

Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL
with Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan

Thesis submitted for the degree of
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by

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To my dearest parents
Lee, Shao-Ying and Lee Shi, Mei-Ling

**Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL:
with Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan**

Abstract

Hsin-Hsin Cindy Lee

This research looks into the reality of cultural teaching and learning in an EFL context. It analyses what cultural constructs are actually taught and learned in the senior secondary EFL programme in Taiwan and how they are mediated. The thesis starts with an overview of Taiwan's foreign language policy and the position of senior high schools within the whole educational system. The literature review begins with an analysis of the dialectic relationship between language and culture and maps out a framework for the research. The theoretical discussion also includes contemporary critical thinking on foreign language education and cultural learning in which I cover the 'cultural politics' of language teaching and controversial issues such as 'globalisation' and 'ideology'. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of cultural teaching and learning within the English class in the Taiwanese Senior High school, the research strategy employed is a qualitative case study with 'typical instances'. The findings show that a number of discrepancies occur between the curriculum, the materials design, instructors and pupils. The analysis also suggests that the attitudes surrounding cultural teaching and learning in Taiwanese senior high schools are almost disapproving. This finding is further explained and the motivational factors are interpreted in order to provide recommendations. Finally, taking various specific situations in Taiwan into consideration, suggestions are made to improve assessment methods, textbook design, teacher training and students' motivation. From answering the question: "what role does the culturally relevant content play in secondary English courses in Taiwan?" to seeking a resolution to the question "what are the best methods to appropriately implement intercultural teaching and learning in the Taiwanese context?", this research supplies an empirical foundation as well as an initial direction for exploring the intercultural perspectives of English language education in an EFL context.

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Abstract

This research aims to examine intercultural teaching and learning in the Taiwanese senior high school EFL programme. Through a qualitative case study, the research project looks into the National English Language Standard Curriculum for senior high schools, textbook design, pedagogy, classroom realities and students' learning processes. Exploring the interaction patterns between these areas, I analyse the cultural content delivered through various teaching styles, alongside the students' perspectives. The findings suggest a measure of inadequacy and impediments to implementing effective intercultural teaching and learning in practice. Finally, implications are drawn from the research results, and recommendations are made for further changes.

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This PhD study is a very special journey in my life. While the essential focus of this research is education, philosophically, it concerns harmony, respect and esteem in all kinds of human interactions. I am grateful for the inspiration of many thinkers, educators and applied linguists for the roots of such wisdom.

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With this thesis, I would like to commemorate my dearest maternal grandmother and best friend – Ms Cheng, Chien-dai, who passed away unexpectedly but peacefully in October 2004. I have been ever thankful for her spiritual guidance and for the love she gave me. I miss her badly and wish so much that she could have lived longer to share with me more of my joys and successes.

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爸和媽咪,謝謝你們的栽培和關愛,我愛你們!

This is the last page I will write for this thesis. I am genuinely grateful to so many people, for so many things. But of course, I am fully responsible for the result and quality of this work.

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Abbreviations

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CBI	Content-Based Instruction
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESP	English for Specific Purpose
EIL	English as an International and Intranational Language
EIL	English as an International Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
MOE	Ministry of Education
ICC	Intercultural Communication Competence
ICRT	International Community Radio Taipei
ICT	Information Communication Technology
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
STT	Student Talking Time
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TEIL	Teaching English as an International Language
TTT	Teacher Talking Time
USA	The United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Part I. Background

1. Introduction

In the decades since Taiwanese society embraced democracy and opened to the outside world, English teaching and learning has been growing rapidly. As Chern (2003, p.437) writes, “People young and old and from all walks of life have invested their time and money in becoming multi-lingual citizens in this global village”. Learning English is now a ‘whole-national movement’.

With such enthusiasm for participating in the process of internationalisation and endorsing English as the global language, it would appear that the demands upon and responsibilities of language educators are now greater than ever before. While teachers must consider how they may enhance learners’ language proficiency and competence to succeed in the competitive international environment, there are apprehensions that such enforced education of a particular foreign language, in this case English, might be subject to linguistic hegemony.

It is with these dual concerns that I would like to consider the importance of intercultural teaching and learning in EFL programmes in Taiwan. First of all, I argue that there is an inextricable link between language and culture. The ability to understand and cope with cross-cultural differences is as important to students as applying linguistic skills in the global village and multicultural societies. In order to increase students’ overall language ability, it is thus essential to develop intercultural competence as well as language competence.

Nevertheless, developing ‘intercultural competence’ in the English language programme does not necessarily mean passing on to learners the cultural

knowledge, communicative norms or behavioural codes of a specific English-speaking country. Tutoring a foreign language learner to be native-speaker-like is controversial in the extreme. Developing Taiwanese students' cultural understanding does not necessarily mean 'cultural assimilation'. On the contrary, intercultural teaching and learning indicates an open mindset motivated towards cultural pluralism, which reflects the real meaning of an international society. It also includes the concept of 'interculturality', which brings the culture the English learners represent, and other world cultures together for comparison. For both language instructors and learners, cultural awareness is not limited to being culturally sensitive to 'others', but also reflects 'oneself'.

Based on these concerns, this research aims to examine intercultural teaching and learning in the Taiwanese senior high school EFL programme. Through a qualitative case study, the research project looks into the National English Language Standard Curriculum for senior high schools, the textbook design, pedagogy, classroom realities and students' learning processes. From the interaction patterns among these areas, I analyse the cultural content delivered through various teaching styles, alongside the students' perspectives. The findings suggest a measure of inadequacy and impediments to implementing intercultural teaching and learning in practice. Finally, implications are drawn from the research results, and recommendations are made for further improvement.

1.1. Conceptualising and Contextualising 'Culture'

In addition to intercultural understanding - emphasising an introduction to 'cultural pluralism', teaching and learning of culture-specific content is not new in Western curriculums. According to Damen (1987), the distinction between 'cultural' and

'culture' learning in American ESL programmes lies mainly in the method of learning and the types of content learned. The former indicates a process of acquiring general cultures, while the latter is used to indicate the learning of a specific target culture associated with the language learned. The latter version has similar terminology in European educational systems, for example, Landeskunde (knowledge about a country) in Germany, Civilisation (the way of life and institutions of a country) in France, Kulturformidling (cultural transmission) in Denmark, Kulturkunnskap (cultural knowledge) in Norway, and Kulturorientering (cultural orientation) in Sweden (Risager, 1998, Byram, 1989b). In Britain, the study of culture is known as Area Studies, knowledge of a country's customs, daily life and institutions in order to assist learning of the language. In the last decade, Culture Learning or Area Studies has been further developed and promoted as Cultural Studies by Byram (1989a) through his intensive research in the field.¹

1.1.1. 'Culture' & 'culture'

Since the core concept of this research is 'culture', it is necessary to explore the possible meanings of the term at the outset. The following discussion is divided into two sections: the distinction between Culture with a 'Big C' and culture with a 'little C', and conceptualisations of Culture in Language Education.

According to American official Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996,

¹ Notice that there is a distinction between definitions of 'cultural studies' in language education and in literary/media studies. Cultural Studies in foreign language education mainly indicates teaching and learning about social-cultural institutions and daily communicative functions for better cross-cultural understanding. However, Cultural Studies as an independent academic discipline or relating to literary/media studies looks into those dimensions of culture constructed within Literature and the media (Montgomery 1993, O'Sullivan et al 1995).

p.40), Culture with a 'Big C' is defined as 'formal culture' or 'high culture', including "the formal institutions (social, political, and economic), the great figures assigned to the category of elite culture". By contrast, culture with a 'little C' is regarded as "those aspects of 'daily living' studied by the sociologist and the anthropologist: housing, clothing, food, tools, transportation, and all the patterns of behaviour that members of the culture regard as necessary and appropriate".

Based on these definitions, Lafayette (1997) and others (Bennett, Bennett and Allen 1999, Cushner and Brislin 1996) argue that 'Big C' culture is 'achievement culture' or 'objective culture', which comprises recognition and explanation of heritages, historical events, artistic legacy, literature and institutional systems such as the judiciary, political, religious and educational operations. This category also includes 'institutionalised patterns' of behaviour, for example, customs or conventions of everyday life. In contrast, 'little C' culture is identified as 'behaviour culture' or 'subjective culture'. It refers to the less tangible aspects of culture as 'worldview' which "is the set of distinctions and constructs that can variously be described as cultural values, beliefs, assumption, or style" (Bennett, Bennett and Allen 1999, p.19). In brief, culture with a 'Big C' is seen as the 'formal culture', the manifestation of people's behaviour, while culture with a 'little C' is regarded as 'deep culture' underlying people's behaviour.

1.1.2. Contextualising 'Culture' in Language Education

Bennett, Bennett and Allen (1999) elaborate on the elements of 'subjective culture' ('little C') and relate them to the use and learning of language. The elements identified include language use (the social context of language), nonverbal behaviours (as generating context for language, and as stand-alone signs),

communication style (patterns of rhetoric or discourse), cognitive style (preferred forms of logic, information-gathering, etc.), and cultural values (assignment of goodness for certain ways of being, such as individualism or collectivism) (Bennett, Bennett and Allen 1999, p.19). In other words, verbal and non-verbal behaviours and the meaning of culture can represent beliefs and perceptions as expressed through language. People's language and culture can be discerned and learned in everyday life.

Byram and Risager (1999) explain another three common concepts of culture in relation to language teaching and learning. First, culture is regarded as a key element "contained in the pragmatics and semantics of language" (Byram and Risager 1999, p.146). This concept focuses on teaching the cultural history of lexis, the spread of loan-words, and cultural knowledge for using words or expressions properly. Such linguistic-oriented interest does not see culture as a coherent entity but as a constituent attached to language study. Second, seeing culture as a 'macro-context for language use' recognises the importance of sociolinguistic perspectives of language study. Culture indicates the fundamental 'context' in which most discourses and production of 'text' take place. Culture as agreed senses/norms for communication influences how meanings are constructed, politeness is applied, and words are used in an immediate situation. Finally, culture as 'thematic content' in the discourse of language teaching refers to culture represented as pieces of content or topical issues such as human rights, environmental problems and so on, whereby cross-cultural subjects are reflected in the study of language.

In fact, among English coursebooks or in teaching practice, it is common to see a

wide range of overlap or various combinations of the different concepts as mentioned above. For instance, some may assert that learning culture with a ‘little C’ is more helpful to develop students’ intercultural understanding and empathy; some may tend to look at an even more specific aspect of culture in language study such as pragmatics or communicative manners. Another possibility is to introduce content of ‘Big C’ (e.g. a country’s customs, historical festivals, geographical monuments, great personalities, etc.) to the language curriculum as thematic reading texts or conversational topics. All kinds of methods contribute to teaching and learning of culture to a certain degree. It is hard to say what approach to culture in language study is more important; it is even harder to separate every element of ‘little C’ from institutions of ‘Big C’. For example, how can one claim that one’s view of family relationships is not culturally influenced by religion, history or education?

In order to avoid unnecessary confusion, the term ‘cultural studies’ will not be used for this case study. Instead, ‘cultural’ teaching and learning is adopted to refer to the delivery and study of ‘cultural content’ in the English classroom, which generally indicates culture-related content with ‘Big C’, ‘little C’ or a mixture of the two. Taking a step further, as mentioned earlier, intercultural teaching and learning suggests an introduction to cultural pluralism – studies of multiple cultures including learners’ own culture, English-speaking cultures and non-English-speaking cultures.

1.2. Taiwanese Perspectives on Culture

The concept of such teaching and learning of culture in the language class is still developing in Taiwan. Traditionally, information about a foreign culture (i.e. ‘Big

C' cultural content) is taught separately from the language, in World Civilisation courses (including History and Geography). Both the course material and instructional language are in Chinese. The combination of language education with the study of culture did not receive much critical attention until the educational reforms of recent years (Shih 1998). For instance, one of the goals stipulated in the revised English Language Standard Curriculum (1995) for senior high schools is to cultivate students through 'cultural understanding', equipping them with the ability to absorb knowledge, appreciate foreign cultures and represent local characteristics in English (the English translation of the Standard Curriculum please refer to Appendix 10).

Huang's (1993) study of how to strengthen teaching of the target culture (i.e. American Culture) in secondary high school English courses was one of the earliest to examine the study of culture in English language teaching. Subsequently Teng (1994) and Huang (1996) looked at how a student's understanding of target culture (i.e. American Culture) affects reading and language comprehension. Ho's (1998) quantitative survey suggests that those junior high school pupils who enjoyed learning about English-speaking countries showed stronger orientation and more positive attitudes towards English learning. Other fruitful essays include the proposal for 'Whole Language Education' for children (Dai 2003), cultural considerations in translation teaching (Tzeng 2003, Ho 2003), and teaching (target) cultural background to improve understanding of the pragmatics and semantics of the English language (Wei 2003). Finally, some theoretically-based works with post-colonial perspectives are concerned with 'cultural domination' in English textbooks (Su 1999), or argue the importance of reflecting on local culture within the globalisation of English language education (Chuang 2003).

Although these studies in Taiwan have all dealt with the same important issue – ‘culture’ in English language education, most of them show a strong tendency to endorse teaching and learning of the target culture. Only a few, such as Tsoi (1999) and Chuang (2003) express concern about the consequences of this tendency, which suggests linguistic hegemony and cultural domination in the process of English teaching and learning. Nevertheless, there are no clear recommendations to resolve the dilemma.

Furthermore, little attention has been given to what cultural content is actually delivered through the national curriculum and how; that is, to the prescribed textbooks and pedagogy at the senior high school level. Some of the studies mentioned above are interested in integrating cultural elements in children’s English, others in translation or lexis teaching at college level. None of them has been specifically dedicated to senior high school English. In addition, so far only a few studies have investigated the teaching of American culture as content schemata for acquiring a better command of English. It is worth noting that other options, such as focusing on international cultures or language learners’ own culture have been neglected. Moreover, although some studies propose a new angle for reviewing the role of cultural content in English teaching material and practice, they do not provide up-to-date analysis of the latest curriculum standards and prescribed textbook. More importantly, there is a lack of empirical research into how such content is actually distributed and understood.

Therefore, a close study of cultural teaching and learning in EFL at senior high school level is necessary to fill the void in the current research literature. This

research aims to answer the questions of what and how cultural content is delivered and understood in the Taiwanese senior high EFL classroom, and whether and how it contributes to intercultural learning. The objectives are to examine the newly revised curriculum standards, focusing on the cultural learning goals and how they are implemented in teaching and learning practice, and to study any cultural content delivered through the authorised textbook and pedagogy, and how such content and learning process is viewed by learners. In order to answer the research question and achieve the objectives, several research strategies, such as interviews, class observations, supplementary questionnaires and telephone survey, are applied to gain insight into the interplay of the three parties: the textbook, teacher and learner.

1.3. Summary of Chapters

The thesis is divided into five parts: Introduction; Literature Review; Methodology; Findings and Analysis, and Final Discussion and Suggestions.

The report begins with an overview of Taiwan's foreign language policy and the position of senior high schools within the whole educational system (Chapter 2 - Context of the Study). It argues that the current foreign language education policy and teaching practice in Taiwan are historical results of the interplay of complex issues concerning politics, culture, economy, ethnicity and power structures. The second part of Chapter 2 narrows the scope down to the current educational system since the recent educational reforms. It clarifies the current status of the senior high school and how it functions. This chapter aims to provide the macro socio-cultural context for the case study.

Chapter 3 – Language, Culture and the English Classroom, explores the research literature related to the teaching and learning of culture in second and foreign language education. It begins with an analysis of the dialectic relationship between language and culture, moving on to an assessment of contemporary critical thinking on foreign language education and cultural learning. Next, relevant studies in cultural learning within ESL, FLT, EFL and EIL contexts are discussed.

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of cultural teaching and learning within the English class in Taiwanese senior high schools, the research strategy employed here is a qualitative case study. Chapter 4 – Research Design, presents the overall methodology. The snow-ball sampling method used involves analysis of curriculum and the textbook, a series of interviews with teachers and students, a telephone survey, class observations and supplementary questionnaires (to the interviewees). The chapter begins with the theoretical framework of the research, followed by critical issues such as ethics and sampling, and then moves to the details of each step of the research plan and why different methods are used.

The Findings and Analysis section begins with Chapter 5 - English Language Curriculum and Textbook Evaluation with Focus on cultural learning goals and content. This opens with the criteria for textbook evaluation. It then presents a detailed account of the standard curriculum content and the coursebook format, followed by an evaluation of cultural content treated in the textbook. The findings indicate that the analysed textbook series focuses mainly on the target cultural content, while little attention is paid to the local culture or to other international cultures. It is argued that without a proper introduction to language and intercultural awareness, the current means of presenting target cultural content is

actually under the shadow of linguistic hegemony. Furthermore, even though the merits of exposing learners to their own culture as well as international cultures through the English teaching material are recognised, the treatment of such cultural content in the textbook is found to be problematic. The major problem is arguably that the negligible quantity of material on the content of learners' own culture and international cultures means that they are treated in a trivial and stereotyping manner. Above all, the findings suggest a gulf between the stipulated cultural learning goals and their implementation through the textbook design.

Chapter 6 – Pedagogies and Implications for Teaching of Culture, reports the findings from the telephone survey among chief coordinators of English departments in all state-run senior high schools in Taipei, a series of interviews with five teachers and observations of their classes. Three main teaching styles are identified (the mainstream grammar-translation method, the conventional method with variations, and computer assisted communicative language teaching), various teaching techniques are analysed and the types of cultural content delivered through these pedagogies are discussed. It is essential to note that although using the same textbook, a different kind of cultural content is accommodated by each teaching style.

Chapter 7 is The Learners' Perspective on Intercultural Teaching and Learning, in which the results from the interviews with forty students and from the supplementary questionnaires are analysed and discussed. The results relate to students' perceptions of language and culture, their interests in different types of cultural content and their opinions of the pedagogies they are exposed to. It is argued that the learners' responses show an initial motivation for intercultural

learning, but not a tendency to sustain it versus the tested-oriented academic structure. There are also critical issues concerning students' personal development of cultural identity in relation to the course of English study.

Finally, Chapter 8 – Conclusion and Recommendations, brings together the findings and critical discussions mentioned above towards an Integrative Model for Intercultural Teaching and Learning. Further suggestions are made to improve the current practice of implementing intercultural learning goals.

2. Context of the Study

This chapter provides an overview of the position of English language teaching (ELT) in Taiwanese society with specific focus on the English language curriculum for senior high schools and how it functions in the overall educational system.

2.1 The Macro Social Context

This section begins with a brief history of language policy in Taiwan, leading up to the recent development of ELT. Attention is paid to how social changes have influenced the English language curriculum standards, textbook design and pedagogies, and to how American, Chinese and Taiwanese cultures manifest themselves not only in Taiwanese society but also in language policy.

2.1.1. A Brief History of Language Policy in Taiwan

The modern history of Taiwan began in the 1940s when General Chiang Kai-Shek, the leader of the Chinese Nationalist government, withdrew with his troops to Taiwan after defeat in the civil war against the communists. Thereafter, Taiwan was under Chinese military dictatorship for almost four decades.

During the period 1945-1969, the Chinese Nationalist government's most important job was to decolonise the island from Japanese domination (Chen 1997). The first task imposed on every school was to replace any Japanese language used in textbooks, classrooms and on public occasions with Mandarin. Regardless of practical communication problems, the government was eager to install the Chinese language and culture into the islanders' minds and lives. At this stage, linguistic

control was an important tool for social control to stabilise the status of the Chinese Nationalist government.

English during this period was exclusively an academic subject. The curriculum standards for senior high school English courses were established and revised in 1948 and 1962, based mainly on the grammar-translation method (Shih 1998). The teaching method was teacher-centred, following the textbook content closely. The focus of learning was to cope with school work. After all, under the martial law, people did not have total freedom to visit or contact the outside world. The majority of the general public and students were not in immediate need of foreign languages.

From 1970 to 1986, the Chinese Nationalist government believed that the implementation of Chinese education did not go deep enough, and decided to enforce a stronger policy that expressly denied any other varieties, including Taiwanese, Hukka and indigenous languages, which together were spoken by the majority of the Taiwanese population (Cheng 1997). In addition to the authoritative educational system, the monitored media and official occasions all classified Taiwanese and other varieties as secondary 'dialects'; any use of them had thus been coloured by discrimination (Lee 1999).

During this period, the senior high English curriculum standards were revised twice, in 1971 and 1983. The first revision, like previous versions, focused mainly on reading and writing skills. According to Shih (1998), the 1983 version was influenced by the 'cognitive teaching method' which emphasised error correction

and accuracy. Teaching objectives concentrated on students' grammatical understanding. The 1983 revision also provided more detailed instructions on the length of reading texts, the number of new words for textbook design, and recommendations on teaching procedures and assessment methods. During this period, teachers laid stress on enhancing students' reading, writing and translation skills with focus on accuracy. Generally speaking, English continued to be a course of study only for the top students.

2.1.2. Recent Developments of Language Policy and ELT

In 1987, the Chinese Nationalist government announced the end of martial law, and Taiwan entered a new democratic era. People soon regained their freedom of speech and were able to travel. Political parties, the media, the economy, and tourism, all began to boom. This had a great impact on language policy and the role of English in Taiwanese society.

