

摘要

文化和文化学习是当今语言教学研究领域的重要主题。人们普遍认为文化是外语学习的重要成分,外语学习实际上就是文化的学习。二十多年来,对文化教学的积极而又富有成效的研究在实际的外语教学过程中是否真正得到了很好的体现呢?英语文化学习在高中英语教学实践中究竟应居于何种地位?高中生英语文化学习的情况到底如何呢?

本论文采用调查研究的方法,对高中三年级学生的英语文化学习情况开展了调查。本研究主要回答以下四个问题:

- 1) 高中生的英语文化学习观念如何?
- 2) 高中生的英语文化水平怎么样?
- 3) 高中生的英语文化学习观念和英语文化水平之间有无相关性?
- 4) 高中生的英语语言水平和英语文化水平之间有无相关性?

为了回答以上问题,本研究设计了一份调查问卷和一份测试题,从高中生英语对英语文化学习的认识和他们对于英语文化知识的掌握情况入手,较全面地对高中生英语文化学习的实际状况进行了调查研究,并应用 SPSS13.0 软件对所得数据进行分析,结果显示,文化学习在现在的高中英语教学中依旧十分欠缺。首先,通过文化测试发现,学生对于文化知识的掌握非常有限。其次,学生问卷调查显示学生的目的语文化学习观念也不强。

同时,在数据分析的基础上,论文探讨了学生对各类文化知识的掌握优劣的差异及原因,归纳了现阶段我国高中英语教学中文化教学的特点。通过 SPSS13.0 软件对高中生英语文化学习观念和英语文化水平二者之间相关性分析,以及英语语言水平和英语文化水平之间的相关性分析,指出了通过提高高中生的英语文化学习观念从而提高英语文化水平的可行性,以及将“融合型”的教学模式运用于高中英语教学实践中的必要性。

最后,本文在调查研究结果上提出了若干教学建议和将来可行的研究方向以及本研究的不足。

关键词: 语言 文化 文化学习 高中生 英语

Abstract

Culture and cultural learning are important themes of contemporary foreign language education (FLE) research. Scholars have generally come to agree that culture is an important part of language learning; language learning is actually culture learning. However, whether theoretical explorations and achievements made are followed by equal zeal in actual teaching and learning or not? What has been the status quo on English cultural teaching and learning since it was advocated and practiced 20 years ago? What is actually situation of Senior Middle School students' English cultural learning?

This thesis attempt to investigate the following questions:

- 1) What are English cultural learning views of Senior Middle School students?
- 2) What extent is English cultural level of the Senior Middle School students?
- 3) Is there relativity between cultural learning views and cultural level of the Senior Middle School students?
- 4) Is there relativity between English language level and English cultural level of the Senior Middle School students?

In view of the above questions, the study designed a questionnaire on English cultural learning views and a test on their English cultural level to investigate SMSS' English cultural learning. SPSS13.0 software is employed to fulfill the statistic work. It results that cultural learning is very deficient in SETL. Firstly, students' English cultural knowledge is very scarce by a socio-cultural test; secondly, students' English cultural learning views are not strong and appropriated by questionnaire.

Meanwhile, with the data analyzing, the thesis dissects the diversity and reasons among different kinds of cultural knowledge of students, and concludes the characteristics of Senior English cultural teaching and learning. Then it examines the correlation between students' English cultural learning views and their English cultural level, and between English language level and English cultural level using SPSS13.0 to discuss the feasibility whether students' English cultural level can be improved by raising their English cultural learning views and necessary of using

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

“integration” model into SELT.

Finally, it offers some implications and suggestions to students and teachers, advice for further studies and limitations of the study.

Key words: language, culture, cultural learning, senior middle school students, English

独创性声明

本人声明所呈交的论文是我个人在导师指导下进行的研究工作及取得的研究成果。尽我所知，除了文中特别加以标注和致谢的地方外，论文中不包括其他人已经发表或撰写过的研究成果，也不包含为获得西北师范大学或其他教育机构的学位或证书而使用过的材料。与我一同工作的同志对本研究所做的任何贡献均已在论文中作了明确的说明并表示了谢意。

签名： 曹慧芳 日期： 2006年5月

关于论文使用授权的说明

本人完全了解西北师范大学有关保留、使用学位论文的规定，即：学校有权保留送交论文的复印件，允许论文被查阅和借阅；学校可以公布论文的全部或部分内容，可以采用影印、缩印或其他复制手段保存论文。

（保密的论文在解密后应遵守此规定）

签名： 曹慧芳 导师签名： 姜永刚 日期： 2006年5月

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Origin of the Study

Culture consists of all the shared products of human society. Among them, language is the key part of culture and plays a very important role in it. The two interact and understanding of one requires understanding of the other. They are inseparably integrated with each other. Language is the carrier of culture and it reflects social and cultural information of a nation. Culture differences can be found in different languages. However, culture used to be neglected in foreign language education (FLE) or introduced as no more than a supplementary diversion to language instruction. But its significance has been increasingly recognized since the 1950s. People come to agree that the development of communicative competence is an important goal of FLE. Since communicative competence entails knowledge of the target culture, culture becomes an important element in language teaching. Moreover, there is the more recent tendency to expressly relate language teaching to learner's "personal and personality development" (Gao:1993), or in other words, to learner's "self-actualization" (Kramsch:1993) and thus elevate the status of culture to an unprecedented position in language teaching, in Kramsch's (1993) words, the "core" of language teaching.

Nowadays, more and more EFL learners in China have come to realize that learning a language should not stop at the ability to produce and understand grammatically correct sentences. Cultural knowledge in English learning has been paid more and more attention since 1980's. Many linguists agree that to learn a language is to learn the culture. In the last 20 years there have been lots of studies made on culture teaching of ELT. Most of these studies focus on 'cultural awareness' and 'culture introduction' in English teaching. They said that the culture awareness should be cultivated because the sensitivity of the difference between the target and the native cultures can stimulate the students' desire to learn the language, thus their English cultural level can be improved.

However, are theoretical explorations and achievements made followed by equal zeal in actual teaching and learning? What has been the status quo on English cultural

teaching and learning since it was advocated and practiced 20 years ago? To answer these questions, some researches on cultural teaching and learning in college English have been made. For instance, Deng Qunfang's master thesis makes an investigation on college English cultural teaching and learning. But how about it in Senior English teaching and learning (SETL)? There are few studies made. So the present study aims at students' cultural learning in senior English teaching and learning so that the status quo of them can be known and much more attention can be paid to.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

As an important part in the process of language learning, English cultural teaching and learning has been practiced for many years; however, it has not received enough attention in English teaching and learning, especially in Senior Middle School. The present study intends, first of all, to highlight the fact that English cultural teaching and learning need to be made the focus of Senior English teaching and learning (SETL). Based on this argument, it investigates the current situation of students' cultural learning in Senior Middle School. In the investigation, students' views and attitudes towards the current practice of cultural learning in SE will be revealed through the analysis of the questionnaire designed for students' English culture learning views. Then, a socio-cultural test is conducted to test students' mastery of cultural knowledge. Lastly, the data collected will be analyzed.

After the obstacle is made evident through analyzing and discussing, the thesis also seeks to offer some practical suggestions. In other words, the ultimate purpose of the research is to offer some practical suggestions so as to better incorporate cultural teaching and learning into SETL so that the focus of SETL is to some extent shifted from the conventional language teaching and learning to cultural teaching and learning. In short, the present study aims at:

- 1) Examining Senior Middle School students' views on cultural learning and students' mastery of cultural knowledge through questionnaire and test.
- 2) Analyzing the relationship between students' English culture learning views and their English culture knowledge achievements according to the data collected in questionnaires and test.
- 3) Analyzing the relationship between students' simulated English test

achievements of NCEE and their English culture knowledge achievements according to the data collected in questionnaires and test.

- 4) Giving some suggestions on cultural teaching and learning in SETL.

1.3 Significance of the Study

It is little argued today that the development of communicative competence needs to be made an important goal of FLE. That is, successful language learning requires language learners to know the culture that underlies the language and communication. In a word, from the perspective of communicative competence, culture plays an inevitable role in communication and need to be given due attention in the language classroom. The idea of relating language learning to learners' personal development or learners' cultural quality has witnessed increasingly more supporters in recent years. Byram (1989) states clearly "there are two facets of language teaching: the instilling of a useful skill and the encouraging of an open attitude and understanding of other cultures." Recently, Chinese scholars also begin to see the two essential aspects of FLE. For instance, Prof. Wen Qiufang (2004) points out that FLE should not only aim at producing proficient second language users, it should also aim at producing "contributing members of community and good citizens of society". Prof Li Li (2004) also affirms that FLE should contribute to learners' "whole-person education, sustainable development and life-long learning". As a result, as a part of learners' whole-person education, English course in high school undertakes the responsibility to broaden learner' horizon, introduce to them different cultures and develop their cultural awareness. Byram (1989) states clearly, "if language teaching is to claim a genuine contribution to pupils' education as citizens of modern civilizations, the focus should shift towards pupils' changes in attitude and insight into other cultures, and their own." Viewed from the perspective of learner's cultural quality and personal development, culture is neither a supplement to linguistic proficiency nor an ingredient of communicative competence. It is the actual contents and core of Senior English course.

Previous studies and educational or training programs mainly concentrated on acculturating immigrants and other groups moving into different cultures. Yet, how to improve intercultural communication competence among foreign language learners,

particularly among Chinese Senior Middle School students is worth studying for practical purposes. Therefore, an investigation of the status quo of English cultural learning in Senior Middle School has its constructive and applicative significance.

This thesis attempts to investigate on English cultural learning status among Chinese Senior Middle School students to examine the correlation between English language level and English cultural level, and the correlation between English cultural learning views and English cultural level to give some pedagogical suggestions on the teaching and learning of intercultural communication in Chinese EFL context.

It is necessary for English teachers in Senior Middle School to know the status quo of students' cultural learning and to what extent students master the cultural knowledge, how students' views on cultural learning are in SEL. Therefore, the present study, which describes the status quo of students' English cultural learning in detail, may be helpful for teachers to know whether students' views is right or not, and then teachers will influence students' views indirectly or directly and help them set up appropriate views in cultural learning. To middle school students, appropriate views are especially important because they will influence their further learning. The study will be an attempt, which may afford some first-hand data and initial conclusions for others' further researches.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This chapter begins with brief theories on culture. Then it comes to the relationship between language and culture. Furthermore, there is a comparison between the second culture acquisition and the second language acquisition. After that, it goes to review the history of culture teaching and learning.

2.1 Review of Theories about Culture

Culture is a key concept in English teaching. What is culture? Culture, as a large concept, is rather difficult to be defined. By this word, we are involving ourselves with a completely complicated concept. It is such an extremely complicated concept and an enormous subject that it almost embraces everything in the world, whether material or spiritual. There are at least 200 different kinds of definitions about culture, which range from an all-encompassing concept “it is everything” to some narrow ones “it is opera, art or ballet.” (Wang Fuxiang & Wu Hanying, 1994:79)

One of the best early definitions was given by the nineteenth-century British anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1871: 1), who defined culture in the first paragraph of his *Primitive Culture* in 1871 as everything human beings made and taught to future generations. “Culture”, he said, “is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” This is called the classic definition. Since then, many other scholars have offered additional definitions and approaches from all kinds of levels and aspects with the booming of culture studies. Especially, with the maturing science of anthropology, further reflections upon the nature and concepts of culture led to a multitude of definitions.

Sapir (1921) says: “Culture may be defined as what a society does and thinks.” Hoebel and Frost (1976), who see culture in nearly all human activities, define culture as an “integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance.” For them, culture is transmitted and maintained through communication and learning.

Culture is so broad in its scope that “there is no aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture.” “Culture consists of all the shared products of human

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

society” (Robertson, 1981). This means not only such material things as cities, organizations and schools, but also non-material things such as ideas, customs, family pattern, and languages.

In her book *Language and Culture*, Claire Kramsch defines culture as “a membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting.”(1998).

Compared with other definitions, Bates and Plog (1990:28) proposed a descriptive one that includes most of the major territory of culture on which scholars currently agree. “Culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation through learning”. This definition includes not only patterns of behavior but also patterns of thought, artifacts, and the culturally transmitted skills and techniques used to make the artifacts. This paper prefers this definition not only because people are not born with a culture, but also learn it through their interactions with their world and others, but also because in many ways, culture is everything and everywhere, and this definition touches more aspects of culture.

