial production have, in turn, provided an impetus for globalisation (Mrak, 2000; Onwuka & Eguavoen, 2007).

Globalisation also refers to population movement, e.g. labour force across international borders (Lawal, 2006). The globalisation of economies has a significant effect upon the pattern of diversification of global industrial production, which results in changes in the nature of employment patterns (Oliver, 2005). The mobility of global production factors, which include capital, labour, materials, technology and know-how, and deregulation of finance (Hallak, 2000; Little & Green, 2009), and an exchange of knowledge and ideas in production and service, have led to an increase in the mobility of skilled workers, whose skills are sought across the world (Little & Green, 2009). This has created a need for greater mobility in the workforce, and has led to demographic changes to the employment market to work in a globalised economy. The increasing number of people searching for work within and across national boundaries means that countries are facing increasing migration challenges and a need to operate a selective international immigration policy for the attraction of a highly skilled workforce (Zimmermann, 2005).

Innovations and advances in technology, particularly information and communications technologies (ICTs), have had a powerful influence upon all facets of societies worldwide, and are seen to stimulate the pace and forces of globalisation (Hallak, 2000; Mebrahtu, Crossley, & Johnson, 2000). For example, technological innovation enables traders to "meet demand for financial instruments such as swaps and futures with relative ease, thus allowing them to better manage their risks" (Onwuka & Eguavoen, 2007, p. 45). It also facilitates the increase in capital flow and the volume of capital in, for example, the stock market (Hallak, 2000).

The computerisation of work, the Internet, and high-speed data and communication networks facilitate the exchange of information and speeds up production (Hallak, 2000). As many jobs can be carried out through the Internet, there is a rise of global outsourcing (Zimmermann, 2005). For example, call centres and manufacturing plants based around developing economies in order to take advantage of lower costs (Cullingford, 2005b).

By means of the Internet, detailed information and news is available, and the communication of ideas and knowledge are accessible personally and commercially in a variety of ways (Cullingford, 2005a; Oliver, 2005). There is worldwide dissemination

of information and images through the media, and the transmitting of information has become cheaper and faster on a worldwide scale. These have had an impact on, for example, the facilitation of connections in international business, or the increasing number of tourists and migrants. Also, the dominance of global media, e.g. MTV, radio, music, TV shows, has instantaneous and constant coverage for a worldwide audience (Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008; Thomas, 2005).

Hallak (2000) claims that, "the main characteristic of globalisation is the interdependence of its different dimensions" (p. 23). Indeed, the above discussion appears to suggest a circular causal connection or loop among the different aspects of globalisation. It also suggests that the changes brought about as a result of globalisation have implications for societies, industries and individuals. For example, the development of multinational companies or transnational corporations, changes in the nature of employment patterns, and a greater mobility in the workforce, and a rise of global outsourcing, etc., all these have created a need for individuals to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately with others who speak a different first language.

<u>Globalisation and the proliferation of the English language</u>

Globalisation reinforces the international recognition and use of English as the dominant global language (Gunn, 2005; Mebrahtu et al., 2000). This dominance derives largely from the history of the British colonial expansion throughout the world in the 19th century, and the economic, technological and cultural power of the USA in the 20th century. (Boampong & Penova, 2005; Crystal, 2003; Gnutzmann & Intemann, 2008).

The use of English as the principal means of most global communication has been welcomed by those who believe that it brings a sense of unity and facilitates communication among users across various systems and national boundaries in a global society (Hallak, 2000; Thomas, 2005). English has become dominant in business communications, politics, administration, academic communications, safety, technology and science and advertising (Gunn, 2005).

The multi-dimensional nature of globalisation has led to a demand for the appropriate use of the English language in a variety of contexts globally. Intense competition in a globalised environment, combined with the changing pattern of a global labour market, has created demands for individuals having "high levels of technological skills and knowledge as well as sophisticated levels of linguistic and communicative competence" (Rassool, 2007, p. 3).