After almost a decade, the highest point was in 1996, when the first democratic presidential election in Taiwanese history was held by mandate. In the meantime, mainland China conducted a large-scale military exercise and launched test missiles aimed at Taiwan. This was believed to be a hostile warning against the Taiwanese people's choice of democracy and independence. Nevertheless, resisting the fear of military threat, Taiwanese people expressed their resolution to establish democracy by standing firm in applying their civil rights. For that year's presidential election, the total voting turnout was over 80%.

In his inaugural speech on 20th May 1996, the newly elected President Lee,

Teng-hui emphasised the importance of forging a 'new culture' of Taiwan which would embody traditional Chinese culture, the merits of Western culture, and most importantly, native Taiwanese cultures. This stance was believed to be an important trigger to the wave of Localisation. Later that year, the Ministry of Education began working on educational reform. The reforms addressed important issues, such as the entrance system to higher education, the teacher training and employment systems, the problem of educational excellence and more crucially, the curriculum and content of textbooks.

One of the critical changes directly concerning language and culture was a brand-new one-hour session on 'Native Art Activities' introduced to primary schools. In addition to the original sociology class on traditional Chinese history and culture, every city and regional government was now entitled to design activities or courses on Taiwanese languages and cultures based on local features or customs. Although a certain degree of resistance remained against this new scheme,² for the first time, a new generation was learning to be 'Taiwanese'.

The year 2000 was another turning point in Taiwanese history, as Mr. Chen Shui-bian, a pro-independence Taiwanese national from the Democratic

² The responses to this experiment policy were diverse. Those belonging to the biggest opposition political faction – the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) – strongly endorsed this new course plan and sponsored new materials design. In contrast, many governors from the Chinese Nationalist Party remained unenthusiastic (although, ironically, this policy was launched by the Chinese Nationalist central government). Nevertheless, this attempt at localisation had important implications for Taiwanese education. For half a century, Taiwanese people had been learning to be Chinese, but now the next generation had the chance to develop their Taiwanese identity, too.

Progressive Party, won the presidential election. Although his political actions led to a deterioration of relations with mainland China and to increased tension, Mr.Chen's presidency meant a lot to many Taiwanese people after a 50-year administration under the Chinese Nationalists.

The new government's language and culture policies took a rather similar direction to those launched in 1996, although they were even more committed to the preservation of native culture and languages. First, both the central and Taipei city governments promoted the educational programme presenting an introduction to Taiwanese languages and cultures. The previous one-hour trial session on 'Native Art Activities' in primary schools finally became a formal part of the national curriculum. School pupils were exposed to their mother tongues – Taiwanese, Hukka or indigenous languages - within the school. Materials on Taiwanese culture, geography, and orthography, for example, were also being properly compiled and developed island-wide. The textbooks for secondary education were amended in accordance with the new political situation and social changes. In higher education, several distinguished universities set up postgraduate schools or institutions dedicated to Taiwanese Literature or to provide a Taiwanese Studies programme to overseas students. In the wider society, more language associations and TV programmes in Taiwanese and Hukka were established. Furthermore, since both the National Council for Cultural Affairs and local Culture Bureaus were highly empowered to promote local culture through various festivals, heritage restoration projects, and educational programmes, they gradually touched the general public's awareness of local cultural identities.

Meanwhile, the number of people leaving Taiwan for business, tourism and study abroad steadily increased. The door to the international world was opened. Foreign investment increased rapidly. More and more foreign companies, brands, and shops opened their branches or even Asian headquarters in Taiwan. Very quickly, Taipei became one of the most important financial and manufacturing centres in the Asia-Pacific region. As a result, people began to find interest in and the need to master foreign languages, in particular English and Japanese.

As for foreign language education per se, in the past, because of limited educational resources, English was the only foreign language to be taught at school. However, since 2001 there have been two major changes. First, a new policy lowered the age at which schoolchildren begin learning English, from junior high school (with pupils aged 13) to the 5th grade of primary school (with pupils aged 11). In some affluent areas such as Taipei County, the local government was even able to afford to support its regional primary schools in teaching English from the 3rd grade (with pupils aged 9). The second change came in 2002, when the Ministry of Education introduced a five-year pilot programme offering funds for teaching a second foreign language in senior high schools, in addition to the existing 5-hours of English sessions per week. Interested senior high schools apply for the fund from the central government and later receive an assessment from the Ministry of Education. Currently, the most popular second foreign languages on the list are Japanese and French.

During this period, in parallel with the growth in popularity of localisation, internationalisation also became fashionable, as Taiwan applied for entry to the

WTO (World Trade Organisation). As a result, the business of foreign language education, particularly English Language Teaching (ELT), has prospered. For example, at the kindergarten stage, more and more schools now emphasise their 'bilingual' (Chinese-English) teaching methods and some prestigious kindergartens even claim to provide a whole English environment. Of course, neither kindergarten education nor English language teaching at such an early stage is compulsory. It is even arguable whether teaching such young children a foreign language is the right thing to do. However, these educational institutions claim, and many parents believe, that early foreign language education is beneficial to children's language proficiency and will enhance their competitiveness in the future. Another example is English language use in higher education. Most university departments use English textbooks, whilst the instructional language is Chinese. However, some universities now stress their internationalisation by offering business-related courses through the medium of English.

These examples all suggest that an increasing number of students will have a certain degree of familiarity with the English language before they receive the formal language course in high schools. Also, after entering university, English will still be useful to them in their daily studies. In brief, nowadays, English is definitely not an 'exotic' language to schoolchildren, as it was just a decade ago.

2.1.3. The Current English Language Curriculum Standards

The English Language Standard Curriculum for senior high schools was revised again in 1995, with the crucial change that English textbooks were no longer issued directly by the central government. Instead, private publishers were permitted to

contract scholars and in-service senior high school teachers to design textbooks based on the standard curriculum. Every senior high school is now allowed to choose any authorised version. Nevertheless, all privately compiled textbooks must be screened and approved by the National Institute for Compilation and Translation (the former monopolistic printing house) in order to ensure that they follow the standard curriculum closely. There are currently four authorised English textbooks for senior high schools. However, since their publication in 1999, one version has remained dominant, with approximately 60%-80% (year by year) market share.

Although there is a routine review of the curriculum approximately every twelve years, the main reason for the latest revisions was to modify the course content and teaching methods in accordance with social changes. Responding to the trends of internationalisation and localisation, the new curriculum aimed to improve several perceived inadequacies in the previous standards and textbooks. Some important improvements include the use of classroom activities, compiling reading texts responding to young people's lives, and most importantly, increasing the amount of content about both local and foreign cultures (Shih 1998).

The major changes to the new curriculum and textbooks can be further summarised as follows. First, in order to meet communication needs in the international community, the new curriculum abandons the old structural-lexical syllabus in favour of a communicative syllabus. The aims and objectives of English language education are now to develop students' language proficiency in not only reading and writing but also listening and speaking. The syllabus aims to help learners to be capable of 'communicating' with foreigners on cross-cultural occasions. Thus, in

the new textbooks, there are sections on Conversation, Listening and Pronunciation, and interactive activities such as role-play, group discussion and other communicative tasks. In addition, the new curriculum emphasises the value of spontaneous study in cultivating students' learning interests, instead of cramming them with tedious drills as was common in the past. The newly designed textbooks attempt to engage teenagers' interest by offering articles on a wide range of topics. There are fewer intensive grammatical exercises, and a greater variety of exercises (e.g. pair talk, information-gap, cloze of dialogue, picture/answer matching and so on). There are also more colourful images in the form of sketches, illustrations and photos.

Finally, the new concept of cultural teaching and learning is worthy of note. Unlike the previous standard curriculums and textbooks in which culture was neglected, the recent curriculum stipulates the importance of developing students' cultural understanding. This includes learners' appreciation of foreign cultures and arts as well as the ability to describe features of local culture.

The new communicative syllabus and the need to respond to the trends of internationalisation and localisation mean that senior high school English teachers now have a huge role in helping their students to prepare for the challenges of modern society. The need to improve students' linguistic competence is as important as ever, while there is now the accompanying stress on competence in communication and intercultural understanding. It is at this point that we need to study what and how cultural content is delivered in the modern English classroom, and how that contributes to learners' intercultural communication competence.

2.1.4. The Role of the USA and American English

So far I have outlined the development of language planning and English language education in Taiwan. However, I have not yet touched upon the critical role of the United States of America (USA) within this development. For decades, the two countries remained in close cooperation in politics, military defence, economy and education. The result of this intimate link is that American English is the only paradigm in foreign language teaching practice in the Taiwanese educational system.³

The link between the two countries began with their early cooperation in resisting the military threat from mainland China. From the early 1950s to the 1970s, Taiwan first went through military confrontations with mainland China and then suffered from isolation in the international sphere due to the communist People's Republic of China (PRC) replacing the Republic of China (ROC) on the standing committee of the United Nations. During this long and difficult time, the USA was financially and militarily supportive of the Chinese Nationalist government in Taiwan in facing up to the power of the communists across the Taiwan Strait.

Although in practice Taiwan has been independent, the neighbouring super-power

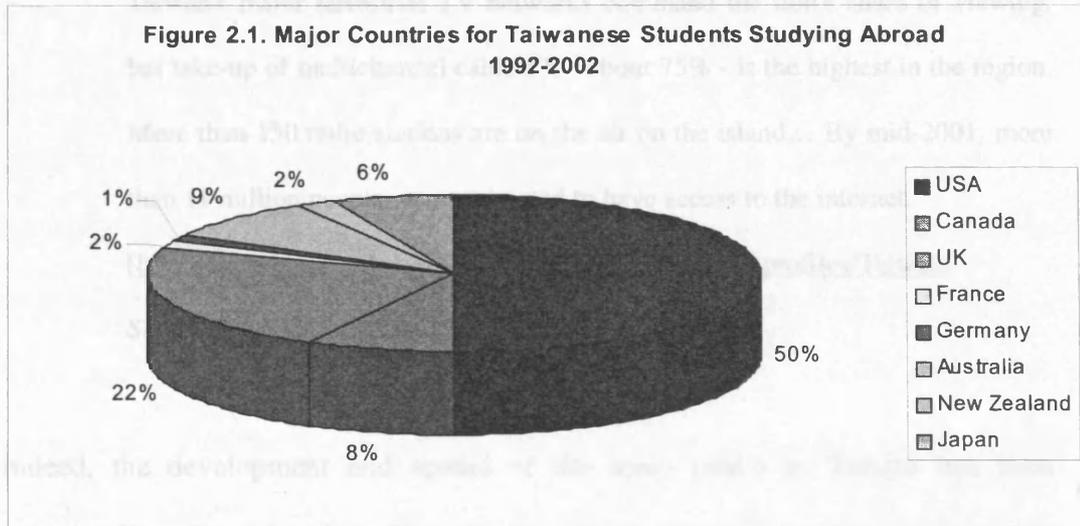
³ Note that although American English has been taught and used through textbooks for decades, paradoxically, the adoption of this paradigm has never been stipulated anywhere in the curriculum. This will be further discussed in the section on Findings and Analysis.

(i.e. PRC) has continually asserted that Taiwan is a rebellious province that must be re-united with the 'mother nation', and has never excluded the possibility of military action to bring Taiwan under its control. Nowadays, although the tension between the two sides is no longer as severe as during the Cold War era, the United States still plays an important role in mediating between the two parties and offsetting the potential military threat that mainland China has posed to Taiwan.

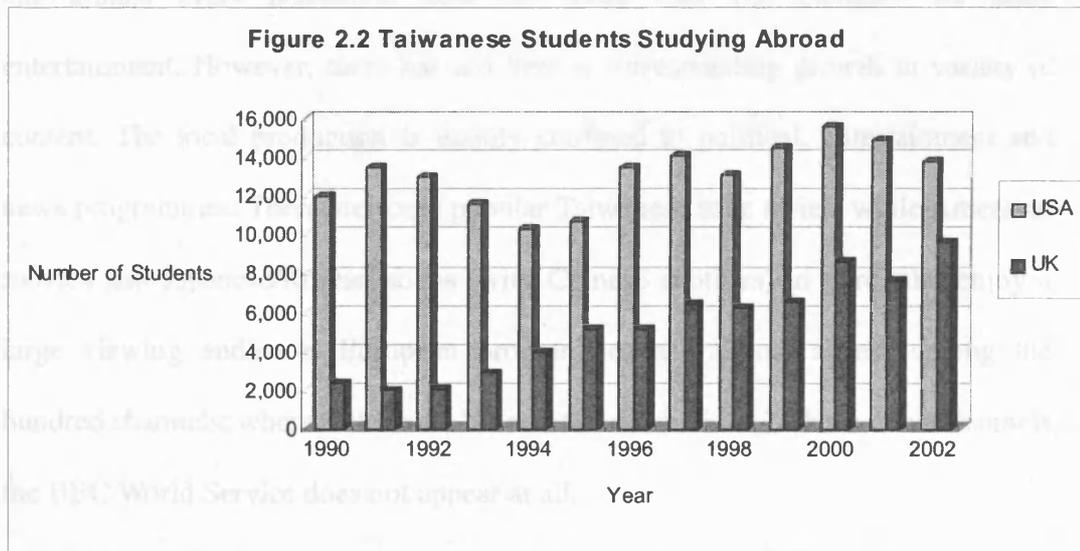
The close links between Taiwan and America are not limited to political and military cooperation. America has also contributed to the economic boom in Taiwan. In spite of its difficult history with mainland China, and its lack of natural resources, Taiwan has become one of the biggest traders and exporters in Asia. The small island is also one of the world's top producers of computer and information technology. It is worth noting at this point that the USA has been the most important trade partner as well as the major market for Taiwan for half a century.

In addition, during the past few decades the USA has been the favourite destination for overseas study. Between 1992 and 2002, approximately 332,000 Taiwanese students took further studies abroad. Among them, 50% chose the United States. (The pie chart in figure 2.1 below shows the nine major destinations for Taiwanese students.) For comparison, although the number of students studying in the USA has fluctuated, and Britain has been gradually gaining in popularity, the total number of students studying in the UK is still far behind that of those heading to the USA. (Figure 2.2 shows an overview of the numbers of students studying in the USA and in Britain.) Moreover, since 2004, the central government has offered sponsorship to Taiwanese universities to offer joint courses or degrees with certain

distinguished American institutions. The implication here is that many social elites such as politicians, educators and influential business people in Taiwan already have American experiences. With on-going projects and cooperation, this situation will obviously continue.



Source: Ministry of Education, ROC, 2003



Source: Ministry of Education, ROC, 2003

Finally, it should be no surprise to see a pervasive American influence in Taiwanese popular culture and media. The media environment in Taiwan was best described in a BBC On-line News Report as follows:

The media environment in Taiwan is among the freest in Asia... There are about 350 newspapers, all privately-owned and reflecting a wide range of views... Taiwan's major terrestrial TV networks command the lion's share of viewing, but take-up of multichannel cable TV - about 75% - is the highest in the region. More than 150 radio stations are on the air on the island... By mid-2001, more than 11 million people were estimated to have access to the internet.

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/Taiwan;

Saturday, 24 May, 2003)

Indeed, the development and spread of the mass media in Taiwan has been evolving liberally and rapidly. The end of political restrictions and the revolution in technology after the late 1980s has meant that cable TV, for example, is widespread and almost every household now has more than 100 channels for daily entertainment. However, there has not been a corresponding growth in variety of content. The local production is mainly confined to political, entertainment and news programmes. There are some popular Taiwanese soap series, while American movies and Japanese/Korean soaps (with Chinese subtitles) in particular enjoy a large viewing audience. European programmes are almost absent among the hundred channels; whereas there are at least three American 24-hour news channels, the BBC World Service does not appear at all.

So far I have addressed the overall development of language planning and foreign language education in Taiwan between 1945 and 2002. I have also explained the

sensitive situation between Taiwan and Mainland China and the role of the USA as a mediator. During the past half century, Taiwan has been through various stages of development. After the Japanese colonial period came the authority-enforced 'Chineselisation' that did not recognise Taiwanese original languages and cultures. Foreign languages too were ignored while the country was being ruled under martial law. The situation was gradually reversed and by the end of the 20th century Taiwanese culture and languages, as well as the international language – English, had a new lease of life. 'Localisation' later took place in education, emphasising improvements to the localised curriculum as well as course content. In addition to knowledge of Chinese culture, more local features such as Taiwanese languages, cultural heritage and indigenous traditions were included in the new curriculum. This trend towards localisation developed in parallel to the movement of internationalisation. The increasing amount of international business, the open media environment and overseas educational opportunities all reinforce Taiwanese society, which is now developing through the "prerogative and significance of a nationhood", to be a member of the global village (Wang 1996, p.112). However, it is at this point that the significant influence of the United States in so many aspects becomes one of the key concerns of this research.

2.2. The Current Taiwanese Educational System with Senior High Schools in Focus

This section will provide an updated and detailed explanation of the current Taiwanese educational system, which comprises four main stages: pre-primary, nine-year compulsory (six-year primary and three-year junior high school), senior secondary and higher education. It normally takes one at least until the age of 22 to

obtain a first degree in Taiwan. Figure 2.3, provided by the Ministry of Education, presents a general picture of the system.

Figure 2.3 The Current Educational System in Taiwan



Source: Ministry of Education, ROC (2003)

In addition to the formal educational programmes, there are also life-long education and special education, not shown in the chart. The former provides the general public with learning opportunities in supplementary schools and open universities. The latter ensures that the gifted or the disabled have a suitable and comfortable learning environment.

The academic year for all schools is divided into two semesters. The specific timetable may vary from school to school, but generally speaking, the first semester runs from mid September to mid January, followed by the winter vacation, which lasts three to four weeks. The second semester begins in February and continues until June. July and August are summer vacation, in which some schools may offer additional sessions, although that is not the norm.

Under this system, after compulsory education, students can continue their studies

through either academic or vocational routes to obtain a higher degree. Those who wish to follow the academic route may gain entrance to senior high schools through application, special selection or entrance examination. The progression from senior high schools to universities follows a similar procedure. In the first phase (around February of the third year) students take a general examination, in which every subject learned in the first two years is assessed. Based on the scores of the test and academic performance during the first two senior high school years, students can either be recommended to a university by their senior high schools, or make an application themselves for admission to a university. The result of the first-phase of application is announced in April, and normally only a small number of students are admitted at this stage. The next phase is a general examination in selected subjects. Students can decide which subjects they wish to be examined in, according to the requirements of the university or department they wish to join. (Generally speaking, Chinese, English and Mathematics are basic requirements.) They are admitted to the university mainly according to the scores of the examination in the required subjects. This multiple entrance scheme is a new approach, replacing the old joint college entrance examination which was known as 'one score decides everything'.

The second route is a vocational path in which junior high graduates choose to enter either the 3-year senior vocational high schools or the 5-year junior colleges. They gain admittance by passing an entrance examination or through special selection. After graduation, some students may choose to devote themselves to technical employment; others may decide to study further in a four-year university of technology or two-year college of technology course for a bachelor degree.

There is no overlap between the vocational and academic routes. For example, graduates of senior high schools do not go to universities of technology. Senior secondary education is critical in that it prepares young adults to adapt to higher education as well as the process of socialisation. Although studying in senior secondary schools is not compulsory, almost every junior high school graduate goes on to study in either an academic or vocational institution. Currently there are 339,627 students in 170 senior vocational high schools, whilst the total number of (academic) senior high schools and their students is even larger. The latest statistics provided by the Ministry of Education show that there are 302 senior high schools with 383,509 students in total. Table 2.1 shows a great increase in the number of senior high school students compared with previous years.

School-Year	Percentage Ratio of Senior High: Vocational High School Students
1976	38:62
1981	33:67
1991	31:69
2003	53:47

Table 2.1. Ratio of Senior High to Senior Vocational High School Students

(Ministry of Education 2003)

The case study of this research concentrates on the academic route, that is, the context of senior high schools. With regard to the English course, although both academic and vocational systems adopt the American English paradigm, their course content and functions vary. The vocational schools mainly teach English for

Specific Purposes (ESP) such as Business English, Industrial English, English for Nursing or Tourism, depending on the specialty of the individual department or school. The standard teaching hours for English are around 2 sessions⁴ a week in each year. In contrast, senior high schools, which prepare students to undertake traditional disciplines in the universities, provide general English language courses with more teaching hours per week (an average of 5 sessions per week or even more depending on the school). The syllabus across the hundreds of senior high schools is also more coherent. Regardless of whether the school is privately or state-run, it has to comply with the same curriculum. Even though there are now a number of authorised textbooks available, it is known that just one of them is used by the majority of senior high schools.

In this chapter, we have seen the growing importance of English in the Taiwanese context. We have been introduced to the historical and more recent development of the English language curriculum for senior high schools, and to the educational and economic influences of the USA. The chapter has also described the Taiwanese school system, the general content of the English curriculum and how English teaching has been and is now conducted. With both micro and macro considerations, the research set out to examine what role is played by cultural learning goals and content in the national curriculum and teaching materials for English education in senior high schools, and whether or not these learning goals and content equip young adults with the skills necessary to enter today's international environment.

⁴ Each session lasts fifty minutes.

Part II. Literature Review

3. Language, Culture and the English Classroom

As the core of this research concerns culture-related content in English language teaching, it is crucial to discuss from the outset the complex relationship between language and culture. The first section of this chapter examines the argument that language and culture are indivisible. Next, some important structuralist viewpoints are considered. There is then a review of studies in relation to cultural learning within the areas of ESL, FLT, EFL and EIL, followed by elaboration of the research problem.