However, in spite of the differences in their perspectives, there are general agreements among anthropologists as well as other culture researchers on the common characteristics as follows:

Firstly, culture is not innate, but acquired. Hence, it allows human beings to adapt themselves to their natural and social settings. Concerning this, American anthropologist Duranti has the following account: About culture, there is a common view, i.e., it is of something learned, transmitted, passed down from one generation to the next, through human activities, often in the form of face-to-face interaction, and, of course, through linguistic communication. With this view, it can be explained why a human child, regardless of his genetic heritage, will grow up to follow the cultural patterns of the people who raised him. A child separated from his blood relatives and brought up in a society different from the one in which he was born will grow up to

be a member of the culture of his adoptive parents. (Duranti, 1997:24)

The second general agreement among culture researchers is the view that all aspects of a culture are interwoven, thus one cannot touch only one aspect of a culture without touching the other aspects.

Thirdly, culture is shared by one group of people. Hence it virtually draws boundaries between different groups of people.

Anthropology deals exhaustively with culture and defines it in various ways. Kessing (1974) reviews those various theories of culture within the discipline of anthropology. He distinguishes between two major paradigms:

By the first paradigm, he refers to those theories of culture that see culture as an adaptive system which serves to relate human communities to their ecological settings and that view cultural change primarily as a process of adaptation.

The second paradigm includes the ideational theories of culture, where culture can be interpreted as (a) a cognitive system, and (b) a structural system. (Kessing, 1974:78) Levi-Strauss (1958) views cultures as shared symbolic systems that are accumulative creations of mind; he seeks to discover in the structuring of cultural domains—myth, art, kinship, language—the principles of mind that generate these cultural elaborations.

We may conclude from the above analysis of the theories of culture that “culture” is a structural cognitive system to be acquired, and that the acquiring process of culture is, to a large extent, a process of adaptation.

2.2 Culture and Language

Language is a set of symbols and the rules for combining those symbols are used and understood by people in a community. When we study another language, we soon discover that the symbols, the sounds for those symbols, and the rules for using those symbols and sounds are different. Language does not exist apart from culture.

The systematic researches on the relationship between language and culture have been undergoing quite a long period of time in western countries as well as in China. Much has been achieved in this field though there are still controversial ideas. Now it is widely accepted that language is product and a carrier of culture. At the same time, it reflects culture. They interact with each other.

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

Brown (1980:124) describes the two like this: “a language is a part of culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture.”

Sapir acknowledged the close relationship between language and culture, maintaining that they were inextricably related so that people could not understand or appreciate the one without knowledge of the other.

On the one hand, language is the chief means of learning a culture. People use it to express, share and transmit their ideas and experience. On the other hand, people acquire culture in the process of learning and using language. Without language, culture would not be possible. It is the symbolic representation of a group of people and it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds as well as their approaches to life and their ways of living and thinking. Therefore, people can learn culture left behind by their ancestors through the acquisition of language, so language becomes the embodiment of culture.

With the view that language is a particular part of culture, we can see that language can never be free of its cultural background, and “there is no natural language that can be used as a pure “international language” (Gao, 2001:26). Therefore, learning a language naturally involves learning its culture.

Learning a foreign language well means, as Deng Yanchang once said “also to see the world as native speakers of that language see it, learning the ways in which their language reflects the ideas, customs, and behavior of their society, learning to understand their ‘language of the mind’. Learning a language, in fact, is inseparable from learning its culture”. (Deng Yanchang, Liu Runqing: 1989)

Language fluency is not always enough for good communication. It is also necessary to know the relevant cultural knowledge. People now know that diverse cultural backgrounds influence communication in subtle and profound ways: one’s cultural perceptions and experiences help determine how one sends and receives messages. In addition, understanding the culture and learning to communicate comfortably with people of that culture are as important as learning the rules of the language. Wang Binhua (2003) shows culture must be learned with the following reasons.

1) Culture is like an iceberg

He points out people from different cultures, cannot see all the ways that their cultures have influenced them each other. This is because culture is like an iceberg; the only part of the iceberg seen is the tip. People don't see the rest because it is submerged below the water. Most of the iceberg is deep within the ocean just as much as culture is deep within people. People must try to understand the hidden parts of culture so that they can more easily understand a person from another culture. That is, it is necessary to know how a culture is different from one's own and how it has influenced people in ways that are not obvious.

2) Cultural differences

With cultural differences, he thinks that obvious differences, such as different foods, clothes, and even physical features of people, new customs or habits, are interesting and important, but they are usually not too difficult to understand. They are visible so they can be seen easily and quickly. Meanwhile, the hidden part of culture influences much of a person's way of thinking and communicating and it is the meaning behind his or her verbal and nonverbal language. Learning to communicate well with people from other cultures involves becoming aware of the hidden differences of culture.

When deep cultural differences exist, a person may misunderstand someone from another culture. In another language and culture, it can be especially difficult to explain one's ideas and feelings. One may say something with one meaning in mind and the other may hear it completely differently. However, often (although not always) people from the same cultural background can figure out why there is a misunderstanding because they have similar ways of communicating and behaving. For those from different cultural backgrounds, it is hard to do so.

3) Different rules in different cultures

He said that every language has certain rules of speaking and every culture has rules about how people should interact with each other. These rules are not usually written down, but are learned by people living in one culture. In one's own culture, people don't need to think very much about how to interact with other people because the rules are a part of them. When people learn about other cultural ways of doing

things, they start to think about what they've been doing in their own language and culture. Complimenting and showing appreciation are the examples of two areas where ways of interacting can differ across cultures. People compliment and show appreciation in many ways. Perhaps the types of expressions used to give compliments are different. Also, it may be that compliments are given more often (or less often) in the U.S. than in Chinese culture.

4) Right in one culture but wrong in another culture

Two people growing up in different parts of the world may have different ideas about what is usual, or "right" or "normal". They may find that what is right in one culture is wrong in another. They may find out that their "normal" behavior is seen as strange. At first it may be difficult to understand another cultural way of thinking. In Wang's opinion, understanding it doesn't mean agreeing with it. It just means to understand what he did (or said) from his cultural point of view. Understanding another cultural point of view means learning to see the submerged part of the iceberg and not forgetting that it is there.

Culture learning goes hand in hand with language learning. With language learning, people don't just learn about the language, they learn to speak the language. With culture learning, they don't just learn about the culture, they learn how to cope with cultural differences and they learn how to communicate comfortably with people in another culture.

2.3 SCA and SLA in relation

It is a common view that second and foreign language learners necessarily become learners of the second culture, and it is now an increasing consensus that language learning and culture learning cannot be realistically separated. (ref. Byram, 1994; Kramsch, 1993; Robinson, 1985; Valdes, 1986; etc.)

One of the well-known characteristics of modern approaches to SLA studies and FLT researches is the view that successful second language acquisition is accompanied by second culture acquisition. For example, it seems clear that a learner's acquisition of communicative competence must involve more than the command of grammatical structures of the target language and a mastery of its phonology and vocabulary; the learner must also acquire new cultural knowledge and

a set of culture-specific constraints on linguistic behavior. So the expansion of linguistic competence should be accompanied by expansion of cultural competence.

Then, what does SLA and SCA share in common? Both of them involve systems of internalized knowledge, and in both cases the nature of these internalizations must be abstract and general enough to be applicable to novel situations. As linguists (e.g., Chomsky, 1972) frequently point out, linguistic competence cannot simply be an internalized “list” of utterances, and this list, no matter how long, could never be long enough. It seems reasonable to suppose that the same principle holds true for the nature of cultural competence in second culture acquisition.

In the light of Brown’s SLA theory (1980:140), there exists a “culturally-based critical period” in second language acquisition. Brown examined further into Schumann’s “Acculturation Theory” and listed four successive stages of acculturation:

Stage 1, the state of “tourist”, in which new culture is almost totally inaccessible and the individual draws extensively on first language strategies and resources; Stage 2, the state of “survivor”, in which the individual has functional understanding of the culture; Stage 3, the state of “immigrant”, where exists “the acculturation threshold”; Stage 4, the state of “citizen” in which the individual’s acculturation level reaches almost the level of native speakers. (ref. Valdes, 1986:36)

Brown (1980:140-145) discovered that the mastery or skillful fluency of a second language should occur at the third stage of acculturation because in this stage the learner has the strongest motivation and the most appropriate pressure since this stage provides the learner with “optimal social and psychological distance” to the target culture and places the learner in “optimal cognitive and affective tension”. The distance and tension may become too great before this stage (e.g. culture shock), or become too little after this stage (complete or nearly complete acculturation). So, before the third stage of acculturation, the mastery or skillful fluency of L2 cannot be achieved; and if the learner has passed this stage without achieving the mastery of L2, his acquisition will be fossilized.

According to the above theory proposed by Brown, adult L2 learners who fail to master an L2 in a second culture may for various reasons have failed to “synchronize

linguistic and cultural development” and so have missed the “culturally-based critical period” for second language acquisition. In this sense, it is of great significance for SLA researchers to locate the optimal interface between SLA and SCA in order to help L2 learners achieve the “optimal synchronization” between second language acquisition and second culture acquisition.

As to be discussed in detail in the following chapter, SCA is basically a process of integrating new cultural elements into an already-existing system of culture, and the process involves social reorientation, cognitive reconstruction, and affective readjustment. That is to say, in learning a second language and culture, the occurrence of conflict is inevitable. SCA has been considered a process of “conflict reduction”, but should the “cultural conflict” evolving from learning a second language and culture always be regarded as playing a negative role in SLA?

According to cognitive learning theoretician Berlyne (ref. Liang Yong, 1999), in learning process, an important role is played by the motivation deriving from curiosity, and what arouses curiosity to the best are those “novel, abnormal things and circumstances which are beyond the expectation and present scope of knowledge of the individual” (translated by Wang Binhua, from Liang Yong, 1999). Obviously, these are the conditions SCA can create for the learner. The conflict aroused by SCA will lead to more curiosity in the learner to stimulate him to reconstruct his cognitive world and motivate him to master the new language.

2.4 A Brief Review of the History of Culture Teaching and Learning

In view of the aforementioned intertwined relationship between language and culture, it would be wrong to say that there was ever a period in the history of language learning when learners did not learn culture. According to Hu Wenzhong and Gao Yihong (1997), culture learning was first started as early as the medieval times when Roman history geography and people’s daily life were introduced in the classic literature course. However, during a long period, culture on the whole played a very minor and subordinate role in language learning. In the nineteenth century modern language learning, the question of relating language to society or culture did not arise with urgency because language learning then was expected to prepare for the study of literature (Stern:1983). When structuralism began to dominate the profession

more than half a century ago, the main focus of language study had, for a long time, been on formal language study; the learning of language was largely abstracted from its social and cultural context.

It was not until World War II that the role of anthropology and sociology were recognized in language learning and the idea of the study of language combined with a study of culture became familiar enough to most theorists (ibid.). In the heyday of the audio-lingual era, Brooks (1968) emphasized the importance of culture not for the study of literature but for language learning (Steele: 1989, cited in Dimitrios Thanasoulas: 2001). Furthermore, Brooks' (1960) seminal work *Language and Language Learning* contributed to a shift of focus from teaching geography and history as part of language learning to an anthropological approach to the study of culture (Dimitrios Thanasoulas:2001). Moreover, the emergence and flourish of a new theory and concept of language teaching in the same period, namely, communicative language teaching (CLT) push culture further to the forefront of language teaching and learning.

Culture receives its renewed theoretical attention in language learning after the introduction of communicative competence by Dell Hymes (1972). As an extension of Chomskyian linguistic competence, communicative competence as proposed by Hymes includes not only the linguistic forms of the language, but also its social rules, the knowledge of when, how, and to whom it is appropriate to use these forms (Paulston:1992). The objectives of language Teaching and learning are believed to include the teaching and learning of socio-cultural rules for language use, not as an added cultural component, but as an integral part of the language taught. To put it simply, we learn culture because we think communicative competence necessarily entail socio-cultural competence. Understandably, the communication-oriented view of culture teaching focuses on the pragmatic and socio-linguistic rules of language use. Accordingly, in the communicative era the contents of cultural learning are largely confined to "Communicative Culture".

Over the past decade we have witnessed a new trend in the perception of the significance of culture studies in FLE: cultural studies not only serve the utilitarian purpose of communication; it also serves to contribute to learner's whole-person

education. As is mentioned above, pioneers like Byram and Kramsch all begin to see the educational value of FLE and stress that culture should be the “focus” (Byram:1989) or “core” (Kramsch:1993) of FLE. We think it justified in believing this new trend takes a view of culture which necessarily embraces “Propositional Culture”.

