

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL EVALUATIONS OF THE PROGRAM

This chapter describes the subjects' evaluations to this teaching program of language functions. The first section of this chapter provides the students' evaluations, and the second section presents the evaluations given by the student subjects' English teachers.

Students' Evaluations of the Program

Two questionnaires (see Appendix K and Appendix L, on pp. 161~166) was given to the student subjects to obtain their evaluations of this teaching program offered by the researcher in two teaching methods—two classes by function-based method, and the other two classes by structure-based method. In function-based method, Lesson-1 included an overview of language functions; Lesson-2 contains an instruction of the eight sentences for invitation by indirectness; Lesson-3 holds an instruction of the eight sentences for invitation by politeness; and Lesson-4 presents the combination of indirectness and politeness. (For detailed teaching procedure by function-based method, see Appendix C~F, pp. 123~141.) On the other hand, in structure-based method, Lesson-1, like that by function-oriented method, includes an overview of language functions; Lesson-2 contains instruction of Direct-imperative strategy and Direct-prformative strategy; Lesson-3 focuses on Modality strategy; and Lesson-4 concentrates on Hinting strategy. (For detailed teaching procedure by structure-based method, see Appendix G~J, pp. 143~160.) Since Lesson-1 presents only an overview of the program, it will not be discussed in this chapter.

Students' Evaluations of the Whole Program

The means of the students' evaluations based on ten dimensions are listed in Table 20. The overall evaluations for each dimension were rated on a seven-point scale, on which the larger the number, the stronger the force is. As for the subjects'

evaluations of the individual lessons, they are given in Table 21. In this table, the member in each cell of the table stands for the proportion of the subjects who offered agreement to each attribute tested.

Table 20 *Means of the Chinese students' evaluations of the program as a whole*

Dimensions of Evaluation	Mean
Difficulty	4.02
Complexity	4.26
Helpfulness	4.50
Need	4.19
Teaching speed	3.74
Clarity	4.90
Illustration	4.45
Interaction	4.19
Fun	3.29
Liking	3.53

Table 21 *Means of the Chinese students' evaluations of three lessons of the program*

Dimensions of Evaluation	Lesson-2	Lesson-3	Lesson-4
Difficulty	0.27	0.39	0.46
Complexity	0.37	0.39	0.50
Helpfulness	0.67	0.69	0.66
Need	0.60	0.60	0.64
Teaching speed	0.71	0.65	0.64
Clarity	0.80	0.73	0.71
Illustration	0.69	0.61	0.59
Interaction	0.57	0.59	0.60
Fun	0.30	0.34	0.40
Liking	0.39	0.39	0.43

According to Table 20, in general, most of the students given mild approvals to difficulty, complexity, helpfulness, need, clarity, illustration, and teacher-student interaction; however, they yield slight disapproval to teaching speed, fun, and liking. To be specific, first, the students' ratings of difficulty and complexity, both slightly higher than 4, indicate that this teaching program is neither difficult nor complex to them. To examine closely, according to Table 21, difficulty and complexity seem to increase from Lesson-2, through Lesson-3, to Lesson-4. Among these three lessons, Lesson-4, which presents indirectness and politeness in combination in function-based method, or which presents Hinting sentences in structure-based method, was

considered the most difficult and complex part in the program. It seems reasonable because the teaching contents were accumulatively more and more difficult and complex.

Next, in terms of teaching speed, clarity, illustration of instruction, and interaction between the teacher and the students, as presented in Table 20, the students gave medium scores. Among these four dimensions, clarity scored the highest (4.90), and teaching speed was rated slight low (3.74). That is to say, in general, the Chinese students can clearly understand what the researcher taught to them in the speed that the researcher conducted. In addition, after checking the last three lessons, it is found that these four dimensions of the researcher's performance were given high rates of positive responses. However, it is important to note that, in Table 21, clarity and illustration were rated differently in the last three lessons, with Lesson-4 being rated lower than the other two lessons. A possible explanation is that since the students of function-oriented classes had to learn the interaction of indirectness and politeness, they were probably overwhelmed by the contents, which they were not very familiarly with; similar problem happened to the students of structure-oriented classes in learning Hinting strategy.

In addition, as shown in Table 20, there was a gap between the students' ratings of fun and liking of the program (3.29 and 3.53, respectively) and those of helpfulness and need of the program (4.50 and 4.19, respectively). This gap indicates that these Chinese students were not interested in the program too much, but they still agreed that the program was helpful and necessary.

In sum, first, it was very likely that this was the first time in their regular English course that these Chinese students contact with the concept of language function, therefore, this concept of "language function" is not very easy to them. Next, when the difficulty and complexity of the lessons increased, the students decreased their interest in what they were taught. Moreover, although learning language functions was difficult and complex to the students, they still think that learning language functions was useful and needed.

