A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ONLINE TEACHER-INVOLVED AND PEER INTERACTIVE LEARNING: CHINESE EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

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Article Info	Abstract
  Research Article	This comparative study aims at exploring Chinese university English as a foreign language (EFL) students' perceptions and practice of two types of interactive learning: the teacher-involved one and the peer one, as well as the factors that may have impacts on their learning. Participants of the study were 32 Chinese EFL students enrolled in a university, being randomly divided into two groups. One group of students participated in teacher-involved interactive learning in an online context; the other group interacted with peers for learning while the teachers were not involved in learning activities. Data collection were administrated via students' online learning documents and semi-structured individual interviews. It was found that students' perceptions and practice were different in two types of interaction. In teacher-involved interactive learning, participants were under the strong impacts of their teachers, and had more stable engagement in learning; while students in peer interactive learning were influenced by a wider range of factors, leading to their less stable participation and production in learning activities. Besides, EFL students were found to be more active in a teacher-involved learning context. Recommendations for future studies are provided on the base of these findings. **Keywords**: Online learning, English as a foreign language, interactive learning, teacher-student interaction,peer interaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Interaction is a significant contributor to language acquisition, particularly for language learning that occurs in an autonomous context (Luk & Lin, 2017). In language learning, interaction "is expected to promote negotiation of meaning, and if it does so, this should be beneficial for language acquisition" (Chapelle, 2003, p.56). It is often defined as sustained, two-way communication between learners and learners or, between learners and instructors, with the purpose of task completion or social relationship building (Gilbert & Moore, 1998).

Interactive learning has been widely accepted as an effective approach to develop learners' foreign language knowledge and abilities (Craig, 2006; Hüseyin, 2014).

Interactive learning is originated from Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978). It lies on the basis of social constructivism, which argues that learners intentionally construct their language knowledge through experience and corresponding reflections with the world (Duffy & Jonassen, 2013). Language knowledge is acquired via meaningful interaction, which occurs through effective response, internal and external negotiation, arguing against points, adding to evolving ideas, and offering alternative perspectives with one another while solving some real tasks (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As scholars have put, social or interpersonal interaction is a key part of interactive learning (Liaw & Huang, 2000).

With the explosion of online technologies and digital devices, new dimensions of interaction have been added to English as a foreign language (EFL) learning. Learning in a technology-supported context, EFL students can participate in interaction in a more self-determined context. They are supported to join in interactive learning both simultaneously and asynchronously, and connect to their teachers and peers without distance and time limits. Technology-supported interactive EFL learning has obtained positive results in different contexts, and has been widely recognized as a preferred approach for language development (Peeters, 2018; Saeed et al., 2018).

Interactive language learning involves two types of interaction, the teacher-student interaction and the peer interaction (Chou, 2003), which are both considered as essential contributors to students' foreign language development (Wang, Woo, & Zhao, 2009). Teacher-involved interaction is common and popular among Asian EFL students, particularly among Chinese students, who rely heavily on teachers in EFL learning (Zheng & Yu, 2018). Teachers are usually playing a dominant role in interactive EFL learning in a Chinese context. While peer interaction contributes to language acquisition as it practices and develops linguistic knowledge and abilities of both sides of involvers in interaction (Long, 2018). Meaningful interaction that occurs among peers can effectively enhance the development of language capacity of all involvers (Vygotsky, 1978).

Empirical studies have been conducted to investigate EFL students' interactive learning (Hsieh, Wu, & Marek, 2017; Yen, Hou, & Chang, 2015). Nevertheless, most previous studies focused on EFL students' engagement in interactive language learning in a traditional teacher-controlled learning context (Tsui & Ng, 2000). There are not many studies on EFL students' possible varied engagement in the two different types of interaction for EFL learning, with less focuses on digging out students' perceptions of the two different interaction. To fill this research gap, Chinese university EFL students' engagement in and perceptions of teacher-involved interactive learning and peer interactive learning are investigated and compared in the present study. The twofold research questions investigated in this study are:

1) What is the possible difference between Chinese university EFL students' engagement in the online teacher-involved interactive learning and the peer interactive one?

2) What factors may result in such differences?