Appendix B

Curriculum guideline for VHS English I

1.1 Subject framework

Credit: 2	Suggested year: First term of first year
The aim of this course is to help students to • Through listening, speaking, reading and writing, apply the English words and grammar they have learned into communication. • Cultivate effective learning attitudes and strategies for learning English, promote the understanding of humanities and technology, and develop independent thinking ability and making value judgements. The primary context includes: Interpersonal relationship, all sorts of leisure and recreation activities, natural and environmental protection, daily routines, shopping, running errands, disaster rescue, contemporary technology, letters and forms, related vocational types of knowledge, domestic and foreign customs, culture and etiquette, appreciation and analyse of short essays or stories, music, dancing, communicative skills, overcome setback and frustrations, life education, etc. Assessment and teaching approach: Various assessment methods should be used. Teaching methods need to arouse student interest, and create an English learning environment. Achieve the objectives of communicative language teaching goal through various activities.	

1.2. Teaching guidelines

Aims: Help students to • Through listening, speaking, reading and writing, apply the English words and grammar they have learned into communication. • Develop effective English language learning strategies • Guide students towards the understanding of cultural differences • Develop independent thinking ability and making value judgements

1.3. Teaching material framework

Unit topic	Content guidelines	Number of classes	Notes
1. Interpersonal relationship	For example: interpersonal relationship, overcome setback and frustrations, life, sex, and human right education, and communicative skills.	Depends on the length of the text	1. Teaching material content: 1.1. Number of lessons: Depends on the number of credit. In principle, 6-8 lessons would be appropriate for a 2 credit course.
2. Leisure and recreational activities	For example: Hobbies, interests, leisure activities and all sorts of sports, etc.		1.2. Length of texts: It may vary. In accordance with articles selected. No word limit.
3. Daily life	For example: everyday routines, shopping, running errands, disaster rescue and law education.		2. Communicative Competence:
4. Contemporary technology	For example: Information, medical and technological products, etc.		2.1. Cultivate communicative competence and build up interaction
5. Customs and cultures	For example: domestic and foreign customs and cultures, etiquette, etc.		
6. Literature and art	For example: appreciation and analysis of short essay, stories, music, art, dancing, etc.		
7. Language	For example: advertisement, slogans, letters and forms, body language and language manners, etc.		
8. Knowledge of industry, commerce and agriculture	For example: categorisation of occupations, industrial and agricultural products, banking, coins, credit cards, consumer protection, etc.		
9. Environmental education	For example: Natural environment (including marine ecology) and environmental protection, etc.		
10. Employment	For example: occupation introduction, career planning and employment safety, etc.		

Appendix C

Students' questionnaire

To All Students in Vocational High School:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify the English learning needs and goals in Vocational High Schools (VHS) in a Taiwanese EFL context. This questionnaire is part of my Ph.D. research at Durham University in Britain to investigate the current English curriculum and its relevance for VHS students' potential future careers. Information you provide on this questionnaire will be used only for the purpose mentioned above and all answers will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your opinions and experiences are very important and I would greatly appreciate your participation.

However, you have the right to add whatever you want by answering the "other" option at each question. Of course, your answers will be treated with full confidentiality and kept anonymous and the researcher will use the replies only for her research purposes. Your response will be of great value to the study and your co-operation would be highly appreciated. You have the right to withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this questionnaire or the research, please feel free to E-mail me at tzu-ling.hua@durham.ac.uk

Thank you very much for your participation.

Tzu-Ling Hua (Researcher)

PhD student, School of Education, Durham University, U.K.

Part A: Background Information

Please answer all questions that apply to you

1. School Name: _____

2. Subject: _____

3. Which version of English textbook does your school use?

   ☐ Far east

   ☐ Lungteng

   ☐ DongDa

   ☐ Other (Please specify_____)

4. When did you start to learn English in school? (please tick one)

   ☐ Before elementary school

   ☐ Elementary school

   ☐ Junior high school

5. Years you have been learning English: _____

6. Would you choose English if it were an option?
   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No
   Please specify_____)

Part B. General Information

1. On average, how often do people in Taiwan use English? (please tick only one)

Always	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
(100%)	(80%)	(60%)	(50%)	(30%)	(20%)	(0%)

2. Which of the following options do you think is <u>the most common</u> situation that people in Taiwan need to use English? (Please tick only one)
   ☐ At work
   ☐ Interaction with foreigners
   ☐ Daily life situations
   ☐ Going abroad
   ☐ Never
   ☐ Other (Please specify_____)

3. (If your answer to question 2 includes 'at work') Specify the type of job you refer to (Please tick all that apply)