3.1. Looking into Language and Culture

As far back as the 19th century, the German scholar, Wilhelm von Humboldt, suggested the notion of an inseparable relationship between language and culture (Williams 1992, Putz and Verspoor 2000). In his view, the variety of languages in the world actually reflects the diversity of cultures and ways of thinking. However, this notion was not widely regarded until a century later when the theory of 'linguistic relativity', the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' or 'Whorfian hypothesis', was developed by the linguist Edward Sapir and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf.

In Sapir's opinion, language and culture are closely related. The following passage is a concise summary of his view:

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society... The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent

unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation. (Sapir 1929, p.207)

According to Sapir, language cannot possibly be used without the knowledge of the culture in which it belongs. Speakers' linguistic behaviours are inter-related with their social environment.

Moreover, based on a linguistic investigation of the Hopi language of Arizona and Standard Average European languages, Whorf (1956) believed that one's language was composed of grammatical structures and lexical classifications which not only frame one's way of seeing the outside world but also confine how one conceives and categorises daily experiences. In other words, the central claim of the Whorfian Hypothesis is that the language shapes the speaker's world-view. Although this notion of linguistic relativity might not convince everyone in the field, many modern scholars have returned to it within more recent interdisciplinary studies (Lucy 1992, Gumperz and Levinson 1996, Lee 1996, Niemeier and Dirven 2000, Kramersch 2000).

Linguistic relativity provides an intriguing and powerful perspective for reviewing the intimate link between language and culture, although it might be controversial to declare that language 'regulates' culture or controls one's mind. Nevertheless, it is worth considering what the weaker version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests. As Wardhaugh (2002, p.220) points out, "cultural requirements certainly influence how a language is used and perhaps determine why specific bits and pieces are the way they are". Proceeding from this understanding, the following passages will make it clear how language interacts with culture through signs and

text.

In the early 20th century the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's work in linguistics was crucial to contemporary theory, especially research into language in social life. Saussure proposed a notion of *langue* and *parole*, language system and language in use that has been interpreted in various forms across the decades. Thibault (1997) believes that it is time Saussure's linguistic theory be rethought to investigate languages from a social-semiological perspective. He cites Saussure's explanation of the relationship between *langue* and *parole*:

Parole designates the act of the individual in realizing this [language] faculty by means of the social convention, which is the language system [*la langue*]. In *parole*, there is an idea of realization of that which is permitted by social convention. (Saussure 1957 cited in Thibault 1997, p.115)

According to this definition, the major distinction between *langue* and *parole* is the social and the individual. Alternatively, Holdcroft (1991, pp.20-21) expands and summarises the differences between *langue* and *parole*, stating of the former that it is "social, essential, no active individual role, not designed, conventional, and furnishes a homogeneous subject" while the latter is "individual, contingent, active role, designed, not conventional and furnishes a heterogeneous subject".

Social	<i>Langue</i>
Individual	<i>Parole</i>

Table 3.1. Distinctions between *langue* and *parole*

Thibault (1997, p.114) argues that Saussure does not regard langue and parole as competing with each other, but as working as a 'complex unit', in which the two systems co-exist and reflect each other at different levels. The function of langue (language system) is to determine the requirements and to create the circumstances in which parole is rooted and performed. These collective terms and conditions form a set of 'social conventions', namely, a given 'culture' operating beyond the individual as a higher-order for the language in use (parole). In other words, this higher social-semiological structure supplies social beings with the capacity and capability to generate meanings in an organised and comprehensible manner.

After Saussure, the modern French thinker Roland Barthes (1968), in his *Elements of Semiology*, extended the structuralist thinking on language and culture. Language in communication, including verbal, non-verbal, text or imagery, is subject to users' understanding. Language is seen as a system of signs, which comprise the 'signifier' (a word or image) and the 'signified' (concept). In the conventional understanding of language, the signifier represents its signified. However, Barthes argues that the first-order of signifier and signified does not present the complete meaning of the sign. He proposes a second-order of the semiological system, at which the socio-cultural meanings, hidden behind the first-order sign, are found, deconstructed and understood as various forms of 'myth' (Barthes 1972). Barthes believes that the meanings conceptualised in the second-order are often taken for granted when a sign is conceived. His approach indicates and analyses the subtleties of cultural meanings embedded in the deeper level of language.

Sharing a similar view, the Italian linguist Umberto Eco (1976) in his *A Theory of Semiotics*, further assumes that culture is a 'semiotic phenomenon'. He believes that the construction of culture manifests itself in human communications. The cultural and communicative operation is implemented by means of an underlying constitution of 'significations'. The process of signification is a system in which signs are used in order to identify denotation as well as to conceal connotation in meaning exchanges. For instance, the word 'vehicle', as a sign, refers not only to its semantic meaning as a means of transmission or carrier like a car, but also contains other meaning-levels in which cultural, social and economic values are signified.

Signs and meanings are essential ideas of structuralist thinking. We have discussed the way Saussure juxtaposes parole and langue, language use and the cultural field; we have also seen how Barthes opens up myth-making. Finally, Eco's point demonstrates why language and culture should be considered semiotically. Structuralism convinces us that culture and language are interwoven in an implicit form. Cultural elements formulate an underlying structure beneath daily communications that permits the language to create meanings comprehensible to the members of a community.

Following on from these arguments, the functional grammarian M.A.K. Halliday (1973, 1978, Halliday and Hasan 1989) argues that language as 'text', including what is said or written, should be used and studied in a 'context'. His notion of text and context suggests a dialectical relationship between language and culture that explains why a flow of communication can be functional and continuous. Firstly,

text has functions within a certain context, which can be divided into micro context of situation and macro context of culture. The context of situation refers to the instantaneous circumstances where text is actually operating. It is made up of the 'field', the 'tenor' and the 'mode', defining the occasions in which the discourse takes place; indicating the characteristics and relationships of the speakers in that situation. The context of situation explains why certain discourses are articulated or formulated in a particular way on a particular occasion. Moreover, this micro contextuality is not formed randomly but fitted into a macro environment where meanings and values are recognised and understood. That is the context of culture. The context of situation and the context of culture build the whole setting for the language in use. When text and context are closely related, interactants are able to predict what occurs next. As Halliday and Hasan (1989, p.47) summarise, "The text creates the context as much as the context creates the text. Meaning arises from the friction between the two". The relationship between the text and the context, namely language and culture, is a dialectical one.

3.2. Language, Culture and Ideology

The issue of the relationship between language and culture becomes far more complicated and political when extended to consider the bond between foreign language education and the teaching of culture. Among various concerns, the ideology of the language and business of language teaching is critical. Based on Eagleton's (1991) notion of ideology, it is argued in this section that at least three types of ideology are crucial for understanding the spread of English language and culture.

The first form of ideology is that of the 'standard language'. Following Fairclough's (1989) notion of Language and Power, Tollefson (2000) argues that the 'standard language' ideology appears to be an overwhelming belief and widely accepted 'common sense' with self-evident truthfulness; it thus avoids attention and disputation. First, 'standard' is contrastive to non-standard, while the definitions and the process of selection of the so-called standard (and non-standard) are open to criticism.. Second, 'Standard English' is often attached to a reputable mission as a means of national cohesion. When citizens within a nation use diverse languages or dialects, it is crucial to impose a common language, that is, the 'standard' one, to allow different linguistic communities to communicate with each another. Thus, it is not surprising to see that the standard language ideology, in Eagleton's (1991, p.29) opinion, represents "rhetoric concerned less with the situation 'as it is' than with the production of certain useful effects for political purposes". Finally, the standard language is seen as the canon and recognised in political, educational and formal contexts nationally and internationally, while non-standard English, referring to varieties other than the standard one, is often excluded from an official forum.⁵ In brief, the conception of the 'standard language' is 'manufactured' and often made to comply with the dominant.

Similarly, Cameron (2002) points out false conceptions of 'standard' communicative style. She argues that the claim by some Western (very often

⁵ With regard to the meaning of Standard English, Strevens (1983) finds that false conceptions of the definition may be pervasive. These include the belief that Standard English means 'most often heard', 'upper class English', 'literary English', 'Oxford English' or 'the best English'. In fact, however, Standard English is simply one of the dialects of English. Since the 'standard' language is only used by more educated or privileged groups in society, language policy is often used as an instrument against different dialects, in order to have them comply with the dominant.

Anglo-American) ‘experts’ that there is an ‘ideal’ global communicative norm which can assure effective communication, and the further promotion of this claim in commercial as well as in educational sectors, has, in the light of globalisation, “given new legitimacy, and a new twist, to the long-lived idea that linguistic diversity is a problem, while linguistic uniformity is a desirable ideal” (Cameron 2002, p.68). Assuming the superiority of the advocator’s own cultural/linguistic paradigm, the idea suppresses cultural differences and taints other speech-styles with a tag of inefficiency. Cameron (2002, p.70) further indicates that “this belief in ideal global communicative norms involves a one-way flow of expert knowledge from dominant to subaltern culture”. In brief, Cameron argues that in the process of globalisation the English language not only manifests its crucial status for communication but also fosters the ideology of communication, passing on uniform values, beliefs and identities to its learners and speakers.

The second type of ideology in language and language teaching is associated with a simplistic conceptualisation influencing judgments and actions. In this sense, ideology, in Eagleton’s (1991, p.29) words, is “very close to the idea of a world view...preoccupied with fundamental matters”. Here, an example is the ‘equality’ ideology of a global language. With a global view, it is said that since most business, technology and popular culture, as well as the majority of web-based content, are presented in English, the use of English provides egalitarian opportunities for people to learn about the world regardless of their national or linguistic backgrounds. Thus, English as a global language enables people to acquire information across boundaries and beyond resources. However, this idea of ‘equality’ can be merely an idealistic generalisation.

Phillipson, in his 1992 study *Linguistic Imperialism*, and others (Crystal 1997, Kachru 1986) have identified the asymmetrical relations between 'centre' and 'periphery' cultures, and how, from the 19th century onwards, English and its education were imposed on colonial countries through the imperial, economic and political power of the British Empire. At the beginning of the 21st century, Nunan (2003) finds that the emergence of English as a global language has had a great impact on English Language Teaching practice in most Asian-Pacific countries. China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, and of course, Taiwan are all investing massively in providing English courses from early school age, in spite of recurring problems such as inadequate educational resources, insufficiently qualified teachers and, more importantly, concerns over the impact of all this on the native languages.

In the present day as in the colonial period, before people in non-native English speaking countries can use the language to access world knowledge, they first have to import the teaching of English. They must then spend a tremendous amount of time, energy and finance learning the language and how to use it appropriately. There is an unbalanced economic tie between native and non-native speakers and thus the whole process can be associated with neo-colonial exploitation.

Most importantly, ideology is "a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class" (Eagleton 1991, p.1). It is a set of self-evident signs that does not truly present reality but reflects the preferences of an eminent group. For instance, there is a concern about the cultural content of textbooks in the matter of English

teaching. A textbook can be an important syllabus for a teacher and normally an essential and official guide for pupils to learn about the target language. It is argued that all English textbooks and teaching materials are full of cultural and ideological connotations by way of selecting or excluding social, political, ethnic or cultural realities (De Castell, Luke and Luke 1989, Apple and Christian-Smith 1991, Cortazzi and Jin 1999, Pennycook 2000).

As one extreme example, it is not rare for English textbooks to depict topical settings with middle-class Caucasians, even though this cannot be seen as a genuine and representative picture of English-speaking cultures (Pennycook 2000). Another example, the so called effective communication skills promoted recently and prescribed in many handbooks used by international and educational institutions world-wide, actually stand for “the preferred speech-habits of educated and predominantly white people brought up in the USA” (Cameron 2002, p.70). Last but not least, in his recent study of the global ELT coursebook, Gray (2002) looks into the impact of the new guidelines issued by international publishing houses for their coursebook authors.⁶ The findings show that the restricted directions for textbook design which assure limited information and repetitive content on ‘safe’ topics, simply lead to misrepresentation of the international world. Although the English coursebooks referred to by Pennycook (2000), Cameron

⁶ According to Gray (2002), in order to sell the books globally the writers are first requested to fairly represent ‘women and men’; second, they are expected to avoid certain ‘inappropriate’ topics such as alcohol, anarchy, AIDS, Israel, politics, religion, racism, sex, genetic engineering, terrorism, violence and so on. One of the results of this new standard, unsurprisingly, is the high similarity among English textbooks which fail to present distinctive (or ‘inappropriate’ in the publisher’s sense) characteristics of world cultures.

(2002) and Gray (2002) are mainly for the global market, an important consideration, equally relevant to the situation in Taiwan as to elsewhere, is that 'cultural ideology' is actually hidden in the authoritative teaching material. In an English textbook, as Pennycook (2000, p.99) indicates, "the pictures, the lifestyles, the stories, and the dialogues are full of cultural content" and laden with meanings. All these cultural symbols are subject to significations and interpretations.

3.3. Cultural Learning in ESL/FLT/EFL/EIL

This section is an integrative review with the focus on cultural learning in established academic areas, second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language teaching (FLT). It maps out relevant theories and empirical studies of the issue according to various socio-cultural contexts.

Research into cultural learning in foreign language education can be categorised into four types, according to different teaching and learning environments. The macro contexts defined here are mainly based on Kachru's (1985, Kachru and Nelson 1996) terminology of English-speaking countries, which identifies three concentric circles of English speaking areas: the Inner, the Outer and Expanding Circles.⁷ The Inner Circle is regarded as the origin of the expansion of English. In countries like the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, English is the first and primary language. The Outer Circle refers to those nation-states where

⁷ Graddol (1997, p.3) argues that the definition of these circles "will not be the most useful for describing English usage in the next century" because in his opinion, 'the centre of gravity' is gradually shifting to the L2 speaker. Graddol's prediction of the growth of English speakers is not objected to here, while the use of concentric circles in this research does not imply any political preference but rather, neutrality and convenience in offering a historical perspective on the spread of English.

English is learned and used as a second official language along with the mother tongue as an official institution. English in the Outer Circle is normally a legacy of the colonial period and thus has a long history and is widely used in various domains such as commerce, popular culture, creative writing and the legal system. Examples include Singapore, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa and Zambia. The Expanding Circle represents those nations that teach English as a major or even only foreign language in school, based on a belief in the significance of English as an international language. Examples include Taiwan, Japan, Korea and Thailand in Asia, and in Europe, Greece and Spain.

The first type of literature reviewed in this chapter relates to learning English as a Second Language with cultural content in the Inner Circle. For example, immigrants in the United States or foreign residents in Britain acquire English language and culture for their daily lives. The second type concerns Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) in the Inner Circle. This literature indicates that pupils in English-speaking countries learn foreign languages like German and French with the study of cultures. (The theory encountered in this type is also applied to developed West European countries such as Germany, France or Denmark.) The third type refers to people in the Outer Circle learning and using English as a Second Language (ESL) within their bilingual/multilingual and multicultural society. Last but not least is the literature relating to people learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Expanding Circle. Although some studies suggest that the only difference between learning English as a second or foreign language is a matter of the degree of linguistic exposure, it is arguable that the distinction is more than that. Various theories of cultural learning will therefore be discussed in

this section; however, issues concerning 'classroom culture' or 'learner's strategy' (due to the learner's culture) will not be the focus of this review.

3.3.1. ESL in the Inner Circle: Acculturation Model

In the 1970s, culture became an eminent concern among American language educators. An important theory of second language acquisition that has developed since then is the Acculturation Model. John Schumann (1978a, 1978b, 1978c) carried out a one-year case study, researching into how Alberto, a middle-aged Costa Rican working-class immigrant, acquired English as a second language in a naturalistic learning environment. According to his findings, the extent to which a second language speaker acculturates to the target language community determines the level at which one acquires the second language (Schumann 1986). Schumann identified that the 'social distance' and 'psychological distance' between the second language speaker and the target language culture are the key factors affecting the achievement of acculturation and second language acquisition. When the social and psychological distances appear to be great, the second language speaker is not able to develop his or her interlanguage into the target language appropriately. In Alberto's case, suffering from a sense of great social distance, his acquisition of English broke down at such an early stage that it came to an end in a form of pidgin language. Schumann accounts for this process with the 'pidginisation' hypothesis, whereby "when pidginisation persists, the learner fossilizes" (Schumann 1978b, quoted in Ellis 1999, p.253).

Ellis summarises the factors which mitigate against 'social distance' as follows:

- The target language and L2 groups view each other as socially equal.
- The target language and L2 groups are both desirous that the L2 group will assimilate.
- Both the target language and L2 groups expect the L2 group to share social facilities with the target language group.
- The L2 group is small and not very cohesive
- L2 group's culture is congruent with that of the target language group
- Both groups have positive attitudes to each other
- The L2 group envisages staying in the target language area for an extended period.

(Reproduced from Ellis 1999, p.252)

The constituents of 'psychological distance' include: "language shock, culture shock, motivation and ego boundaries" (Ellis 1999, p.252). These factors are all important for understanding the causes and effects of an immigrant's experience of culture learning, social adaptation and language acquisition.

As Mitchell and Myles (1998) indicate, Schumann's Acculturation Model is meaningful in that he accounts for the long missing sociocultural aspect of language learning, and indicates the significance of the study of culture in SLA. However, the validity and reliability of Schumann's research remains problematic. Many counter arguments and empirical studies find it hard to support the theory (Spolsky 1989, Larsen-Freeman 1991). Even Schumann (1986) himself admitted that his notions might not be empirically testable. The Acculturation Model has therefore become highly controversial.

Furthermore, the Acculturation Model does not explain the situation when the target language and culture is acquired through instruction in class. Schumann's theory is drawn from observation of an immigrant's naturalistic learning of English. As Ellis (1999, p.255) indicates, "what is missing from the model is an account of the role of the interaction between the situation and the learner". Spolsky (1989, p.145) also points out that it would be crude to use the model to generalise "all kinds of second language learning and by its tendency to assume direct effect of the social factors on the learning process". In Spolsky's opinion, the factors of social distance are not essential for second language learning within an 'instructional' context while the affective variables of 'psychological distance' may remain relevant. That is, Schumann's acculturation model fails to account for the situation when SLA happens in a controlled classroom with systematic teaching and learning, for instance, the setting in most EFL countries.

Most importantly, the application of Schumann's Acculturation Model in an EFL country is debatable. As the fundamental meaning of Acculturation is to 'acculturate' the language learner, to transform the speaker into a member of the target language community by diminishing both social and psychological distances, the whole process actually implies cultural assimilation. It may be practical for an immigrant to adapt to the new life in this way, but it is questionable whether EFL learners should conform to the target cultural rules. For instance, in an EFL country like Taiwan, it would not be necessary to assimilate English learners to be like native-American-speakers, simply because the target language learned is American English.

Brown's (1987) elaboration of the Acculturation process focuses on the psychological factors involved in classroom practice. First, he accounts for the way a second language learner goes through acculturation. This is a mental process whereby language learners cope with the unfamiliar cultural impact of the macro environment in which they are situated, and later internalise the novel experience as part of themselves. The four stages of Acculturation are briefly as follows:

- Excitement: euphoria over the newness and surroundings.
- Culture Shock: emerges as individuals feel the intrusion of more and more cultural differences into their own images of self and security.
- Tentative Recovery: some problems of acculturation are solved while other problems continue for some time.
- Full Recovery: assimilation or adaptation, acceptance of the new culture and self-confidence in the 'new person' that has developed in this culture.

(Reproduced from Brown 1987, p. 129)

Brown believes that the role of the language teacher should be not only instructional, but also 'therapeutic' in assisting learners to transfer from one level of acculturation to another. It is especially critical from the second stage of experiencing culture shock to the third level of learning the target culture. With assistance it is believed that the learner will have a smoother path to success in the second language as well as in learning the second culture.

In order to achieve this goal, Brown suggests that a language educator can guide students to think of the causes of their frustration or anxiety; then lead them to transform those uneasy feelings into a useful experience and personal learning strategy. He also refers to several useful teaching methods. As Donahue and

Parsons (1982) propose, role-play can be an effective teaching tool for helping pupils to deal with culture fatigue in the ESL classroom. The use of role-play not only encourages cross-cultural exchanges, but also creates oral communicative opportunities for students. Stevick (1976) mentions that it is also possible that a learner may feel 'alienated' in the process of learning the target language. To solve this problem, McGroarty and Galvan (1985) advocate the use of more active methods or interesting teaching materials to facilitate cultural understanding. These tools can include multi-media, cinematic film, television programmes, simulation games and so on. Finally, treating culture as the 'fifth dimension' in the language classroom and using textbooks with rich cultural content or activities can also be helpful (Damen 1987).

Brown's (1987) model for cultural adaptation modifies the traditional Acculturation Model with pedagogical suggestions for instructional context. Many of the scholars mentioned above also provide valuable recommendations on pedagogies for helping second language learners to fit into the new culture. Nevertheless, the application is limited to situations where the pupil and teacher are from the first and target cultures respectively. It would not be useful for those who learn English outside the target country, for example, in Taiwan or Japan, in a monolingual society where cultural shock is far beyond daily experience.

3.3.2. FLT in the Inner Circle: Intercultural Communication Theory

As Buttjes (1990) indicates, in the 1980s the cultural gap in language teaching came under new evaluation (Seelye 1984, Valdes 1986, Kramsch 1989). Studies concerning the teaching of cultures in the foreign language classroom emerged

mainly in Britain, Germany and France. The central concern of the international discussion is Intercultural Communication. Scholars consider one of the major purposes of foreign language education is to enhance pupils' cross-cultural understanding, and thus to contribute to international cooperation, for example, European integration (Byram 1997a, 1997b, Risager 1998). Thus, how to facilitate language learners' intercultural communicative competence and implement cultural learning in the pedagogy of foreign language teaching becomes an essential concern, especially in Britain and other West European countries (Byram and Risager 1999, Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor 1991).