Students' Evaluations by Function-based Method and Structure-based Method

It is anticipated that different teaching methods would induce different teaching effects. The evaluations by those students who received function-based method are compared with those who took structure-based method. Table 22 presents these two

groups of students' evaluations of the two teaching methods, and Table 23 provides their evaluations of Lessons 2 to 4.

Table 22 *Means of the Chinese students' evaluations of the program by function-based method and structure-based method*

Dimensions of Evaluation	Function-based method	Structure-based method	Probability
Difficulty	4.20	3.88	0.173
Complexity	4.57	4.03	0.018*
Helpfulness	4.41	4.58	0.540
Need	3.93	4.40	0.051
Teaching speed	3.84	3.67	0.467
Clarity	4.55	5.16	0.016*
Illustration	4.45	4.45	0.985
Interaction	3.61	4.63	0.000*
Fun	2.70	3.74	0.000*
Liking	3.04	3.92	0.000*

* $p < .05$

Table 23 Means of the Chinese students' evaluations of three lessons by function-based method and structure-based method

Dimensions of Evaluation	Lesson-2			Lesson-3			Lesson-4		
	Function	Structure	Probability	Function	Structure	Probability	Function	Structure	Probability
Difficulty	0.32	0.23	0.266	0.30	0.45	0.087	0.45	0.47	0.829
Complexity	0.39	0.36	0.672	0.34	0.42	0.328	0.64	0.38	0.003*
Helpfulness	0.68	0.67	0.930	0.70	0.68	0.890	0.64	0.67	0.739
Need	0.54	0.66	0.163	0.57	0.63	0.503	0.57	0.68	0.187
Teaching speed	0.62	0.77	0.080	0.59	0.70	0.199	0.50	0.74	0.005*
Clarity	0.79	0.81	0.754	0.71	0.74	0.750	0.61	0.79	0.020*
Illustration	0.63	0.74	0.165	0.55	0.66	0.233	0.54	0.63	0.284
Interaction	0.46	0.64	0.042*	0.46	0.68	0.011*	0.48	0.68	0.020*
Fun	0.20	0.38	0.022*	0.21	0.44	0.008*	0.20	0.56	0.000*
Liking	0.32	0.44	0.179	0.29	0.47	0.038*	0.30	0.52	0.013*

* $p < .05$

As shown by Table 22, the Chinese students taught in function-based method evaluated the program less positive than those students taught in structure-based method. To be specific, for the Chinese students, structure-based method is significantly less complicated, less clear, more fun, and more likable, and would attract more interaction between teacher and students. However, no significant difference is found in the other dimensions. An explanation to such results is that the Chinese students were more familiar to structure-based method, and familiarity would usually invite positive subjective judgments.

As the Chinese students responded more positively to structure-based method, further check of their reactions on each lesson was made. According to Table 23, first, in the dimensions of complexity, teaching speed, and clarity, the scores given to Lesson-4 in function-based method are significantly higher than those in structure-based method; however, they were rated insignificantly differently in Lesson-2 and Lesson-3. Next, other dimensions of interaction, fun and liking in structure-based method were rated higher than those in function-based method for all of the three lessons, with only liking in Lesson-2 insignificantly different. Since, in function-based method, Lesson-4 presented all of the eight sentences for invitation by the combination of indirectness and politeness in only one period (i.e., 50 minutes), it is very likely that the complexity of the non-parallel distributions of indirectness and politeness was relatively high, and thus frustrated the students. By contrast, because the Chinese students are more familiar with structure-based method, they would consider that learning functions by means of forms was easier and more comprehensible; therefore, one period (i.e., 50 minutes) is sufficient for them to absorb what they were taught in each class.

In sum, from the results of the students' evaluations, the Chinese students, in learning language functions, preferred structure-based method to function-based method. It is possible that such tendency is derived from the fact that the Chinese students have been under a long-term structure-based language teaching method, and thus are more accustomed to teaching method based on linguistic structure. In contrast, learning language through functions (in this study, indirectness and politeness), an unfamiliar way to learn a language, is a challenge for them. However, it is important to note that although function-based method was thought to be a more difficult, more complex, and less interesting way to learn language functions, this method was proved, in preceding chapter, to be more effective than structure-based method, and it

could further be inferred from the results that the teacher should try to choose teaching language functions by function-based method to achieve higher effectiveness in both teaching and learning. Also, it is noticed that the teacher should give more examples for illustration and more time for the students to digest and absorb the new knowledge. After all, teaching difficult and complex notions in a short period of time and in a way different from the traditional one would easily overwhelm most of the students and decrease their interest in learning.

Students' Evaluations by School One and School Two

It was predicted that students from a school of different BCT (Basic Competent Test for Junior High School students) scores would give different evaluations to this teaching program. Table 24 displays the results of the students' evaluations of the teaching program as a whole by School One (school of higher BCT score) and School Two (school of lower BCT score), and Table 25 describes the students' judgments of three individual lessons.