□ Food/Restaurant
□ Tourism
□ IT
□ Cosmetics
□ Fashion
□ Automobile industry
□ Other (Please specify_____)

4. Why do you learn English? (Please tick all that apply)

□For my anticipated career development

□For passing employment exams

□For passing school exams

□For passing TVE Joint College Entrance Examinations

□To make contact with foreigners

□Required/Compulsory by the course

□To learn another language

□Parents' /Society's expectations

□Other (Please specify_____)

5. What are your goals for learning English? (Please tick all that apply)
□For career development

□To pass employment exams

□To pass school exams

□To pass TVE Joint College Entrance Examinations

□To make contact with foreigners

□To learn a language

□To learn English that is used in daily life situations

    (i.e. food, clothing, transport, education and entertainment)

□Other (Please specify_____)

6. What are your individual English learning needs? (Please tick all that apply)
□To learn English that is relevant to my intended job
□To pass employment exams
□To pass school exams
□To pass TVE Joint College Entrance Examinations
□To make contact with foreigners
□To learn English that is used in daily life situations

    (i.e. food, clothing, transport, education and entertainment)

□Other (Please specify_____)

7. What are the general English learning needs for students learning EFL in VHSs?

(Please tick all that apply)
- □ Understand vocational English relevant to the subject
  (i.e. English used in the workplace that VHS students will graduate into)
- □ Understand technical English relevant to the subject
  (i.e. for auto mechanics major, know the word 'clutch' in English)
- □ Understand the knowledge of English (i.e. basic grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary)
- □ Understand expressions to socialise with foreigners
- □ Understand daily-life English (i.e. food, clothing, transport, education and entertainment)
- □ Other (Please specify_____)

8. English learned in school is <u>relevant</u> to your anticipated career.
   How far do you agree?

   STRONGLY AGREE   AGREE   DISAGREE   STRONGLY DISAGREE

           □   □   □   □

   If you disagree or strongly disagree with this, is it because (please tick all that apply)

   - □ Those social conversations in the textbook are very unlikely events in the use of English in Taiwan
   - □ The content in textbook is not adapted to the local (English) needs
   - □ It is designed for passing school exams but not for practical English uses in reality
   - □ It is very removed from the real world that VHS students will graduate into
   - □ It does not cover any relevant English that may be used in employment
   - □ Other (Please specify_____)

9. English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare/develop your English competence to meet anticipated occupational English. How far do you agree?

   STRONGLY AGREE   AGREE   DISAGREE   STRONGLY DISAGREE

           □   □   □   □

   If you disagree or strongly disagree with this, is it because (please tick all that apply)

   - □ Current textbooks do prepare students for using English competently in the occupational setting
     Please illustrate _____
   - □ This is not the focus of English lessons in VHS
     Please specify in detail _____
   - □ Other (please specify_____)

10. I am interested in the current English learning content in textbooks. How far do you agree?

STRONGLY AGREE   AGREE   DISAGREE   STRONGLY DISAGREE

□   □   □   □

If you disagree or strongly disagree with this, is it because (please tick all that apply)

□It is beyond my English level

□It is designed only for passing the school exams

□It is not relevant to my intended career

□It is not realistic to Taiwanese EFL context

□It does not meet my English learning needs

□Other (Please specify_____)

11. What do you think the effect would be if the English curriculum were redesigned especially/more for vocational related English that is relevant to students' anticipated career? (Please tick one for each statement)

□ Raise   □ Lower   □ No effect on   students' motivation to learn English

□ Meet   □ Not meet   □ No effect on   students' English learning needs

□ Make   □ Not make □ No effect on   English learning in school more effective

□ Positively □ Negative □ No effect on   change the way students think of English learned in school

□ Create   □ Nor create □ No effect on   a positive attitude towards learning

□Other (Please specify_____)

12. Would you like to see the curriculum designed especially/made more relevant to students' anticipated career?

STRONGLY AGREE   AGREE   DISAGREE   STRONGLY DISAGREE

□   □   □   □

If you agree or strongly agree with this, is it because (please tick all that apply)

□ This is my main purpose for learning English

□ This will raise my English learning motivation

□ Vocational related English better meets my English learning needs

□ Vocational related English can increase my chances of my career improvement

□ Other (Please specify_____)

13 Please tick any of the following options that you think are neglected in TEFL in Taiwan (please tick all that apply)

□ Vocational English

□ Cultural English

□ Daily life English

□ Socialising English

□ Recreational English

□ Subject related English

□ Other (please specify_____)

14. Please tick any of the following options that you would like to learn in TEFL in Taiwan (please tick all that apply)

□ Vocational English

□ Cultural English

□ Daily life English

□ Socialising English

□ Recreational English

□ Subject related English

□ Other (please specify_____)

<div align="center">~The end~</div>

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have additional comments or questions regarding this survey, please use the space below or attach a separate sheet.