The original hypothesis of communicative competence was formed by Hymes (1979) as a critique of Noam Chomsky's 'universal grammar'. Hymes argues that the concept of universal grammar overlooks interactional performances and social-cultural aspects of language learning. In Hymes's argument, in addition to linguistic competency, it is equally important to account for a language learner's ability to use the language appropriately within the social context. Canale and Swain (1980) develop this concept into a theoretical framework for second language teaching, learning and testing. They define full communicative competence as reaching a balance of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Byram (1997b) adds that the factors contributing to intercultural communication competence include linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, socio-cultural and social competences.

A better demonstration of these hypotheses is the Model for Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), proposed by Byram (1989b, 1997b, Byram,

Nichols and Stevens 2001). According to this model, the elements of intercultural competence are attitudes, knowledge, skills and awareness. First of all, it is essential for learners to have intercultural attitudes which make them willing to open themselves to view and even respect different values, conduct and manners relative to their own. This is a process of 'de-centring'. Knowledge of the social process is the next crucial factor. It refers to awareness of a country's ethos relating to individual and national identities, social class, and ethnic varieties. Such knowledge should be bilateral. Next, the skill of comparing, interpreting and relating foreign culture to one's own can help the learner prevent or solve unexpected misunderstandings. In addition, since it is not possible to acquire all the necessary knowledge for future use, or to predict misunderstandings within the classroom, the skill of discovery and interaction becomes important. There is a need for learners to know how to ask for information about values, faiths and behaviours of people from other cultures and to have the ability to learn and develop their knowledge in real interaction. Finally, through education, learners acquire the ability to think critically about the perspectives and experiences they encounter in their own culture as well as in the culture of others. Critical cultural awareness is thus cultivated through the intercultural teaching and learning process.

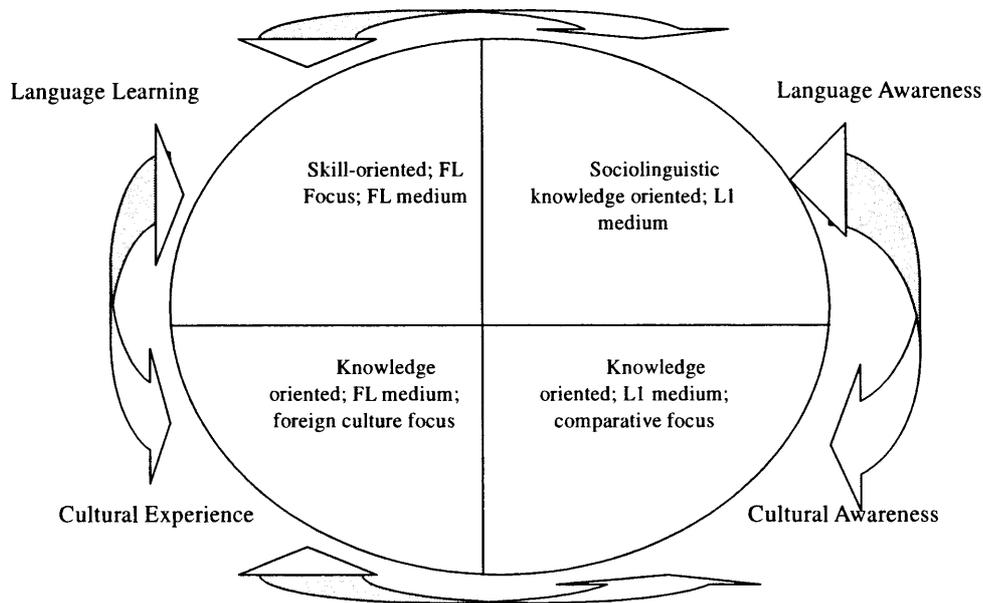
	<u>Skills</u> Interpret and relate	
<u>Knowledge</u> Self and other; Interaction between individual and societal	<u>Critical cultural</u> <u>awareness</u> Develop through education	<u>Attitudes</u> Relativise oneself while valuing others
	<u>Skills</u> Discover and/or interact	

Table 3.2. Factors in intercultural communication

(Based on Byram 1997b, p. 34)

Moving from theory to pedagogy, which nourishes the ground for intercultural communication, Byram (1990) suggests an integrated model for cultural learning and foreign language teaching. It is composed of language learning, language awareness, cultural awareness and cultural experience. The content of the model is demonstrated below:

Figure 3.1. The language and intercultural teaching process



(Reproduced from Byram 1990, p.20)

According to this model, language learning refers to the process whereby learners acquire lexical and grammatical knowledge of the foreign language in order to reach linguistic competence. Byram (1990) hereby emphasises the use of the Communicative Approach.⁸ Language awareness indicates guiding pupils to be conscious of the sociological and structural differences in the language learned. Cultural awareness is a similar idea but focused on the cultural aspect, for example, analysing the use of French in French culture. The cultural experience provides opportunities for reflection and real application. Exchange programmes in schools

⁸ After the 1960s, Audiolingualism was gradually fading out in TESOL; Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or Communicative Approach was then developed and became fashionable from the mid-1970s. As an independent subject, the details of CLT will not be introduced in this section. Relevant references are the works of Brumfit and Johnson (1979) and Richards and Rodgers (2001). There is further discussion in the Findings and Analysis section of this thesis.

or holidays in a foreign country are examples. Notice that cultural experience can also be given domestically, for example under the Canadian bilingual curriculum certain academic sessions are instructed in the foreign language.⁹ The allocation of the four elements should not remain static. For example, in a five-year foreign language-learning programme, the proportion of cultural awareness and cultural experience should be increased gradually from 10% in the first year and finally to 40% in the fifth year (Byram 1990).

The model of intercultural communication competence and recommendations on the language and intercultural teaching process are useful to gain insight into intercultural teaching and learning in the foreign language classroom. Through a series of intensive studies, many classroom realities and experiences have been included in the model. This advantage makes the model highly valued by this research, for which it supplies an important framework for the case study. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the model has been constructed as a result of studies mainly based on the European context. When applied to the Taiwanese context, it may be subject to some variations.

In response to intercultural communication theory, certain pedagogical practices are suggested. First, some studies emphasise the significance of authentic cultural exchange. The Ethnographic Approach is proposed for pedagogy particularly within British and European contexts. Roberts (1997), Poulain (1997) and Daniels (1997) discuss 'ethnographic' experience with reference to teacher training. More studies approve taking pupils' language learning beyond the classroom through real

⁹ This practice is associated with the notion of Content-Based Instruction (CBI).

visits to learn the target culture and language currently in use (Salvadori 1997, Dark et al 1997, Byram 1997a). The work of Roberts, Jordan and Street (2001) presents details of how British higher education institutions can implement ethnography programmes for foreign language and culture learning. With a similar concept but without learners going abroad, Morgan and Cain (2000) propose the Dialogic Approach. Their research demonstrates how a group of British secondary school pupils interact with their French counterparts via modern telecommunications media and materials exchanges to learn both French language and culture effectively.

The contemporary concern to enhance cross-cultural communication is an optimal goal for foreign language education. Intercultural communication theory is especially meaningful within the European context. Firstly, young learners' early ethnographic experience of foreign culture is helpful in dissolving prejudices. Secondly, intercultural understanding is believed to make regional cooperation more promising. Yet, as Sadtono (2000) points out, several practical issues can be problematic, for example, overseas residence, teacher qualifications, and teaching materials. Living and learning in a foreign country requires large amounts of financial funding. It may be possible for a developed country like Britain to send a group of pupils to a target country like France or Germany, whilst it would be hard to imagine a developing country in Asia, for example, doing the same thing. In fact, Asian countries of the Expanding Circle may not even be able to afford to teach their young students more than one foreign language.

The next main concern is the teacher's knowledge of cultural teaching. As

Widdowson (1979) notes, most language teachers are trained to teach linguistic skills rather than to teach a language with subject content. It is questionable whether most teachers are willing or able to teach cultural content in addition to linguistic knowledge. The implication is that a teacher's motivation to bring in cultural knowledge to the language classroom may depend on his/her own previous training and cultural knowledge.

Another problem is teaching materials. Sadtono (2000) indicates that there is still limited availability of materials presenting intercultural communication. Furthermore, for many Asian countries of the Expanding Circle, textbooks are still produced and published by state-run institutions.¹⁰ In order to change the production of these textbooks it may first be necessary to change how language and culture are viewed. Until these problems are addressed, pedagogies for intercultural communication remain idealised, especially for the Expanding Circle countries.

3.3.3. ESL in the Outer Circle: World English Paradigm

The number of those who use English as a second language in the Outer Circle is estimated at approximately the same level as native speakers in the Inner Circle. There are thirty-five countries in West Africa, East Africa, South Asia, South-east Asia and the South Pacific that give English official status or a semi-official position (where English is used as an official language with others) (Crystal 1997, Gramley and Patzold 1992).

Various political, historical and cultural factors have contributed to the spread of

¹⁰ Taiwan is one of the best examples in that all senior high schools (whether private or state-run) use the authorised textbook.

English, and clearly the British colonial influence¹¹ and the post-war impact of British/American political economy¹² in these areas should be noted. In these countries, although ‘Standard (either British or American) English’ was preferred in schools when the language was introduced, regional varieties and standards have been developed over time. For example, there are several well-established varieties with distinctive local features, such as Indian English,¹³ Singaporean English, Standard West African English, Standard Nigerian English, Philippine English and so on (Gramley and Patzold 1992). Although these varieties of English share many similarities, they are distinct in their innovations of grammar, lexis and discourse with local characteristics and pronunciations. Kachru and Nelson (1996, p.71) argue that “all these languages have more than one accepted standard and set of norms for creativity, and thus are termed pluricentric languages”.

In the sense, English has been developing as if a living entity moved, grew and later had siblings and a family of its own. When one studies this entity, its new looks should not be ignored. Thus, in the study of the English language, what one needs is Y. Kachru’s (1991, p.304) “richer theory to account for the socially

¹¹ Since the 19th century, when the British Empire occupied nearly one-third of nation-states, the English language has been an important instrument of administration and was used as a device to achieve political unity throughout the Empire. The colonial influence was so compelling that the use of English remains significant even today (Crystal 1997, Phillipson 1992, Kachru 1986).

¹² After the Second World War, the British and American Governments enthusiastically and cooperatively endorsed the English language in education. The mission of spreading the English language and preserving Britain’s national interest was clearly stated in a major post-war British foreign policy statement (known as the Drogheda Report) published in 1954. According to this statement, the British Council worldwide (in 109 countries up to 1998) was an essential organisation to promote English “with government, academic, and commercial interests radiating to and from it” (Phillipson 1992, p. 136). The USA, Britain’s counterpart, along with official agencies and private institutions, applies similar operations (Phillipson 1992, Crystal 1997, Pennycook, 1994, 2000).

¹³ For example, as Kachru (1982, 1983, 1986) indicates, the unique conceptualisation of the caste system is intrinsic in Indian English. Similarly, other variety standards represent their regional culture.

realistic use of the English language [that] the notions of speech act, conversational analysis, sociolinguistics, and ethnography of communication is needed to study the illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect of locutionary acts". As Kachru and Nelson (1996, p.97) further argue, "this 'richer theory' will take into account a much broader range of data than is available from looking at only one variety or limited set of varieties". In other words, the English language should not simply be viewed as the property of only one or two nations. While teaching and learning English, it is crucial to represent and study the language within its many socio-cultural contexts, acknowledging the characteristics of pluralism and multiculturalism.

As a result, from a post-modern perspective, many critical applied linguists believe that it is high time that both English language educators and learners decolonised the English language in use and valued these varieties and their cultures. The World English Paradigm, which suggests teaching of multi-cultural content, has recently begun to be promoted in the field of English Language Teaching.

Kachru and Nelson (1996), who propose the World English Paradigm, believe the teaching and learning of English today should be based on a factual conceptualisation that recognises the differences among language users and their settings. It is a notion that urges language educators, policy makers and resource publishers to rethink curriculum design, the testing scheme and teaching materials in terms of the study of variation in World English. The cultures and creativity represented in the varieties of English should not be excluded from the syllabi. Only when teachers and the educational system become fully aware of the reality

and development of English in the world today and in the future can these optimal and positive aims be achieved.

Nevertheless, unfortunately, Brown (2001, p.108) notes that “Kachru’s perspective on the role and functions of English as an international language remains a minority perspective”. In her infusion model, Brown (2001) identifies several factors that discourage this curricular innovation. For example, a student and instructor may not have sufficient background schemata for understanding Outer Circle countries; the availability of regional English text and supporting materials involving the methodology of the World English Paradigm also remain limited. Furthermore, taking as an example the Taiwanese senior high school English programme, it may be a severe challenge to incorporate different English varieties alongside the mainstream American paradigm in the current curriculum. Perhaps as Brown (2001) concludes, it is clear that the recognition of World English still stands in need of more effort and further studies.

In research into ELT in a Tamil community in the northern peninsula of Sri Lanka, Canagarajah (1999, p.174) suggests a ‘third way’ to avoid “the traditional extremes of rejecting English outright for its linguistic imperialism or accepting it wholesale for its benefits”. This ‘third way’ refers to teaching pluralism of English, introducing multiple standards and liberal access to the language. Canagarajah further explains:

Language educators must recognise the contextual appropriacy of different Englishes and teach students as many variants as possible; it is equally important to teach students that any dialect has to be personally and communally appropriated to varying degrees in order to be meaningful and relevant for its use.

(Canagarajah 1999, p.181).

Thus, it is necessary to consider and implement a pedagogy that allows pupils to be reflexive and critical on the discourses and any cultural content learned.

Based on personal experience of teaching English in Hong Kong, Pennycook (1997) has been inspired to develop the idea of 'learner autonomy' with cultural alternatives. He argues that teaching and learning English in Hong Kong, for example, is used as a political weapon to suppress the local people. The use of English entitles those elites who identify with British culture to be a part of the 'winner' circle. Learning English is thus an economic and political pursuit and the majority of pupils gradually lose their own way of expressing things in the use of the authoritative colonial language. Pennycook (1997, p.47) believes that it is the educator's responsibility to help learners decolonialise the language by providing "pedagogy of cultural alternatives, an educational project that seeks to open up such alternative ways of thinking and being in the world". The content of this critical pedagogy is best described in Pennycook's own words:

A pedagogy of cultural alternatives in English would need to address not only issues of colonialism and gender but a broad range of cultural representations of Third World people, lesbians and gays, people with disabilities, working-class people, and many other groups.... I hope to help my students to find cultural alternatives, to find meanings in English that run against the class, gender, race and cultural assumptions linked to different contexts of language use. (Pennycook 1997, pp.52-53)

This approach means to emancipate English language learners from the prescription of the colonial paradigm; it further enables them to perceive the language in use within the learner's own cultural context, and finally facilitates

students to think critically, and differently, about the world.

In brief, the World English Paradigm is a crucial theory promoting an open-minded view of world cultures in English teaching and learning. The proposal to introduce pluralism of English and multiple cultural variants into classroom practice is appraised as an innovative pedagogy (Brown 2001). By introducing multicultural elements and local English varieties, it revolutionises the traditional English curriculum in which a single paradigm and only the target culture are valued. In addition, ESL learners are encouraged to study local expressions, which directly or indirectly free themselves from language ideologies. The examples provided in Canagarajah's (1999), and Pennycook's (1997) works imply that the World English Paradigm is an effective approach to resisting post-colonialism as well as linguistic imperialism.

Canagarajah's (1999) and Pennycook's (1997) recommendations on pedagogy, together with Kachru and Nelson's (1996) theory could prove useful to EFL countries where language ideology and target cultural domination become concerns in the English classroom. An EFL country such as Taiwan, although it has no colonial history with the British Empire, is under a heavy cloak of American influence. A liberal view of teaching language and culture suggested by critical pedagogy or cultural pluralism implies that students can gain a better panorama of the international world through their study of English. Such training also develops intercultural awareness in students. For an Expanding Circle country, the most critical question may lie in implementation. For instance, in order to teach different English variety standards and cultures, an Outer Circle country can simply choose

the local English variety in addition to another standard paradigm (e.g. American English or British English). However, an Expanding Circle country like Taiwan, within which no variety standard has developed, faces the question of whether to teach, for example, Indian English, Singapore English or West African English. How could it be taught or demonstrated? How can students be motivated to study a variety standard and culture of a remote country beyond their everyday concern? In other words, more recommendations on implementation and practical pedagogies will be needed.

3.3.4. EFL in the Expanding Circle: the EIIL Model¹⁴

The World English Paradigm shows a tendency to view English as an international language rather than a legacy of colonial imperialism. It encourages educators and students in Outer Circle countries to recognise their own valuable English variety standard and a diversity of cultural content. However, in an Expanding Circle country, the paradigm may not be easily applicable. As mentioned above, many practical issues need to be taken into consideration.

Similar in concept to the World English Paradigm, but more rooted in the area of TEFL in the Expanding Circle, are Smith's model of EIIL (1983) and McKay's reflective approach (2002, 2003) to cultural teaching in TEIL (Teaching English as an International Language). Smith argues that English should be used and learned as an international and intranational Language; neither a foreign nor a second language. In this way, English cannot be seen as belonging to any one nation or linked to any one particular culture. He points out that English is very often used

¹⁴ EIIL stands for English as International and Intranational Language.

among non-native speakers as a lingua franca. There is no need, for example, for a Thai to speak like an American in order to communicate with a Filipino at an ASEAN meeting; or for a Japanese to acquire British cultural knowledge to use English well for conducting business with a Taiwanese. Thus Smith (1983) urges native speakers to abandon their cultural superiority over ownership of the English language; and encourages the introduction of a worldview of English to the classroom for non-native speakers.

Smith (1983) considers that the pedagogy of EIL is two-fold, and that the student population should include both native and non-native speakers. For native speakers, Smith believes it is time that 'new literatures' were introduced,¹⁵ in order to help them learn about the cultures of other English users, and increase tolerance and understanding of different expressions (Smith 1983, p.3). For non-native speakers, Smith (1983) emphasises that while intelligibility, grammatical acceptability and social appropriateness remain important concerns, it is not necessary to imitate a native-speaker's way of using English. More importantly, Smith argues that cultural learning in EIL should be given a new meaning.

As Smith (1983) acknowledges, although language and culture are closely related, it is not necessarily the case that one language be linked to a particular culture. He indicates that the teaching of English as a foreign language tends to focus on the target language culture within a specific nation. For example, textbooks often represent what British families do in their vacation or what American people have for meals. However, even within an English-speaking country (whether it is Britain,

¹⁵ For example, it can be a literary work written by authors in the outer circle.

the USA, Canada or Australia), society can hardly be mono-cultural. The representation in coursebooks, as argued earlier, is often over-simplified or ideological. By contrast, with the EILL model, English is seen as a common and neutral language with liberal access to cultures of the learner's choice. That is, "in an international situation, the cultural emphasis is placed upon the cultures of specified countries in which the students are interested" (Smith 1983, p.19). For example, in an English training programme for Japanese business people who are to be dispatched to Thailand, the cultural emphasis can be placed on Thailand. If learners cannot be certain about where and how they will use their English in the future, the learning of different cultures should be suggested to facilitate greater appreciation and tolerance of the varieties of culture.

Thus far, Smith's proposal of EILL implies that learners' interest is crucial in cultural teaching and learning. In his opinion, learners are entitled to learn the culture that is meaningful for them. This seems especially true with reference to ESP (English for Specific Purpose). A banker, an engineer, a traveller or a buyer who clearly knows his/her destination and purpose of communication may be eager to learn the culture of that place or people. In this sense, any decision on teaching only one culture to general EFL students in school (for example, Taiwanese students learning only American culture) may appear to be too arbitrary. After all, as Smith (1983) suggests, in their near future, students are likely to deal with people from any part of the world. English is used for communicating with not only native English speakers but also non-native speakers. Therefore, learning different cultures through English in school and enhancing young adults' intercultural understanding, become essential.

However, once again, there are practical difficulties in implementation. A specific intercultural training programme or a series of workshops can be tailored for a company or a small group of business people to help them with cultural adaptation. But so far the literature has not made clear how varieties of cultural content can be included in classes with large numbers of pupils (for example, a senior high English class in Taiwan, or in most Asian countries of the Expanding Circle). In what form or what way can students learn different cultures effectively? How many different cultures should be covered? Until there are practical solutions in material design and pedagogy, the idea that learners be given the right to choose what cultural content to study may remain unrealistic.

Moreover, there is a conceptual concern for TEIL. As Bamgbose (1982) indicates, linguistic insecurity in the classroom may cause resistance to teaching and learning other English varieties and cultures, rather than adopting a standard paradigm. Non-native speakers tend to have low-esteem of their English and a desire for a standard to follow. For example, when Shaw (1983) researched Asian college students' attitudes toward English, almost half of the 313 Thai interviewees thought that they should learn to speak English like the British, not Thai or international speakers. This illustrates the importance of both educators' and learners' attitudes toward the language, and how these attitudes affect the cultural content taught and learned in reality.