2. LITERATURE

For promoting EFL students' language development, meaningful interactive learning is conducted through effective and instant response, internal and external negotiation, support and argument, adding to new ideas, and offering different perspectives with one another while solving some real tasks emerging in the world (Rostami, Kashanian, & Gholami, 2016; Woo & Reeves, 2007). Through such interaction by using the target language, learners can intentionally construct and internalize foreign language knowledge and abilities (Al-Abdali, 2016), and achieve better goals than learning alone (Nguyen, 2013). A wide range of empirical studies have investigated the effects of interactive learning on promoting EFL students' language abilities from various perspectives: Ciftci and Kocoglu (2012) suggested that interaction helped students focus on EFL learning, and enhanced their confidence in foreign language practice; Hung, Young, and Lin (2015) noticed that interaction encouraged disadvantaged EFL students to achieve better goals in EFL learning; Jahin (2012) confirmed that interaction could be beneficial to EFL students writing skill build-up. Interaction has been widely recognized to contribute to foreign language learners' cognitive and intellectual development, leading to the improvement in their language abilities and knowledge.

In interactive EFL learning, teacher involvement is important to students' language development. The effectiveness of teacher involvement in interactive EFL learning on promoting students' language abilities and knowledge has been widely studied: Bloch (2002) confirmed teachers' contribution to benefiting EFL students' language development in interactive learning; Miao, Badger, and Zhen (2006) figured out the importance of teacher involvement to students' interactive language learning; Yeh and Yang (2011) also confirmed that teacher-involved interaction could effectively improve students' language skills with the support of computers. From the perspective of socio-constructivism, teacher-student interaction is a major type of the social interaction that promotes students' language learning and linguistic knowledge construction (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As for peer interactive learning, a wide range of benefits for EFL development and knowledge constructions from various aspects have been noticed in previous studies, including improving language skills (Storch, 2005), expanding horizons (Barnard & Campbell, 2005), and enhancing confidence (Parga Herrera, 2011). Besides, interactive learning with peers is described as a learning approach that is "engaging, challenging and interesting" (Wang, 2014, p. 389). Peer interaction employed in EFL students' learning process makes learning interesting and attractive, encouraging students to take more active engagement in learning.

Although many merits of interactive learning are found, not all EFL students engage in it actively. Some of these students are reticent in interactive learning, and escape from interaction with either teachers or peers in their language learning process (Chen & Goh, 2011). Factors that may have impacts on students' willingness of engagement in interactive learning have been spotted and analysed in previous studies.

Language confidence is closely related with students' willingness of participation in interaction for foreign language learning (Clement, Baker, & MacIntyre, 2003). For those students who are in a lack of language confidence, foreign language anxiety is a big challenge that potentially prevents them from engaging in interactive learning actively (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Foreign language anxiety is a common emotional reaction that occasionally occurs during students' foreign language learning process (Horwitz, 2001). Studies have noticed that EFL students from Asia are easily impacted by foreign language anxiety, and may suffer from possible communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation in their interactive learning process (Chen & Goh, 2011). As Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) have put, language learners who are in a lack of confidence in interactive EFL learning "tend to sit passively in the classroom, withdraw from activities that could increase their language skills, and may even avoid class entirely" (p. 562-563).

Another influential factor of EFL students' engagement in interactive learning is the teacher's position. EFL students often play in "a passive comfort zone" in interactive learning with teachers, particularly in a Chinese context, where teachers usually have a dominant position in teacher-involved learning activities (Xu & Liu, 2009). Students' learning is largely controlled by teachers when learning in this context, allowing less space for students' autonomy in interaction (Littlewood, 2007). It suggests that teachers' dominant position may demotivate EFL students' engagement in interactive learning, and fails to take students' individually different learning interests and needs into consideration.

Peer interdependence is also a concern of students in interactive learning. Previous studies were conducted to investigate the impacts of peer interdependence on EFL students' engagement in interactive learning, though no inclusive conclusions have been made: some believed that positive interdependence can be a contributor to interactive language learning that it strengthens the tension between peers, which encourages them to get active involvement in learning and more exposure to the target language (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Pishghadam & Ghadiri, 2011); while some argued against the point, and suggested that peer interdependence is less effective on promoting EFL students' engagement in interactive learning, and may discourage them from independent foreign language learning demotivate their future involvement (AbuSeileek, 2012). The effects of peer interdependence on interactive EFL learning still remain a question, and are further examined in this study on the base of empirical research.