Teachers' questionnaire

To All Teachers in Vocational High School:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify the English learning needs and goals in Vocational High Schools (VHS) in a Taiwanese EFL context. This questionnaire is part of my Ph.D. research at Durham University in Britain to investigate the current English curriculum and its relevance for VHS students' potential future careers. Information you provide on this questionnaire will be used only for the purpose mentioned above and all answers will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your opinions and experiences are very important and I would greatly appreciate your participation.

However, you have the right to add whatever you want by answering the "other" option at each question. Of course, your answers will be treated with full confidentiality and kept anonymous and the researcher will use the replies only for her research purposes. Your response will be of great value to the study and your co-operation would be highly appreciated. You have the right to withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this questionnaire or the research, please feel free to E-mail me at tzu-ling.hua@durham.ac.uk

Thank you very much for your participation.
Tzu-Ling Hua (Researcher)
PhD student, School of Education, Durham University, U.K.

Please answer all questions that apply to you
Part A: Background Information

1. School Name: _____

2. Highest educational qualification

   ☐ a. Master ☐ b. Bachelor ☐ c. Other (Please specify_____)

3. Years of teaching _____

4. Subjects you are currently teaching at school (Please tick all that apply)

   ☐ a. Tourism Industry

   ☐ b. Childhood Education

   ☐ c. Advertising

   ☐ d. Restaurant Management

   ☐ e. Automobiles

   ☐ f. Computer Science

   ☐ g. Data Processing

   ☐ h. Other(please specify_____)

Part B: General Information of English Teaching/Learning in VHS

1. On average, how often do people in Taiwan use English? (Please tick only one)

Always	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
(100%)	(80%)	(60%)	(50%)	(30%)	(20%)	(0%)

2. Which of the following options do you think is <u>the most common</u> situation
   that people in Taiwan need to use English? (Please tick only one)

   ☐ At work
   ☐ Interaction with foreigners
   ☐ Daily life situations
   ☐ Going abroad
   ☐ Never
   ☐ Other (Please specify_____)

3. (If your answer to question 3 includes 'at work') Specify the type of job you refer
   to (Please tick all that apply)

   ☐ Food/Restaurant
   ☐ Tourism
   ☐ IT
   ☐ Cosmetics
   ☐ Fashion
   ☐ Automobiles
   ☐ Other (Please specify_____)

4. What are your English teaching goals in VHSs? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Prepare students to learn relevant English for their intended career

☐ Prepare students for pass their employment exams

☐ Help students pass their school exams

☐ Help students pass their TVE Joint College Entrance Examinations

☐ Help students to make contact with foreigners

☐ Help students to learn a language

☐ Help students to learn English used in everyday situations

   (i.e. food, clothing, transport, education and entertainment)

☐ Other (Please

   specify_____)

5. What are the main emphases for teaching English to VHS students in school?

  (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Occupational English for students' intended job

☐ Preparation for employment exams (i.e. GEPT, TOEIC, etc.)

☐ School exams

☐ TVE Joint College Entrance Examinations

☐ Social interaction with foreigners

☐ Daily English conversation

☐ Other(please specify_____)

6. What are your students' English learning needs? (Please tick all that apply)

☐ Understand vocational English relevant to their intended workplace

  (i.e. English used in the workplace that VHS students will graduate into, such as tourist guide)

☐ Understand technical English relevant to their subject

  (i.e. for auto mechanics major, know the word 'clutch' in English)

☐ Knowledge of English as a language (i.e. basic grammar, sentence structure and vocabulary)

☐ Understand expressions to socialise with foreigners

  ☐ Understand daily-life English (i.e. food, clothing, transport, education and entertainment)

☐ Other (Please specify_____)

