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### Stimulating learner autonomy in English language education : a curriculum innovation study in a Vietnamese context

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## CHAPTER 6

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TWO EMPIRICAL EXPERIMENTS

Aiming to enhance the quality of secondary school English teacher education through improving the quality of the existing curriculum at CTU, I designed the intended curriculum for a try out on the first-year students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). I did two preparatory activities before I designed the intended curriculum. First, I examined the context and the quality of teaching English in secondary and ELT programs in higher education in Vietnam. This examination showed that students lack autonomy in learning English and that their communicative competence is far from satisfactory. Second, I reviewed literature relevant to stimulating learner autonomy and communicative competence. From the literature review, I distilled two design parameters, *choice* and *interactions*, focusing on stimulating learner autonomy and communicative competence. In chapter 5, I elaborated on these two design parameters and described how they were steered the intended curriculum. The intended curriculum was completely task-based and was validated by methodologists and teachers. In the present chapter, I outline the *research questions*, *research design* and *research instruments* of the two empirical experiments I conducted at CTU from 2002-2004.

Experiment 1 includes the implementation and measurement of the effects of the intended curriculum on the freshmen of TEFL in semester 1, academic year 2002-2003. The implementation of choice and interactions was monitored and the effects of the curriculum on the students' self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning were measured in a pretest-posttest design.

Based on the intended curriculum, a task-based component was developed by the curriculum developers at the researcher's department with the cooperation of the researcher. This component was one of two components in *the adapted curriculum*. The other component was the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP), the pedagogical paradigm the teachers had chosen in 2001.

Experiment 2 includes the implementation of the task-based component in the adapted curriculum on the freshmen of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in semester 1, academic year 2003-2004. In experiment 2, the implementation of the task-based component was monitored; the effects of the adapted curriculum on students' self-management, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning were measured.

#### 1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In both experiments, the quality of the intended and the adapted curriculum was measured for two representations: *The implemented* (i.e., the operationalized and perceived curriculum) and *the attained curriculum* (i.e., the outcomes of the implemented curriculum). Figure 6.1 presents the representations of the curricula I measured.

The arrows in figure 6.1 show the presentations of the curricula I measured. The implementation of the *intended curriculum* was measured to assess whether it was *implemented* as intended. Its operationalization was documented via classroom observations. We monitored the implementation of *choice* and *interactions*. Teachers'

and students' perceptions of the operationalized curriculum were documented to determine which aspects of the curriculum they perceived as to fit the aims of stimulating learner autonomy and communicative competence and which features of the curriculum they thought should be improved to meet these goals. I measured the *attained curriculum* (i.e., the outcomes) as the effects of the operationalization and perception of the curriculum. In the next section, I will present the research questions concerning the quality of the intended and adapted curriculum in both presentations we mentioned: The *implemented* (as operationalized and perceived) and the *attained curriculum*

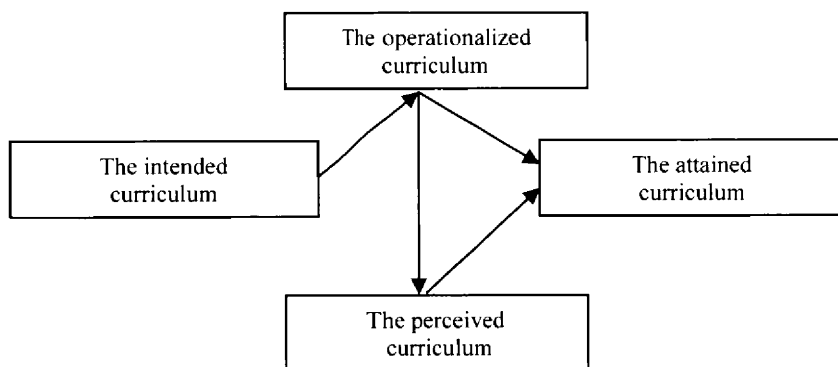


Figure 6.1. Curriculum representations measured in the two experiments.