Empirical studies have also spotted some other influential factors that might have impacts on EFL students' engagement in interactive learning, such as the effectiveness and efficiency of interaction (Kalanzadeh, Soleimani, & Bakhtiarvand, 2014) and interactive learning topics (Morell, 2007). These findings have provided some insights of interactive EFL learning, as well as students' perceptions of this learning approach, particularly in a newly emerging online context. Contextualized in a Chinese university environment, this study, being illuminated by previous studies, focuses on Chinese EFL students' perceptions of their engagement in interactive learning, and the possible factors that may lead to such perceptions.

3. METHODOLOGY

Participants of this comparative study were 100 non-English majored undergraduate students in a tier-1 university located the southwest part of China. College English was a compulsory course for all participants in the university. Most of these participants had been studying EFL formally for more than eight years in various education institutions in China. They were supposed to be experienced EFL learners, competent English language users, as well as skilful computer users, who were able to use computers and the Internet for online EFL learning. Two of their English teachers were involved in this study as well. Both teachers were experienced in English teaching in a Chinese university context. All participants were native speakers of Chinese mandarin, with English as their foreign language.

A highly recognized online interactive learning platform, which was an achievement produced by a large Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage project: Image, perceptions and resources: Enhancing Australia's role in China's English language education (2011-2014), was used to serve as the research context for this study. Six modules were selected and employed for participants' online interactive language learning. Each learning module was of similar difficult for Chinese university EFL students. Participants were allowed for two weeks on each module's learning. Students' learning consisted of one complete set of authentic videos and two sets of pedagogical audio materials. A wide range of interactive learning activities and tasks were provided on the platform, supporting EFL students' language learning and skill development.

This was a comparative case study that focused on Chinese university students' online interactive EFL learning. All participants were randomly divided into two groups, with 50 students in each group. The two teacher participants engaged in both groups. Participants were involved in online parallel EFL learning activities. Group A attended the online interactive learning with the involvement of their English teachers. Participants in this group were supposed to engage in interactive EFL learning activities with both their peers and teachers via the Internet. Participants in Group B only interacted with their peers in the EFL learning process in the classroom. Teachers in Group B did not involve in students' learning activities, but only served as learning organizers and observers.

This is a qualitative comparative study by using a variety of methods for gathering data from different sources to validate evidences (Yin, 2013). As a case study, this comparative study does not aim at generalizing the findings, but to present Chinese university EFL students' perceptions and practices of two types of interactive learning that occurred in an online context. The entire comparative study commenced in October 2018 and ended in January 2019, lasting for thirteen weeks. Two methods were employed for data collection in this study: participants' online interaction documents and semi-structured individual interviews. Participants' online learning documents, including the learning logs that were generated in the learning process, and recorded interactive activities of all students, were both collected and analysed for illustrating their interactive learning on the Internet.

Eight student participants, four from Group A and four from Group B, were interviewed individually in a face-to-face way after their online interactive EFL learning. Two in-depth individual interviews with the English teachers were also conducted. Students' learning activities, interpreted from the teachers' perspectives, were investigated in the interview. The difference between students' learning in a teacher-involved context and that in a peer interactive learning one was the focus of the interviews. The individual interviews were guided by an array of questions, which were adopted and modified from previous studies on similar topics (Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006; Zhao, 2010). The full list of these guiding questions is attached in Appendix I and Appendix II. Each interview lasted for approximately 40 minutes. For encouraging their expression, and for eliminating misunderstanding, participants' native language was used in the individual interviews. Data were recorded and transcribed for analysis. All data that were in Chinese were translated and back translated by professional translators to maintain validity.