7. English learned in school is relevant to students' anticipated career.
  How far do you agree?

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE   DISAGREE   STRONGLY DISAGREE

          ☐   ☐   ☐   ☐

If you disagree or strongly disagree with this, is it because (please tick all that apply)

☐ Those social conversations in the textbook are very unlikely events in the use of English in

  Taiwan

☐ The content in textbook is not adapted to the local (English) needs

☐ It is designed for passing school exams but not for practical English uses in reality

☐ It is very removed from the real world that VHS students will graduate into

□ It does not cover any relevant English that may be used in employment

□ Other (Please specify_____)

8. English textbooks need revising in order to help prepare/develop students' English ability to meet future needs of English at work. How far do you agree?

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE   STRONGLY DISAGREE

        □   □   □   □

If you disagree or strongly disagree with is this, is it because (please tick all that apply)

□ Current textbooks do prepare students for using English competently in occupational settings.

      Please illustrate _____

□ English at work is not the focus of English lessons in VHS.

      Please specify in detail _____

□ Other (please specify_____)

9. I think the majority of students are satisfied with the content in textbooks. How far do you agree?

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

           □   □   □   □

If you disagree or strongly disagree is it because (please tick all that apply)

□ It is beyond students' English level.

□ It is designed only for passing school examinations.

□ It is not relevant to students' intended career

□ It is not realistic in the Taiwanese EFL context

□ It does not meet students' English learning needs.

□ Other(please specify_____)

10. What do you think the effect would be if the English curriculum were redesigned especially/more for vocational related English that is relevant to students' anticipated career (Please tick one for each statement)

□ Raise   □ Lower   □ No effect on students' motivation to learn English

□ Meet   □ Not meet □ No effect on students' English learning needs

□ Make   □ Not make □ No effect on English learning in school more effective

□ Positively □ Negative □ No effect on change the way students think of English

                                    learned in school

□ Create   □ Nor create □ No effect on   a positive attitude towards learning

□ Raise   □ Lower   □ No effect on teachers' motivation to teach English

11. I would like to see the curriculum designed especially/made more relevant to students' anticipated careers. How far do you agree?

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE   DISAGREE   STRONGLY DISAGREE

         □   □   □   □

□ This is students' purpose for learning English

□ This will raise students' English learning motivation

□ Vocational related English better meets students' English learning needs

□ Vocational related English can increase students' chances of my career
 improvement

□Other (Please specify_____)

12. Please tick any of the following options that you think are neglected in TEFL in Taiwan (please tick all that apply)

 □ Vocational English

 □ Cultural English

 □ Daily life English

 □ Socialising English

 □ Recreational English

 □ Subject related English

 □ Other (please specify_____)

13. Please tick any of the following options that you think your students need to learn in TEFL in Taiwan (please tick all that apply)

 □ Vocational English

 □ Cultural English

 □ Daily life English

 □ Socialising English

 □ Recreational English

 □ Subject related English

 □ Other (please specify_____)

~The end~

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have additional comments or questions regarding this survey, please use the space below or attach a separate sheet.

Appendix D

Students' interview schedule

<u>Introduction</u>

Thank you for agreeing to meet me. As I have already informed you, I am conducting research on English language education in VHSs in Taiwan, with particular interest in its preparation for students' intended career. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences and perspectives on current English language education in VHSs. Your responses will be confidential and you will not be named in any reports that may arise from the study. I will be taking brief notes during our conversation, but I would also like to record the interview so that I can listen to it again. You are free to withdraw from the research without any harmful consequences. Do you have any questions before we start?

<u>Questions</u>

Q1: If English language were an optional subject rather than compulsory, would you still choose English? Why?

Q2: Why do you want to or have to learn English?

Q3: What is your motivation for learning English?

Q4: What is your definition of workplace English?

Q5: What level of English do you want to achieve?

Q6: What level of English do you think employers expect or require?

Q7: What are your opinions (thoughts) on English courses in VHSs?

Q8: What are your opinions of English teaching in VHSs?

Q9: What area of English do you want to learn?

Teachers' interview schedule

<u>Introduction</u>

Thank you for agreeing to meet me. As I have already informed you, I am conducting research on English language education in VHSs in Taiwan, with particular interest in its preparation for students' intended career. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences and perspectives on current English language education in VHSs. Your responses will be confidential and you will not be named in any reports that may arise from the study. I will be taking brief notes during our conversation, but I would also like to record the interview so that I can listen to it again. You are free to withdraw from the research without any harmful consequences. Do you have any questions before we start?