## 1.1 The intended curriculum

### 1.1.1 Implementation

*Operationalization.* The overall aim of documenting the operationalization of the intended curriculum is to assess whether it was operationalized as intended. I searched for the answers to the questions,

- 1) Did the teacher provide the students with opportunities to make choices of learning content and learning strategies to complete the task?
- 2) Were the interactions between the teacher and students and among the students conducted in English?

Therefore, I observed “key” class-meetings, those being where the teachers’ pedagogical actions, aiming at making students aware of choices of learning content and learning methodology, provided students with opportunities to make choices and create learning tasks. I assumed that in these class-meetings, authentic interactions in the target language would occur most. Class-meetings 1 and 5 of Unit 1, class-meeting 1 of Unit 2 and class-meeting 1 of Unit 3 met the criteria of being “key events”. To document the students’ changes from the awareness of choices to the

creation of learning tasks, observing students' responses and behaviors responding to making choices and creating the learning tasks for themselves were conducted;

- 3) Did students demonstrate awareness of choices of learning content and learning methodology towards the creation of learning tasks?

The intended curriculum was operationalized in the four groups of students. Each teacher taught one group. To assess the teacher's effects on the students' learning, I monitored the operationalization of the curriculum according the question,

- 4) Was the intended curriculum operationalized to the same degree in the four groups?

*Perception.* To see how the teachers and students involved in operationalizing the intended curriculum perceived it, I investigated and answered the questions,

- 5) Which aspects of the curriculum did the teachers and students perceive positively?
- 6) Which aspects of the curriculum, according to the teachers and students, could be improved?

How the teachers perceived each unit (i.e., formative evaluation) and that of the curriculum (i.e., summative evaluation) was documented by means of two questionnaires during and at the end of the semester respectively. The insights I gained were used to adjust and enhance the operationalization of the curriculum. Formative evaluation was carried out at the end of each unit. The aims of summative evaluation were to confirm the operationalization of the curriculum and to gain insights into the quality of the operationalized curriculum as perceived by the classroom practitioners. Summative evaluation was carried out at the end of the semester. Both formative and summative evaluation was carried out by applying the Delphi method (as described in section 2.2, chapter 7).

At the end of the semester, a questionnaire was handed out to collect the students' evaluation on the characteristics of the curriculum supposed to enhance their intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning.

### 1.1.2 *The attained curriculum*

As discussed in section 1.2.1 in chapter 1, *choices* and *interactions* function as the key design parameters. One common quality of autonomous and communicatively competent language learners is the competence in using meta-cognitive skills (self-management skills). Therefore, stimulating the learners' self-regulated skills promotes the development of learner autonomy and communicative competence. Providing learners with the choices of the learning content and learning methods is aimed at enhancing their intrinsic motivation to learn the target language because choice allows the learners ownership of their learning.

Figure 6.2 summarizes the outcomes of the intended curriculum the researcher measured.

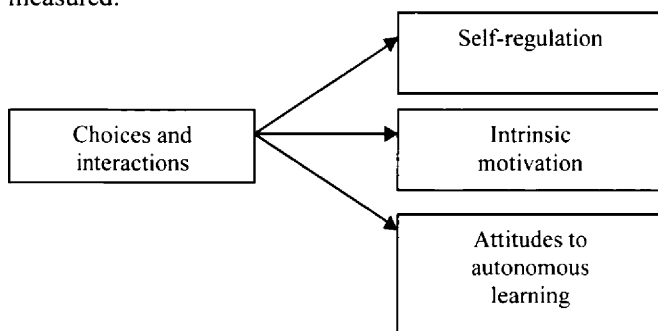


Figure 6.2. The outcomes measured.

To access the hypothesized outcomes of the curriculum, I searched for the answers to the question,

*Were the students' levels of self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning improved?*

The outcomes of the intended curriculum were measured by comparing the pre- and post-tests scores on self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and attitudes to autonomous learning. The pre-tests were handed out one week before each curriculum was implemented. The post-tests were handed out one week after the end of the implementation of each curriculum.