Nevertheless, Smith is not the only proponent of TEIL. Since the 1990s, more and more applied linguists have advocated Teaching English as an International

Language. For example, instead of focusing on a target culture of native English speakers, Alptekin (1993) advises alternative choices for teaching practice in the EFL class. These would involve the international role of English in areas such as popular culture, tourism culture, and scientific culture, or the culture of other English varieties. In order to resist linguistic imperialism, Modiano (2001) also appeals to language educators to define English as an international language in ELT practice. He urges language instructors to recognise that English does not belong to any particular nation and that nor should cultural content taught in schools be associated with any dominant English culture. He emphasises that neither American nor British English is superior to any other varieties. The international role of the English language as lingua franca should be valued as much as cultural equality should be promoted in educational settings.

McKay (2002) proposes rethinking the goals and approaches of TEIL. In her opinion, the fundamental objectives of TEIL should include teaching cross-cultural pragmatic rules and developing textual competence. The former aims to minimise cultural differences and misunderstandings, and the latter aims to help learners acquire information and understand cross-cultural texts. More importantly, since in TEIL it is recognised that English should be separated from any one culture, certain implications for teaching practice should be considered. McKay (2003) summarises these into three main points. Firstly, if one of the main educational aims of instructing an international language is to allow learners to communicate with different people and to share their own culture and thoughts with others, then EIL materials should offer sufficient expressions of 'local' cultural content. Secondly, McKay points to the problems associated with using the Communicative Language

Teaching Approach in countries where the population looks up to the Western communicative style, particularly in terms of language pedagogy. If the English language is not attached to any specific country, then the pedagogy should also be liberalised. EIL methodologies should feature local culture in the aspects of the roles of teachers and learners, learning strategies and classroom realities. Thirdly, local bilingual teachers should be accorded their full value as possessing not only linguistic knowledge but also familiarity with the local culture. They should not be regarded as inferior to native English-speaking teachers. In her recent case study, McKay (2003) found that Chilean educators have successfully set out to develop a locally appropriate pedagogy to help students learn English as an international language. Besides introducing linguistic knowledge and learning skills such as brainstorming and analysis, the new English curriculum¹⁶ implemented in primary and high schools covers rich cultural content on local concerns, as well as in an international context.

Here McKay (2002) concludes that the most appropriate pedagogy for culture in TEIL is the 'reflective' approach, in which learners' local culture as well as the culture of their learning style are highly respected. Learners should be encouraged to think about why the cultural topic was chosen and in what alternative ways it can be demonstrated. There should always be a culturally sensitive concern for learners, allowing them to reflect on their own culture while learning another. Eventually, TEIL enables learners to possess the linguistic ability to express themselves freely, further sharing their own culture with their foreign counterparts.

¹⁶ In the newly designed textbook, there is a story about a group of Chilean and overseas students embarking on a sea voyage along the Chilean coast. The story of the journey enables the writers to cover Chilean geographical and regional features, as well as to provide information about the foreign countries represented by the overseas students on board.

As Prodromou (1988) points out, the problem in teaching cultural content in EFL classes lies not only in dealing with the cultural background (Anglo-American culture) but also with how to link that to the cultural foreground (local culture). In Greece, he found that the target cultural content in the English textbook which is irrelevant to the learner's daily life simply makes students "switch off, retreat into their inner world, to defend their own integrity" (Prodromou 1988, p.80). As a result, teaching English with culturally alienating materials becomes an uncomfortable matter for learners as well as instructors. Nevertheless, from his own teaching practice, Prodromou (1988) sets a twofold objective: to help learners with their proficiency in English, and to lead them to be more aware of the interplay between two cultures (Anglo-American and Greek culture).

The empirical studies in this section are mainly based on experiences in countries of the Expanding Circle such as Chile and Greece. Unlike the cases in the inner and outer circles, these examples shed light on the importance of local culture in teaching and learning the English language, and on what culture should be taught for learners in other EFL contexts such as Taiwan.

However, the studies mentioned above, especially McKay's (2003) article on the Chilean context, are not without weaknesses. Bruton (2004) severely criticises McKay's survey on the grounds that it appears to satisfy Chilean education authorities and a small number of teachers instead of investigating the teaching method and course content carefully at national levels. For example, he challenges McKay's questionnaire design for teacher interviewees and her refutation of CLT,

which was crudely equated with 'group work'. In Bruton's (2004, p.185) opinion, McKay could have clearly defined CLT at the outset and explained "what are Chilean teachers of English in state schools actually expected to do now, apart from supposedly shelving GW [group work]?" That is, more detailed accounts of teaching methods for the newly revised textbook content should be considered.¹⁷ We should note that Bruton (2004) does not question the intention of introducing intercultural content including local culture into the school curriculum. His serious concern is, again, an appropriate pedagogy for intercultural teaching and how it can be effectively implemented and evaluated in an EFL country.

3.4. Reflections and Research Questions

Thus far, we have discussed the intimate relationship between language and culture. A language is used by people within a sociocultural context. It is impractical as well as impossible to separate the two. However, in the case of ELT (English Language Teaching), when English language and culture are introduced or even imposed through political or economic power, the by-products such as language ideologies are worrying. The dilemma is: if the English language comes with culture, what and whose culture should students be learning in the English language classroom today?

Many studies have shed light on this issue from different perspectives. The Acculturation Model explains how culturally assimilating to the target language society is important for successful target language acquisition. The Intercultural

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that, in contrast to the Chilean case, in Taiwan the use of CLT is promoted in the newly revised curriculum. Bruton's criticism here is an important reminder for further investigation of what pedagogical alternatives are actually left available to teachers if an original teaching methodology is put on hold.

Communication Competence Model, although it refers to general FLT rather than to ELT, provides insight into how to develop intercultural competence through learning cultural content through different stages. The World English Paradigm and TEIL theory, with associated empirical studies rooted in Outer Circle and Expanding Circle countries respectively, encourage English learners to gain self-esteem in the language they are learning as well as open up their minds to learning varieties of culture.

These models all answer the question to a certain degree, but all carry limitations. None of them offer adequate explanation or solutions to intercultural teaching and learning for an EFL country like Taiwan. As argued earlier, although some studies point out alternative cultural content to be taught, they do not explain how the school curriculum can realistically incorporate varieties of language standards and cultural content. More importantly, they offer little or no explanation of methodology for cultural learning (McKay 2003, Modiano 2001, Alptekin 1993, Smith 1983, Pennycook 1997, Canagarajah, 1999). Others share their valuable teaching methods and experiences, but admit that the current materials are deficient in explaining intercultural content (Prodromou 1988, Canagarajah 1999, Brown 2001). For example, with reference to Smith's (1983) EIL model, Smith himself points out that any achievement of EIL will rely on a combination of appropriate resource materials and teacher training. As Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p.201) indicate, what we need most are "appropriate methods for teaching and learning culture in the EFL classroom that will facilitate a reflective use of the best available materials".

In view of the trend towards intercultural teaching and learning, this research addresses the questions of what cultural content is delivered in the EFL programme for senior high schools in Taiwan, and how that cultural content is delivered and understood in the English classroom. Subordinate issues include teachers' and students' attitudes towards the link between language and culture, and towards the objective of cultural teaching and learning, and an examination of any ideology that might be involved in any cultural content delivered. Specific research objectives also include identifying the pedagogy used by the Taiwanese teachers and how well it facilitates intercultural learning. It is expected that the result of this research can enrich the current literature in the field by supplying an empirical foundation as well as an initial direction for exploring the intercultural perspectives of English language education in an EFL context.

Finally, in order to answer the research problem, two important studies are employed as the framework for the research. First, as mentioned in Chapter 2, Context of the Study, 'cultural content' here refers to any course content related to 'Big C' culture, 'little C' culture or a mixture of the two. When considered in the English classroom, there are four important dimensions to an examination of that content. They are suggested by Byram's Intercultural Communication Competence Model as intercultural attitudes, intercultural knowledge, intercultural communication skills and intercultural awareness (Byram et al 2001). Next, in order to find out how such content is delivered and understood, we must note Cortazzi and Jin's (1999, p.201) notion of the 'three-party dialogue'. As many of the studies mentioned above suggest, the whole business of intercultural teaching and learning is far too complex to be satisfactorily accounted for by a set of

decisions embodied only in teaching material or pedagogy. Thus, the rationale behind Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) model is that when textbooks offer interesting cultural content, "the learning of culture and the development of intercultural skills depend in a large part on how the textbooks are used in the classroom, that is, on the quality of interaction between students, texts and teachers". That is, one of the best approaches to discern any achievement of intercultural teaching and learning in an EFL class is to study the interplay between the three parties involved: teacher, students and the textbook.

Part III. Methodology

4. Research Design

The theoretical framework of this research is based on a combination of two models: ICC (Intercultural Communicative Competence) from Byram (1989, 2001) and the 'Three-Party Dialogue with Cultural Content' from Cortazzi and Jin ('Cultural mirrors: Materials and Methods in the EFL Classroom', 1999). The former refers to intercultural competence of which the key components are intercultural attitudes, intercultural knowledge, intercultural communication skills and intercultural awareness. These four components, according to Byram (1997b, 2001) suggest the following significant meanings:

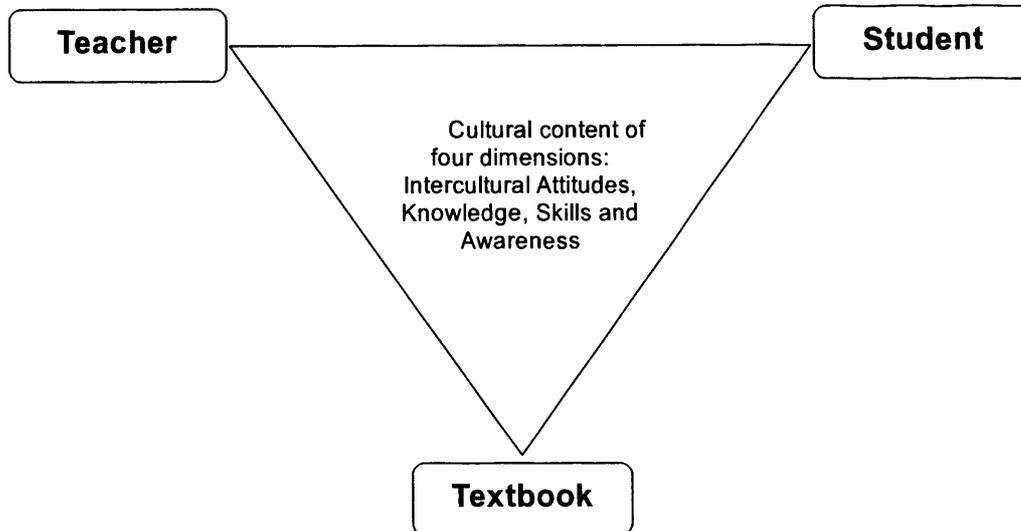
- a) Intercultural Attitudes: Students should 'decentre' themselves, hold an open attitude not only to their own culture but also to others' cultures.
- b) Intercultural Knowledge: Students learn knowledge of other cultures as well as their own culture, to enrich their understanding.
- c) Intercultural Communication Skills: It is impossible to learn all kinds of cultural knowledge in advance. Communications skills are crucial for relating one's own culture to another, and to elicit information from other speakers, etc.
- d) Intercultural Awareness: Language learners have critical awareness, can discern the cultural differences and similarities, are culturally sensitive.

Note that all these elements, according to Byram (1989), can be learned through education in school. Thus, if we apply the model to the Taiwanese senior high school context, these elements can be seen as four important forms of cultural content. For example, does the English class teaching develop students' intercultural awareness? How does the teaching material and the teacher deliver

(what kind of) cultural knowledge? Are communication skills taught? What are they? Is intercultural awareness facilitated or ideology imposed in the course of study? These questions developed from the ICC model are essential dimensions for examining the cultural content delivered in the EFL classroom and how it facilitates intercultural learning and competence. One further critical point worth noting is that this model mainly draws on studies based on European countries. Some explanations of the model will be subject to modification in the Taiwanese context.

Such cultural content should not be studied in isolation from where it actually takes place. I draw on the work of Cortazzi and Jin (1999) who emphasise the learning of culture in the EFL classroom as a dynamic process involving interactions between the teacher, students and textbook. The implication is that cultural content should be studied through evaluating textbooks, and through investigating the teacher's pedagogy and students' viewpoints of cultural teaching and learning. (The integrated research framework is demonstrated as figure 4.1.) In order to unpack the delivery of cultural content in the interplay between the three parties, the research methodology employed is based on the guidelines proposed by Denscombe (1998) for conducting small-scale qualitative research projects, and on the research plan for naturalistic study suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001).

Figure 4.1. A three-party dialogue with cultural content of four dimensions



(Adapted from Cortazzi and Jin 1999, p.211 with Elements of ICC based on Byram 2001)

4.1. An Overview: A Case Study of Multi-Methods

Multi-methods are used to unpack the interplay of the three parties: the teacher, textbook and students. The case study begins with the textbook and curriculum evaluation. Since all of the four authorised textbooks for senior high schools in Taiwan comply closely with the national English language standard curriculum, it is crucial to examine not only the coursebook but also the national standard curriculum. The opinions of teachers and students, and classroom reality are also included in the study.

The textbook examined was the one used in the majority of Taiwanese senior high schools – *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*. It is the centre of the case study in which all the informants (including the teachers and students

interviewed) were selected based on their use of the same textbook (although they may not be in the same school).¹⁸ Next, telephone contacts and one survey with all state-run senior high schools in Taipei were conducted for filtering purposes and to invite suitable subjects for study. In order to incorporate more types of teaching and learning processes, two-stage snowballing sampling was employed. At the first stage, the mainstream teaching method used by most senior high school teachers was investigated, and later other variations were studied. In order to gain the teachers' and students' responses toward cultural teaching and learning, questionnaires and a series of interviews were used. Class observations were conducted to support the findings from the interviews and to gain an overall picture of classroom reality. Overall, the research subjects included analysis of the national English language standard curriculum and one prominent textbook, interviews with five teachers (one of whom was also the textbook editor), observation of three teachers' classes over one unit, and interviews (together with questionnaires) with students, thirty-five of them with structured questions and five with informal conversational questions.

Such a multi-method case study aims to obtain and interpret the 'dialogue' generated among the three parties (i.e. the teacher, students and the textbook) over culture content delivered in class. According to Denscombe (1998), multiple research methods for a case study can provide other advantages such as allowing each method to look at the research topic from a different perspective. The findings emerging from different research strategies can also be compared and contrasted; one result can be examined against another. Multiple methods make it possible for

¹⁸ The textbook analysis is based on the criteria for textbook evaluation focusing on cultural content provided by Byram (1989, 1993) and Cortazzi and Jin (1999). More details will be given in the next section.

findings to be corroborated, questioned or triangulated (Denscombe 1998).

4.2 The Research Process and Principles

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001, p.140) summarise the process of a naturalistic inquiry as having 11 sequential stages. This advice is helpful in setting out a research project and I have based my research plan broadly on it. Since in reality the fieldwork required much more preparation and effort than first assumed, several steps were modified specifically for this research and adapted to ten steps under five stages (Table 4.1).

The five sequential stages of my research process are: preliminary research, preparation for fieldwork, data collection, examination of data and data analysis. The ten steps are: reviewing relevant documents, conducting pilot studies, locating a field of study and addressing ethical issues, deciding the sampling and managing entry into the context, interviewing, observing classes, collecting the materials outside the field and textbook evaluation, completing the first draft of field notes, validating the transcripts and finally, data analysis. In reality, the stages of data collection and data analysis took most of the time and the steps in these procedures (such as sampling, interviewing, observing classes, collecting materials outside the field and textbook evaluation) were overlapping and recurring.

<p>Stage I: Preliminary Research Step 1: Reviewing relevant documents Step 2: Conducting pilot studies Stage II: Preparation for Fieldwork Step 3: Addressing ethical issues Step 4: Deciding the sampling & Managing entry into the context Stage III: Data Collection Step 5: Interviewing Step 6: Observing Classes Step 7: Collecting the materials outside the field & Textbook evaluation Stage IV: Examination of Data Step 8: Completing the first draft of field notes Step 9: Validating the transcripts Stage V: Data Analysis</p>

Table 4.1. Research Plan¹⁹

4.2.1 Preliminary Research

Reviewing relevant documents was the first step in the research procedure. The initial literature review was helpful in establishing a framework for the research and generating detailed questions for fieldwork. For example, some specific questions for interviews were strengthened after consulting relevant research reports, especially *Cultural Studies and Language Learning* by Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991). This study described a long-term project set in English secondary schools, using both qualitative and statistical approaches to seek an explanation of causal relationships from school instruction of French language to pupils' perceptions and attitudes toward French people. Another influential work was Byram and Risager's (1999) *Language Teachers, Politics and Cultures*. As the

¹⁹ In reality, although every stage is sequential, the steps of Stage III and Stage IV were often overlapping and recurring.

title suggests, this study focused on teachers' viewpoints on the cultural dimension of foreign language teaching. Its research results comprised qualitative interviews and quantitative data collected across Denmark and England. These two works together provided my research with a valuable guide to questionnaire design, particularly in the aspects of looking for abstract clues from both teachers' and pupils' thinking, such as perception and attitudes.

Conducting a pilot study was necessary as step two in order to ensure the quality and quantity of subjects for formal interviews and observations. In practice, several pilot studies were conducted for various purposes at different times. First, questions for the questionnaires and interviews were tested with acquaintances before being used with real informants. For the interviews with teachers, 20 provisional questions were structured under four headings: Background Information, Teaching the English Language, Teaching Cultural Content and Teaching Materials. Twenty questions were formulated in English, and later translated into Chinese for respondents. The Chinese version was listed in parallel with the English one for convenience and reference. In order to ensure that the Chinese translation was comprehensible to interviewees as well as true to the original English meanings, a pilot study was conducted with a colleague, a Taiwanese student in the third year of an EdD programme. Apart from her language proficiency in both Chinese and English, the major reason for inviting this colleague to help with the pilot study was because before she entered the University of Leicester School of Education, she happened to be an English teacher in a private senior high school. Although she has not been in service for several years, she has retained her expertise and work experience. She was in the best position among acquaintances at the time to

comment on the questions for the interviews with two senior high teachers. The pilot study took about thirty minutes. Most questions seemed sensible to her, although she advised that a few Chinese expressions might need to be more colloquially phrased. Another valuable input from her was that some private senior high schools, though following the national curriculum standard, also used imported international textbooks. The implication was that some private schools were either too prestigious or too inferior to comply with the national curriculum standard. With her helpful and valuable input, the Chinese questions were refined.

The formulation of questions for student interviews underwent a similar process. The original English version, including themes, wording and format, was designed and then revised carefully after examination. The Chinese translation was completed with attention to truthfulness and comprehensibility to senior high pupils. The design of the interview with students includes a questionnaire concerning personal background information (for written replies) and another list of semi-structured/structured questions for the face-to-face interview. Two respondents, college students in their late teens, (one male and one female) were invited to participate in the pilot study via e-mails from Taiwan. They turned out to be reliable correspondents. According to their replies, both of them took around 15 to 20 minutes to finish the written questionnaire and understood most questions for the interview. In common with my colleague, they also thought a more colloquial version of some questions would be helpful. They particularly mentioned the definition of culture in a few questions. The results of this pilot study appeared to be advantageous to the later stages of fieldwork.²⁰

²⁰ For the final questionnaire and a list of questions for the interviews with teacher and students please see the Appendix 1, 3, 4, 5, 6.

4.2.2 Preparation for Fieldwork

After the preliminary research, step three - addressing ethical issues - was essential for preparing the fieldwork in stage two. Since the case study was set in senior high schools, factors relating to school administration, students and teachers needed to be considered.

For the interviews with students, several ethical issues were taken into consideration. These included students' security, peer pressure and concern over privacy. The first decision was the location and time for the interviews. In my initial contacts with the schools, this was also the first direct question I was asked. Since senior high students in Taiwan are highly disciplined within the class hours,²¹ it was not easy for students to squeeze a moment for any outside-class activities such as an interview. Furthermore, the school was responsible for students' safety and conduct, especially in those undertakings suggested by the administrative or teaching staff. It was thus unlikely, for both discipline and security reasons, that the school would allow an unfamiliar researcher to lead their students away. This was why all the interviews with students were conducted in school and in the lunch break, the only free time students had during the school day.

The second concern was peer pressure. How could a student be made to feel at ease to participate in the interview? The method of selecting interviewees should be without bias. Neither the top students, nor the most privileged should be specially

²¹ Normally students are at school from 8:10AM to 5:00PM, from Monday to Friday. They are supposed to arrive at school before 7:30AM for the morning self-study session. The lunch break is approximately one hour including lunch time from 12:00-12:30PM and nap time from 12:30 to 1:00PM.

recommended. The process should not cause hard feelings for any students, whether participating or not. It should also be made clear to all respondents that the interview was not an academic assessment or administrative evaluation and no particular reward or risk would result from their participation. This message was assured through advance communication with teachers and students before the interviews.

The third concern was privacy. In accordance with the research questions, some parts of the survey queried the student interviewees' travel experiences and future plans regarding their learning of English. Considering that some students might not wish to reveal such personal information to their classmates, since childhood travel experience might indicate the affluence of a household, or future plans show personal ambitions, these issues were addressed through questionnaires instead of open discussion in group interviews.

For the interviews with teachers, the ethical dimensions considered were stress, and teachers' involvement in students' responses. First, teachers were assured that the class observations and interviews were not inspections of their teaching skills. It was essential to have teachers' understanding that any interview or class observation was part of the research method, not an official examination of their teaching performance. When I sat in class, nothing needed to be changed. This explanation was crucial to reduce the stress experienced by teachers while their teaching was being observed. Second, there was careful negotiation on teachers' involvement in students' responses. When teachers were curious about what their students said about them, a general summary was given, but no information as to

students' identities or their exact comments. Pupils had the right to review and verify their own answers, whereas their teachers were not supposed to interfere or judge pupils according to their responses.