<u>Questions</u>

Q1: What do you think of English language education in VHSs (teaching goals,

purposes, emphases, problems, etc.)

Q2: What is your definition of workplace English?

Q3: What is your perspective on English language education provided by VHSs?

(English taught in VHSs, VHS students, teaching and learning situations)

Q4: What are your views of English courses in VHSs?

(Teaching content, textbooks, students' ability, language skills training)

Q5: What are your views of English learning in VHSs?

(What is good/what needs to improve?)

Appendix E

Interview transcript

問：老師任教的科系有？

Q: What tracks of students do you teach?

答：之前有教資訊、美容、電機，現在教資處科

A: I have taught students from Computer Science, Cosmetics, Electronic Mechanical, and I'm currently teaching students from Data Processing.

問：老師談談你對於高職英文教育的看法？

Q: Please talk about your perspective on English language education provided by vocational high schools.

答：學生英文比較差，上課是有困難，從基礎的開始上，因為我上過一輪，就是三年的一個過程... 有時候會覺得很挫折，好像你都很認真在教一些東西給他們，可是他們得到的跟我們教的是有誤差的。

A: The students are relatively poor in English, so it is difficult for me to teach them. I have to start from the most basic. I know it because I have taught a group of students for a whole process of three years… sometimes I feel very frustrated. It feels like I have been working hard to teach them, but they have received differently from what I have taught.

問：教學目標？

Q: What's your teaching goal?

答：目標跟有進度壓力其實兩個是併行的，比方說我們希望把課全部都上完，但是礙於時間，課本裡包含了很多主題，但因為考量學生程度，根本無法上完。因為一、二年級只有兩堂英文課，既便是三年級也是，所以他的課程安排其實是很少的，這麼少課就是教很多東西其實是有困難的

A: Teaching goal and pressure to cover teaching plan are actually two sides of a coin. For example, I wish to finish the textbook, but it would be nearly impossible within the time limits. There are too many topics in the textbook, the students would not be able to complete the program when considering their levels. First and Second Year students only have two English classes per week, and it is the same even for Third Year students. The number of lessons provided is actually very few. It is difficult to teach a lot of things within such a short time.

問：一本課本一學期上幾課？

Q: How many topics are covered in a semester?

答：龍騰的是六課，總共是六課，之前東大是八課，其實有上超過一半。一次月考至少是兩課，如果是六課的那個版本是兩課，就是兩課兩課就是三次，如果是那種八課，一次也是要兩課，所以一學期只會上完六課。

A: There are six topics include in Lunteng textbook, and we cover six of them. We used Dong-da textbook before and there are eight topics included. We cover more than half of the topics. We cover at least two topics per monthly examination, so if the version we use include six topics, we exam two topics for each monthly examination, and that's six topics for a year. If the version includes eight topics, we can still only cover two topics. So basically we can only able to cover six topics for a year.

問：老師的教學重點會放在哪裡？

Q: What's your teaching focus?

答：字的用法，課文講解，再從裡面去講文法的重點

A: word usage, reading text, explanation of the grammar points in the textbooks.

問：字的用法是指？

Q: What do you mean by "word usage"?

答：就是課本單字部份，然後告訴他們在課本上所列的例句，片語的補充之類。有時候我會用一些比較簡單的例句

A: The vocabulary in the reading text. Give students some examples of the words and phrases as illustrated in the textbook. Sometimes I would use simpler examples.

問：老師的教學問題？

Q: What are your difficulties in teaching?

答：時間是一個問題，還有就是學生能不能跟上，這個都是重要的

A: Time is one issue, and the level of the students is the other, i.e. whether the students could keep up with the scheduled lessons is the other. Those are equally important.

問：您對於高職英文課程的內容看法？

Q: What do you think about the English taught in schools?