### 1.2 The adapted curriculum (implemented in experiment 2)

The implementation of the intended curriculum in experiment 1 brought insight into its effects on the students' *self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning*. In addition, its implementation created opportunities for the curriculum developers at my department (with my cooperation) to adapt the parameters (i.e., choice and interactions) operationalized in the intended curriculum to develop the *adapted curriculum* according to their educational philosophy. The adapted curriculum consists of two components: The *TBLL component* adapted from the intended curriculum and the *PPP paradigm*, the existing pedagogical practice at my department. The adapted curriculum was implemented as experiment 2 in semester 1 (academic year 2003-2004) on first-year students of TEFL. Like the intended curriculum, the researcher assessed two representations of the adapted curriculum: Implementation (i.e., operationalization and perception) and attainment (i.e., outcomes).

### 1.2.1 *Implementation*

The researcher monitored the operationalization of choices and interactions in the task-based component,

- 1) Were choices and interactions in the target language operationalized in the task-based component of the adapted curriculum?

The operationalization of the task-based component in the adapted curriculum was monitored by observing targeted sessions within the task-based component. Class-meeting 1 was the one in which the main task (or project) was introduced. In this session, the teachers' pedagogical actions concerning providing students with choices and students' responses and behavior were most pronounced. Therefore, class-meeting 1 was observed and monitored.

The adapted curriculum was operationalized in the three groups of students. Five teachers taught the three groups. Each teacher taught each group once a week. For each week, each teacher taught a different section (vocabulary, reading, grammar, writing, listening/speaking) corresponding to the divisions in the Lifelines syllabus. (For more information about the Lifelines syllabus, consult section 1 in chapter 8 of this thesis.) Concerning the operationalization of the task-based component, each teacher was assigned to supervise two sub-groups of three or four students. To find out to which degree the task-based component was operationalized in the three groups, I described, analyzed and reported the observed class-meetings to answer the question,

- 2) Was the task-based component operationalized in the three groups to the same degree?

To get access to the teachers' and students' evaluation of the operationalized task-based component, I collected their opinion of the task-based component to answer the question,

- 3) How did the teachers and students evaluate the operationalization of the task-based component?

Upon completing the project work, after students orally presented their project work in front of the class, they orally self-evaluated their project work execution and language learning. In the same session, students also evaluated the provision of choice in the project work component of the adapted curriculum.

How the teachers perceived the project-work component in the adapted curriculum was documented in an interview. The researcher and a colleague asked the teachers questions in three areas: (1) Their inferences from their observations and experiences teaching with the task-based approach, (2) the benefits to students learning the target language via doing tasks (project work), and (3) the measures needed to be taken to improve the implementation of the task-based component.

### 1.2.2 *The attained adapted curriculum*

In terms of the outcomes, with the task-based part as one component in the adapted component, I searched for the answers to the question,

*Were the students' self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning improved by participating in the adapted curriculum?*

The outcomes were measured by the same questionnaires used as pre-tests and post-tests in experiment 1 on self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, and attitudes to autonomous learning. The pre-tests and post-tests on the three constructs were handed out one week before and one week after the operationalization of the curriculum respectively.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study reported in this book consists of two chronological experiments. The first experiment was conducted in semester 1, academic year 2002-2003, and the second experiment in semester 1, academic year 2003-2004. Experiment 1 stemmed from the desire to improve the quality of secondary school English teacher education of CTU. The experiment included developing, implementing and measuring the effects of the intended curriculum. Experiment 2 included implementing and measuring the effects of the adapted curriculum.

In both experiments, the operationalization of choice and interactions in the two curricula at the classroom level was monitored; the effects of the two curricula on the students' self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning were measured. The overall research design of the two experiments is a *one-group pre- and post-test design* in which the curriculum is the independent variable, *self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning* the dependent variables, while *the implementation of the curricula is monitored*. In the following sections, I will describe the participants and research instruments of the two experiments.