4. FINDINGS and DISCUSSIONS

Data from this comparative study suggested that there was no significant difference in students' overall participation in interactive learning activities between Group A and Group B. Considering from all six Learning Modules (LMs), the participation rate of students in Group A was 72%, while that of students in Group B was 70.3%. However, it was noticed from participants' learning logs that the participation rates of Group A were more stable than those of Group B across all six LMs. The participation rates of Group A changed within a very small range from 78% (LM4) to 64% (LM3). While the rates of Group B experienced a more significant change, from the highest point of 94% (LM2) to the lowest one of 34% (LM3). This is presented in Figure 1.
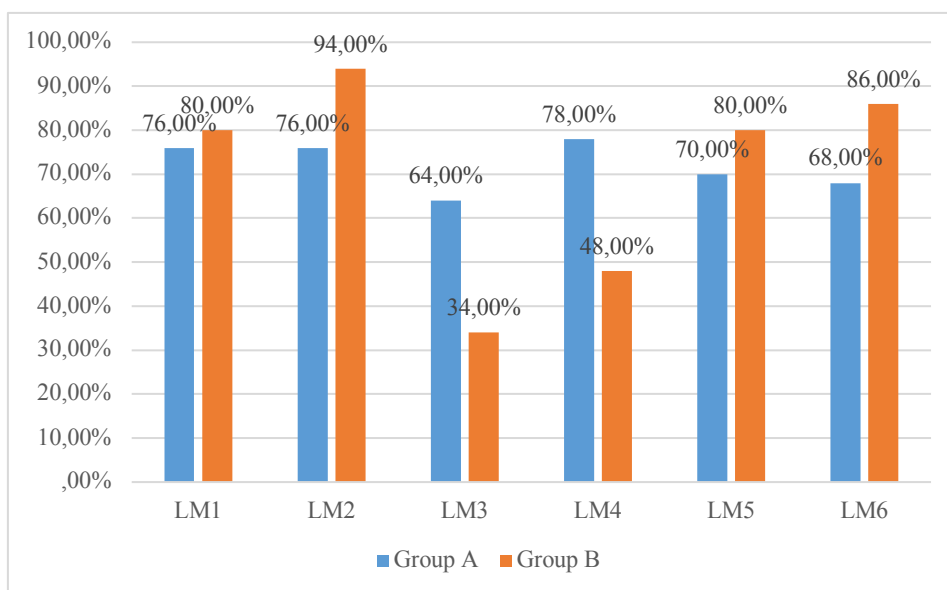

Figure 1. The participation rates of both groups in six LMs.

This study also compared the average production of students in interactive activities from the two groups. As the data showed, the average records of interactive learning activities that were

made by each participant in Group A was 11.53; while the average number of interactive records made in Group B was much less as 7.58. The distributions of student participants' production in the six LMs were not consistent either. Data generated from the platform indicated that EFL students' average production in a teacher-involved interactive learning context did not experience fierce change alongside their stable participation: in average, each student participants in Group A produced stable counts of records of interaction as the highest point of 12.56 in LM6 and the lowest point of 10.66 in LM1. While the average production of participants in Group B was much different. The counts ranged from 10.43 (LM2) to 5.35 (LM6) in the peer interactive context. This is illustrated in Figure 2.
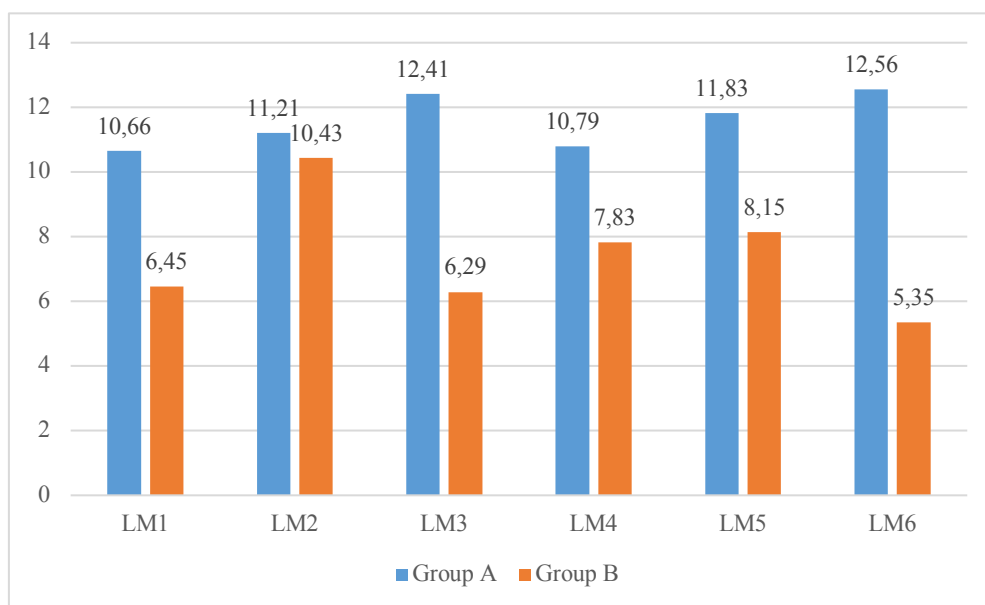

Figure 2. The average production made by each participant in both groups in three LMs.