Finally, although audio tape recordings were made when they were permitted, confidentiality and anonymity were upheld. Any information gained from the fieldwork was only used for this research and interviewees' identities were kept confidential. Pseudonyms were used for all the respondents.

Keeping ethical concerns in mind, the next step was deciding the sampling and managing entry into the context. In contrast to the private senior high schools, which might be either prestigious or inferior, the state-run schools in Taiwan stood out as research subjects in that they represented a common standard teaching quality and facility for the majority of the 16-18 age group to receive their regular formal education. Based on the principle of convenience sampling (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2001) and seeking for high 'relativity' (Denscombe 1998), schools in the capital city, Taipei, were particularly suitable. Because the researcher resided in Taipei, it was both practical and affordable to access schools in the city, and to make frequent visits. Moreover, even though this research does not claim to be 'generalisable', it is desirable, as Denscombe (1998) suggests, that it should be 'relatable'. The expectation here is to link the experiences and situations explained in this case to other similar instances in the rest of the country. Thus, a small-scale research focused on subjects in the capital, which provides indicators of many living and educational standards throughout Taiwan, was considered suitable. Finally, after long negotiation for access to regional state schools, the subjects for

this case study were teachers and students from four typical state-run institutions with good reputations in Taipei city.

The number of informants was the next critical decision to be made. After self-assessment of time and ability, interviewing a limited number of teachers and at least thirty students (of balanced gender proportion) face-to-face was considered manageable. On the one hand, a sample of thirty was small enough for me to deal with interviews in depth.²² On the other hand, it was also large enough, as recommended by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) and Denscombe (1998), for any form of statistical analysis to be carried out on the data if necessary. The interviewed pupils were aged 16 or 17 years with intermediate English proficiency, and in the second year of their study. These students had sufficient experience of learning English through their junior high education (3 years) and the first year of senior high study. Compared to the third-year seniors facing university entrance exams, these students had more spare time and were more open to extracurricular activities such as participating in these interviews.

For the interviews with teachers, the initial subjects represented the majority in that they used the traditional teaching approach (i.e. grammar-translation). Two teachers were selected at the first stage as the result of preliminary telephone interviews through personal networking. As the research and analysis proceeded, the sampling decision became dynamic. At the second stage of sampling, teachers who used different teaching methods (Ho 1994) were also invited to interview and agreed to

²² The number of thirty was set in the original plan. After completing the first draft of fieldnotes, extra interviews were conducted with five more students to make the sampling more complete. In addition, following class observations, some informal conversational interviews were conducted with students from the classes observed.

class observations. Telephone interviews were conducted with all 27 state-run senior high schools in Taipei in order to filter suitable schools and teachers for the interview and class observation at this stage. The details on interviews with teachers and students are explained in the following sections.

4.2.3 Interviewing

An important mission of this project was to find out how cultural teaching and learning in EFL was sensitised and how culture-related content in the textbook was learned. In other words, investigating how the teachers and pupils in the senior high school perceive, receive and react to teaching and learning of culture in their English class was essential. The meanings of the informants' perceptions, attitudes and values toward language and culture were as critical as the actual way they learned English at school.

Taking these research objectives into considerations, the decision to use interviews was made for the following reasons. First of all, "interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2001, p.267). Also, as Kerlinger (1970) suggests, the interview could be "used to follow up unexpected results...or to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do" (cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2001, p. 268). Last but not least, this method was particularly useful to "investigate emotions, experiences and feelings rather than more straightforward factual matters"; after all, "the nature of emotions, experiences and feelings is such that they need to be explored rather than simply

reported in a word or two” (Denscombe 1998, p. 111).

Several types of interviews were used in this research. On a scale of increasing formality, they were as follows: informal conversational interview (unstructured interview), interview guide approach (semi-structured interviews) and standardised open-ended interviews (structured interviews).²³ According to Patton (1990), each type has strengths and weaknesses for different purposes of data collection.

In practice the procedure was similar for each type of interview. Each followed the pattern suggested by Kvale (1996): bringing in a subject matter; proceeding on the topic; eliciting further information; requesting interviewees to specify or to give examples; straightforwardly asking for information; indirectly asking for response and clarifying respondents’ replies. These strategies were useful in each interview conducted.

The interview process was divided into three periods. At the first stage, the questions for interviews with both teachers and students were piloted.²⁴ In the second phase of interviewing through personal networking, it was learned that state-run schools in Taipei were not only more open to academic research than other schools, but also more representative in that they are where the majority of teenagers study. Initial contacts were made through telephone calls to several

²³ According to Patton (1980, quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2001, p.271), the characteristics of each type of interview are as follows. a) Informal conversational interview: “questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things; there is no predetermination of question topics or wording”. b) Interview guide approach: “topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview”. c) Standardised open-ended interviews: “the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order”.

²⁴ For details please see Section 4.2.1. Conducting Pilot Studies.

institutions around the start of the first semester in 2002. As well as introducing the aim of my research, I explained my request for entry into the field, especially the part involving interviews with students and class observation. After several contacts, two schools agreed to offer cooperation to a certain degree, and their teachers volunteered for interview. These two teachers were also known as typical good teachers in their schools.

In the negotiation process with the teachers, we agreed that all interviews with students would be held on the campus during the lunch break, for students' safety and convenience. The teachers also agreed to invite students to participate in the interviews based on random selection. We all recognised that student interviewees should be arranged in groups so that the pupils would be more at ease with me as an interviewer unfamiliar to them. I thus suggested 3 to 5 people for each group with face-to-face structured interviews (standardised open-ended interviews). In order to protect the interviewees' privacy, a written questionnaire supplementary to the interview was also used. Most personal information such as travel experiences, preferences and future plans were asked within the questionnaire. Students could fill it in privately without revealing their personal background to their classmates.

At the first stage, the two teachers interviewed demonstrated a mainstream teaching method²⁵ which was also known to be used by the interviewees' colleagues and many other secondary school teachers (Ho 1994). For the next phase of the study, taking into account other possible variations in addition to this teaching method, a snowballing sampling was considered (Bryman 2001).

²⁵ Here it indicates The Grammar-Translation Method. For details please see Chapter 6 – Pedagogies and Implications for Teaching of Culture.

According to Ho (1994), the communicative language teaching method is the second most widely used by teachers in high schools after grammar-translation. Since the current standard curriculum and textbook also suggest the communicative syllabus, it was worthwhile to consider whether or not CLT was implemented or effective to facilitate intercultural teaching and learning. The sampling objective for the final phase of fieldwork was thus to find suitable subjects for in-depth study.

In order to gain an overall understanding of English teaching methods used in senior high schools, a large-scale telephone survey was conducted with all twenty-seven state-run senior high schools in Taipei.²⁶ The first round of telephone calls was made to find out the chief coordinator of English teachers in each school. Next, telephone interviews were conducted with the chief coordinator English teacher in each school. The questions were mainly about the number of English teachers, the version of textbook used in the school, description of the teaching method most teachers used and any special characteristics of ELT in that school.

The result of the telephone survey showed that none of the schools specified that any of their teachers used the Communicative Language Teaching approach or the Communicative Syllabus. The mainstream teaching method was pervasive, although some informants did point out that their schools provided some facility or activities to encourage students to improve their listening or speaking skills. Individual teachers might also show personal characteristics in the classroom; for example, some teachers were known sometimes to use mild versions of

²⁶ For the relevant questionnaire please see Appendix 2.

communicative tasks in their teaching, and these teachers were identified as those who used the mainstream teaching method with variations.

After the filtering process, a series of interviews was carried out with two qualified candidates,²⁷ and their teaching was observed. In addition, since one of the teachers conducted a cross-cultural exchange activity within a session, the students gave written responses on this experience after class.²⁸ An informal conversational interview was also conducted with five students from this class in order to understand how they felt about this cross-cultural exchange activity, to support my observation of their class.

Finally, except where interviewees at the initial phase did not consent to tape recording, other interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The typed transcripts were also sent to interviewees to verify either through e-mail or in person. All information was treated with confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used in the final draft of transcription as well as in the report.²⁹

4.2.4 Observing Classes

An important aim of this research is to unfold the interaction between the ‘three parties’- teachers, students and textbook. Although the interviews with teachers and

²⁷ ‘Qualified’ candidates here refer to those who use not only *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*, but also communicative language teaching elements in their teaching.

²⁸ In one observed session, the class had a video conference with a class of American students through the Internet. After the 50-minute session, students wrote down their reflection on this experience and e-mailed it anonymously to their teacher and to me.

²⁹ The drafts of transcription are available upon request, although sample transcripts are attached. Please refer to Appendix 7, 8, 9.

students are helpful in gaining insight into informants' feelings, opinions and attitudes towards teaching and learning of culture in the English class, this research strategy may not be sufficient to provide an overview of the classroom reality.

As Denscombe (1998) indicates, participant observation provides at least five strengths: basic equipment, non-interference, insights, holistic view and subjects' points of view. These advantages were particularly true for this case study in that the textbook did not exist in isolation but was used by the instructor and students. With simple audio recording equipment and note-taking techniques, observation was useful in gaining an overview of how the course content was delivered in a naturalistic setting. The results of observation can also supplement the interviewees' own descriptions and reactions to supply a better picture of teaching methods. Finally, how cultural content is delivered can also be discerned and depicted through this first-hand research method. The subjects for class observation are thus as follows:

- a) the teaching method (i.e. the teacher's teaching procedure of a unit);
- b) the classroom reality (i.e. students' reactions and the interaction between the teacher and students if there is any);
- c) cultural content (delivered through the teaching procedure if there is any).

Based on Denscombe's (1998) advice, the procedure for conducting observation for this research was threefold: starting fieldwork, making field notes and considering ethics.

In order to gain ongoing access in the field, from the beginning of the case study several principles were employed in communication with informants. These principles were based on Bryman's (2001) practical advice. For example, whenever I was in contact with potential informants, especially arranging times for class observation, guidelines such as "using friends, contacts, colleagues, academics to help gain access"; "providing a clear explanation of research aims and methods and be prepared to deal with concerns", and "being reasonably honest about the amount of people's time" were all employed (Bryman 2001, p.295).

Nevertheless, access to a long-term class observation was far more difficult to obtain than expected. Many teachers or schools declined the request when I initially made contact with them. I presumed some possible reasons for rejection of class observations. First, it was neither academic convention nor an obligation for any Taiwanese high school to accept a researcher to sit in for observation. Second, most English teachers in Taiwan used the grammar-translation approach and followed the authorised textbook closely. While being under great pressure to help their students pass the entrance exam for universities, the teachers also had to manage to keep the large class intensively focused. Under such circumstances, it was understandable that teachers did not wish their teaching method or class management to be observed.

As a result, as mentioned above, convenience sampling and snowball sampling were used for this qualitative research. At the first stage, I reached those teachers who were willing to accept interviews and then focused on one of the teachers' teaching. I observed the teacher's instruction of a complete unit to a class of 37

male pupils in their second year of study. In this teacher's school, they had five English sessions each week. During the two weeks of observation, the teacher spent eight sessions finishing a unit of *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*. At the second stage, in order to obtain better understanding of how the English subject and cultural content was delivered through different teaching methods, it was necessary to consider other examples of teaching variations. Thus, in contrast to the previous class observation in which the teacher observed used highly structured means of instruction, the criterion for selecting research subjects in the second round concentrated on those who claimed to use communicative tasks in their classes. Two teachers' classes were later observed as a result of many contacts via telephone calls, e-mails and personal visits. The two teachers taught in two different schools; they spent eight and ten sessions respectively for one complete unit. Both of them taught first-year senior high students with *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*.

The type of observation used in this research was 'observer-as-participant', which means my role as researcher was openly recognised and my observation involved little participation (Bryman 2001). The main reason is that this role "takes the form of 'shadowing' a person or group through normal life, witnessing first hand and in intimate detail the culture/events of interest" (Denscombe 1998, p.150). It allowed observation to take place in a naturalistic environment, gaining authentic data.

Based on this principle, during observations of the three teachers' classes, the pattern of my presence was similar each time. In the first session the teacher introduced me to his/her students as an academic observer and told them that I

would appear in the class during the coming two weeks. Except for the brief introduction, nothing particular was arranged for my visit. I observed the class from a seat either in the last row or in the corner in the classroom, and remained there quietly for the duration of the class. Later on during the two weeks, my presence seemed invisible to both the teacher and pupils. I sat in the class more like a shadow; the whole environment remained natural as I wished.

There was one exception, when I had a little interaction with a teacher and her students in an on-line teleconference activity in a computer room. During this activity, while the Taiwanese students communicated with their American counterparts through computers and web cameras, I walked around the classroom and observed each group's performance. Since students knew my identity, some of them asked me expressions for conducting the real-time communication. The teacher also introduced me to her American counterpart, and a brief greeting was exchanged between us. However, when the class returned to the normal classroom and had a regular class, my presence was once again ignored.

While conducting observation, it was essential to make field notes. Before entering the site, a set of guidelines recommended by LeCompte and Preissle (1993) was noted.³⁰ Another checklist suggested by Spradley (1980), including important

³⁰ This is a list of 25 questions to which answers should be found while conducting observations (LeCompte and Preissle 1993, pp.199-200): 1. Who is in the group/activity - who is taking part? 2. How many people are there, their identities and characteristics? 3. How do participants come to be members of the group/activity? 4. What is taking place? 5. How routine, regular, patterned, irregular and repetitive are the behaviours observed? 6. What resources are being used in the scene? 7. How are activities described, justified, explained, organised, labelled? 8. How do different participants behave towards each other? 9. What are the statuses and roles of the participants? 10. Who is making decisions and for whom? 11. What is being said, and by whom? 12. What is being discussed frequently/infrequently? 13. What appear to be the significant issues that are being discussed? 14. What non-verbal communication is taking place?

items such as space, actors, activities, objects, acts, events, time, goals and feelings, was also found useful.

Content	Description
Time	The sequence of acts, activities and events
Space	The physical setting
Actors	The people in the situations
Objects	The artefacts and physical things that are there
Goals	What people are trying to achieve
Acts	The specific actions that participants are doing
Activities	The sets of related acts that are taking place
Events	The sets of activities that are taking place
Feelings	What people feel and how they express this

Table 4.2. Content List of Field Notes

Source: Adapted from Spradley (1980) quoted in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.312)

The notes on observation were written up on the spot and reviewed as soon as I left the site. In the first round of observations, neither video nor audio tape recording was employed to support the field notes, mainly because the teacher did not give his consent. However, fortunately, this situation was regarded as manageable as the

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15. Who is talking and who is listening? 16. Where does the event take place? 17. When does the event take place? 18. How long does the event take? 19. How is time used in the event? 20. How are the individual elements of the event connected? 21. How are change and stability managed? 22. What rules govern the social organisation of, and behaviour in, the event? 23. Why is this even occurring, and occurring in the way that it is? 24. What meanings are participants attributing to what is happening? 25. What are the history, goals, and values of the group in question?

teacher's instructions were highly structured. In the second round of observations, video recording was not permitted but the teachers were happy to allow audio tape recording. In fact, in view of the intrusive nature of overt video shooting which might cause teachers and students to become nervous or to behave unnaturally (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2001), audio recording was used instead as much as possible to assist my memory and note taking.

Finally, with regard to ethical issues, some general concerns have already been stated in the first section of this chapter. As with the interviews, consents for observation were obtained from the teachers in advance. Any information gained from the fieldwork would be used only for this research and the informants' identities remained confidential. As Denscombe (1998, p.152) suggests, the principles of considering ethics in the case of observation are: a) "any use of the material should ensure that no one suffers as a result, and any use of the material should avoid disclosing the identities of those involved". Pseudonyms were thus used to conceal the real names of the observed schools, classes, teachers and students. The description of findings or discussion of results would also avoid specifying any particular personal features.

4.2.5. Collecting Materials outside the Field and Textbook Evaluation

In the 'three-party' dialogue, the textbook plays an important role. It is an essential medium where cultural content is represented and delivered. As Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p.199) state, a textbook can be "a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skinner and an ideology". Not only the teacher but also students do rely on it. Analysis of the textbook is as important as opinions from the teacher and

students. Therefore, it is crucial first to collect relevant teaching materials and then to evaluate them.

In this research, 'materials' mainly indicate the English language standard curriculum, the textbook and supplementary teaching resources. In this case study, I focused on the authorised English textbook, *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*, which was a prominent version, possessing the highest market share in Taiwan. The textbooks were not available from general bookstores, and could only be purchased from the publisher. The teaching materials used by respondents also included grammar workbooks, test papers and CD (compact disk); one of the teachers also made use of interactive CD-ROM (read-only memory) with students' e-books in class.³¹ These supplementary teaching materials were all provided by the textbook publisher and could be purchased at the publisher's bookstore. In addition, each school also used monthly English educational magazines such as *Studio Classroom*, *English Landmark* and *English 4U*, although these were usually assigned as self-study material or homework rather than being taught in class. Unlike the textbook, these magazines were available in every bookshop. Moreover, as stated in the previous chapter, the textbook design closely complied with the national curriculum standard. Therefore, the curriculum itself was also an important document. It is a set of guidelines that specifies what types of text, which grammatical structures and vocabulary should be mastered at which stage of study. This document can be attained from the Ministry of Education or downloaded from the website of the Ministry.

³¹ E-book here indicates a type of laptop computer for students to use in class. It is A4 size with standardised hard disk containing course content in the form of interactive learning software installed by the computer manufacturer in advance.

With regard to analysis of curriculum and textbook, Brown (2000, p.195) cautions that “at every turn in our curricula, we must be wary of imposing a foreign value system on our learners for the sake of bringing a common language to all”. Sharing a similar concept, Cunningsworth (1995, p.90) argues that, “language textbooks are bound to express some social and cultural values. These are often not explicit and are unstated. Any detailed evaluation should therefore aim to detect and examine such unstated values”. They both point out that it is crucial to investigate what value system and cultural content is conveyed through the textbook. That investigation is one of the main research objectives of this study.

However, although there are many published checklists for examining the textbook, few of them specifically identify the cultural perspective for such ‘detailed evaluation’ (Dwyer 1984, Brown 1995, Cortazzi and Jin 1999). Many checklists which suggest the importance of culture appear to ask simple (though critical) questions about racial stereotypes, representation of cultures or integration of cultural content in activity design (Harmer 1991, McDough and Shaw 1993, Savignon 1983, Skierso 1991). Cortazzi and Jin (1999, p.202) conclude that questions about culture for textbook evaluation have never been prominent since “if [they are] present, [they] are nearly always placed at the end of a checklist, almost as an afterthought”.

Finding an effective approach to analyse the textbook was thus more difficult than other research strategies. A more thorough and relevant research was carried out by Risager (‘Cultural references in European textbooks: An evaluation of recent

tendencies', 1991a) who used a set of criteria, adapted from Huhn (1978) and Byram (1989, 1993), to evaluate cultural content in elementary EFL textbooks used in Scandinavia, although the results also appeared to be generalisable to the rest of Western Europe. This set of principles for examining cultural content in English textbooks was important and useful.

According to Risager (1991a) and Byram (1989, 1993), textbook evaluation can be divided into two levels: cultural content and treatment of cultural content. The overall checklist on cultural content can be summarised as follows:

- a) social identity and social groups
(e.g. social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities)
- b) social interaction
(e.g. differing levels of formality; as outsider and insider)
- c) belief and behaviour
(e.g. moral, religious beliefs; daily routines)
- d) social and political institutions
(e.g. state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government)
- e) socialization and the life cycle
(e.g. families, schools, employment, rites of passages)
- f) national history
(e.g. historical and contemporary events seen as markers of national identity)
- g) national geography
(e.g. geographic factors seen as being significant by members)

h) stereotypes and national identity

(e.g. what are typical symbols of national stereotypes)

(Byram 1993, cited in Cortazzi and Jin 1999, p.203)

A further seven essential criteria relate to the evaluation of the treatment of cultural content:

a) giving factually accurate and up-to-date information

b) avoiding (or relativising) stereotypes by raising awareness

c) presenting a realistic picture

d) being free from (or questioning) ideological tendencies

e) presenting phenomena in context rather than as isolated facts

f) explicitly relating historical material to contemporary society

h) making it clear how personalities are products of their age.

(after Huhn 1978, Byram 1989; cited in Cortazzi and Jin 1999, p.203)

Moreover, these criteria for textbook evaluation are not in conflict with the ICC model. On the contrary, they are also helpful in examining the form of cultural content which may be taught as attitudes, knowledge, skills or awareness.

The process of textbook evaluation took a great deal of time. First, there was a general review of Books 1 and 3 before interviews and class observation. Next, in parallel with the fieldwork, classification of all the reading texts (especially those in the first three books which were used by the respondents) was based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) definitions of types of cultural content.³² The structure of each

³² Generally speaking, there are three types of cultural content: target cultural content,

unit and general thematic topics were also noted. Closer scrutiny, based on the criteria mentioned above, was applied repeatedly to identify the treatment of cultural content throughout the books. This long process of textbook evaluation actually lasted throughout the whole research period: data collection, examination of data and data analysis.

4.2.6. Examination of Data

The Examination of Data stage took place almost in parallel with Data Collection. Two important steps at this stage were completing the draft of field notes and validating the transcripts. (This stage is followed by Data Analysis, the results of which are reported in the Part Four – Findings and Analysis.)