## 3. PARTICIPANTS

### 3.1 *Teachers*

In experiment 1, four senior teachers from the Department of English, CTU taught the intended curriculum. Their years of teaching experience range from 11 to 20. All four earned a Master degree outside Vietnam. They were experienced in implementing the PPP paradigm in grammar and vocabulary lessons and the pre-activities, while-activities and post-activities in language skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening and speaking) lessons. Two of them are from the Teaching Methodology Division, one from the Research Methodology Division and one from the Language Skills Division. The involvement of the four teachers was based on two criteria: (1) Their availability and willingness to participate, and (2) their specialized expertise. It

should be noted that the four teachers are from three different divisions, bringing in different perspectives to the team and contributing a comprehensive insight into improving the quality of the curriculum if necessary.

In experiment 2, five teachers were involved. One of them, with 17 years of teaching experience, earned her Master's degree in Australia. The other four are younger teachers with 8, 7, 5 and 3 years teaching experience. The involvement of the teachers was determined by their performance in the workshop "Methodology on Teaching the Skills" organized and led by the three teachers from the Teaching Methodology Division of the Department of English in February 2003. The senior teacher with 17 years teaching experience worked as one of the teacher trainers in the workshop. The other four teachers were the workshop participants. They were evaluated by the trainers of the workshop as trainees who, in micro-teaching during the workshops, presented the lesson in the most desirable way, implementing the model Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) paradigm in Grammar and Vocabulary lessons and pre-, while-, post-activities model in language skills lessons. After the workshop, these teachers were assigned to teach the three groups.

### 3.2 Students

Participants in experiment 1 (cohort 1) and experiment 2 (cohort 2) are all first-year students Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) of the two academic years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 respectively. There were 60 participants in experiment 1 and 40 in experiment 2. In cohort 1, the four target students from each group were chosen based on their highest and lowest score on the pre-test on self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning.

For admission into the program, candidates have to take the entrance examination for "Track D" with three subjects: Vietnamese literature, mathematics and English. Each subject examination lasts for 120 minutes. To complete the examination in the three subjects, candidates are tested in three separate sessions under the supervision of two proctors. The examination questions are written by a group of examiners under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Training. After the examination has been taken, to ensure the reliability of the scores, all examination papers are sent anonymously to the grading committee consisting of instructors of English at the Department of English at CTU. Each examination paper is taken in turn to be corrected by three evaluators. *The first evaluator* corrects the examination paper using a grading sheet, not directly marking onto the examination paper, to make sure that the second grader is not aware of the candidate's initial grade. *The second evaluator* marks the scores for each answer directly onto the examination paper. *The third evaluator* compares the two scores. If the two scores match, the third evaluator confirms that score as the definitive score. If the two scores do not match, the third evaluator has to grade the paper again and make the final decision on the result.

There are two reasons for the choice of first-year students of TEFL as participants in the two experiments: (1) Their experiences of learning EFL during their secondary years, and (2) the aim of this curriculum innovation study. During second-

dary school years, participants have been taught the target language in the teacher-centered approach. The focus was on learning the language structures rather than using the target language. As a design study, the aims are two-fold. In the first place, the study aims to develop and test the effects of the intended curriculum on participants' *self-regulation*, *intrinsic motivation* and *attitudes to autonomous learning*. In the second place, the study aims to make participants as future secondary teachers of English aware of an alternative way of learning language implemented at university level. If the way this approach to teaching and learning the target language works for them, they might transfer these learning experiences into their future teaching in secondary schools.

#### 4. INSTRUMENTS

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 of this chapter present the variables measured in the two experiments. With *choice* and *interactions*, the two key parameters, the intended curriculum was designed to aim at enhancing the first-year TEFL students' *self-regulation*, *intrinsic motivation* and *attitudes to autonomous learning*. In other words, we measured *the attained curriculum* or the outcomes. To describe the possible effects of the intended curriculum, we had to find out whether the curriculum was operationalized as intended. Therefore, at the classroom level, the operationalized curriculum was monitored. To achieve insight into the quality of curriculum for future adaptation, we collected the teachers' and students' feedback on the quality of the curriculum (i.e., the perceived curriculum).

In the following section, the instruments used to measure the implementation and the effects of the implemented curricula will be outlined. The section begins with the description of instruments used in the first experiment and then outlines the instruments used in the second experiment.