By examining participants' engagement in all six LMs, this study noticed that EFL students had more stable participation and production in teacher-involved interactive language learning than their classmates in a peer interactive context. It was found from the study that compared with other factors, teachers' high status in language learning in China had more significant influence on students' learning than other factors, which largely led to students' stable engagement in interaction (see Figure 1 & 2).

Teachers usually have a higher status as an authority in language learning, particularly in an Asian context. To date, EFL learning and teaching in Confucian heritage countries, including China, has still applied a teacher-centred approach (Xu & Liu, 2009). EFL students, learning under this circumstance for a long period, were less autonomous in making learning-related decisions when teachers are involved in learning. As students from Group A admitted, they had always engaged in learning "under the command of an authority" (Interviewee 1), whose command was so influential that ordinary students could hardly refuse. For students, teachers' high status in interactive learning was the major factor, which had "excluded impacts from other sources" (Interviewee 2), for students' engagement in learning, even though in an online learning context.

Investigation of the English teachers further revealed the influence of the high status of teachers on EFL learning. When teachers engaged in interactive activities, students relied on them for "almost everything in learning" (Teacher 1). One of the teachers stated that EFL students in interactive learning would "follow my instructions blindly" (Teacher 1). When the teachers requested students' participation, as admitted by the teachers, students "dared not to decline, no matter they liked the learning or not" (Teacher 2). As Zheng and Yu (2018) have put, English teachers in a Chinese context usually enjoy a higher status in teacher-student interaction, making themselves an authority in the process. In this case, teachers' authority made their requests in EFL learning so influential that there was limited room for individual students to voice their thoughts. Therefore, students' participation was stable as students themselves could hardly change their learning under a teacher-involved circumstance.

In a peer interactive context, without teacher involvement, EFL students were found to be more independent and autonomous in interactive learning. The online interactive learning context allowed more spaces for autonomy as students could "progress on my own pace" (Interviewee 5) in a flexible environment. As autonomous language learners, EFL students in a peer interactive context could make decisions on their engagement from various perspectives to serve their different learning purposes, rather than being strictly controlled by their teachers (Littlewood, 2007). As observed in Group B, for teachers were not involved in students' learning process, students engaged in or withdrew from peer interactive learning for meeting their individual learning needs and interests, which "varied from students to students" (Teacher 2). Therefore, being influenced by a wider range of factors, EFL students' participation and production in the peer interactive context had a less stable change from module to module. Further investigation revealed that three key factors might have led to EFL students' different engagement in interactive learning activities, particularly in a peer interactive context: the interactive learning topics, students' language confidence, and peer interdependence.

This study found that the interactive learning topics were a factor that led to students' different engagement in foreign language learning. As previous studies have put (Huang & Lin, 2011; Morell, 2007), EFL students' preferences of a certain learning topic induced their more active engagement in learning activities. In this study, participants in Group B, who "had more autonomy in learning", were "selective" in interactive topics, and displayed stronger willingness to engage in interaction that was "practical", so that they could "put what I learned into the real world" (Interviewee 6). This suggested that language learning that is closely connected with learners' real life, which was considered as "meaningful learning" (Vygotsky, 1978), usually induces their higher participation and stronger learning motivation. From this perspective, autonomous EFL students, particularly those in a peer interactive context, might be impacted and changed their engagement in language learning with the changes of interactive learning topics.

Interviews with teachers also revealed the influence on learning topics on students' engagement in interactive learning. In a peer interactive learning context, students usually chose interactive activities that "actually aroused their learning interests", instead of "considering teachers'

assignment" when teachers were involved in learning (Teacher 1); while for those activities with "boring contents" (Interviewee 8), as teachers observed in this case, students usually escaped from the learning and "refused to communicate with peers" when teachers were not involved (Teacher 1). This finding noticed the strong influence of students' preferences of learning topics on their engagement, which was largely ignored by previous studies (Morell, 2007).