Since the twentieth century, the term “global communication” has become a buzzword in academic writing. From theory to practice, language teaching circles both at home and abroad have paid much attention to whether to carry out cultural teaching in language teaching, what to teach and how to teach about culture (Robinson, 1988; Kramsch, 1994; Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Fowler & Mumford, 1995; Hu Wenzhong, 1992; Jia Yuxin, 1997; Gao Yihong, 2002). Regarding the relationship between language teaching and cultural teaching, there are three main argument, language teaching with cultural dimension, cultural teaching as a parallel to language teaching and cultural teaching as an integral part of language teaching. Also, arguments about culture come to what the area is actually called: cultural mediation, cultural knowledge, the cultural dimension, cultural and social conditions, or cultural understanding. However, different those arguments may be, now it is universally acknowledged that English language learning is actually cultural learning.

One of the results of discussions about the cultural dimension is that there is a broad agreement that the cultural dimension has three aspects: knowledge, attitude and behavior (Karen Risager, 1994). These three aspects are interdependent. In cultural teaching at home, there exist two categories, cultural knowledge and cultural understanding. Traditional cultural teaching mainly emphasizes cultural knowledge, which provides students with cultural awareness. Recent researches show that cultural teaching should go beyond cultural knowledge to cultural understanding.

2.5 Summary

In short, regarding cultural learning both at home and abroad, the goal mainly focuses on improving students’ intercultural communication competence. Theoretical explorations of culture learning have come to a general agreement: culture learning must be explicitly integrated into language learning. As mentioned in the former, today it is a common view that the learning of English culture plays an important role

in EFL. Moreover, the requirement for the learning of culture has been added to the new edition of syllabus for Senior English. To cater for the need of society, the National English Curriculum for General High School put forward the detailed goals for cross-cultural competence to different levels about English teaching in China:

We should cultivate students' cross-cultural competence in learning and using language in various situations, which is based on the integrated development of language skills, language knowledge, affection, attitudes, strategies, and so on. There are also detailed goals and requirements at Level 7, Level 8, and Level 9. It is stated in this book that language and culture are closely related, and the cultural knowledge is conducive to the improvement of students' linguistic competence.

With the boom of intercultural communication, many researches have been made on the cultural elements in language learning. Many English teachers in China are aware of this responsibility, and have bravely shouldered this heavy load. As a result, quite a number of articles with regard to culture teaching and learning have been published in the last twenty years. We must admit the efforts made by these researchers. Thanks to their appeals, today more and more English learners have realized the importance of the learning of English culture. However, most of these researches are about the importance and necessity to learn culture in EFL. Additionally, most of these studies are in the light of college and university's culture teaching. Culture teaching is common in colleges and universities, but in senior middle schools, culture teaching is still at their initial stage.

It is hard to find a status quo study on English cultural learning, especially of senior middle school students. Therefore, it is necessary to make this investigation so that the status quo of it can be known and much more attention can be paid to.

Chapter 3 Clarifying of Cultural Learning in FLT

In this chapter, “culture” will be redefined in FLT and SETL firstly, and then “cultural learning” will be defined in relation with SCA theory, and lastly the content of cultural learning will be given in detail.

3.1 Redefining “Culture” in FLT

As we have discussed in chapter 2, the term “culture” can have various meanings. In education, some foreign language teachers use this term to refer to cultural products, such as literature and art works. Others use it to refer to background information, e.g., facts about history and geography of countries where the target language is spoken. How we perceive “culture” in FLT will to a large extent determine what shall be taught and what shall be learned in the practice of language and culture teaching, so it is quite necessary to redefine the term of “culture” in the context of FLT.

Among the various definitions of “culture”, the following three categories may be applicable to language teaching. (Wang Binhua, 2003)

Defining from the Cognitive Perspective

From the cognitive perspective, “culture” includes not only cultural products, but also the social knowledge used by people in perceiving and interpreting experiences. In his statement to sum up what we may call the cognitive view of “culture”, Goodenough (1964:36) wrote: “Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. By this definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them”. So, seen from the cognitive perspective, culture is the internal program in people’s mind just like the computer program, and this “program” differs from culture to culture.

Defining from the Behaviorist Perspective

From the behaviorist point of view, “culture” consists of discrete behaviors or set

of behaviors, such as habits, customs, and traditions, which are observable, and the functions, rules, or reasons underlying behaviors which can be inferred from the behaviors. (e.g. Davis, 2001; Seelye, 1984)

With this perspective, we can see that while behaviors of people from different cultures are always the same, their perceptions and interpretations may be different, or even widely different.

Defining from the Symbolic Perspective

“Culture” is viewed as a system of symbols and meanings from the symbolic perspective. This view holds that culture is a representation of the world, a way of making sense of the reality, just as Levi-Strauss (1963:65) says, “all cultures are sign systems”. This view also considers culture as a dynamic process of creating meaning. It is concerned with the dynamic inter-relationship between meaning, experience and reality. As Robinson (1985:10) explains:

“Culture is a dynamic system—an ongoing, dialectic process, giving rise to symbols which may be viewed historically. Past experience influences meaning, which in turn affects future experience, which in turn affects subsequent meaning, and so on”.

We can see from her words that culture is regarded from the symbolic perspective as the framework of meaning and meaning creation and that the symbol system of the learner’s C1 will surely influence his/her second culture acquisition.

When we review the above three categories of definitions of “culture”, we find there is some truth in each of them, with the cognitive approach focusing on the aspect of knowledge, the behaviorist approach focusing on the aspect of behavior, and the symbolic approach focusing on the aspect of meaning.

But just as Chen Shen (Chen Shen, 2001:3) points out, in FLT practice, we must consider both “inclusiveness” and “applicability” of the definition when we define culture. In redefining “culture” in FLT, we find the theories in the above three approaches are, in fact, overlapped, although they are complementary to each other. To be inclusive enough, the definition of “culture” in FLT must embrace all the three aspects of knowledge, behavior and meaning. Culture is a system of meaning interpretation of both knowledge and behavior, together with the products of that

system.

3.2 Definition of Cultural Learning in FLT

According to SCA theory discussed in Chapter 3, “cultural learning” in the study should be defined as the integration of target language cultural elements into an existing, native language cultural system. The process of cultural learning is, therefore, the expansion of an existing system, rather than the development of a totally new one. The process of cultural learning, similar to SCA, involves four major possible cases:

a) In the case when there are some new elements in Ct (target culture) which have no counterparts in the learner’s Cn (native culture), some of these “new” cultural elements shall be absorbed; and

b) Some others will be rejected by the acquirer.

c) In the case when there are counterparts in the acquirer’s Cn for those Ct elements and they are comparatively similar to each other or the same, there shall be no change to the acquirer’s cultural system.

d) Still in the case when there exist counterparts in the acquirer’s Cn for those elements in Ct, but they are different from each other, then there will be changes and modifications to the acquirer’s cultural system.

3.3 Content of Cultural Learning in FLT

Since culture is a complete pattern of living, aspects of culture are acted out each time members of different cultures come together to share ideas and information. Some cultural elements have great impact on intercultural communication.

One element of intercultural communication is perception, the process by which an individual selects, evaluates, and organizes stimuli from the external world. Cultural perceptions are based on beliefs, values, and attitude systems. Another intercultural element is intercultural communication patterns, including verbal process (how people talk to each other and think); nonverbal processes, involving the use of actions to communicate; and some pragmatic rules, involving some social convention in communication. Finally, the context of the communication event is influenced by culture.

Concerning the numerous and complicated definition of “culture”, the present study tends to discuss “culture” from its categories and contents to cater teaching

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

practice. How should we classify cultural elements in FLT so as to make it accord with the situation of cultural learning in China?

With the view of the second language learning, Chinese researchers Zhang Zhanyi (ref. Hu Wenzhong, 1994), Wu Guohua (ref. Hu Wenzhong, 1994), Zhao Xianzhou (1989), etc. point out that culture should be classified into “Communicative Culture” and “Propositional Culture”. Propositional Culture refers to cultural elements which indirectly cause barrier during communicating between people from different cultures, including some common conceptions of history, geography, literature, politics, etc., and connotation of some words and expressions. Communicative Culture refers to cultural elements which directly cause barrier during communicating between people from different cultures. Communicative culture mainly reflects in the following two aspects: verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Verbal communicative behavior, including language conventional patterns such as: greetings, expressing one’s gratitude, apologizing, form of address and titles, and so on; nonverbal communicative behavior is the use of terms of distinctive national features such as: euphemism, politeness formula and taboo, and so on. In summary, Communicative Culture refers to semantics, social sense and cultural regulations about language use, emphasizes social content customs and speech act customs, and it is a culture collected with pragmatics.

In FLT we focus primarily on the teaching of “communicative culture”, but not on all elements of culture. According to Zhang Zhanyi (ref. Hu Wenzhong, 1994), “culture in communication” includes “such cultural elements, both verbal and nonverbal, that influence the conveyance of meaning between people of different cultural backgrounds in their communication.” It is practicable for us to sum up such cultural elements as the major components of the content for culture learning.

The content of culture learning in FLT should take “culture in communication” of the foreign language as the base, with comparison to our native “culture of communication”. So the content of culture learning can be composed of the following three major parts:

- A) Intercultural communication patterns;
- B) Socio-cultural background knowledge of the foreign language;

C) National mentality and value orientations of the foreign-language-speaking people.

The above three major components for culture learning can be correspondent to the three stages of FLT: the primary-level stage; the intermediate-level stage; the advanced-level stage.

At the primary level stage of FLT (e.g., the case of middle school students), it is advisable that culture teaching should deal with “intercultural communication patterns” as the primary concern, and this includes typical verbal and non-verbal communication patterns.

At the intermediate-level stage (e.g., the case of non-English majors and junior English majors in colleges and universities), culture teaching should deal primarily with “socio-cultural background knowledge of the foreign language”, which includes mainly cultural connotations of the language and social customs of foreign countries.

At the advanced-level stage (e.g., the case of senior English majors), focus in culture teaching should be shifted to “national mentality and value orientations of the foreign-language-speaking people”. This part of culture is also termed by some culture researchers as “deep culture” which requires learners of keen insight and deep understanding of the culture. The aim of this stage is not to teach knowledge, but to develop intercultural awareness and to cultivate “cultural creativity”, which means students should not only learn to know and learn to do, but also learn to interact creatively between different cultures.

Of course, such correspondence does not necessarily mean that the three components of the culture syllabus can be distinctively separated. The fact is that they are all integral constitutive parts of the same system. Thus, it is often the case that every stage needs to deal with not only its own part, but also some elements from the other two parts. Every part has its own focus that is prescribed in the above for the sake of applicability and convenience of culture learning in FLT.

So, we say that the content of cultural learning in FLT includes three parts: intercultural communication patterns; socio-cultural background knowledge of the foreign language; national mentality and value orientations of the foreign-language-speaking people. In view of that the present study is aimed at the

cultural learning of senior middle school students, that is, the primary-level stage of FLT, so, the main content of cultural learning in this stage should deal with “intercultural communication patterns” as the primary concern, and this includes typical verbal and non-verbal communication patterns.

In fact, verbal communication and nonverbal communication are two channels of human communication and they interact with and compensate each other. Verbal communication expresses meaning or feeling with words. It includes address, greetings, gratitude, compliment, wishes, shopping, and so on. Nonverbal communication expresses meaning or feeling without words. In its broader sense, nonverbal communication refers to all the communication activities in which language is not used. In its narrower sense, nonverbal communication involves all those nonverbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source and his or her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver (Samovar & Porter, 1995).

3.4 Summary

This chapter clarifies the cultural learning form its conception and its content in FLT. Concerning that the present study is aimed at the cultural learning of senior middle school students, who are in the primary-level stage of FLT, so the main content of cultural learning should deal with “intercultural communication patterns” as the primary concern, and this includes typical verbal and non-verbal communication patterns.

Chapter 4 Investigation

This chapter first introduces the research questions. Then it provides the information about student participants and the teacher informant. It gives details on instruments used in this study including answering the questionnaire and doing the questions in the test. In the end it specifically describes the procedures of data collection and analyses.

4.1 Questions of Investigation

The investigation is conducted to address the following four questions:

- 1) What are English cultural learning views of Senior Middle School students?
- 2) What extent is English cultural level of the Senior Middle School students?
- 3) Is there correlation between cultural learning views and cultural level of the Senior Middle School students?
- 4) Is there correlation between English language level and English cultural level of the Senior Middle School students?