##### 4.1 Instruments used in experiment 1

To monitor how the curriculum was *operationalized*, classroom observations were conducted to document whether choices and interactions in the target language were put into practice. These observations focused on the teachers' pedagogical actions in providing students with choices and students' responses and behaviors to making choices. Classroom observations documented the language which was used as the main medium in interactions between the teacher and student(s) and between/among the student(s). In addition, the students' portfolios were collected and analyzed to find out whether the operationalization of the curriculum created the opportunities for them to be aware of choices, to adapt choices, to create the learning tasks for themselves and to use the self-regulated skills in their learning.

The teachers' and students' perception of the curriculum were documented with questionnaires and opinion questions. The students responded to a questionnaire on the features which the intended curriculum is supposed to enhance in their intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning. The teachers responded to two lists

with open questions that serve as a basis for meetings for formative and summative evaluation respectively.

The attained curriculum or the *outcomes* (self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning) were measured with the adapted *Self-Regulation Inventory* (SRI) from Pintrich et al., (1991), the adapted *Intrinsic Motivation Inventory* (IMI) from Ryan and Deci (1992), and the adapted *Questionnaire that Helps You to Establish Your Personal Level of Autonomy* from Camilleri (1999). Table 6.1 lists the instruments used in my study. The numbers in the table refer to the sections in which I describe each instrument in detail.

Table 6.1. Instruments used in the two experiments

<i>Representations of the curriculum</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Method</i>
The operationalized curriculum	Implementation of Choice and Interactions	Classroom observation and portfolio analysis (section 4.1.1)
The perceived curriculum	The quality of the curriculum	Written questionnaires (to teachers and to students), sections 4.1.2)
The attained curriculum	The effects of the curriculum: - Self-regulation - Intrinsic motivation - Attitudes to autonomous learning	Inventories (section 4.1.3)

#### 4.1.1 *Monitoring the operationalization of the intended curriculum*

*Classroom observations.* Classroom observations were conducted at two levels: The whole class in general and the students in the target groups (referred to in the next paragraph). Classroom observations were conducted to find out whether the teachers provided students with choices of learning content and learning methodology.

Nunan's (2000) theoretical framework was adapted to document the operationalization of choices in the curriculum via classroom observations. Classroom observations focused on the teacher-student(s) interactions, student-student(s) interactions, and students' behaviors and responses regarding making choices. Four target students from each group were selected based on their highest and lowest score on the pre-tests on self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning. The following section describes in detail observation activities. Table 6.2 presents the adapted classroom observation framework.

Table 6.2. *Adapted classroom observation framework*

<i>Level of involvement</i>	<i>Teacher's pedagogical actions</i>	<i>Students' responses and behaviors</i>
Awareness	What did the teacher do to make students aware of the choices of what to learn and how to learn?	What kind of response did the target students give? a. Did they demonstrate that they recognize that they could choose what to learn in terms of learning resources, learning tasks and language content? b. Did they demonstrate awareness that the curriculum module offers them the choice of how to approach a new content and how to work on their assignments or their unit projects?
Involvement	What did the teacher do to get students to involve in making choices?	What kind of responses did the target students give and what kind of behavior did they show? a. Did they resist making choices? b. Did they hesitate making choices?
Intervention	What did the teacher do to make students aware of their opportunity to modify or adapt choices?	Did the students in the target group modify and adapt the choices they were offered?
Creation	What did the teacher do to get students to create their own learning tasks?	Did students in the target group create tasks (e.g., suggest other sources as sub-tasks or produce a new learning unit task) for themselves?

The observation framework from table 6.1 shows the four levels of students' involvement in making choices. At the awareness level, observations focused on the teacher's pedagogical actions attempting to make students aware of choices of content and learning strategies the curriculum offers them. At the involvement level, observations focused on whether students moved from awareness to involvement in making choices from a range of content and procedural options. At the intervention level, observations focus on whether students made changes to the choices they were offered so that these changes fit their use and situation. At the creation level, observations focus on whether students created the own learning tasks.