Students' language confidence was also found to be influential on their engagement in peer interactive learning. As Chu (2008) has put, EFL students from Asia are inclined to be impacted by a lack of language confidence and suffer from foreign language anxiety in interactive learning activities. EFL students, who were in "the feeling of tension and apprehension" in interaction, might possibly withdraw from engagement (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284); while their confident peers were more willing to involve in interaction (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). In Group B, participants might escape from interactive learning when facing difficult tasks as they were concerned about "my poor English abilities" (Interviewee 7).

Teachers in this comparative study paid intensive attention to EFL students' language confidence, as well as its impacts on students' engagement in interactive learning. As teachers observed in this study, participants "who were confident about their EFL abilities", were more active in peer interaction (Teacher 2). According the two teachers, confident EFL students participated in peer interaction, and "attempted to gain the control" of the learning process; while their less confident peers were usually "more silent" in the interaction (Teacher 1). Previous studies have noticed the effectiveness of language confidence on promoting students' engagement in learning (Horwitz, 2001). However, many of them have ignored that teacher involvement in interaction might "neutralize" the influence of students' different levels of language confidence: students "had to" (Interviewee 2) engage in learning when their teachers asked, no matter how concerned they were. This might lead to EFL students' comparatively stable participation rate in teacher-involved interactive learning.

Besides, it was found that peer interdependence imposed either positive or negative influence on EFL students' engagement in interactive learning, whose effects might be more significant in an autonomous peer-peer context. Positive interdependence could be a contributor to interaction among all involved students in interactive learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The "good interpersonal relationship" (Interviewee 8) between participants encouraged their engagement in learning. Students, who were under the influence of positive interdependence, were found to get active involved in, and enjoyed peer interaction for language development. While negative influence sourcing from peer interdependence could result in oppositional interaction, which might lead to unsatisfying outcomes of learning, and drove students from engaging in interaction for learning (AbuSeileek, 2012). Participants' learning efforts might be obstructed by varies factors, including "ineffective communication" (Interviewee 3), distrust, and "peer competition" (Interviewee 4). Students, thus, might withdraw from interactive language learning due to negative peer interdependence.

It should be noted that the findings on the influence of peer interdependence on interactive EFL learning was in line with literatures (AbuSeileek, 2012; Pishghadam & Ghadiri, 2011). However, this study further noticed that in a teacher-involved interactive learning context, the influence of peer interdependence was limited. Participants in Group A suggested that their peers had little influence on their engagement since "teachers were playing the leading role" (Interviewee 3) in interactive learning. Teachers also noticed that EFL students appeared to pay little attention to their peers' performances in interaction, but "focused heavily on interaction with the teachers" (Teacher 1). It demonstrated the strong and exclusive influence of teachers' high status on Chinese EFL students in a teacher-involved context, which has been discussed before.

In teacher-involved interactive learning, teachers' dominant position helped stabilize student' engagement, and kept the participation and production at an active level. Compared with their peers in a teacher-involved context, EFL students' engagement in peer interactive learning was under the influence of a wider range of factors, including learning topics, language confidence and peer interdependence. Therefore, students' participation and production in peer interactive learning was less stable than that of students in a teacher-involved context.

An interesting finding from the comparative study was that EFL students in teacher-involved interactive learning made more production than their counterparts in a peer interactive learning context (see Figure 2). Considering the similar numbers of involved students in interaction in both groups (see Figure 1), this suggested that EFL students were more active when their teachers were involved in interactive language learning. This seemed to be contradictory to previous thinking on interactive learning. As an array of empirical studies have suggested, peer interactive learning, as a "engaging, challenging and interesting" (Wang, 2014) approach, induced EFL students' higher participation and production as compared to teacher-involved interaction (Barry, King & Burke, 2000). Further investigation of this study spotted two factors that resulted in EFL students' more active engagement in a teacher-involved interactive learning context: students' perceived effectiveness and the interpersonal relationship with peers.

