

## MASTER'S THESIS

### **The use of praise and humour in ESL classrooms by native speaking teachers (NS) and non-native speaking Chinese teachers of English (NNS): a cross-cultural comparative study in the Hong Kong context**

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**THE USE OF PRAISE AND HUMOUR IN ESL CLASSROOMS BY  
NATIVE SPEAKING TEACHERS (NS) AND NON-NATIVE  
SPEAKING CHINESE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH (NNS) : A CROSS-  
CULTURAL COMPARATIVE STUDY IN THE HONG KONG  
CONTEXT**

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## 摘要

由於香港本地的英文老師和香港外籍英文老師來自不同的文化及教育背景，因此他們的語言教學觀念及教學行爲都有所分別。一般來說，中國人的教學方式較爲嚴肅，以傳遞知識爲本。相反，西方的教學方式較多採用輕鬆的教學活動，但一般中國人視這些爲“遊戲”，而非正統的教學。基於以上不同的教學觀念，兩類老師在課堂上的教學方式和與學生的溝通話語相信亦會很不同。

本論文就本港的英文老師和外籍英文老師在課堂上使用稱讚及幽默的技巧作出比較，探討他們使用稱讚及幽默時在數量和質量方面的分別。

結果顯示本地的老師較多使用有具體行爲描述的稱讚，而外籍老師使用稱讚時，所用的措辭則較多變化，他們使用幽默的頻率遠高於本地老師。以上結果顯示本地師訓課程應加強培訓老師如何在課堂上有效地使用稱讚及幽默的技巧，以達到更佳的教学效果。

# **The Use of Praise and Humour in ESL Classrooms by Native Speaking Teachers (NS) and Non-native Speaking Chinese Teachers of English (NNS) : A Cross-cultural Comparative Study in the Hong Kong Context**

## **Abstract**

This study attempts to compare the differences in the behaviour of praising students and employing humour in ESL lessons between native speaking teachers (NS) and non-native speaking Chinese teachers of English in Hong Kong (hereafter called NNS). The issue will be explored both quantitatively and qualitatively. Not only the frequency of those teaching skills, but also the quality, such as effectiveness and function of statements of humour and praise, will be compared. Due to the differences in cultural and educational differences between NS and NNS teachers, they have developed different attitudes and behaviours toward language teaching. For instance, the Chinese teaching style tends to be more serious, formal, knowledge based, while Western ways of teaching are inclined to be more relaxed, casual, seen by Chinese as 'games', not as serious learning. These differences are expected to manifest themselves in their classroom interactions.

Different techniques used by NS and NNS teachers to praise students and create humour will be compared in the study. The results of the study showed that (NNS) had slightly higher frequency of praise which contained more specific and descriptive praise, whereas NS had a greater variety of praise phrases. Rates of humour use were far higher for NS than NNS teachers. Such results showed that training of effective use of praise and humour in the classroom should be emphasized in the Hong Kong teacher training courses. Ultimately, close collaboration is advocated for achieving a better mutual understanding and mutual benefits for NS and NNS teachers.

## **1. Introduction**

It is believed that due to the different cultural backgrounds and beliefs about language teaching, the teaching styles of NS and NNS teachers will be different, which will be demonstrated in their classroom interaction.

Classroom interaction analysis has been used by many scholars for a long time. Plenty of research has been done on classroom interaction, but most has been restricted to Western countries, such as Flander(1970), Barnes (1969), Bellack et al (1966) and Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Brophy, J, & Good, T (1969) Moskowitz (1976).

A lot of quantitative research has been done on the overall pattern of classroom interaction or discourse. For example, studies have calculated the proportion of