*Heuristics to portfolio analysis.* To ascertain the operationalization of choices in the intended curriculum and to find out whether the students used self-regulated skills in their learning, the target students' portfolios were collected and analyzed.

The heuristics to examine students' writings in portfolios are based on the theoretical framework of Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) by Pintrich et al.'s (1991) on self-regulation and Wenden's (1991: 4) Question Outline for Interpreting Self-Reports. Students' portfolios will be examined in sub-category of *planning, monitoring and evaluating*.

In terms of *planning*, the learning objectives the student set, the plan the students made to achieve their set learning objectives, and their task analysis (i.e., the percep-

tion of the purpose, the requirements of learning tasks, the solutions to learning tasks) were examined.

In terms of monitoring, the following activities were examined: (1) Whether the students examined their learning outcomes, (2) whether they became aware of problems and difficulties they had as they did the task and learned English, and (3) whether they self-assessed the strategies they used in their communications.

In terms of evaluating, evaluation activities were analyzed including (1) what the students thought may improve their future performance, and (2) what students suggested as guidelines or ideas for effective task execution and for language learning.

#### 4.1.2 Documenting the perceived curriculum

*Documenting the quality of the curriculum: Teachers' perception.* The researcher used two questionnaires for formative and summative evaluation respectively to collect information on how classroom practitioners perceive the operationalized curriculum.

*Formative evaluation. How teachers perceive each unit of the curriculum.* This formative evaluation consists of eight questions to collect information on:

Variables:	Items:
The objectives of the unit: The consistency of objectives and its unit task.	1
The relevancy and feasibility of the unit project.	2
Choices offered to students.	3
Scaffolding: Working in pairs and in groups, tutorials.	4, 5
Students' attitudes to reflection on their own learning.	6
Learning tasks: Does task execution foster students' attitudes to communication objectives and learning to learn objectives?	7
Suggestions or improvements that classroom practitioners made for solving problems/ difficulties they faced, to enhance the operationalization of the unit.	8

The collection of information in the formative evaluation was carried out by means of the Delphi method. The answers to the questions were used as input for the discussions; two rounds of discussions were held. In the first round, the teachers shared and discussed their ideas on the aforementioned areas of evaluation of each unit. In the second round of the meeting which was held some time after the first meeting, the discrepancies in the teachers' evaluation in the first round of discussion were considered and disposed off. For the full questionnaire, see appendix 6.1.

*Summative evaluation. How teachers perceive the intended curriculum.* A questionnaire consisting of 14 questions designed for the summative evaluation were adapted from the framework to evaluate the elements of curriculum by Davis (1980): *Evaluation of objectives, evaluation teaching materials and evaluation of teaching and learning.* In addition, for our purpose of evaluating teaching material for learner autonomy, we included the four questions proposed in Nunan (2000).

- 1 To what extent are the objectives of the curriculum module made clear to students? (If they are implicit, how could they be made explicit?)

- 2 To what extent are students provided with opportunities to make choices? How could the module be modified to allow for greater learner choice?
- 3 To what extent does the curriculum module allow flexibility and allow for individualization? How might this aspect be enhanced? What opportunities exist for critical reflection and self-evaluation? How might this aspect be enhanced?
- 4 What are the key learning strategies underlying pedagogical tasks? Are they explicit? If not, to what extent could they be made explicit? Are these learning strategies helpful to students to learn how to learn the language?

The questions focus on looking for the answers to these areas of the curriculum:

Aspects:	Variables:	Questions:
Objectives	The explicitness, the feasibility of the objectives of the curriculum, the degree to which local conditions and requirements of the students and the community are reflected in the objectives.	1, 2, 3
Materials	Whether the materials help to accomplish the objectives of the curriculum module, whether the material is practical in terms of facility, equipment, teachers, etc.	4, 5
Self-direction	Students' making choices, possibility of individualization, critical reflection and self-evaluation.	6, 7, 8
Scaffolding	Negotiation and cooperation among students and teacher	9
Control of learning	Do students gradually take control over their learning?	10
Learning strategies	Learning strategies underlying learning tasks	11
Using to learn the language	Students' awareness of the issue that language use is language learning	12
Evaluation procedure	Whether the curriculum module suggests a favorite instrument for students to document their learning English as a process of learning communicative skills and strategies	13
Degree of autonomy	Is the degree of autonomy consecutively internalized after each unit?	14

The collection of information in the formative evaluation was also carried out by means of Delphi method with two discussion rounds, in the same way as in formative evaluation. For the full questionnaire, see appendix 6.2.