Table 24 Means of the Chinese students' evaluations of the program by School One and School Two

Dimensions of Evaluation	School One	School Two	Probability
Difficulty	3.93	4.08	0.514
Complexity	4.05	4.42	0.116
Helpfulness	4.33	4.64	0.252
Need	4.04	4.31	0.256
Teaching speed	3.53	3.91	0.101
Clarity	4.84	4.95	0.671
Illustration	4.24	4.61	0.221
Interaction	4.31	4.09	0.407
Fun	3.07	3.45	0.133
Liking	3.40	3.64	0.349

Table 25 Means of the Chinese students' evaluations of three lessons by School One and School Two

Dimensions of Evaluation	Lesson-2			Lesson-3			Lesson-4		
	School One	School Two	Probability	School One	School Two	Probability	School One	School Two	Probability
Difficulty	0.15	0.36	0.005*	0.47	0.32	0.088	0.51	0.42	0.313
Complexity	0.25	0.46	0.017*	0.38	0.39	0.908	0.56	0.45	0.189
Helpfulness	0.71	0.65	0.473	0.69	0.69	0.983	0.71	0.62	0.304
Need	0.55	0.65	0.239	0.53	0.66	0.123	0.71	0.58	0.137
Teaching speed	0.69	0.72	0.757	0.62	0.68	0.502	0.64	0.64	0.989
Clarity	0.89	0.73	0.024*	0.69	0.76	0.409	0.69	0.73	0.633
Illustration	0.64	0.73	0.260	0.55	0.66	0.181	0.60	0.58	0.831
Interaction	0.58	0.55	0.755	0.55	0.62	0.388	0.65	0.55	0.253
Fun	0.27	0.32	0.532	0.33	0.35	0.778	0.44	0.38	0.510
Liking	0.45	0.34	0.181	0.44	0.35	0.331	0.49	0.38	0.204

* $p < .05$

According to Table 24, students of the two schools yield statistically almost identical evaluations to the whole teaching program. They consider this teaching program to be clear in teaching content, adequate in the quantities of examples, sufficient in the interaction between the teacher and the students, helpful and necessary in language learning; and they agree with each other that the teaching speed was slightly slow, and they showed mildly low rates of fun and liking to the teaching.

Although in general the two schools gave very close ratings to this teaching program, still some significant differences are located. According to Table 25, the two schools significantly differ from each other in their evaluations of Lesson-2, with School Two scoring higher in difficulty and complexity but lower in clarity than School One. These results indicated that the students in School One (i.e., school of high BCT score) are seemingly more capable of dealing with the lesson which is the essential part of the program—instruction of the eight invitational sentences by indirectness (in function-based method) and instruction of Direct-imperative strategy and Direct-performative strategy (in structure-based method). It seems that students from the school of low BCT scores should be given extra helps to remedy the problem, such as cutting down the learning content in each class, giving more in-class activities and exercises, and providing more various examples.

Students' Evaluations of the Program by Schools and Teaching Methods

It is expected that students from different schools (school of high BCT score vs. school of low BCT score) would react differently to the two teaching methods. Table 26 presents the evaluations collected from the four groups of the Chinese students.

Table 26 The Chinese students' evaluations of the program by two schools and two teaching methods

Dimensions of Evaluation	School One			School Two		
	Function	Structure	Probability	Function	Structure	Probability
Difficulty	4.10	3.82	0.460	4.26	3.92	0.280
Complexity	4.43	3.82	0.091	4.66	4.21	0.131
Helpfulness	4.24	4.38	0.732	4.51	4.74	0.516
Need	3.81	4.18	0.325	4.00	4.59	0.061
Teaching speed	3.52	3.53	0.988	4.03	3.79	0.439
Clarity	4.71	4.91	0.615	4.46	5.38	0.006*
Illustration	4.33	4.18	0.741	4.51	4.69	0.655
Interaction	3.76	4.65	0.021*	3.51	4.62	0.001*
Fun	2.52	3.41	0.014*	2.08	4.03	0.000*
Liking	3.00	3.65	0.083	3.06	4.15	0.001*

* $p < .05$

When the two schools were examined individually, it was found that School Two showed significantly more positive evaluations toward structure-based method, in clarity, interaction between teacher and students, fun, and liking. However, for students of School One, significant differences between the two teaching methods lie only in the interaction between teacher and students and fun of the teaching, with structure-based method being more preferable than function-based method.

The above findings seem to indicate that students from the school of low BCT score (School Two, in this case) showed more preference to structure-based method, and that students from the school of high BCT score (School One, in this case) showed more balanced evaluations to the two teaching methods. It is suspected that this is because the students of School Two have limited ability to adapt to the new method (namely, function-based method), which they were unfamiliar with, especially when the learning content was not too easy, and apprehension was evoked and hindered the students' learning.