4.2 Research Participants

4.2.1 Subjects

The investigation has chosen 101 students as subjects. All of them are students of Grade Three in senior middle school at the approximate ages. 55 of them are males and 46 of them are females. They have learned English for six years. All the subjects are from General Senior Middle School of Tianshui. Their English language level can represent the level of Senior Middle School students.

4.2.2 The Teacher Informant

Only two English teachers participated in the questionnaire and the test-taking process and marked all valid questionnaires and test-papers according to the given answers by the author. They are experienced in English teaching and have a clear idea about the task of this study.

4.3 Indices of English Cultural Level and English Language level

Since the study will explore what is the correlation between English cultural level and English language level, it is necessary to prescribe the indices by which students' English cultural level can be measured. In view of the discussion in Chapter 4,

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

English cultural level can be tested through a socio-cultural test, testing their mastery of Communicative Culture, which involves verbal behavior, non-verbal behavior, and Propositional Culture, involving context culture and vocabulary culture. The socio-cultural test paper is adapted from Wang Zhenya's which is widely used to test students' English cultural level in researches.

As for English language level, it can be measured by students' scores in the simulated English test of National College Entrance Examination which has been recognized as scientific index of students' English language level. Several simulated English tests have been made in March. The scores of the simulated English test made on March, 20th, 2006, the latest one, are chosen as subjects' English language level scores. Subjects are asked to write down their latest simulated English test on the socio-cultural test paper as their English language level scores.

4.4 Instruments

For the purpose of obtaining a status quo, a socio-culture test and one questionnaire on students' cultural learning views will be used in the investigation.

4.4.1 Test

The socio-cultural test is conducted among senior middle school students to get a general idea of learners' overall knowledge of the target culture (British & American cultures), and the achievements and problems in current SETL in terms of cultural teaching and learning.

The test falls into four parts, among which Part One and Two deal with Communicative Culture, Part Three and Part Four address Propositional Culture. Part Three is about the connotation of English words and expressions, Part Four is about context knowledge of the target culture covering literature, geography, politics, history, etc. Part One focuses on non-verbal behaviors, ranging from body-language to personal interaction. Part Two, verbal behaviors, concerning verbal behaviors which are directly related to the activities of high frequency in real life intercultural encounters, such as greeting, addressing, complimenting, asking, refusing and accepting etc. There are altogether 40 test items with each item scoring 2.5 points. The total score is 100 points. The test is in English. Part One and Two of the socio-cultural test are adapted from Wang Zhenya's (1991) socio-cultural test.

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

Considering that the original test is designed for English majors, it might be too demanding for high school students, so the author removes 10 difficult items from the original Part One and 10 from Part Two respectively. Part Four is selected from Part Three of Wang Zhenya's test. Besides, Part Three is added. The only purpose is to cover an overall perspective and to reduce the difficulty of the test so that it suits the level of senior middle school students. With such a test, the researcher expects to know about the senior middle school students' English cultural level and problems of the cultural learning in foreign language learning.

4.4.2 Questionnaire

The Questionnaire employed in this study aims to get a general idea of students' views toward English culture learning in SETL. It is designed with Likert Five Scales as chosen items so as to get a grade to measure their degree of English culture learning views.

It is composed of 25 individual items, which focuses on the students' objectives, attitudes, methods, ways and teachers' effect towards English culture learning. Each item is attached with five answers from 1 to 5 and the students are required to choose one answer that is suitable to him/her.

4.5 Procedures for Data Collection

4.5.1 Collecting Test Papers

The subjects are told that the result of this test is related to their English cultural level so as to let them take it more seriously. They are asked to finish all the 40 questions in 30-40 minutes. When time is up, their answer sheets are collected immediately.

4.5.2 Collecting Questionnaires

All the subjects are required to complete the questionnaire after taking the teacher's explanation for reference. Before doing this questionnaire, they are also told that this survey had no relation with their middle or final examination scores and thus their choices might reflect their true thinking. 101 valid questionnaires are collected.

4.5.3 Making Data Base

For each subject, the data base includes the following date:

- 1) scores of English simulation test as English language level scores;

- 2) scores of socio-cultural test as English cultural level scores;
- 3) scores of English cultural learning views;
- 4) scores of Part One and Two as Communicative Culture's scores;
- 5) scores of Part Three and Four as Propositional Culture's scores;
- 6) scores of Part One as nonverbal behavior's scores;
- 7) scores of Part Two as verbal behavior's scores.

4.6 Data Analysis Discuss

This part deals with the quantitative analysis based on data collection in this survey, which consists of counting and computing test papers on English cultural level and questionnaires on English cultural learning views. It tends to investigate the general status of English cultural learning for today's Chinese senior middle school students.

4.6.1 Frequency of Scores on the Test and Questionnaire

Chart 1 illustrates the bell-shaped frequency of subjects' scores on the test of English cultural level. From the chart, we can see that a large number of subjects' scores vary from 45 to 60 while the most frequently achieved score is around 50. In detail, only 32 subjects' score is over 60.

Chart 1 Histogram for English Cultural Level Test

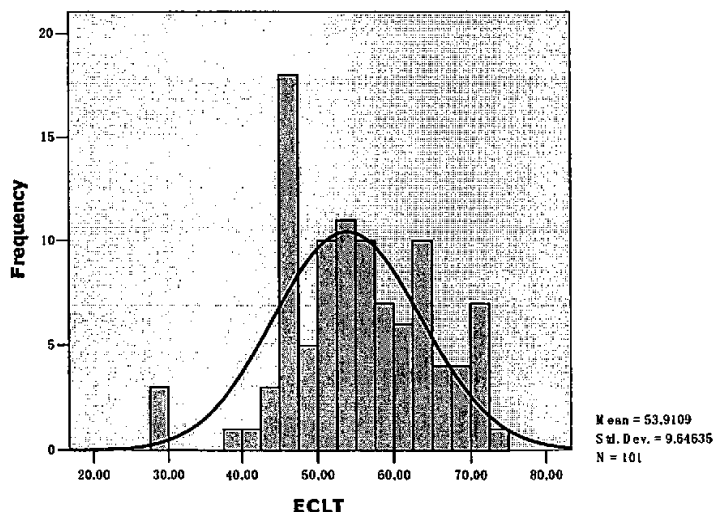
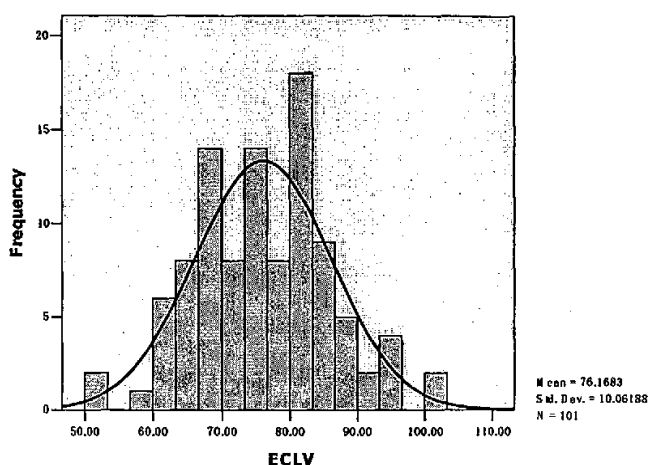


Chart 2 describes the distribution of frequency of scores achieved by subjects in

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

the questionnaire of English cultural learning views. Most of these scores frequent the range from about 60 to 90 in which the scores of around 75 are very often seen. More specifically, nearly 90 subjects achieve around 60 to 90.

Chart 2 Histogram for English Cultural Learning Views



4.6.2 Counting and Computing the Test and the Questionnaire

According to Table 1, the descriptive statistics for ECLT shows the minimum score of 27.5 and the maximum of 75 in the test. The mean is about 53.9109 and the standard deviation is about 9.64635.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for the Test

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|-------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| | N | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| ECT | 101 | 47.50 | 27.50 | 75.00 | 53.9109 | 9.64635 |
| CC | 101 | 35.00 | 15.00 | 50.00 | 35.8168 | 7.20338 |
| KC | 101 | 20.00 | 10.00 | 30.00 | 18.0941 | 5.02678 |
| NV | 101 | 20.00 | 5.00 | 25.00 | 16.0644 | 4.55997 |
| V | 101 | 15.00 | 10.00 | 25.00 | 19.7772 | 3.60727 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 101 | | | | | |

Generally, the score range from 27.5 to 75 points is relatively wide and the minimum score 27.5 is quite low. Furthermore, considering the division of the low, average and high range of scores which is about 0-60, 60-80, and 80-100, the mean

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

score of 53.9109 implies that students' English cultural level is lower than average level.

The descriptive statistics for CC shows the minimum score of 15 and the maximum of 50 in the test. The mean is about 35.8168 and the standard deviation is about 7.20338.

The descriptive statistics for PC shows the minimum score of 10 and the maximum of 30 in the test. The mean is about 18.0941 and the standard deviation is about 5.02678.

The descriptive statistics for NVB shows the minimum score of 5 and the maximum of 25 in the test. The mean is about 16.0644 and the standard deviation is about 4.55997.

The descriptive statistics for VB shows the minimum score of 10 and the maximum of 25 in the test. The mean is about 19.7772 and the standard deviation is about 3.60727.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics on English Cultural Learning Views (ECLV) including its five subsections: Objective (O), Attitude (A), Method (M), Way (W), and Teacher's Effect (TE). These statistics were shown with the minimum, the maximum, the mean scores and the standard deviation as well for each item. Scores are calculated for each scale, as well as summed for a total score where higher scores indicate greater English Cultural Learning Views.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for the Questionnaire

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| O | 101 | 8.00 | 20.00 | 15.2178 | 2.67434 |
| A | 101 | 7.00 | 25.00 | 15.0990 | 3.35113 |
| M | 101 | 8.00 | 20.00 | 15.5842 | 2.35061 |
| W | 101 | 9.00 | 20.00 | 15.6436 | 2.34343 |
| TE | 101 | 6.00 | 24.00 | 14.6337 | 3.43722 |
| ECLV | 101 | 51.00 | 102.00 | 76.1683 | 10.06188 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 101 | | | | |

In Table 2 the minimum score for subjects' English cultural learning views is 51 and the maximum 102 in the questionnaire. The mean is about 76.1683 and the standard deviation is about 10.06188. Specifically, for M and W items, the standard

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

deviation is about 2.3 while it is about 3.4 for A and TE items. For O item, the standard deviation is 2.6. However, the largest number of deviation happens to ECLV item which is up to 10.06.

It suggests that subjects are almost same in learning methods (M) and learning ways (W) to cultural learning, and their attitude and teacher's effect to cultural learning differ little. However, it results in the wide variation of their English Cultural Learning Views (ECLV).

Compared with the low, average and high range of scores in English cultural learning views level in terms of the total score, which account for 25-62.5, 62.5-77.5, and 77.5-125 the mean score for subjects in this survey (76.1683) is in the average level but relatively near to the high end. It is noted that all the listed mean scores of each item are all around 15. It indicates that in this survey subjects achieved scores in average level in all five scales.

That is to say, students involved in this survey have the nearly same performance, which are all in the average level, in their responses to five scales of English cultural learning.

4.6.3 Correlation between English Cultural Learning Views and English Cultural Level

This part is going to prepare Table 3 to answer the third research question about the relationship between English cultural learning views and English cultural level.

All data collected on English cultural learning views and English cultural level are analyzed with SPSS13.0 software. The result of correlation analysis conducted by SPSS13.0 is shown as follows:

Table 3 Correlation between ECLV and ECL

| Correlations | | ECLV | ECL |
|--------------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| ECLV | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .657** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 101 | 101 |
| ECL | Pearson Correlation | .657** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 101 | 101 |

** .Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 3 indicates that there is correlation at the 0.01 level between students' English cultural learning views and English cultural level. The correlation between these two will be studied later in Chapter Six.

4.6.4 Correlation between English Language Level and English Cultural Level

Table 4 Correlation between ELL and ECL

| Correlations | | ELL | ECL |
|--------------|---------------------|---------|---------|
| ELL | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .317 ** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .001 |
| | N | 101 | 101 |
| ECL | Pearson Correlation | .317 ** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | |
| | N | 101 | 101 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

This part is going to prepare Table 4 to answer the fourth research question about the relationship between English language level and English cultural level.