#### 4.1.3 *Monitoring the features of the intended curriculum supposed to enhance students' intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous language learning: Students' perception*

A seven-item questionnaire with four rating points (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) and an open section for opinion survey was designed to monitor the features of the curriculum that were supposed to enhance the students' *intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning*. The research findings, in terms of pedagogical practices and teaching materials by Deci, Koestner, & Ryan (1999), Ryan and Deci (2000), and Camilleri (1999) have been used to construct the ques-

tionnaire focusing on *choice, opportunities for self-direction, confidence in one's ability, perception of one's capability, cooperative language learning environment, reflection on language learning and learning process*. These features are found to enhance intrinsic motivation and to bring students a greater feeling of autonomy. The seven features include:

Features:	Items:
Provision of enough choices of learning content and learning methodology	1
Opportunities for self-control of learning	2
Reflection on the learning process	3
Recognition of students' role as crucial to succeed in learning the target language	4
Cooperative learning environment	5
Confidence in one's ability to succeed in learning the target language	6
Opportunities for arousing curiosity and being challenged	7

For the questionnaire, see appendix 6.3.

#### 4.1.4 *Measuring the outcomes*

*Self-regulation Inventory (SRI)*. A seven-subscale questionnaire was adapted from the section Cognitive and Meta-cognitive Strategies: Meta-cognitive Self-regulation of Pintrich et al.'s (1991) Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) to measure the students' level of self-regulation. Pintrich et al.'s (1991) MSLQ was used to measure the learners' meta-cognitive self-regulation in a reading course, so I adapted it to fit the purpose of measuring the participants' self-regulation of the students in learning the target language by using it autonomously.

The adapted SRI includes 15 items that focus on the control and self-regulation aspect of meta-cognition. To Pintrich et al. (1991), the three general processes that make up meta-cognitive self-regulatory activities are *planning, monitoring and regulating*. Planning activities such as goal setting help to activate, or prime, relevant aspects of prior knowledge that make organizing and executing learning tasks easier. Monitoring activities include tracking one's attention, self-evaluative and reflective activities that assist students in understanding how to perform the tasks better and regulating refers to the fine-tuning and continuous adjustment of one's cognitive activities. Regulating activities are assumed to improve performance by assisting learners to check and correct their behavior as they proceed on a task.

The adapted instrument was piloted in a group of 204 first-year students of TEFL at CTU and the community colleges to test its internal consistency ( $\alpha = .73$ ). From the empirical point of view, deleting items with the item-rest correlation lower than .30 just improved the total reliability of the inventory slightly (from .73 to .75) whereas the stability index of Pintrich et al.'s (1991) SRI is .79. Therefore, we decided not to delete any items. For the questionnaire, see appendix 6.4.

*Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI)*. The researcher adapted the instrument from Ryan and Deci's (1992) Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI). The adapted inventory, a seven-subscale questionnaire, covers four aspects: Interest/enjoyment, perceived competence, pressure/tension and relatedness. Ryan and Deci's (1992) IMI

aims to be used as a post-test measure upon the completion of the course, so verb tenses in questions in the inventory are in the simple past. To adapt this inventory so that the adapted intrinsic motivation inventory could be used as a pre-test and a post-test measure is essential.

To Ryan and Deci (*ibid.*), *interest and enjoyment* is considered as the self-report measure of intrinsic motivation; there is a correlation between the level of students' interest and enjoyment in the activity and the degree of their intrinsic motivation. If students themselves feel interested in or enjoy doing a certain learning activity their degree of intrinsic motivation enhances. Otherwise, their intrinsic motivation decreases. As a student said, "I enjoy doing learning activities very much", we can interpret that she is highly intrinsically motivated to do the activities.