答：因為高職有分很多個版本，有些版本，例如遠東比較淺顯易懂，比較多的會話東大和龍騰其實都是蠻多東西，可是像龍騰其實有不斷的在修正課程內容，所

以有比較好，東大也是一樣，因為之前我有上過一年的東大，其實也不錯，教材是好的，但是學生程度有落差。

A: Because there are many versions of textbooks in vocational high schools, some versions such as Far East is simpler and easy to understand. More conversation practices are included. Dong-Da and Lungteng versions cover a lot of areas. Lungteng is revising its contents, so it becomes better gradually. So does Dong-Da. I have taught English with Dong-Da textbook for one year, and it is not bad. The material is good, but it does not match students' level.

問：你對職場英文這一個詞的定義是？

Q: How do you define Workplace English?

答：比較是可以用到，上班的時候可以用到的英文

A: English that can be used…that can be used in the workplace.

問：您覺得學校所教的英文和學生未來職場 所要求的英文能力之間的關聯性是？

Q: What do you think the relationship between English taught in school and English required by students' future career?

答：如果要認真說的話，課本是有主題有內容，但是比較偏重日常生活那種文化面向，就比較難一點，職場的話它就可能就會有落差。既便是學了很多很複雜的字，但是要用的話其實好像不太能夠把它用上。真正用到職場上的英文可能不需要用到這麼的複雜。

A: Technically speaking, the textbooks have specific themes and topics which focus more upon daily life and cultures. English presented in the textbook is more difficult, and there is a gap between English taught in school and English required in the workplace. Even if the students have picked up many complicated vocabulary, it seems to be hard for them to put what they learned into practice. English used in the working environment might not be as complicated as the English taught in school.

問：還有其他看法嗎？

Q: Any other thoughts?

答：課本的內容都是偏重在讀寫，如果是用在職場上你是要說，說的時間會比較少，根本只看的懂但是不會說，應該是說這個地方比較有落差。龍騰版把對話放在最後面，但是那種對話，雖然已經想要把它用的比較生活話，但是其實在日常生活中可能不會這樣講。至少在這邊，我們看到的是這邊嘛。我不確定它就

是出國肯定用的到得在台灣的日常生活裡，說話用語其實是用不太到的，不是這樣子說話，就是它有一些情境題... 有的時候並不是用到這樣子，可能會有另外一個說法。

A: The focus of the textbook is more on reading and writing, but in the workplace you need to be good at speaking. The speaking part is less focused in the English courses in school, so most of the students are only able to read rather than to speak. It is one of the gaps that I pointed out. Even though Lungteng includes conversation practice at the last part of the textbook, and although the editor tries hard to show the 'common' expressions used in daily life, it really isn't used in real life. We live in Taiwan, and what we see is all about this island. I am not sure if what we learnt in Taiwan can be useful when we go abroad. It is unlikely to use the conversations in the daily life in Taiwan because it is not how we usually speak. I should say that it can be used on several occasions, but the situation doesn't always go as it is. If so, then we might need to speak in another way.

問：針對龍騰的版本，您說在後面的部份有會話，平常上課會上到嗎？

Q: Referring back to Lungteng textbook, you mentioned that there are conversation practices included in the last part of the textbook. Do you normally teach them in class?

答：之前我是會上，但是後來我覺得效果不是那麼好

A: I did, but I found that the material was not that effective.

問：為什麼覺得效果不好？

Q: Why do you think it is not effective?

答：就是學生好像，他不知道怎麼去對話。

A: The students do not seem to know how to make conversations in English.

問：你覺得學校所教的英文有反應出學生未來職場所要求的英文需求嗎？

Q: Do you think the English taught in school reflects the requirement for the students' future career?

答：針對升學考試是OK的

A: It is ok for the examination for going onto further studies.

問：那對於學生未來職場所要求的英文能力呢？

Q: How about the English ability required for their future career?

答：這個就要努力了。（笑）

A: That would require extra work. (Laugh)

問：你覺得學校的英文課有沒有包含一些和學生未來職場工作時相關的英文？

Q: Do you think the English lessons provided by school teach anything relevant to English used in the workplace?

答：應該是說有時候會在課堂裡面稍微提。但是，就變成是有跟他們講，請他們注意，但是不見得他們就能聽進去

A: I will sometimes mention it by passing. But the thing is the students might not pay attention to what teachers say in class.

問：您上課主要是以英文課本為主嗎？

Q: Is your teaching mainly based on the English textbook?

答：對

A: Yes.

問：你覺得學校所教的英文和學生進入社會工作所要求的英文能力兩者之間是

Q: What do you think about the relationship between English taught in school and English required by students' future jobs?