Teachers' Evaluations of the Program

In this section, the evaluations of this teaching program offered by the student subjects' English teachers are presented in Table 30, and analyzed afterwards.

Table 27 Means of the teachers' evaluations of the program

Dimensions of Evaluation	Holistic	Teaching Methods			Schools		
		Teachers from function-based method	Teachers from structure-based method	Probability	Teachers from School One	Teachers from School Two	Probability
Function-based method	5.80	6.50	5.67	0.537	5.50	6.00	0.735
Structure-based method	6.00	6.00	5.67	0.822	6.00	6.00	1.000
Difficulty	2.80	3.50	2.33	0.518	2.00	3.33	0.453
Complexity	2.40	3.00	2.00	0.272	2.50	2.33	0.870
Helpfulness	4.40	6.00	3.33	0.347	4.00	4.67	0.828
Need	4.80	7.00	3.33	0.223	4.50	5.00	0.885
Teaching speed	5.60	5.50	5.67	0.898	5.50	5.67	0.898
Clarity	5.40	6.00	5.00	0.495	5.00	5.67	0.658
Illustration	4.20	3.50	4.67	0.402	3.50	4.67	0.402
Interaction	4.40	4.50	4.33	0.923	3.50	5.00	0.346
Fun	4.00	4.50	3.67	0.537	3.50	4.33	0.537
Liking	4.40	4.50	4.33	0.936	3.50	5.00	0.444

In general, as shown by Table 27, the teachers gave high evaluations to both function-based method and structure-based method (6.00 and 5.80, respectively). Moreover, there is no significant difference between the ratings of function-based method and those of structure-based method given by the teachers of the two kinds of classes that received different teaching methods, and by the teachers from the two schools of different BCT scores. That is to say, the teacher considered that it was appropriate to teach functions by using both methods. The description of the teachers' evaluations in general can be detailed by the ten dimensions as those offered to the students in follow-up questionnaire for evaluation.

According to Table 27, in general, the five teachers, as a whole, gave a positive judgment toward this program in all ten dimensions. Also, Table 27 indicates that the teachers' judgments toward the teaching program are not influenced by the teaching methods and the school types. Both function-based and structure-based teaching methods were evaluated high (5.80 and 6.00, respectively).

As for their evaluations on the ten dimensions, some patterns are located. First, the teachers' ratings of difficulty and complexity are low (2.80 and 2.40, respectively), and helpfulness and need were scored medium by the teachers (4.00 and 4.80, respectively). In other words, these teachers consider this teaching program as easy and simple, helpful and necessary.

Next, the teachers gave medium high scores to teaching speed and clarity (5.60 and 5.40, respectively), and a medium score to illustration and interaction (4.20 and 4.40, respectively). That is to say, the teacher thought that although the teaching speed was fast, the students could still understand what the researcher taught since they were given enough examples for illustration and there were enough interaction between the teacher (i.e., this researcher) and the students. However, the teachers from the class of function-based method gave a lower score to illustration, indicating that more examples are needed. Also, the teachers from School One think that more illustration and interaction would be helpful to the students.

Moreover, the other two dimensions (i.e., fun and liking) were not rated high. As to the dimension of fun, the teachers of function-oriented classes and the teachers from School Two scored mildly high, indicating that those teachers feel that this teaching program is interesting. However, the teachers of structure-oriented classes and the teachers of School One react the opposite. As for the dimension of liking, all teacher of the two class types gave positive evaluations to the program; however, it is

the teachers of School Two, not teachers of School One, who gave positive evaluations to the program.

Teacher's Comments on the Program

To answer those open-ended questions given in the questionnaire, the teachers gave comments. First, there are different options on difficulty and complexity of this program. One teacher thought the program was slightly difficult and complex for the students (who are from the school of low BCT score). However, the other four teachers addressed a different comment, considering that the language function is an easy part for English teaching in Taiwan; one of them even suggested that language function should be taught in junior high school or in conversation in senior high school, and she also thought that two periods of time would be enough for teaching the concept of language functions.

Next, about the clarity of the teaching, two of the teachers indicated that the researcher should put language functions into specific situations since both indirectness and politeness are abstract concepts. These teachers also pointed out that there should be various examples or dialogue practice in order to facilitate students' learning; after all, using same examples always evokes boredom.

In addition, two teachers thought teaching language function seems not to be necessary in senior high school stage under the examination-oriented goal, which demands both the teachers and the students to pay full attention to teaching/learning language forms. The other three teachers considered that this program did help students obtain the knowledge of language functions, which would enhance language users to use a language appropriately, but it failed to offer activities for students to practice.