EFL students of this study were found to believe that teacher involvement made the interactive learning more effective and efficient. Students insisted that teacher involvement in interactive learning "ensured its effectiveness" (Interviewee 1). In line with previous studies, a knowledgeable teacher is expected to get involved in interactive EFL learning, as teachers enabled students to see their mistakes and weaknesses and help them overcome the problems (Rahnama, Rad, & Bagheri, 2016). As teachers recalled, when student participants encountered some difficulties in learning, they would sought teachers' assistance as "a prior choice" (Teacher 1). Furthermore, participants were found to be "more active" (Teacher 2) in solving their learning problems through interaction with teachers and peers in a teacher-involved context; while many students in a peer interactive context often "left my questions behind" (Interviewee 6). Teachers thus suggested that students, learning in different contexts, might have different levels of autonomy. Showed in this study, students displayed a higher level of autonomy and learning motivation in a teacher-involved context than their classmates did in

peer interactive context, which is contradictory to previous thinking on language learning (Jiang & Ribeiro, 2017; Nouhi Jadesi, Razmjoo, & Ahmadi, 2016).

Besides, students concerned that their peers might lack essential experience or knowledge to "give valuable feedback" and provided them with "incorrect language knowledge" (Interviewee 2 & 8). EFL students, according to Ching and Hsu (2016), occasionally doubted peers' abilities to provide credible feedback in interactive learning. In this circumstance, students might be reluctant to engage in peer interactive learning, as they did not think they could improve their language abilities through peer interaction. Same findings were discovered in the current study. According to the teachers' observation, student participants in the peer interactive context were less active due to a lack of trust in their peers' abilities. Students found interacting with peers sometimes "meaningless", because such interaction often led to "a dead end" (Interviewee 5) as compared to "helpful instructions" (Interviewee 1) provided by experienced English teachers. For the purpose of obtaining reliable and trustworthy instructions to fulfil their "higher requirements in English learning" (Interviewee 4), student participants were more active in interaction with teachers.

Findings from this study also indicated that interpersonal relationship might prevent Chinese EFL students from actively engaging in peer interactive learning activities. Interpersonal relationship is an important cultural and social concept in a Chinese context (Vanhonacker, 2004). Chinese students always intend to keep good relationships with peers in interaction (Ding et al., 2017). Interacting with peers, as noticed in this study, usually made students "worry about breaking relationship" (Interviewee 6), even in an online context. Students "dared not to" give "critical comments" (Interviewee 4) on peers' presentations in peer interactive learning. This concern of breaking interpersonal relationship with peers largely demotivated students' engagement in learning. Some EFL students "would rather keep silence for not hurting peers' face" (Interviewee 1). Many student-made presentations were observed to receive no comments from others and remained monologic in peer interactive learning activities. For maintaining a group harmony or for reluctance to claim authority among peers, EFL students might escape from peer interaction, avoiding commenting on peers' work directly (Carson & Nelson, 1996). As scholars have indicated, meaningful interactive learning, which is beneficial to EFL development, should be two-way communication with the involvement of both students (Rostami, Kashanian, & Gholami, 2016; Woo & Reeves, 2007). Students, who were passive in peer interactive learning, might not be able to improve their language knowledge and abilities.

These findings on EFL students' engagement in interactive learning are new to the literature, since many previous studies have contextualized in a traditional in-class environment (Ciftci & Kocoglu, 2012; Hung, Young, & Lin, 2015). It should be noted that for many Chinese EFL students, the online interactive learning, as a newly emerging approach for foreign language development, is still following an old teacher-centred mode. Although many have considered the online learning as an autonomous context for students to play a dominant role in their own language learning (Benson, 2000), Chinese students' EFL learning in the context is under the influence of their teachers, as found in this case. It appeared that Chinese university EFL students did not accept the online learning as a totally different approach for English learning,

particularly for autonomous learning, but an expanding platform, where they could get more opportunities to interact with both their teachers and peers for language learning. Considering from this perspective, EFL students' interaction with teachers and peers is both important.

5. CONCLUSION and SUGGESTIONS

This comparative case study investigated Chinese university EFL students' different participation and production in teacher-involved interactive learning and in peer interactive learning. Factors that students perceived to result in such differences were also examined and analysed in the study. Findings indicated that teachers' higher status in China led to students' more stable participation and engagement in teacher-involved interaction as compared to that in peer interaction; while students' engagement in peer interactive EFL learning, which was under the influence of a wider range of factors, including the employed learning topics, students' language confidence and the peer interdependence, experienced changes from module to module. In terms of students' engagement in interactive learning, EFL students were found to be more active in teacher-involved interaction. Two students' perceived factors of teacher-involved interaction, which were the effectiveness of learning activities and the interpersonal relationship with peer students, were spotted to result in their preferences of teacher-involved interactive learning.