It shows that in Table 4, there is correlation at the 0.01 level between students' English language level and English cultural level.

4.7 Summary

This chapter describes the design adopted for the survey study in detail. Altogether, 101 subjects by answering tests and responding to questionnaires while two teachers marked the tests and the questionnaire papers. Procedures for data collection and analysis are also given in detail. Statistical package for the social science (SPSS version 13.0) is employed for fulfilling the analysis task.

The first and second research questions are supported with descriptive analysis conducted by SPSS 13.0 software. The answers to these questions will be given in Chapter Six and a few characteristics of English cultural learning of Senior Middle School students in China EFL context will be under discussion as well. In addition, the third and fourth research questions concerning the relationships between two pairs data are raised to be discussed later in Chapter Six.

Chapter 5 Results and Discussion

This chapter consists of two parts: qualitative results on characteristics in English cultural learning of today's Chinese senior middle school students which are reflected in the above analysis and the prediction of the correlation between English cultural learning views and English cultural level, and between English language level and English cultural level.

5.1 Discussing the Test and the Questionnaire

5.1.1 Discussing the Test

With "A Sociocultural Test", we can be more aware of subjects' cultural levels. Moreover, whether they are good or bad at concerning the target culture is clearly revealed in the findings. From Table 1 and Chart 1, the following points become clear:

Firstly, learners' overall performance on the test is shockingly poor. Of the total 100 points, the average score is only 53.9109. The highest is 75 and lowest is only 27.5. Only 32 students (32%) have scores over 60 point. 65 students' (64%) scores fall between 40 to 60; and 4 students' (4%) scores are even below 40.

Secondly, students' performance on Propositional Culture is extremely disappointing. (cf. Chart 3) Of the total 50 points, the average score is only 18.0941, the lowest, only 10. Only 2 students' (2%) got passing scores (over 30 points); the vast majority, 99 of them (98%) got scores lower than 30 points. The limited few items which over half of the subjects give the correct answers to include:

Item 2.The National Day of the U.S.A. is the day when the Declaration of Independence was signed (74% correct).

Item 3.The American Civil War broke out in 1861 (53% correct).

Item 12.California is a sunny state (68% correct).

Item 16.The largest English Dictionary is Oxford English Dictionary (56% correct).

Except for these four items, students' knowledge on American or British literature, geography, history, etc. is shockingly scarce. It indicates that "Propositional Culture" doesn't get enough concern in Senior English teaching and learning. This shocking fact might be persuasive enough for us to argue for the right place of

“Propositional Culture” in language teaching.

Chart 3 Histogram for Propositional Culture

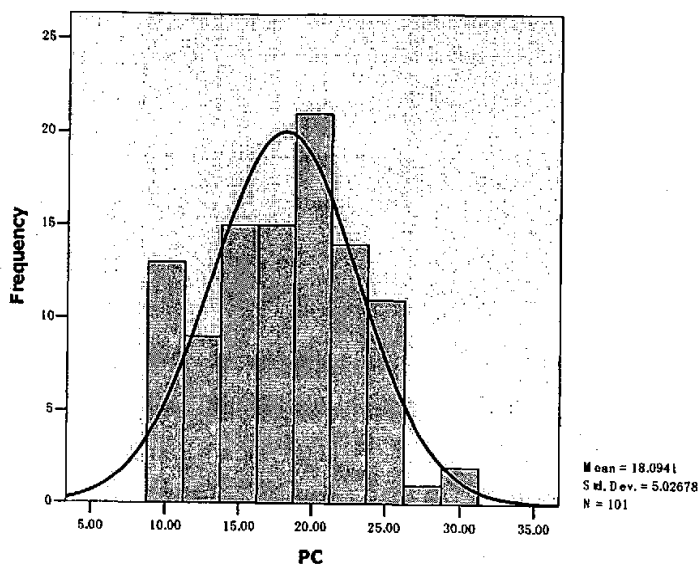
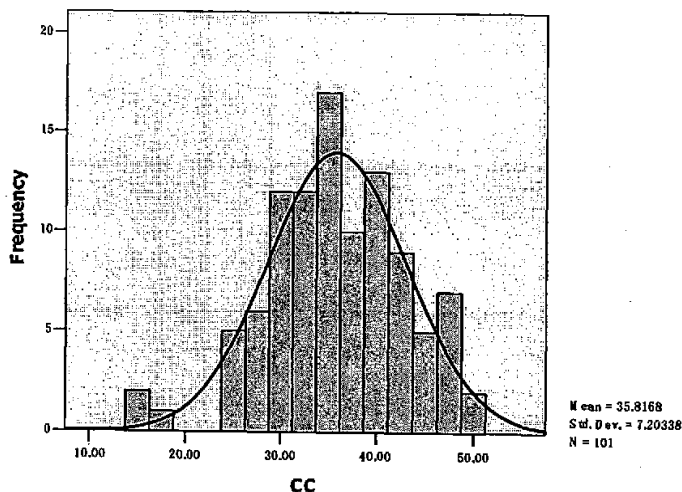


Chart 4 Histogram for Communicative Culture



Thirdly, comparatively speaking, learners' performance on Communicative Culture is better. (cf. Chart 4) Of the total 50 points, the average score is 35.8168 and the highest, 50. 87 students (86%) got a passing score or higher (over 30 points).

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

Table 5 indicates that there is correlation at the 0.05 level between students' Communicative Culture and Propositional Culture.

Table 5 Correlation between CC and PC

| Correlations | | CC | PC |
|--------------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| CC | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .219 * |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .027 |
| | N | 101 | 101 |
| PC | Pearson Correlation | .219 * | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .027 | |
| | N | 101 | 101 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Fourthly, it can be noted that learners' performance on nonverbal behavior is inferior to verbal behavior. (cf. Charts 5 & 6) On nonverbal behavior, of the total 25 points, the average score is 19.772 and the highest, 25 (total points). 96 students (95%) got a passing score or higher (over 15 points), while on nonverbal behavior, of the total 25 points, the average score is 16.0644 and the lowest, only 5.72 students (71%) got a passing score or higher (over 15 points).

Chart 5 Histogram for Nonverbal Behavior

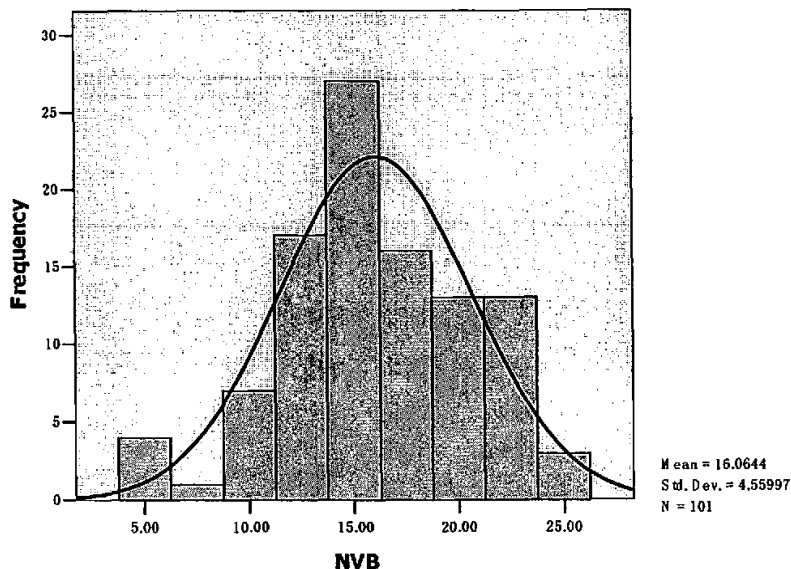


Chart 6 Histogram for Verbal Behavior

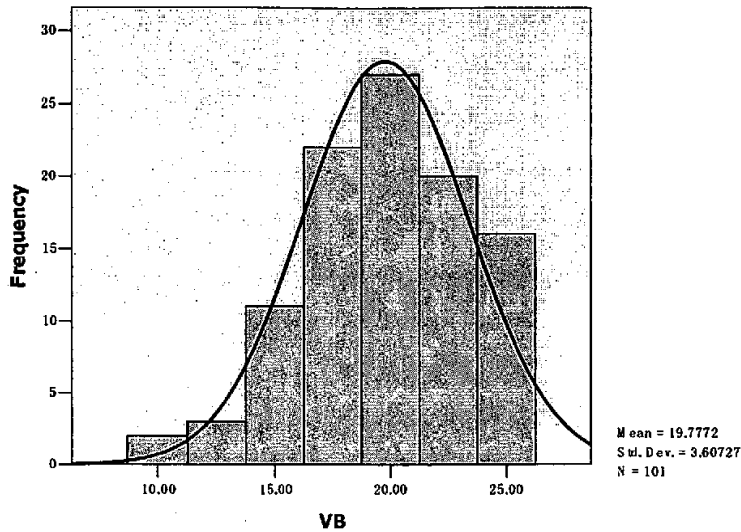


Table 6 indicates that there is correlation at the 0.01 level between students' performance on verbal behavior and performance on nonverbal behavior.

Table 6 Correlation between NVB and VB

| Correlations | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|---------|---------|
| | | NVB | VB |
| NVB | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .554 ** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 101 | 101 |
| VB | Pearson Correlation | .554 ** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 101 | 101 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The following reasons might help explain the results:

Firstly, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been influencing China's FLE in the past two decades. As CLT stresses the appropriate use of linguistic forms, it has some positive influence on learners' performance in Communicative Culture.

Secondly, nowadays the English textbooks for senior middle school have been compiled according to the structural-functional syllabus, they have a striking feature

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

which is “culture permeation”, that is to say, the textbooks introduce PC and CC about Western society step by step. A topic and a communicational function item are arranged in each unit. Each topic reflects different cultures in the West from ancient times to the present age, especially about the cultures in English-speaking countries. The reading text in the second lesson of each unit develops about this very topic, in focus of “Propositional Culture” about Western countries; the first and the third lesson embody communicational function items, reflects “Communicative Culture” about English-speaking countries.

Thirdly, perhaps another major reason is that the communicative rules of the target culture are different from our own in many respects, though we humans share many things in communication. The chief cause of learners’ mistakes is culture transfer; learners tend to use the native-culture standard to judge behaviors in the target culture.

Therefore, we can conclude by saying that on the whole, learners’ Communicative Culture is very scarce and learners’ knowledge of Propositional Culture is particularly limited. In FLE, “Propositional Culture” is often taken for granted. The emphasis is always on “Communicative Culture” so that learner’s communicative competence can be developed. This investigation reminds us that while we should take enough care of “Communicative Culture”, we need also pay due attention to “Propositional Culture”.

Researches have revealed that a large portion of people’s communication is done nonverbally. John Lyon regards nonverbal communication as an essential component in spoken language. The theorists, such as Albert Meherabian, Mark Knapp, Kay Birdwhistell, agree that in a normal two-person conversation, the verbal channel carries less than 35 percent of the message’s social meaning, which indicates that more than 65 percent of the meaning is conveyed nonverbally. Judy C. Pilson thinks that only 7 percent of emotional information is conveyed through verbal communication while 93 percent of the information should depend on nonverbal communication. One study done in the United States also showed that in the communication of attitudes, 93 percent of the message was transmitted by the sound of the voice and by facial expressions, whereas only 7 percent of speaker’s attitude

was transmitted by words. Therefore, cultural learning in SE should concern the focus on nonverbal communication. In next section, the discussion on nonverbal communication and verbal communication will be given in detail.

5.1.1.1 Discussion of Part One

To probe into the reasons for students' underdeveloped nonverbal communication competence, the author of the dissertation has made careful study of students' test paper and found three causes: nonverbal misinterpretation, assumption of similarity and different value systems.

Nonverbal Misinterpretation

Nonverbal misinterpretation is triggered when people from different cultures inhabit different sensory realities. They see, hear, feel, and smell only that which has some meaning or importance for them. They abstract whatever fits into their personal world of recognition and then interpret it through the frame of reference of their own culture.

In the sample survey, for item 4 "*When you have a conversation with your English teacher, you mustn't have a prolonged eye contact with him.*", 7 subjects give the response of "inappropriate" to it. In their opinion, a foreign teacher will not have a prolonged eye contact with a student unless he/she is angry. Based on such a misinterpretation, they think they are showing anger if they have a prolonged eye contact with the teacher.

Assumption of Similarity

According to Barna (1994), the assumption of similarity does not often extend to the expectation of a common verbal language but it does interfere with caution in decoding nonverbal symbols, signs, and signals. As is known to all, no cross-cultural studies have proven the existence of a common nonverbal language but the confidence that comes with the myth of similarity is much stronger than with the assumption of differences.