After finishing the interviews with students, I examined my fieldnotes. During the initial examination, two problems caught my attention. First, the gender proportion of my interviewees was not balanced. Since during the interviews, one student did not appear, I had twenty-nine respondents instead of thirty as expected. Among the twenty-nine, there were twenty boys and only nine girls. The major reason for this was that the two teachers interviewed had far more male students in their classes (one of the teachers only had ten female students in his two classes). Thus, when they invited students to volunteer (or to draw lots) for interviews, boys remained in the majority. Next, after I reviewed my notes and recalled all the interviews again, I sensed that one or two girls in the two female groups tended to agree automatically with what other members said, while this phenomenon was not prominent in the

international target cultural content and source (native or local) cultural content.

male groups.³³

Therefore, I decided to go back to the two sites to interview more girls. Instead of having groups, this time I requested to do pair interviews, with the expectation that the female students would feel more at ease in pairs. Interview slots with three pairs were arranged after the students' first term exam. In this way, all the interviews with students were completed.

4.2.7 Validating the Transcripts

After completing all the interviews with students, I transcribed the Chinese fieldnotes and typed them into the computer. Next, I translated the Chinese transcripts into English versions. After that, I dealt with the transcripts from interviews with teachers, which underwent a similar process. The Chinese transcripts were sent back to the respondents for review either as hard copies or via e-mail. The transcripts were all approved by the respondents. Later, the English scripts were examined by one Taiwanese colleague and a British research fellow, who focused on quality of translation and the English texts respectively. The process of data collection, from the preliminary research to fieldwork, thus ended here. Findings and further analysis are presented in the following chapters.

³³ I do not suggest any gender-related behavioural difference at such an early stage, though at the time I did take this possibility into consideration.

Part IV. Findings and Analysis

5. English Language Curriculum and Textbook Analysis: with Focus on Cultural Learning Goals and Content

In order to answer the research question on what cultural content is delivered in Taiwanese senior high English education and how it contributes to intercultural learning, it is important to examine the textbook content, as it plays an essential role in the three-party dialogue (i.e. textbook, teacher and students).

This chapter is devoted to the findings and analysis of the English language curriculum and a textbook series for senior high schools in Taiwan. It is divided into four sections. After an introduction to the criteria for textbook evaluation, the report begins with the overall content of the English language curriculum and teaching objectives, with special attention to cultural learning goals. This section also contains background information about the textbook design. Much relevant information was gained from an interview with one of the textbook editors. Next, there is a brief introduction to the reading texts, unit structure and suggested pedagogy of the textbook. Most importantly, different types of cultural content are identified and their treatment analysed, followed by further critical discussion.

As stated in the previous chapter, the recommended criteria for textbook evaluation include examining the representation of social identity, social interaction, people's beliefs and behaviour, social and political institutions, socialisation and the life cycle, national history, national geography, stereotypes and national identity (Risager 1991a, Byram 1989, 1993). The treatment of cultural content is another important dimension for analysis. Several considerations are suggested by Huhn

(1978) and Byram (1989), including providing accuracy, avoidance of stereotypes, showing realistic pictures, questioning ideological tendencies, presenting contextualised phenomena, and relating historical material to modern society. Moreover, whether or not the cultural content delivered through the textbook encourages intercultural attitudes, provides intercultural knowledge and intercultural skills and raises intercultural awareness should be noted. Finally, it is also crucial to examine how such cultural content and associated pedagogies respond to the cultural learning goals set in the curriculum.

5.1. Background Information on the English Language Standard Curriculum and the English Reader for Senior High Schools

According to the result of telephone interviews, at the time this research was conducted the *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools* was being used by more than half of the state-run senior high schools in Taipei. It is said that in the country as a whole, more than 60% of senior high schools use the Far East series. This series received high recognition from most of the teacher interviewees and enjoys its popularity as the leader of the senior high school English textbook market in Taiwan.

The Far East series, like three other versions, is approved and authorised by the Ministry of Education, Republic of China, and complies with the English language standard curriculum for the senior high school. The editorial committees of the *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools* are composed of English professors from several universities and a group of in-service teachers from

various senior high schools. One of the editors, who is also a senior high school teacher, agreed to be interviewed for this study, and offers valuable insight into the design of the textbook.³⁴

5.1.1. The Aims and Objectives of Senior High English Education

The aims and objectives of the senior high English course are prescribed by the Ministry of Education. They are part of the national curriculum and listed in an official document available from the Ministry website. These aims and objectives are the fundamental principles for the design of all versions of English textbooks. They are also supposed to be the goals that all English teachers should achieve.

The English language standard curriculum contains four sections: Aims, Course Schedule, Guidelines for Textbook Compilation and Implementation. The first section stipulates the aims and objectives of the senior high English course in detail. The second section specifies five sessions per week for English throughout the three-years of study. The third section gives detailed guidelines for designing a textbook, including the number of units in each book, the length of a unit, the number of new vocabulary items, the level of grammar, a range of thematic topics and types of language practice. The last section - Implementation, suggests specific pedagogies for teaching reading, vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking and composition. This final section also provides some directions for assessment.

The curriculum standard begins with a brief introduction, which sets out four aims and objectives (MOE 1999, pp.1-3). The introduction points out that the senior

³⁴ The result of the interview with this editor is integrated in the following report.

high English course, which extends from the junior high English programme, should continuously enhance students' English proficiency in preparation for their further study or future occupation. In addition to increasing language proficiency, the purpose of senior high English education is to help students cultivate correct learning strategies and ways of thinking as well as develop a broad worldview through cultural understanding. More specifically the four aims of the senior high English programme are:

- a) Developing students' four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in English and having them apply the language skills to daily life;
- b) Cultivating good learning strategies and positive learning attitudes in students as the basis for further and independent study;
- c) Growing students' interest in learning the English language so that they are able to appreciate or participate in English-related cultural or artistic activities;
- d) Enhancing students' understanding of international affairs, technology, and foreign culture in order to be familiar with current world issues as well as domestic and foreign cultures.

Under each aim, further objectives are specified accordingly. With regard to cultural learning, the subordinate objectives are listed as follows. After completing the senior high English language course, students are expected to be able to:

- a) understand international affairs and absorb the latest knowledge;
- b) understand and appreciate foreign³⁵ customs and ways of living;

³⁵ Note that the curriculum does not clearly define the word – 'foreign'. When it describes a country, culture or custom, the meaning can be ambiguous. But an impression gained from the interviews with teachers and students suggests that 'foreign culture/country' is interpreted by most informants as target culture/nation (i.e. American culture/America).

- c) introduce local customs and ways of living in English;
- d) compare and contrast the Chinese and Western cultures as well as appreciate the causes behind the differences.

It is worth noting that ‘most’ aims and objectives (except for cultural learning goals) are well developed in the curriculum. For example, incorporating the aim of enhancing students’ ‘four’ language skills, the section regulating textbook compilation specifies that the framework of each unit in the textbook should cover a thematic picture, the main reading text, vocabulary, sentence patterns, grammar and conversation on communicative functions. In the section on implementation, there are useful suggestions on techniques for teaching and motivating students to learn reading, vocabulary, grammar, listening, speaking and writing.

However, after all these careful instructions on how to enhance students’ English proficiency (especially language skills), and how to help them develop learning interest, it is surprising to see that there is no mention of how to achieve the cultural learning goals. Neither the Guidelines for Textbook Compilation nor the Implementation section contains any line dedicated to the cultural learning aims and objectives set out at the very beginning of the curriculum. There is no suggestion as to how students should be led to “appreciate or participate in English-related cultural or artistic activities,” or through what kind of pedagogy students are eventually able to “compare and contrast the Chinese and Western cultures as well as appreciate the causes behind the differences”. It is also not clear what knowledge on ‘international affairs’ or ‘foreign customs’ should be incorporated in the textbook, nor to what degree students can eventually “introduce

local customs and ways of living in English”, and there is no mention of how these curriculum goals will be assessed.

In other words, although the cultural teaching and learning goals are well stipulated at the beginning of the standard curriculum, they are actually ignored in the perspective of implementation, at every stage from material design and teaching methodology to assessment. Despite the accomplished design of linguistic study, the curriculum lacks clear definition and scope for cultural content to be taught and practical pedagogies for teaching that content. It is even weaker on how to measure students’ achievement of cultural understanding, as there is not a single word in the curriculum referring to this aspect. Whilst it is undeniable that the cultural learning aim and objectives are as important as the other three major aims and their objectives, the current imbalanced curriculum plan apparently leaves room for further improvement.

5.1.2. The Communicative Syllabus

According to the editorial board of *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*, whereas the previous version (prior to 1995) concentrated on reading, the current syllabus now focuses on the Communicative Approach, which responds to the aims and objectives of enhancing students’ four language skills and their communication competence. The editor, Ms Wu, explains: “The current approach is to modify the traditional pedagogy. In the past, we only attached importance to grammar-translation. We used the functional approach, which only stressed sentence patterns and grammar”. The drive behind this change, as the editor points out, is that “nowadays students learn a language in the hope of understanding and

applying it. We also expect our students to speak and listen well in addition to correct grammatical use. So, there must be a balance point for the four skills”.

As a result, a number of improvements have been made to the textbook design, especially in the design of activities. The editor offers further explanation: “The concept behind our materials design is based on the ‘communicative approach’, especially the activities such as ‘Pre-reading’ questions and ‘Listening’ practice. The section on ‘Language Use’ also emphasises interaction. Of course, there are many approaches for teaching practice. But what we think is, at least, activities in class should be communicatively devised to achieve the effect of interaction”. In other words, unlike the traditional teacher-centred or lecture-based English classroom, this edition of the senior high English textbook provides more interactive activities, which allows teachers and students to create mutual dialogues in the classroom.

However, a question remains as to whether most teachers actually adhere to the new communicative syllabus. The textbook editor suggests that many teachers continue to use the conventional (grammar-translation) approach; therefore, the implementation of the communicative syllabus depends solely on a teacher’s choice. She takes her own class as an example, saying that, “After the first term exam, I asked students to do an activity based on Lesson 2- Advertising. I asked them to design their own advertisement [commercial] by writing their own scripts and performing on stage. That activity was very interesting, or perhaps partly because they were a female class, students liked it very much. The joyful laughter never ended during the whole session”. Her teaching experience tells her that only when a teacher is willing to put in the effort can the

communicative syllabus truly be put into practice. As she said, “after all, the material is just a tool. It relies on how a teacher uses it”. All in all, a communicative teaching material is meaningful only when united with an appropriate pedagogy.

The teacher admitted that many students showed initial resistance to the activities. “In the beginning, students took every activity as a burden. They felt that they didn’t have time for it. After all, they spend most of their time preparing for tests”. However, she believes that her pupils will gradually realise that “English is useful only when it is used. Besides, if they plan to take GEPT [General English Proficiency Test] some day, in that test, listening and speaking are also required”.

In brief, the editor’s experience suggests that many teachers and students are unfamiliar with the communicative syllabus. The result of telephone interviews with English teachers in twenty-seven senior high schools in Taipei also shows that although there are some attempts to improve students’ listening and speaking, the conventional grammar-translation method remains the majority preference. It may be best concluded that the implementation of the communicative syllabus, in Ms Wu’s words, indeed depends on the individual teacher’s decision. Whether or not the four language skills can be equally well developed relies on a teacher’s pedagogy and use of the teaching material. Without an appropriate evaluation system, it is also hard to know how the communicative syllabus can be successfully put into practice by teachers in the field. Perhaps, in order to carry out the objectives on developing communicative competence, more ‘communication’ between the policy maker, textbook designers and school teachers, teachers and students will be needed.

5.2. Unit Structure and Text Themes

Each book of the *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools* series contains 12 units. Ten of the units are taught during the semester and the other two are assigned as reading homework in the vacation. Each unit has nine sections: Pre-reading Questions, Reading, Comprehension Check, Vocabulary, Grammar Focus, Language Use, Conversation, Listening, and Pronunciation. The unit structure closely follows what the standard curriculum stipulates. (The Reader series comprises six books provides thirty-six units on various topics.³⁶)

5.2.1 Structure of Course Units

The first section, Pre-reading Questions, is relatively short, and contains two to three simple queries. It always appears on the first page of a new unit under a colourful cartoon drawing or sometimes an authentic photo. The Reading section contains the main text, which can be a story, an essay, a poem or a play script. The reading text is the most important part of the unit because the rest of the course content and exercises are all related to it. The length and difficulty level of the text increases with each book in the series. Next, in the Comprehension Check, students are asked to discuss and answer some questions about the main ideas of the text, and to complete a set of true or false questions, again testing their understanding of the content. The Vocabulary section introduces 20 to 30 new vocabulary words and 5 to 10 idioms or phrases. There is also a

³⁶ In addition to the textbook, there are an optional student workbook, teacher's book, tape, grammar book, vocabulary book, outside reading exercise book, mock examination books, and interactive CD-ROM available from the publisher. There are also on-line supplementary materials and Computer Assisted Instruction software provided on the publisher's website (<http://www.hsenglish.com.tw/Teach/LessonInfo/SeniorHighSchool/Experience.aspx>). Since the use of supplementary materials is optional, the analysis focuses on textbook only.

Chinese translation. A further discussion section includes questions related to the main reading text for students to consider and review what they have learned.

The next section, Grammar Focus, sets out the important sentence patterns appearing in the main text. There are examples, followed by exercises and blanks for students to fill out. Language Use consolidates students' understanding of the main text or application of the language skills learned, providing various types of activities based on the topic. Activities include matching pictures with their description and listening to tape recordings. There are also discussion questions, short plays or information-gap tasks requesting pair or group work. The activities and their format (narratives, pictures, blanks, charts, etc.) vary from one unit to another, according to context.

The final sections of a unit concentrate on listening and speaking. Conversation, including colloquial expressions, is presented with a short transcript. The script is usually no more than 10 lines spoken by two characters. The conversational content is topical rather than communicatively functional, again closely related to the subject of the main reading text. A few new vocabulary words or phrasal expressions are explained in Chinese under the dialogue transcript. Finally, there is a simple listening comprehension or pronunciation exercise. A unit often ends with an English proverb, a short joke or riddle.

In general, the structure of the course unit carefully complies with the standard curriculum, and manifests a communicative syllabus. Although the reading text is the most important part of a unit, other sections supply various types of grammar/language practice involving group work or discussions. As the textbook

editor indicates, “the purpose [of various kinds of activities] is to allow students to have oral practice even at the time for grammar learning. All these tasks are designed to get students to speak up in class or even perform on stage in English”. In other words, these sections provide many interactive opportunities to the teacher and students. In addition to studying the literary text and grammar statically, communication is encouraged through the activities offered by the textbook.

The design of the conversation and pronunciation practice in parallel with the reading and writing sections shows the textbook designers’ attempt to balance teaching of the four skills as the standard curriculum requests. At the first glance, the unit structure thus far reflects the aims and objectives set out in the standard curriculum, especially the first point: “developing students’ four language skills in English”. However, further investigation of book content and classroom pedagogy is necessary in order to better judge to what degree these listening and speaking exercises are actually helpful in developing communicative competence.

5.2.2. Themes of Reading Texts

As mentioned earlier, the reading text plays an important role in the coursebook. It conveys meanings as well as carries grammatical and lexical learning points. The dialogue practice also centres on the topic of the main reading text. That is, the reading text defines the scope for teaching and learning. If there is any cultural content delivered in class, the reading text is the major reference.

The topics of the reading text cover a wide range. Generally speaking, each book contains various types of text such as poetry, excerpts from literature, short stories, essays about science, sports, nature, culture, biographies of notable people and articles on conversation/writing skills. The themes of the reading texts in the first three books are reported as follows:

In Book 1, Unit 1, 'Learning English Can Be Fun' is about learning English, with five Taiwanese students sharing their English learning strategies. Unit 2, 'The Blind Men and the Elephant' is an Indian fable. Unit 3, 'Plastic Money' discusses the advantages and disadvantages of using credit cards. Unit 4, 'Halloween' is an introduction to a festival categorised by the textbook as Western Culture. Unit 5, 'Making Telephone Calls', teaches basic conversation skills and manners for making phone calls in the USA. Unit 6, 'Gifts of Love', adapted from O. Henry's *The Gift of The Magi*, is about a poor couple who both sell their most precious things to buy Christmas presents for each other. Unit 7, 'Adding Some Colour to Your Life', offers knowledge about cultural differences on perception of colours. Unit 8 teaches two Jazz chants. Unit 9, 'Reading Signs', is about a Taiwanese grandfather's interesting experience of reading different signs in the USA. Unit 10, 'Eating Out', categorised by the textbook as 'local culture', discusses various options while eating out in Taiwan. Unit 11, 'Choosing a Bright Life: The Story of Hsieh Kun-Shan', depicts a Taiwanese painter's difficult but courageous youth. It is about how he faced his disability caused by an accident with great personality and optimism. The last unit, 'The Internet', opens with a story about a boy in need of information on the wild animals of Taiwan, and goes on to introduce functions and convenience brought by the Internet.

Using similar text types, Book 2 also covers a Western festival, Valentine's Day, and includes a touching short story and a fable ('The Bicycle' and 'How Much Land Does a Man Need?'). There are several units specifically relating to American conversational style, including Unit 3, 'American Manners', Unit 5, 'Compliments', and Unit 9, 'Filling Out Forms for Visiting the USA'. There is also one unit on a poem; a biography of an American entrepreneur, Milton S. Hershey, and short essays on science and sports. For example, Unit 7, 'Robots', discusses how robots can be used in industry and in the home; Unit 12, 'Basketball', is about its American inventor and later development of the sport. Most articles in the first two books are concise, though not necessarily with deep meanings.

The articles in Book 3 are longer than those in the first two books. Lesson One, 'Reading is a Journey' begins with a metaphor on exploring an unfamiliar area in Taiwan, and proceeds to an explanation of the English reading skills of skimming and scanning. Lesson Two, 'Advertising', demonstrates four principles for making effective advertisements. Lesson Three, 'A Letter from a Pen Pal', presents a letter written by an American teenage student describing her daily life to her Taiwanese pen pal. Lesson Four, 'Going Home', is a touching short story. Lesson Five 'Asking and Giving Directions', teaches those functional conversation skills. Lesson Six, 'Recycling: An Answer to the Garbage Problem', opens with the problem of rubbish in Taiwan and concludes that recycling is one effective solution to the environmental problem. Lesson Seven is a biography of Mother Teresa. Lesson Eight, 'Time Travel', though categorised by the textbook as a 'science and technology' text, mainly relates the story of the Hollywood movie 'Back to the

Future'. Lesson Nine is about the American poet, Emily Dickinson, and two of her poems. Lesson Ten, 'The Luncheon', adapted from Somerset Maugham's work, humorously depicts a poor young man's embarrassing date with an extravagant lady at an expensive restaurant in Paris. Lesson Eleven, 'A Trip to the Flea market', introduces the origins of the flea market and American garage sale. The last unit is about Superstitions in Taiwan and the Western World.

How and why does the editorial board select these themes? First of all, the themes of the reading texts, ranging from poetry, literature, culture and biography, to technology, environment, practical knowledge, sports and communication skills, carefully follow the guidelines set by the curriculum. In the editor's words, "when we choose topics and texts, we try to provide wide diversity. We all know that the Ministry of Education issues a curriculum standard, which specifies categories for text selection. So, normally we try to cover every category to comply with the regulations". At the same time, in compiling the texts, the editorial board holds the principles of 'reality, practicality, intellectuality and festivity'. Therefore, in fulfilling the Ministry's requirements, they choose texts which are relevant to students' daily life, good for their mental development and helpful to language proficiency. These features are described by the textbook editor, stated in the preface and manifested through the texts reviewed.

However, the need to comply with the scope of topics defined by the curriculum does impose limitations. The textbook editor points out the challenge they face behind the scenes: "We also realise that it is very difficult to cater for what students like under such circumstances [when it is necessary to comply with the curriculum]. Finding something to motivate them in this case is not easy". Trying to avoid boring the language learners,

the textbook editors hope that the text topics can be appealing enough to nurture students' interest in learning the English language while sticking to what the standard curriculum requests. It is understandable that textbook designers wish to stimulate students' learning interest. Even if this is not one of the aims and objectives stipulated by the curriculum, it must still be natural for any publisher or book editor to strive hard to appeal to more readers. When the textbook editor thought the text topics might not be interesting as they are confined by the curriculum standard, she actually underestimated the merits of their selection. The students' reactions to the textbook content reveal that, with some exceptions, most of the themes are not disappointing.³⁷ What calls for attention in this case is the content of the reading text.

While the themes appear interesting, unfortunately, many of the texts were fairly superficial, especially those on science or hard facts. These essays, among all the types of texts, appear most disappointing to students interviewed. For example, the essays characterised as 'technology and science' by the textbook, are not as 'scientific' as they claim to be. Many everyday examples are presented rather than serious theory or discovery. The only unit which once mentions a scientific notion is 'Time Travel' in Book 3. After a general introduction, it continues: "However, scientists have been debating the possibility of time travel for many years, and many have even published theories and predictions about how it might work. Some of them have used Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity as a basis for their arguments". The rest of the essay is about the film 'Back to the Future', with no scientific discussion at all. The laws of physics are only mentioned in passing.

³⁷ More on students' learning interests and responses to the textbook content is reported in Chapter 7-The Learners' Perspective of Intercultural Teaching and Learning.