答：應該說沒有那麼實用，學生的程度沒有那麼好，沒有把基本的該學，所以根本不會把他應用在職場上面

A: I would say that it's not very practical. Students' English levels aren't very high, and they hadn't learned the basics, so they wouldn't even know how to apply the skills into their workplace.

問：老師對於現在課本的看法？

Q: What do you think about the current textbooks?

答：每個版本其實都很努力，幫老師準備了很多的東西，教師手冊都做的很好，可是我覺得雖然好，但是如果可以針對比方說個別的情況去做一個教材的變化，其實會比較有效果

A: I think each version has worked hard to offer many materials for teachers, and the teacher's guide is well composed. I think they're good, but if the material design could be more subject to different individuals it would be more effective.

問：老師所謂的個別情況是指？

Q: What do you mean by "individuals"?

答：比方說我知道這班的學生程度可能沒那麼好，但是你從最基本的開始上，給他基本的文法觀念什麼的，這樣可能學的會比較多

A: For example if I know the class of students might have lower level of English, then I would start from the teaching of the most basics, including the basic grammar points. By doing so, students might learn more.

問：老師針對課本和學生未來職場的競爭能力這一點來看？

Q: What do you think in regards to textbook and students' competitiveness in the future workplace?

答： 基本上如果英檢， 課本上現在只有著重在讀跟寫，比較少聽跟說，那這兩個必須還要再加強。雖然教科書的編排上面有聽力的練習，但是它的問題會比較難，內容的單字量太多，所以根本聽不懂它在說什麼，其實就沒有多大的輔助。

A: I said if students took the GEPT English proficiency examinations, because the textbook only focuses on reading and writing, there is no much listening and speaking practice for students, so these two skills must be strengthened. Although listening practice is included, the questions are too hard. There are too many new vocabularies, and the students do not understand them, so it doesn't help students to learn much.

問：說的部份呢？

Q: What about the speaking part?

答：就比較少，因為時間的關係，比如說我要給學生練習對話，不管是分組或是叫一個一個念其實都要花很多時間，那你花那麼多時間，一個禮拜只有兩堂課這樣就沒了，所以其實很難去做到的

A: Very little, due to the time issue, if I were to give time to students to practice, either by dividing the students into teams, or doing it individually, it all takes a lot of time. With only two classes in a week, it is actually very hard to achieve.

問：如果教科書做調整，朝著幫助高職生未來在工作或者是求職上的英文能力多做準備，您的想法是？

Q: What do you think if the textbooks were designed more for preparing students for the English language ability for their future career?

答：這樣或許會比較有幫助，可以活用吧。其實如果他們英文好的話再加上本身自己有一些，就是每個科系的證照，其實會對他們比較好一點

A: It might be more helpful, so they can put what they learn into practice. It is actually better for students if they have good English ability and plus certifications from their chosen subject of study.

問：對於該如何使高職學校所學的英文和學生未來職場所需的英文能力做一個接軌有怎樣的想法？

Q: What do you think of connecting English learned in vocational high schools and English required by students' future jobs?

答：如果要以職場為主的話其實職場就是要說，如果要做的話其實要加重的就是講跟聽力，要做改善，才能夠出去就知道怎麼去面對人可以講

A: If the focus is on the workplace, then the emphasis should be placed on speaking. And if you want to focus on speaking, then you need to strengthen your speaking and listening. You need to improve these to be able to communicate with others.

問：還有其他建議跟提議嗎？

Q: Any other suggestions?

答：還有另外規畫，像很多那種不同主題式的英文，現在不是有什麼電話英文或是辦公室英文類似這樣子的

A: Additional topics would be needed. Apart from speaking English, there are English of many different topics such as telephone English, or office English.

問：這樣子和現在課本的主題有什麼差別？

Q: How do these topics differ from the topics provided by the current textbooks?

答：因為它不是以職場這樣一個方式，就會變成中間可以去做瞭解的地方

A: The current textbook isn't designed to satisfy the occupational purpose. we would need to fill the gaps between Academic English and Workplace English.

問：你覺得現在課本安排的主題是比較偏向於？

Q: What do you think about the focus of the current textbook?

答：文化生活一些個體的都有，就是範圍比較廣

A: Topics include culture, living and some individual themes. The range is very broad.

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