Item 1 concerns different customs of giving gifts. Chinese people tend to bring food such as pastry, fruits and nutriment when visiting friends and relatives. As a result, a large number of subjects regarded it proper to bring the hostess some fruits if invited to dinner by an English-speaking friend (8 of subjects in the sample survey

shared this view). Actually typical presents like chocolate and flowers are proper on such an occasion, as fruits are reserved for the purpose of visiting patients.

Sometimes, students are not ignorant of rules or customs different from their own, but they have only a scanty knowledge of them and have to make overgeneralization.

As to the answer to item 7, many subjects expressed their different opinion: since assignments in English-speaking countries should be typed before they are handed in, why should a typed letter of invitation or acknowledgement be less polite than a hand-written one? The subjects failed to comprehend the fact that in countries where mass-production is achieved, people value hand-made artifacts. That explains the reason why people there prefer hand-written letters of invitation or acknowledgement to typed ones.

Different Value Systems

As is mentioned in the previous section, nonverbal behavior is subject to cultural differences and reveals basic cultural traits. Some students are unaware of the different value systems and interpret nonverbal behavior of the target speech community according to their own cultural norms or value orientations. For example, the subjects' response to item 10 reflect values characteristic of Chinese people.

Item 10 concerns suitable present for old people with cultural background different from that of Chinese. Many subjects viewed a china god of longevity as the right gift for Dr. Smith in that it expressed good wishes in Chinese culture. Since old people are valued and respected in China, the longer they live, the more admirable they will be; whereas old people in America are equivalent to uselessness. So they are reluctant to admit that they are old. Thus, Dr. Smith might misinterpret Li Bing's present as implying that he is too old.

5.1.1.2 Discussion of Part Two

After marking 101 copies of test papers, the researcher identified some similarities among subjects in the understanding of verbal behavior. Although they have already showed their knowledge and skills under some intercultural communication contact such as privacy issues and expressions of appreciation, it would still be worth noticing that they give similar wrong answers to questions on how to give proper addressing, to offer general greetings, and to express refusal or

acceptance.

In order to take a closer look at how subjects gave wrong answers to some specific questions in the test, the researcher then conducted a sample survey by randomly picking out 10 subjects' test papers (one tenth of the total number of the subjects) and analyzed on their performance in the first question. The reason for why choosing this question rather than any other questions listed in the text is that it concerns about communicator's responses to appreciation, which subjects to the refusal and acceptance item with the highest percentage of wrong answers given by subjects.

The analysis shows that among 10 subjects, 5 of them responded to appreciation improperly. In this question, when receiving appreciation from the boss saying, "Thanks a lot. That's a great help." for extra work and effort as an employee, they think that "It's my duty." should be the appropriate response. However, the correct answer should be "You are welcome".

The results of the test survey suggest that cultural learning be made part of foreign language learning to improve students' intercultural communicative competence and efforts be exerted to improve students' nonverbal communication competence, and that much attention be paid on Propositional Culture.

5.1.2 Discussing the Questionnaire

The analysis on the questionnaire still employed the 10 sample papers in the above sample survey for the analysis on the test. From Table 2, it indicates that subjects' views on English cultural learning are balanced on five scales. All of five aspects are around the average. It shows that most of subjects scored a little higher in A and W scales; while their performance in TE is a little lower.

The questionnaire reveals a general scarcity of exposure to the target culture on the most of the subjects. Firstly, students' after-class English cultural learning is quite-limited, while mainly confined to linguistic knowledge and skills. Secondly, teaching facilities such as pictures, slides, audio-video materials, etc are rarely used in the classroom. Thirdly, students' access to foreign movies or lectures on foreign cultures is equally scarce. The only somewhat encouraging news is that most of them agree that it is a good way for English cultural learning to use teaching facilities such

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

as pictures, slides, audio-video materials, etc. The overwhelming view of the objectives of FLE is still a utilitarian one. Besides, almost every respondent thinks that teacher's effect on students' English cultural level is not great. That is, teacher dose not pay enough attention to cultural knowledge in teaching.

To sum up, in the sample survey of the questionnaire, subjects show that their eagerness to learn English and especially their enthusiasm on the development of their intercultural communication competence is not strong. However, most of them want to be more competent in intercultural communication by improving their speaking and listening skills, and tend to admit English cultural learning should be paid more attention to. Almost all of them have already attached great importance to the use of English as a tool in achieving effective communication in their lives.

In conclusion, questionnaire shows that learners have a general desire to know the foreign culture and they believe that language learning cannot be separated from culture learning. However, apart from the encouraging news, there is also discouraging news: learners' exposure to the target culture is very scarce and basically, their views of the objectives of SETL are only partial, with the humanistic aspect of foreign language course only realized by limited few students. This can only signal an unhappy result from the socio-cultural test.

5.2 Discussion of Correlation

The interpretation of the Pearson correlation coefficient is as follows: the Pearson correlation coefficient r is between $+1$ and -1 , that is, $-1 \leq r \leq +1$. If r is $+1$, it indicates a perfect positive correlation and a -1 correlation coefficient indicates a perfect negative correlation. A zero correlation indicates no relation between the variables. Of course, perfect correlation never happens in reality. Therefore, the magnitude of the correlation coefficient will vary from -1 to 0 to $+1$. The greater the value, the stronger the relationship between the two variables.

From Table 3 and Table 4 (at pp. 40 & 41), we can see that the students' English cultural level is not obviously correlated with their English language level ($r=.317$, at .001 level), but are positively correlated with their English cultural learning views ($r=.657$ at the .000 level). The result indicates that students' English cultural level mainly depend on their English cultural learning views. Students, whose English

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

cultural learning views are stronger, have a higher English cultural level. With the statistical data, we can safely say that Students' English cultural learning views are the more decisive factor concerning their English cultural level than their English language level in this study.

That is to say, the correlation between English language level and English cultural level does exist ($r=.317$, at .001 level), (cf. Table 4) but the coefficient of these two items is too low to predict that one's English language level must be improved by the increase and accumulation of his English cultural level, or in reverse.

In summary, the correlation existing between English language level and English cultural level shows that language learning and culture learning are not independent things, and there is positive connection between them. On this point, researchers' studies on the relation of culture and language can afford theoretical support. However, the much lower coefficient of them indicates that the teaching and learning of language and culture are not balanced in SETL in China. Students' English cultural level hasn't been developed simultaneously to their English language level.

From the result of the analysis based on the output offered by SPSS13.0 software, some prediction can be drawn behind Table 3. The most correlated pair is English cultural learning views and English cultural level, and its coefficient is about .657, which is relatively high. It indicates that English cultural learning views might influence English cultural level by greater degree. We can say that, English cultural learning view is not the only influencing factor, but is the main influencing factor.

Since the correlation between English cultural learning views and English cultural level does exist and the coefficient of these two items is relatively high. Therefore, based on the correlation of these two items, the researcher predicts that one's English cultural level could be improved by the increase and accumulation of his English cultural learning view. That is, students could improve English cultural level by purposeful training to have more positive English cultural learning view.

5.3 Summary

Based on the analysis in the previous chapter, four research questions are answered in this chapter. Actual status of English cultural learning views and cultural level for today's Chinese senior middle school students and then three characteristics

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

of foreign language learning under China's EFL context are raised. In the end, it takes a closer look at the relation between English cultural learning views and English cultural level and predicts that people could improve English cultural level by training themselves to have more positive English cultural learning views.

The subjects in this survey study showed similarities in their understandings of intercultural communication to some extent. They are not sure about proper responses under some specific intercultural interactions like addressing and greeting people and refusing or accepting certain appreciation requests, and agreements. The questionnaire also shows that those subjects have a lot in common when expressing opinions about how to deal with English learning and what they want to learn at most.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This chapter summarizes this study beginning with the pedagogical implication. Then it highlights the strengths and as well as the weaknesses of this study. Finally, suggestions are given for future research dimensions.

In view of the increasingly internationalizing character of society and in consideration of the improved understanding of the nature of intercultural communication, the “linguistic competence” as described by Chomsky(1965) and further developed to “communicative competence” by Hymes(1967), etc, has now been enlarged to “intercultural communicative competence”. That is, both practically and theoretically speaking, ICC should be the ultimate goal of foreign language education. However, the research carried out in this thesis shows that the current situation of SETL in China is not efficient which has resulted in students’ inadequate cultural competence. In order to better students’ English cultural level, the last and also the most important part of the thesis puts forward some tentative suggestions to improve the current situation of SETL.

6.1 Pedagogical Implication of This Study

The result of this survey study indicates that subjects are better at Communicative Culture but weaker in Propositional Culture. This is not only a characteristic in their language learning but also in their culture study. Students pay special attention to Communicative Culture on the surface but neglect some root causes such as cultural values which hide deeper far from seeing. The point is if students continue to take it for granted that cultural learning is just as simple as learning what to eat or what to say under particular circumstances, they will certainly miss the most valuable essence of intercultural learning. As a result, Chinese senior middle school students need proper guidance to improve their English cultural level. Then how to improve their English cultural level? The following parts point out the pedagogical implication of this study.

6.1.1 General Implication

Based on the above analyses on the correlation of English cultural learning views and English cultural level, and of English language level and English cultural level,

the “integration” model should be taken in FLT.

Though language and culture should be integrated in view of their close relationship, it has been a rather long time that people tended to dichotomize them. Such practice of “dichotomy” may be traced back to some traditions in linguistics: the dichotomy of *langue*/*parole* by Saussure has been regarded possessing great significance in establishing linguistics as a science; the dichotomy of language competence/performance by Chomsky has also been considered as having profound influence on modern linguistics. But is it reasonable and proper to dichotomize language and culture?

Kramsch (1993:8) offers far-reaching analysis and criticism on the dichotomy of language and culture in teaching practice:

This dichotomy of language and culture is an entrenched feature of language teaching around the world. It is part of the linguistic heritage of the profession. Culture is often seen as mere information conveyed by the language, not as a feature of language itself; cultural awareness becomes an educational objective in itself, separated from language. If, however, language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching.

In her opinion, in order to get out of the dilemma of such a dichotomy, we should regard language and culture as “two sides of the same coin” (Kramsch, 1993:3) to integrate language and culture teaching. This is the “integration” model. Then, how shall we put this model into teaching practice?

The present author wants to stress the following points in the practice of the “integration” model of language-and-culture teaching:

- 1) The intrinsic relation between language and culture must be fully understood and the “separation” model and “attachment” model of culture teaching must be abandoned.
- 2) Culture must be understood not only as “knowledge” and “behavior”, but also as “meaning” and all of them must be understood as being dynamic in context.
- 3) We can make full play of the advantages of the communicative approach of FLT by employing communication as the integrating “interface” between

language forms and cultural contents.

6.1.2 Specific Suggestions

So far we have learned that communication, language and culture cannot be separated. Successful intercultural communication demands cultural fluency as well as linguistic fluency. For example, if we are to communicate effectively in English we need more than just competence in English grammar and vocabulary. We must also have an awareness of the culturally determined patterns of verbal and nonverbal communication which speakers of English follow, such as how they treat time and space, and why they think and behave the way they do.

The following eight categories of communication behavior will be described which contributes to the achievement of FLT.

1. Display of respect. Respect is shown through verbal symbols like tone of voice and other nonverbal symbols which convey interest in the other person. The action of displaying respect increases the likelihood of a judgment of competence.

2. Orientation to knowledge. Orientation to knowledge refers to the terms people use to explain themselves and the world around them. A competent orientation to knowledge occurs when people's actions demonstrate that all experiences and interpretations are individual and personal rather than universally shared by others.

3. Empathy. Individuals who are able to communicate and be aware of another person's thoughts, feelings, and experiences are regarded as more competent in intercultural communication. Alternatively, those who lack empathy and who therefore indicate little or no awareness of even the most obvious feelings and thoughts of others will not be perceived as competent. Empathetic behaviors include verbal statements that identify the experiences of others and nonverbal codes that are complementary to the moods and thoughts of others. However, it is necessary to make an important distinction here. Empathy does not mean "Putting yourself in the shoes of another." It is both physically and psychologically impossible to do so. Yet it is possible for people to be sufficiently interested and ware of others that they appear to be putting themselves in other's shoes. The skill we are describing here is the capacity to behave as if one understands the world as others do. Of course, empathy is not just responding to the tears and smiles of others, which may, in fact, mean something very

different than your cultural interpretations would suggest.