*Perceived competence* is a positive predictor of both self-report and behavioral measures of intrinsic motivation. As students consider themselves competent, their intrinsic motivation increases and they will perform the task better. Whether a student perceives herself as skilled or unskilled at doing a certain activity, she herself shows that her intrinsic motivation to do that activity is high or low, which results in good or poor performance respectively.

*Pressure and tension* is a negative predictor of intrinsic motivation. When a learning activity or learning moment during class time brings students some pressure or tension, it is safely predicted that students will certainly not be intrinsically motivated to proceed on their learning.

*Relatedness* is a positive predictor of intrinsic motivation. If the relationship between the teacher and students or among students is good, we could predict that students become more intrinsically motivated to learn.

The adapted instrument was used as the pre-test and post-test. We piloted this adapted instrument on a group of 204 first year students of TEFL at CTU and the community colleges to test its internal consistency ( $\alpha = .83$ ). Though 7 items of Ryan and Deci's (1992) IMI had been deleted, with this alpha, there is no need to reconstruct the items in the inventory. For the questionnaire, see appendix 6.5.

*Measuring students' attitudes to autonomous learning.* The questionnaire consisting of 23 items, five-scale (not at all, little, partly, much, and very much) was used to measure students' attitudes to autonomous learning. In this questionnaire, in addition to the items we adapted from Camilleri's (1999) "*Questionnaire to help you establish your personal level of autonomy*", we created some new items. The adapted questionnaire focuses on collecting information concerning the manifestations of attitudes to autonomous learning.

<i>Cognitive and meta-cognitive skills:</i>	Items:
Taking initiative in learning, self-study at resource center	1, 13, 14, 15, 16
Establishing learning objectives	2
Learners' learning preferences	3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Perception of the importance of learning strategies how to learn the language	22
Willingness to discuss one's progress	17
Self-evaluating one's learning	23

<i>Affective factors:</i>	
Self-confidence	8
Motivation to learner English	18
Perception of one's role in succeeding in learning languages	19
<i>Social factors:</i>	
Flexibility	10, 11, 12, 13
Working in cooperation with others	9
<i>Perception of language and language learning:</i>	
Language as a means for communication	20
Learning language means to learn how to communicate	21

For the questionnaire and description of the adapted questionnaire, see appendix 6.6.

## 4.2 Instruments used in experiment 2

### 4.2.1 Implementation

*Operationalization.* The operationalization of the task-based component was monitored with the same classroom observation framework applied in experiment 1, presented in table 6.2 in this chapter.

*Perception.* At the end of each of project work, besides questions aiming at strengthening the students' reflection capacity on their project execution and language learning task (e.g., their self-evaluation of project work execution, language learning task, oral presentation of project), I collected information from students by having them evaluate whether the project-work component allows students to choose what and how to do the project work (e.g., the provision of choice).

The researcher, together with a colleague of the researcher interviewed the teachers involved in experiment 2. The questions focused on the *teachers' perception of supervising students to do the project work, the benefits students have when doing project work, and how to improve the project-work component* to make students become more independent of the teachers. These questions aim at exploring the teachers' belief about the paradigm of learning the language by using it authentically, and learning how to learn the language.

### 4.2.2 Attainment.

Experiment 2 aims at testing the effects of the adapted curriculum on students' *self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning*. The three adapted questionnaires on self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning used in experiment 1 (described in section 4.1.3 in this chapter) were used to measure the students' self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning. Based on the students' reports in the pre-tests and post-tests on self-regulation, intrinsic motivation and attitudes to autonomous learning, insights into the effects of the adapted curriculum and comparisons between the generative power of each of the two curricula on the development of learners' subsequent factors with reference to their initial level of these factors will be generated.

### 5. SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the research questions, research design, participants and research instruments of the two empirical experiments I conducted in the two semesters 1, academic years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 at CTU. In chapters 7 and 8, I will present the qualitative results of the implementation of the intended curriculum and of the task-based component in the adapted curriculum. In chapter 9, I will present the quantitative outcomes of the two curricula.