These findings highlighted the influence of teachers on Chinese university EFL students' interactive learning, even in an online context. These findings suggested that for these EFL students, online learning was not a different approach for language development, but an expanding platform for more learning opportunities through interaction with both teachers and peer students. It is recommended that teachers should be taken into consideration for EFL learning and teaching, who may play a role in promoting EFL students' language practice and active engagement. The identification of factors that caused EFL students' different participation and production in interactive learning can be also used by researchers and teachers to apply a better approach, which hopefully minimize students' concerns during the process, and help them achieve their learning goals in an online context. EFL students' online interactive learning was yet to be developed to a more self-determined level for better learning outcomes (Luk & Lin, 2017), where students could rely less on their teachers and the traditional teacher-centred learning mode. The current study did not examine to what degree these students' perceived influential factors impacted their participation and production in different types of interactive EFL learning. Further studies may be conducted to investigate the correlation from a quantitative perspective.

Çevrimiçi Öğretmen Katılımı ve Etkileşimli Akran Öğrenmesinin Karşılaştırılması: Çinli Yabancı Dil Öğrencilerinin Algıları ve Deneyimleri

Özet

Bu karşılaştırmalı çalışmanın amacı etkileşimli öğrenmenin iki türü olan çevrimiçi öğretmen katılımı ve akran öğrenme yöntemleri hakkında Çindeki bir üniversitede yer alan yabancı dil öğrencilerinin algılarını ve deneyimlerini araştırmaktır. Rasgele iki gruba ayrılan katılımcılar, Çin'de bir üniversitede öğrenim gören 32 yabancı dil öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Bir grup öğretmen katılımlı etkileşimli öğrenme yöntemi ile ders işlerken, diğer grup akran katılımlı etkileşimli öğrenme yöntemi ile ders işlemiştir. Veriler öğrencilerin çevrimiçi dökümanları ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu aracılığı ile elde edilmiştir. Sonuç olarak iki grup arasında öğrencilerin algıları ve deneyimleri açısından faklılıklar tespit edilmiştir. Öğretmen katılımlı grupta öğrenciler baskın bir şekilde öğretmenin etkisi altındadırlar ve öğrenme etkinliklerine katılımları normal düzeydedir. Akran etkileşimli grupta ise öğrenciler birçok dış faktörden etkilenmişlerdir. Böylece öğrenme etkinliklerine katılımları ve katkıları olumsuz yönde etkilemiştir. Bununla birlikte öğretmen katılımlı gruptaki öğrencilerin öğrenme etkinliklerinde daha aktif rol oynadıkları ortaya çıkmıştır. Araştırma sonunda gelecekteki çalışmalara yönelik önerilere yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Çevrimiçi öğrenme, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, etkileşimli öğrenme, öğretmen-öğrenci etkileşimi, akran etkileşimi.

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APPENDIX I

Guide questions for individual interviews with students:

(1) For what purpose did you engage in interactive EFL learning?

(2) What do you think of interaction with teachers in your EFL learning?

(3) What do you think of interaction with peers in your EFL learning?

(4) Did you experience any difficulties or concerns when interacting with teachers in your

EFL learning?

(5) Did you experience any difficulties or concerns when interacting with peers in your EFL

learning?

(6) If there is any difference between interacting with teachers and peers in your EFL

learning?

(7) What factors do you think lead to such differences?

APPENDIX II

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Guide questions for individual interviews with teachers:

(1) From your observation, was there any difference between students' participation in teacher-involved interactive learning and that in peer interactive learning?

(2) From your observation, was there any difference between students' production in teacher-involved interactive learning and that in peer interactive learning?

(3) Was there any difference between students' peer interaction in a teacher-involved context and that in a peer-to-peer context?

(4) From your perspective, what factors might result in such differences?

(5) What are the benefits of teacher-student interaction and peer interaction?

(6) Did students encounter any difficulties in their interactive learning with teachers and with peers? What strategies did they use to cope with such challenges?