4. Interaction management. Some individuals are skilled at starting and ending interactions among participants and at taking turns and maintaining a discussion. These management skills are important because through them all participants in an interaction are able to speak and contribute appropriately. In contrast, dominating a conversation or being non-responsive to the interaction long after they have begun to display signs of disinterest and boredom or ending conversations abruptly may also pose problems. Interaction management skills require knowing how to indicate turn taking both verbally and nonverbally.

5. Task role behavior. Because intercultural communication often takes place where individuals are focused on work-related purposes, appropriate task-related role behaviors are very important. Task role behaviors are those that contribute to the group's problem-solving activities, for example, initiating new ideas, requesting further information or facts, seeking clarification of group tasks, evaluating the suggestions of others, and keeping a group on task. The difficulty in this important category is the display of culturally appropriate behaviors. The key is to recognize the strong link to a culture's underlying patterns and to be willing to acknowledge that tasks are accomplished by cultures in multiple ways. Task behaviors are so intimately entwined with cultural expectations about activity and work that it is often difficult to respond appropriately to task expectations that differ from one's own. What one culture defines as a social activity, another may define as a task.

6. Relational role behavior. Relational role behaviors concern efforts to build or maintain personal relationships with group members. These behaviors may include verbal and nonverbal messages that demonstrate support for others that help to solidify feelings of participation. Examples of competent relational role behaviors include harmonizing and mediating conflicts between group members, encouraging participation from others, general displays of interest, and a willingness to compromise one's position for the sake of others.

7. Tolerance for ambiguity. Tolerance for ambiguity concerns a person's responses to new, uncertain, and unpredictable intercultural encounters. Some people react to new situations with greater comfort than do others. Some are extremely

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

nervous, highly frustrated, or even hostile toward the new situations and those who may be present in them. Those who do not tolerate ambiguity well may respond to new and unpredictable situations with hostility, eagerness, shouting, sarcasm, withdrawal, or abruptness.

Others view new situations as a challenge; they seem to do well whenever the unexpected or unpredictable occurs, and they quickly adapt to the demands of changing environments. Competent intercultural communicators are able to cope with the nervousness and frustrations that accompany new or unclear situations, and they are able to adapt quickly to changing demands.

8. Interaction posture. Interaction posture refers to the ability to respond to others in a way that is descriptive, non-evaluative, and non-judgmental. Although the specific verbal and nonverbal messages that express judgments and evaluations can vary from culture to culture, the importance of selecting messages that do not convey evaluative judgments is paramount. Statements based on clear judgments of rights and wrongs indicate a closed or predetermined framework of attitudes, beliefs, and values, and that they are used by the evaluative, and less competent, intercultural communicator. Non-evaluative and nonjudgmental actions are characterized by verbal and nonverbal messages based on description rather than on interpretations or evaluations.

6.1.3 Suggestions to Teachers

To Senior Middle School students, their teachers of English play an important role in deciding whether cultural learning is successful or not. Li Li and Chen Zhi'an (1997) pointed out that teachers should be familiar with the culture of target language in order to raise students' intercultural awareness. In the course of teaching, teachers should consciously reflect cultural facts and cultural differences in language points. He and Yan (1990) have tested the intercultural pragmatic skills of 79 college teachers. The result suggests that the lack of pragmatic knowledge is the main trouble source which gives rise to Chinese learners' pragmatic failure. Similarly, it can be concluded that teachers' intercultural awareness is of vital significance to enhance students' intercultural awareness.

Teachers have four tasks to fulfill to attain the goal. The first task is to help

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

students become more aware of conventional behavior in common situations in the target culture.

The second one is to help students increase their awareness of the cultural connotations of the words and phrases in the target language.

The third task is to help students develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture.

Most important of all, teachers should stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture to encourage empathy towards its people.

Teachers may help students achieve culture learning both inside and outside classroom.

6.1.4 Suggestions to Students

In fact, because of the restriction of time and space, it is not sufficient for the students to only depend on the classroom instruction of English cultural learning. Developing various extracurricular activities to enhance English cultural learning is interesting and efficient. These activities function as a driving force, which may be much more effective in helping students recognize cultural patterns and understand cultural themes.

1) Literature Reading

Most of the literary works pay much attention to describing the society in which the stories take place. In the description, a great amount of cultural aspects are involved, such as politics, economics, education, religion, and so on. So, literature reading can deepen students' understanding towards foreign countries, and their cultures.

Among the extracurricular activities, literature reading is thought to be the most commonly used one to increase EFL learners' cultural awareness, especially to explore intercultural communication. Literature is greatly valuable in enhancing intercultural communication in two very impotent ways. One is by expressing the significance of certain relationships, values, and communication styles, etc., that are representative of the culture being described. The other is by presenting intercultural issues themselves as the major theme of the literary work, such as acculturation and identity, inter-ethnic relations, and so on.

2) Video Watching

Video is a useful teaching aid since it is a supercharged medium of communication and a powerful vehicle of Information. It provides EFL learners with vast space of messages and images about the target culture. Applied to EFL learners' cultural learning, this medium brings the real world where the target language is spoken into the classroom, and makes the target language and culture alive in a way, which the printed page cannot. Video is served both as resource and supplementary material of introducing the target culture to EFL learners. It must be noticed that video watching can make students have a lasting impression on the world of the target culture.

3) Internet Surfing

The characteristic of facility of the Internet is well recognized by EFL learners who often use it to learn the target culture. Computers have been used extensively in education nowadays, and the internet has gained immense popularity in EFL learners, cultural learning, through which a large number of information about the target culture can be found. Technology has brought about so great a revolution in EFL teaching that we should take advantage of it. Thus, it is worthwhile to make full use of computers in senior middle school students' English cultural learning.

For instance, if learners want to comprehensively understand the difference between Chinese and American ways of greeting, what they need to do is to surf on the Internet with key words through certain search engines. Then, relative information appears. The application of the Internet makes students' English cultural learning highly efficient.

6.2 Limitation of the Study

As a tentative research, the thesis still has some limitations. There are some reasons that account for the weaknesses of this study.

First, the sample in the study is relatively small. The limited number of subjects cannot represent the actual situation of today's English cultural learning of Chinese Senior Middle School students'.

Second, the present study suffers some methodological defects of the design and correlation study could only be used to predict certain relations between different

things. It will be too quick to confirm that cultural level can be influenced and improved by the increasing command of cultural learning views only through a correlation study between these two items. The high correlation solely cannot build a solid basis for the saying that one of these two must have great influence over the other. Furthermore, when the sample quantity is limited, the result and conclusion may not be very persuasive enough to demonstrate the validity of the survey.

Third, within such limited time and space, the thesis only puts forward general suggestions rather than very detailed ones.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Study

Future studies on English cultural learning in Senior Middle School can be done from different aspects: e.g.: textbook and teaching material, teachers, and learning strategies, etc. This thesis doesn't try to establish a comprehensive, systematic and brand-new theoretical framework, for the discussion on learning and teaching methods is just unfolding. Suggestions will benefit further discussions, while theoretical framework will make it restrained.

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

Reference

- Bates, D. G. & Plog F., 1990. *Cultural Anthropology*. 3d ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Barna, L. M. 1994. "Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication". In L. A. Samovar and R. E. porter (eds.) *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (7th edition). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co.
- Bolinger, D. 1968. *Aspects of Language*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Bonvillain, N. 1993. *Language, Culture, and Communication: The Meaning of Messages*. N. J.: Prentice Hall.
- Brislin, R. W. & T. Yoshida. (1994). *Improving Intercultural Interactions—Modules for Cross Cultural Training Programmes*. London: SAGE.
- Brooks, N. D. (1968). "Teaching Culture in the Foreign Language Classroom." *Foreign Language Annals*.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 1980. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs.
- Byram, M. 1989. *Investigating Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Teaching* [M]. Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters.
- Corson, D. (1989). "Foreign Language Policy at School Level: FLT and Cultural Studies across the Curriculum." *Foreign Language Annals*. Vol.22, No. 4.
- Chomsky, N. 1972. *Language and Mind*. New York: Harcourt Brace, Inc.
- Davis, L. 2001. *Doing Culture: Cross-cultural Communication in Action*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Dimitrios Thanasoulas 2001. *The Importance of Teaching Culture In The Foreign Language Classroom*. Radical Pedagogy.
- Duranti, A. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Ellis, R. 1997. *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Fowler, S. & M. Mumford. (Eds.) 1995. *Intercultural Sourcebook: Cross Cultural Training Methods*. (Vol. 1) Intercultural Press.
- Fries, C. C. 1945. *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Gao, Yihong. 2001. *Foreign Language Learning: "1+1>2"*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Gardner, R. and W. E. Lambert. 1972. *Attitude and Motivation in Second Language Learning*. Rowley, Mass. : Wewbury House.
- Goodenough, W. 1964. "Cultural anthropology and linguistics". In Dell Hyme, (ed.) *Language in*

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

- Culture and Society. New York: Harper & Row.
- Goodglass, H. 1995 .Understanding Aphasia. New York: Academic Press.
- Gudykunst, William and Kim (ed.). 1984. *Intercultural Communication Theory*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
- Guira, A. 1972. "Construct Validity and Transposition Research: Toward an Empirical Study of Psychoanalytic Concepts". *Comprehensive Psychology*.1/2
- Hedge, T. 2000. *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Herskovits, M. J. 1964. *Cultural Dynamics: Abridged from Cultural Anthropology*. Alfred A. Knopf. Inc.
- Hymes, D. 1972. "On Communicative Competence". In J. B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (P P.269-293). New York: Penguin.
- Kessing, R. 1974. "Theory of culture". In Siegel, B. (ed.) *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol, 3. Palo Alto, California.
- Knapp, K. 1998. "Intercultural Communication in EESE". *EESE Strategy Paper* No.4
- Kramsch, C. 1993. *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. 1998. *Language and Culture*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Teaching Press.
- Lado, R. 1957. *Linguistics Across Cultures*. Michigan University Press.
- Lantolf, J. P. 1999. "Second culture acquisition: cognitive considerations". In Hinkel, E. (ed.) *Culture in second Language teaching and Learning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Levi-Strauss, C. 1963. *Structural Anthropology*. Paris: Plon.
- Libben, G. & Lindner, O. 1993. "Becoming Bilingual and Bicultural: Some Theoretical Considerations". *Alberta Modern Language Journal*, 30/1.
- Littlewood, W. 1981. *Communicative Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rivers, W. M. 1968. *Communicating Naturally in a Second Language: Theory and Practice in a Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, G. & Nocon, H. 1996. "Second culture acquisition: ethnography in the foreign language classroom". *The Modern Language Journal*, 80/4.
- Porter & Samovar. 1994. *Communication between Cultures*. Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Samovar, L. A. 2000. *Communication between Cultures* Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

- Sapir, E. 1921. *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech*. Harcourt, Brace & Co.
- Seelye, H. N. 1983. *Teaching Culture*. Illinois: National Textbook Company.
- Stern, H. H. 1983. *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tylor, E. B. 1871. *Primitive Culture*. London: John Marray.
- Valdes, J. M. 1986. *Culture Bound-Bridging the Cultural Gap in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. 1981. "The Genesis of Higher Mental Functions" in J. V. Wertsh (ed.) *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe.
- 程立, 程建华编, 2000, 《英汉文化比较辞典》[C], 湖南教育出版社。
- 邓炎昌, 刘润清, 1989, 《语言与文化》[C], 外语教学与研究出版社。
- 杜瑞清, 1989, “英语教学与英美文化”, 《外语教学与研究》[J], 第2期。
- 谷启楠, 1988 “文化教学与外语教学”, 《外语界》[J], 第2期。
- 顾嘉祖, 陆升, 1996, 《语言与文化》[C], 上海外语教育出版社。
- 郭建中, 2000, 《文化与翻译》[C], 北京:中国对外翻译出版公司。
- 胡得钢主编, 2001, 《国情英语》[C], 广东省语言音像出版社。
- 胡文仲, 1999, 《跨文化交际学概论》[C], 外语教学与研究出版社。
- 胡文仲, 1998, 《文化与交际》[C], 外语教学与研究出版社。
- 胡文仲, 1995, 《英美文化词典》[C], 外语教学与研究出版社。
- 胡文仲, 高一虹, 1997, 《外语教学与文化》[C], 湖南教育出版社。
- 胡文仲, 1986, “Why Bother about Culture in ELT”, 《外国语》[J], 第4期, P1-5。
- 贾德江, 2000, “论文化因素对英汉翻译的影响”, 《外语教学》[J], 第2期, P56-60
- 贾玉新, 1997, 《跨文化交际学》[C], 上海外语教育出版社。
- 连淑能, 1997, “关于建立汉英文化语言学的构想”, 《语言研究论文集》, 中山大学出版社。
- 林大津, 1996, 《跨文化交际研究》[C], 福建人民出版社。
- 林学明, 2001, “论东西方文化对语言理解的影响”, 《外语与外语教学》[J] (增刊)。
- 林汝昌, 1995, 《外语教学多学科研究》[C], 北京理工大学出版社。
- 平洪, 张国扬, 2000, 《英语习语与英美文化》[C], 外语教学与研究出版社。
- 萨丕尔, E., 陆卓元译, 1964, 《语言论》[C], 商务印书馆。
- 束定芳, 庄智象, 1996, 《现代外语教学:理论, 实践与方法》[C], 上海外语教育出版社。
- 王斌华, 2003 文化习得与语言习得: 跨文化的外语教学观 [MA], 南京师范大学。

- 王福祥, 吴汉樱, 1998, 《文化与语言——论文集》[C], 外语教学与研究出版社。
- 王立菲, 2002, 《现代外语教学论》[C], 外语教学与研究出版社。
- 王英鹏, 1999, “对在大学英语教学中培养学生社会文化能力的几点思考”, 《外语界》[J] 第一期。
- 王振亚, “社会文化测试分析”[A], 载于胡文仲《交际与文化》[C], 1994
- 王振亚, “以跨文化交际为目的的外语教学” 《外语界》[J], 1993
- 王振亚, 《语言与文化》[C], 1999, 北京:高等教育出版社
- 王佐良, “翻译中的文化比较”[A], 郭建中《文化与翻译》[C], 2000
- 文秋芳, 1995, 《英语学习策略论》[C], 上海外语教育出版社。
- 吴国华, “论知识文化与交际文化”[A], 载于胡文仲《交际与文化》[C], 1994, 外语教学与研究出版社
- 吴友富, 《国俗语义研究》[C], 1998, 上海外语教育与研究出版社
- 邢福义主编, 《文化语言学》[C], 2000, 湖北教育出版社
- 许力生, 跨文化交际能力问题探讨[J]. 外语与外语教学, 2000
- 杨梅, “论公外英语教学中的文化输入”[MA], 华中师范大学外语学院, 2002
- 张红玲, “跨文化的语言教学”[D], 上海外国语大学, 1999, 上海
- 张友平, “对语言教学与文化教学的再认识”, 《外语界》[J], 2003(3)
- 张占一, “试论知识文化与交际文化”[A], 载于胡文仲《交际与文化》[C], 1994
- 赵贤洲, “文化差异与文化导入论略”, 《语言教学与研究》[J], 1989, 第3期
- 钟华, 樊威威, 秦傲松, “非英语专业学生社会文化能力调查”, 《外语界》[J], 2001(4)

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

Appendixes

Appendix I

A Socio-cultural Test

| Class | Grade | Sex |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
|--------------|--------------|------------|

Introduction:

The purpose of this test is to know your understanding of some English culture knowledge. Therefore, please think over these questions from the perspective of native English speakers and then answer them.

Part One (20%)

Directions:

There are 10 questions in this Part. Each question has a part underlined which describes a non-verbal behavior (非言语行为) in cross-cultural interaction. Read each question and decide whether the underlined part is appropriate or inappropriate. If it is appropriate, write a “T”, or if it is not appropriate, write an “F”, before the sentence.

1. If you are invited to dinner by one of your English-speaking friends, you may bring the hostess some fruit as a present.
2. When you are invited for the first time to a foreign teacher's apartment and are offered a cup of coffee, you can remain seated receive it with a smile and say, “Thank you.”
3. Mary came to Zhang Mei's birthday party and brought her a present wrapped in a nice box. Zhang Mei unwrapped the box in Mary's presence and praised the present.
4. When you have a conversation with your English teacher who is a native speaker of English, you mustn't have a prolonged eye contact with him.
5. Dr. Smith, over 60, invited Li Bing to his birthday party. Li Bing brought him a china god of longevity as a present.
6. At a dinner you can begin to eat when the hostess picks up his or her own spoon or fork.
7. It is more polite to type the letters of invitation or acknowledgement than to write them with a pen.
8. When you fell ill and want to go and see a doctor, it is a good idea to make an appointment

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

before you go.

9. To motion(打手势)to a person nonverbally(不用语言的)to come to you, you extend one arm in front of you and wave the person over with your palm down(掌心向下).
10. In the West, intimate contact between fellow classmates or friends, such as huddling over some interesting news display, walking arm-in-arm or holding hands is generally considered normal and natural.

Part Two (25%)

Directions:

There are 10 questions in this part. Each question has a part underlined which the product of verbal behavior(言语行为). Read each question and decide whether the underlined part is appropriate or inappropriate. If it is appropriate, write a "T", or if it is not appropriate, write an "F", before the Sentence.

1. Li Xiaolan works as a secretary in an American company. One day she worked very late. Her boss said to her, "Thanks a lot. That's a great help." Li replied, "It's my duty."
2. On his way to the school cinema, Li Hong saw Professor Jones walking to the cinema, too. Li said, "You're going to see the film, aren't you?"
3. On a cold winter day Wang Ping met Professor Briner on his way to the library Wang said to him, "It's rather cold. You'd better wear more clothes."
4. Betty is a foreign student in China. She met Feng Mei and said to her, "I was told that you won the 100-meter race in the all-city track meet this morning. Congratulations." Feng replied, "Just lucky."
5. If your friend says to you, "I wonder if you'd mind posting this letter for me on your way home, Xiao Jun." You'd better reply, "I don't mind at all. You're welcome."
6. When you want to compliment your young English friend's new coat, you can say, "I like your new coat."
7. If you want to borrow a typewriter from your English friend, you say, "Is there any chance of borrowing your typewriter?"
8. If a native speaker of English says to you "That's very nice coat you're wearing", you can answer it by saying, "Do you really like it?"
9. Mrs. Godwin was about the same age as Li Ming's grandmother, so intimately Li called her "Grandma".

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

10. Jack, a foreign student in China, called at your house and asked if you minded him smoking.

If you hate the smell of tobacco, you may say, "Would you mind if I said no, Jack?"

Part Three (25%)

Directions:

Fill in the missing words on the help of the words in the brackets:

For example: He didn't want to offend his wife, so he told a white lie. (color)

1. My mother is always as busy as a _____. (animal)
2. He has three sons but he loves his daughter best, thus people say that his daughter is the _____ of his eyes. (fruit)
3. I found the young man is _____ in teaching beginners English. (color)
4. The thief was as cunning as a _____. (animal)
5. Yesterday his girlfriend gave him a cold _____. (body's part)
6. The bill was about to be defeated, but at the _____ hour enough votes were found to pass it. (number)
7. He is as wise as a/an _____. (animal)
8. They never talk about the youngest son; He was the _____ of the family. (color, animal)
9. He doesn't have an idea of his own. He just _____ what others say. (animal)
10. A large number of American radio stations operate in the _____. (color)

Part Four (25%)

Directions:

Read the following sentences, decide which choice best completes the sentence and mark your answer.

1. Harvard University is located in _____.
a. New York b. Washington c. Philadelphia d. Boston
2. California is a _____ state in the U.S.A..
a. windy b. rainy c. sunny d. snowy
3. _____ does not belong to the U.K.
a. Scotland b. Ireland c. The Isle of Man d. the Channel Islands
4. The largest English Dictionary is _____.
a. Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language

An Investigation of English Cultural Learning of Senior Middle School Students

- b. Oxford English Dictionary
 - c. Longman Contemporary English Dictionary
 - d. The American Heritage English Dictionary
5. "I Have a Dream" was delivered by Martin Luther King in ____.
- a. 1961 b. 1963 c. 1964 d. 1968
6. The American Civil War broke out in ____.
- a. 1861 b. 1776 c. 1904 d. 1812
7. The oldest University in the U.K. is ____.
- a. Cambridge b. St. Andrews c. University of London d. Oxford
8. The National Day of the U.S.A. is the day when ____.
- a. the Declaration of Independence was signed
 - b. the British army surrendered to the American Continental Army
 - c. the America Constitution was signed
 - d. the Continental Congress was held
9. The Parliament of the U.K. comprises ____.
- a. the Sovereign, the House of Lords and the House of Commons
 - b. the House of Lords and the House of Commons
 - c. the House of Lords and the Senate
 - d. the Senate and the House of Commons
10. The American Congress consists of ____.
- a. the House of Representatives and the Senate
 - b. the Senate and the Cabinet
 - c. the House of Commons and the House of Lords
 - d. the Senate and the President

Appendix II

学生英语文化学习观念调查问卷

年级 班级 性别 最近一次英语模拟考试成绩

请您在问卷上选择数字 1-5 完成以下问题。由于各人情况不同，任何选择都是可能的，不存在答案“正确”或“错误”的问题。因此请您根据自己的实际情况和看法，如实地从 1-5 中挑出最适合实际情况的选项，填在相应的横线上。1 代表最不符合，5 代表最符合，其他类推。本调查的结果和数据只作论文写作研究用。谢谢您的合作！

1. 我学习英语是为了培养并提高自己的英语交际能力。 ____
2. 我对英美文化有浓厚兴趣。 ____
3. 我经常通过阅读英美文学作品了解英美文化。 ____
4. 我对英美文化的了解有很大部分来自教师的课堂讲解。 ____
5. 我的英语老师对英美文化很熟悉。 ____
6. 我学习英语的主要目的是了解英美文化。 ____
7. 学习英语社会文化能提高学习英语的兴趣。 ____
8. 我经常了解希腊罗马的神话传说以增强英美文化知识。 ____
9. 我对英美文化的了解有很大部分来自于看英文电影。 ____
10. 我的老师经常向学生介绍中西方文化的差异。 ____
11. 我学习英语的主要目的是提高自己的文化修养。 ____
12. 英语文化的学习有助于同西方人进行交际。 ____
13. 我总是对英美文化与中国传统文化进行比较。 ____
14. 我对英美文化的了解有很大部分来自于课外阅读。 ____
15. 我的英语老师讲解生词和课文时，总是讲解一些文化内涵和社会用语规则。 ____
16. 我学习英语的主要目的是为将来在实际工作和生活中运用英语打好基础。 ____
17. 英语文化的学习能促进英语水平的提高。 ____
18. 我在英语学习中遇到不熟悉的英美文化因素，会查阅相关资料。 ____
19. 我对英美文化的了解有很大部分来自于同外国人交谈。 ____
20. 我的英语老师在讲解课文时，对相关的文化背景介绍得很详细。 ____
21. 我学习英语的主要目的是为了升学考试。 ____

- 22. 我认为学习英美文化知识对提高英语成绩毫无用处。 ____
- 23. 除课堂上老师讲解外，我从不自己学习英美文化。 ____
- 24. 除课堂外，我从未通过其它途径学习英美文化。 ____
- 25. 我的英语老师在讲解生词和课文时，总是讲解一些语法知识。 ____

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have helped me in many ways. Without their help, the completion of the thesis could not be possible.

First of all, my sincere thanks go to Professor Jiang Qiuxia, my supervisor, for her valuable and specific advice on the shaping and sharpening of my ideas, and for her tolerance and patience in correcting my drafts. Every progress of mine is due to her encouragement and instruction. Without her suggestions and encouragements, my thesis couldn't have reached the present form.

Equally sincere appreciation would be delivered to my teachers Associate Professor Zhao Dengming, Associate Professor Wu Heping, Associate Professor Lv Wenpeng, Associate Professor Wang Qi, Associate Professor Yang Yin, from whom I have learned a great deal during my three years of graduate studies. I am grateful to all my teachers, whose courses have expanded my scope of knowledge.

I would also express my sincere thanks to some of the teachers in the College of Foreign Languages, Associate Professor Quan Xiaohui, Associate Professor Cai Lanzhen, Associate Professor Ling Qian, Associate Professor Jin Yan, and Professor Zhang Shengting, who provided valuable suggestions and important information for my thesis.

I would like to thank my classmates and friends, all of whom gave me such valuable encouragement and help that I will never forget in my life.

I'm also very grateful to those authors and writers whose works had been referred to and whose words or ideas been quoted in my thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my families, especially my husband and my mother, for their unconditional support and encouragement throughout my graduate study.