Furthermore, perhaps due to the early date of publication (1999), the content of these essays was extremely dated by the time this research was undertaken. For example, 'Basketball' in Book 2 begins: "Basketball is one of the most popular sports around the world. During the NBA season...people have their TV sets on every day to watch their favorite teams - the Chicago Bulls, the Houston Rockets...There's nothing more exciting than watching Michael Jordan slam dunk the ball..." By the time my interviewees were studying this unit, the NBA star, Mr. Michael Jordan had left the Chicago Bulls and was about to retire. The broadcast of the NBA in Taiwan had also declined in popularity since the article was written. Similarly, 'Advertising', in Book 3, refers to a Taiwanese TV commercial slogan: "Trust me, you can make it!" In the first paragraph, the writer asks, "Are these familiar words? Where did they come from? Almost everyone knows this, too: from a TV commercial for a weight-loss center". The tone here suggests high familiarity with the slogan, yet the TV commercial was released many years ago, and most current senior high students are far too young to have heard of it.

Generally speaking, the essays are written in a similar style. They often begin with simple questions to attract readers' attention. There is no real depth, and the content is often out of date. Although the themes of the essays are classified by the textbook as 'information, science and technology', they provide neither specialised scientific information nor substantial knowledge.

5.3. Evaluation and Treatment of Cultural Content

This section evaluates cultural content provided by the textbook and the treatment of that content. Among the thirty-six units considered, units on 'Halloween', 'Valentine's

Day', 'The Thai New Year' and 'The Legend of the Paiwan Clay Pot' were categorised by the textbook as 'Culture'. However, it is argued that many other texts which are not so classified are also full of cultural content.

Following analysis, the textbook content can be classified as Target Culture, Source Culture and International Target Culture content. In Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) definition, Target Culture is where English is used as a first language. In this case study, results of analysis show that American English is the paradigm used by the curriculum and textbook. American culture is thus an important subject matter represented in the textbook as Target Cultural content. Source Culture indicates the language learners' own culture (which includes Chinese Culture and Taiwanese Culture in this case). Finally, International Target Cultures suggest cultures of other English-speaking countries (other than USA) or places where English is not a first language or used as an international language.

5.3.1. Implications for Teaching of Target Culture

The *Far East English Reader* series presents a great deal of American culture. Across thirty-six units, about 40% of the texts are directly linked to it. This prominent type of course content is mainly about American communicative style, including conversation skills, communicative manners and how to behave while visiting the USA. Other units introduce American personalities or lifestyles. Even where the text theme is not directly related to American life or people, it is argued that the target culture serves as schemata and is taken for granted. All in all, target cultural content, accounting for about 80% of overall textbook content, is worth looking into carefully.

Many units within the six books teach American culture directly, including communication skills for living in the USA and American lifestyles. For example, Unit 5 of Book 1 is about American telephone manners; Unit 9 is about reading signs in the USA. Unit 2 of Book 2 specifies American social manners, including table manners and behaviour codes in other situations. In the same book, Unit 5 is about how to give and receive compliments in English. The examples draw on different linguistic habits between American and Taiwanese people. Unit 9 teaches readers how to fill out various types of form for living in or travelling to the USA, such as the I-94 Arrival Record Form, a hotel registration form, and a club membership application form. In the third book, Unit 5 introduces the language for asking directions and the examples are also located in the USA. There are other units in Books 4 to 6 on body language, making requests, travelling alone and how to carry on a conversation, all with specific reference to American culture. In these units, many communicative tips and conversational examples, subject to the contexts and topics, are given in the main reading text and in the section on language use. These texts aim to demonstrate how to deal with Anglo Americans, how to live, or in the sense of tourism, how to 'survive' in the USA.

In this category of texts, although the tips on conversational skills and manners are useful to help students with their communicative competence, it is the sole Anglo-American norm that calls for attention. First, it is arguable that Taiwanese students will use English only for communicating with American native speakers. With the trend toward internationalisation, modern students choose many destinations for further study.³⁸ They may also meet people from different parts of

³⁸ For relevant information please see Chapter 2 – Context of the study.

the world for various purposes (Smith 1983). Meeting American people while living in the USA is only one of many possibilities in the modern global village. There is an ever growing demand for English as an international language (McKay 2002), and the task of meeting this demand should not be ignored. Second, as Cameron (2002) and others (Modiano 2001, Pennycook 2000) warn, any strong emphasis on a single norm of speech style in the modern EFL classroom runs the risk of being subject to linguistic hegemony. Using a single language model (i.e. American English in this case) may be convenient for material design and classroom teaching, but instructors as well as textbook designers must be very careful when introducing a particular speech style and dominant culture not to suppress other varieties, pass on the values of that dominant culture or impose the 'standard ideology' upon students. So far in our analysis of the textbook, we have not seen any device to avoid such ideological tendencies. The target language, especially communication style, is endorsed as the authoritative paradigm without mention of other varieties.

Other target-culture related texts are about American ways of life. Through essays on traditional customs, national heroes, geographic features or contemporary events, the American national identity is introduced. For instance, in Book 1, the main reading text of Unit 4 introduces a traditional festival: "Halloween which falls on October 31, is one of the most unusual and fun holidays in the United States". From customs to daily lifestyle, 'A Trip to the Flea Market' in Book 3 tells readers that while visiting the USA, to make their dollar go further, readers should not miss "one of the best deals America has to offer", the so called Flea Market. 'A Letter from a Pen Pal', also in Book 3, describes an American teenager's colourful daily life. In the text, a teenaged girl, Karen,

writes to her Taiwanese pen pal, Ling-Ling, about what she normally does during the week. For example, she plays tennis, goes shopping, eats at McDonald's or Burger King, and plays video games with friends. The unit on 'Tornadoes' in Book 4 discusses the natural disaster many American people must cope with. Some texts introduce people notable for their personality or special achievement. Unit 6 in Book 2 is a biography of Milton S. Hershey, the American entrepreneur and philanthropist. Unit 1 of Book 6 is about the popular cartoonist Charles M. Schulz and his famous creations Charlie Brown, Snoopy and their friends. A unit in Book 5 introduces the accomplishment of Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren, known as Abby and Ann Landers, as 'The World's Best-Loved Advice Givers'. There are also texts (in Books 3 and 5) on the famous American poets Robert Frost and Emily Dickinson and their poems. Finally, General McArthur's Prayer for His Son and Dr Martin Luther King's 'I Have a Dream' speech are provided in Books 4 and 6, revealing important values and these American heroes' faith in humanity.

The units mentioned above manifest the principles of practicality and a certain degree of intellectuality and festivity, although the aspect of 'reality' is questionable. The texts relating to communicative skills, based on Anglo-American norms, are useful for interaction with native-English speakers. The poems and texts by and about great personalities are encouraging and inspirational. Most of the topics and text content in this category are in the spirit of celebration or light-heartedness, relating to holidays, festivals or making new friends from a different culture.

However, these very characteristics mean that the target culture is represented only

partially and inaccurately. There is no reference in the first three books to the true multiracial and multicultural nature of American society. The linguistic conventions and lifestyles represented are mainly middle-class Caucasian, and the festivals introduced belong to Christianity. Other social classes, religious beliefs or ethnic minorities in the USA are ignored.

The pictures, illustrations or cartoons are also in line with this ideological tendency. For example, in the six books, there are only two images of African-Americans. One is a photograph of Dr King, accompanying the text of his speech; the other is of an NBA basketball star player. It is arguable that even these images are stereotyped, as black people in the United States are associated either with sport, or with oppression. There is a lack of depiction of minority groups in responsible positions or professional roles.

As Pennycook (2000) argues, the portrayal of affluent middle-class Caucasian lifestyles can scarcely be regarded as an indisputable representation of American culture, not to mention English-speaking cultures in general. In this case, the textbook for the senior high school students could have provided a better portrayal of the multicultural society of the USA, or linked the historical situations of different racial groups with the contemporary status quo.

It is also worth examining the principle of festivity and the spirit of celebration throughout the cultural content represented in this textbook series. In common with Gray's (2002) findings for internationally marketed coursebooks, only 'safe' or 'happy' topics are selected for the *Far East English Reader*. Although, unlike the

international publishers (Gray 2002), the standard curriculum does not stipulate what topics should be excluded, nevertheless, many critical issues or societal facts about the target culture are avoided in the authorised textbook. While there is a place for encouraging stories with positive points of view, on the other hand, an absolutely harmonious world depicted through exclusively cheerful themes (e.g. interesting trips, festival celebrations, meeting new friends) is hardly true to reality. Issues regarding terrorism, international relations, health care, changes in modern family/interpersonal relationships, and diverse religious beliefs are the real major concerns in everyday life, both inside and outside America. If the curriculum aim and objectives of helping learners to gain knowledge of international affairs and better understanding of Western culture are to be accomplished, then text themes and cultural content offering a more truthful representation of reality should be taken into consideration.

Overall, we have seen that the textbooks provide a lot of content related to American culture. American English is apparently the language model used by the textbook. The vocabulary spelling, pronunciation and grammar are based on the American English paradigm. Throughout the six books, with the exception of Unit 3 in Book 4, which gives a brief introduction to the spelling and vocabulary differences between American English and British English in the form of a drama, other varieties do not feature in the material. All the units on conversational skills and manners are centred on American speech style.

However, bizarrely, the adoption of this paradigm is neither stipulated in the curriculum by the Ministry of Education nor stated in any part of the coursebook.

American English is simply taken for granted as the standard to be implemented in the programme of study. The recognition of this Standard English seems to be a common fundamental belief. No one has ever questioned this choice or explained it to students, so natural has it seemed to most educators and students.

Such 'naturalisation' towards the American English paradigm is not confined to the linguistic aspect. Target-culture-related content is embedded in many literary texts, even though it may be latent at first glance. As Halliday and Hasan (1989) point out, a text is always intertwined with the context. The cultural background serving as setting for a literary story may not be noticeable at first sight, but it does exist. For example, in the short story 'Gift of Love' (Unit 6 of Book) the writer does not specify where the events take place, but when the narration reads: "Della had been saving for months, one or two 'pennies' at a time, but there was only one 'dollar' and eighty-seven 'cents' ...", the monetary units reveal that the protagonist is likely to be in North America. As another example, some texts begin with an opening sentence featuring a place name. In 'Going Home' (Unit 4 of Book 3), the opening line, "They were going to 'Florida' - three boys and three girls..." suggests that 'it goes without saying' that Florida is a popular resort in the southern part of the United States. In Unit 12 of Book 2, one paragraph begins: "Basketball is one of the most popular sports 'around the world'... people have their TV sets on every day to watch their favourite teams - 'Chicago' Bulls, the 'Houston' Rockets, the 'Los Angeles' Lakers..." The tone suggests that 'as we all know' they are famous professional basketball teams representing their cities which are located in the United States. There are also more direct statements in some informative articles (which are specified by the textbook as essays on science or practical knowledge).

For example, in Unit 2 (Advertising) of Book 3: “almost everyone in American culture, for example, knows these famous words: Things go better with Coke or an ad campaign for Nike athletic shoes: Just do it...”. These slogans and brands appear to be familiar not only to people in America but also to millions of consumers around the world.

In other words, a text does not need to be categorised as ‘Culture’ by the textbook to be cultural content. Cultural content can serve as schemata for reading; and provide a macro context for a specific reading text. More importantly, the examples above show that familiarity with the target culture is naturalised, as if aspects of that culture were expected to be common knowledge to any user of this set of textbooks. The naturalised attitude is suggested by the tone and manner of the texts. In the whole course of study, there is neither reflection on the existence of American popular cultural products nor questioning of the use of the recurring social settings. The consequence may be that, eventually, language learners’ cultural awareness is undermined.

5.3.2. Treatment of Source Culture: Localisation or Trivialisation?

In this series of textbooks, a fresh element is the source cultural content. There are six reading texts with Chinese/Taiwanese themes, in addition to a few cultural contrasts presented in the Language Use or Conversation sections.

The six units on source cultural content cover a wide range of interests, which together provide a good basis for learning cultural comparison, although some details could have been given further consideration. Unit 10 of Book 2 introduces The Great Wall of

China; the other five relevant units are about aspects of life in Taiwan, including local people, tourism, food, artefacts and nature. Many students were particularly impressed with the inspirational biography of the disabled artist, Hsieh, Kun-shan.

These texts provide a start in guiding students to describe their own country, food or places of interest in English. However, it is noted that some advanced discussion activities in one or two texts, especially in later books, may need more background information for students. For instance, names of many local cultural objects may have special or official English translations. Without a guide showing where and how English learners can obtain such information in English, it would be very difficult for them to be able to talk 'freely' about these local subjects as the textbook instructs.

Some essays categorised as science or practical knowledge also refer to certain Taiwanese features or characters. At first glance, these texts seem to be highly 'localised'. However, the Taiwanese features only serve as prologue or background to the main content without any deep meaning. They are neither developed nor emphasised to provide any useful information. The reading text, 'Internet', in Book 1 provides a good illustration. The first paragraph describes a boy who is worried about his assignment on the wild animals of Taiwan. Later this boy finds a solution to his problem by using the Internet. After this, there is no further reference to the Taiwanese context, such as the information on wild animals that the boy might have obtained, or from what websites the boy finally found helpful information. Another example is Unit 1 of Book 3, 'Reading Is a Journey'. The text opens with a line about how a person can take a trip around Taiwan, then proceeds to a discussion of how reading experiences can be like that journey. Again, the Taiwanese setting vanishes right after the beginning of

the first paragraph. Such passages tend to contextualise the main content in Taiwan or try to give a local touch, but it is too factual to be considered as substantial 'content' or serious 'information'.

Another type of source cultural content is represented in the form of cultural comparison. According to the textbook editor, this part of content cannot be considered as essential, but in her opinion, while learning a foreign language students actually shuttle between 'two cultures'.³⁹ Thus, the device of 'cultural contrast', in her words, grants students valuable opportunities to compare and contrast the target culture and source culture. As Byram (1989b, 1997b, 2001) indicates, the skill of comparing, interpreting and relating foreign culture to one's own is the key to helping the learner prevent or solve intercultural clashes. This intention can be positive in developing intercultural competence with the awareness of similarity and differences, in addition to the ability to appreciate the reasons behind the cultural difference. This is also one of the major aims and objectives expected by the curriculum. Although the rest of the curriculum does not specify how this cross-cultural learning goal can be achieved, the textbook editor, Ms Wu, points out a promising start.

All of the teachers and many of the students interviewed believe that the source cultural content and the device of cultural comparison and contrast aims to enhance students' ability to verbalise their own culture. Many informants believe that against a background of internationalisation, with increased opportunities both to travel abroad and to meet foreigners within the country, the competence of sharing local culture with outsiders will be crucial. Therefore, such content has a special significance nowadays,

³⁹ The material designer probably means American and Taiwanese cultures, though it is arguable that students are likely to be in contact with more than two cultures through the study of English.

and of course, this is also one of the main aims and objectives set by the English language curriculum standard.

Nevertheless, the evaluation of the textbook thus far reveals that some representations of source culture may run the risk of contradicting the originally good intention of achieving the intercultural learning goals. Despite the thoughtful device of 'cultural contrast', it is argued here that, paradoxically, source cultural content is trivialised, and stereotypes are reinforced through cultural comparison. Examples of this kind mainly appear in the Conversation or Language Use sections, which function more as follow-up activities than as serious content.

The first example appears in Unit 4 of Book 1, in which a Taiwanese character, Hua-yin, chats with an American boy, Richard, about a Halloween party and Chinese Ghost Festival. Responding to Richard's question on the folk belief – Chinese Ghost Festival - in Taiwan, Hua-yin's explanation is almost unintelligible, concluding by saying that the religious worship offerings set outside her house had simply 'disappeared' next day.

<p>Richard is having coffee with his Chinese friend Hua-yin.</p> <p>Richard: Hey! Some of my friends are having a Halloween party. Would you like to go?</p> <p>Hua-yin: A what party?</p> <p>Richard: A Halloween party. Halloween is a traditional American holiday. It's a day when people dress up like ghosts and witches and other evil things.</p> <p>Hua-yin: That's sounds scary! It reminds me of the Ghost Festival that we celebrate in Taiwan every summer.</p> <p>Richard: Really? Is that something like Halloween?</p> <p>Hua-yin: Well, we don't dress up like ghosts, but we offer food for the ghosts to eat and burn paper for them to use as money.</p> <p>Richard: That sounds cool! But do the ghosts really eat the food?</p> <p>Hua-yin: I don't know, but last year on the Ghost Festival we put some cookies outside our door and the next morning they were gone.</p> <p><End></p>
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Table 5.1. Excerpt from the Conversation Transcript in Unit 4, Book 1, *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*

If this dialogue is intended as a model of how to talk about local customs in the source culture, then it is easy to imagine that it could be a cause of great confusion or even misunderstanding. Did ghosts consume the offerings? Does it suggest the religion is based on superstitions? Or is the girl's statement intended to be funny? But why does she take her family belief as a joke? We have no idea about the answers or the character's intention, but such a sample dialogue apparently does not elucidate any part of Taiwanese culture to foreigners. On the contrary, it runs the risk of denigrating local beliefs by implying that they are based on ludicrous superstition.

The second example is in Unit 10 of Book 2. In the Conversation section a Taiwanese girl, Yu-ching, and her American friend, Patricia, talk about their travel plans. Yu-ching tells Patricia that her favourite place is the Grand Canyon in the USA and her next destination will be Paris. But bizarrely, Yu-ching has never heard of the famous tourist spots in her own country, such as Mount Ali and Taroko Gorge. In the middle of the conversation, Yu-ching even complains, "Gee, I wonder why Taiwan doesn't have such

wonderful sights!” The places of interest in Taiwan are actually introduced by the foreign student, Patricia, to Yu-ching.

<p>Yu-Ching calls her friend Patricia to talk about her travel plans.</p> <p>Yu-ching: I'm going to visit Paris this summer. I can't wait to see the Eiffel Tower. I've heard it's so romantic!</p> <p>Patricia: It is! But it's not as interesting as the Leaning Tower of Pisa. In fact, Italy has lots of beautiful old buildings.</p> <p>Yu-ching: Actually, when I travel, I like to see the natural scenery most. My favorite place is the Grand Canyon.</p> <p>Patricia: Oh, I love the special rock formations there. And the sunsets are really beautiful. But Niagara Falls is my favorite.</p> <p>Yu-ching: Gee, I wonder why Taiwan doesn't have such wonderful sights.</p> <p>Patricia: But it does! The sunrise at Mount Ali is great. And Taroko Gorge is breathtaking. People from all over the world come to see them.</p> <p>Yu-ching: Really? Maybe I should do more travelling right here at home.</p> <p><End></p>

Table 5.2. Excerpt from the Conversation Script in Unit 10, Book 2, *Far East English Reader for Senior High schools*

Again, the dialogue is filled with confusion and even baffling points. The Taiwanese girl has been to many world famous resorts⁴⁰ but appears to be extremely ignorant of her own country (especially as the two places mentioned in the script are well-known National Scenic Areas in Taiwan). Perhaps, the design of this exchange attempts to remind readers of the importance of visiting one's own country; however, it is still as bizarre as if a British teenager had no idea about Stonehenge or the Lake District! It is hard to know what the purpose is behind such discourse. The Taiwanese interlocutor in the example dialogue once again shows ignorance rather than comprehension of native culture. There is also a lack of confidence in the Taiwanese character. When the character exclaims: “Gee, I wonder why Taiwan doesn't have such wonderful sights!” her tone and meaning patronises the national geographic factors of her own country.

⁴⁰ Note that it is uncommon for a teenager to have travelled to so many foreign countries.

However, what she does not value much may be of great significance to many people in Taiwan. A model passage like this in an authorised textbook intended to guide Taiwanese students to introduce their own culture to foreigners can be very confusing. This type of discourse also reflects what many students revealed in the interviews, that they believed very few people in Taiwan had respect for their own culture.

Another example worth noting is Unit 3 in Book 3. In this unit, readers see content of letters exchanged between a Taiwanese girl, Ling-ling, and her American pen pal, Karen. In the letters, the two girls share their school and family lives - an intangible cultural dimension. This could have been an effective demonstration which engaged senior high students in learning how to talk about their daily lives, cultural behaviours or even identities. However, what we read instead is that the Taiwanese girl jumps to a hasty conclusion, suggesting that her parents are conservative as traditional Chinese parenting.

<p>A Taiwanese girl, Ling-Ling replied a mail to her American pen pal Karen.</p> <p>Dear Karen, Hello! Thank you for the new American stamps of flowers. They are very beautiful. I like them very much...</p> <p>I don't have any boyfriend yet, because my parents do not allow me to date. They say I have to wait until I got to college. Don't you think they are a little too conservative? But anyway, I love them...</p>
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Table 5.3. Excerpt from a Personal Letter in the Language Use Section in Unit 3, Book 3, *Far East English Readers for Senior High Schools*

The girl judges her parents as too 'conservative' to allow her to have a boyfriend. This statement is not followed by any explanation of, for example, why having a boyfriend is

important to her or in what way her parents did not permit this. There is only a simple and compromising conclusion: “anyway, I love them...” As a text on cultural comparison and contrast, it is a pity that there is no elaboration of Taiwanese family relationships in contemporary social context. The text simply reinforces the stereotype of Chinese parents as reserved and old-fashioned. Thus far, all the examples shown above demonstrate a tendency to trivialise local culture by portraying Taiwanese student characters as giving shallow (or even unintelligible) information about Taiwanese culture to their American counterparts.

The good intention to bring localised text and context into the EFL learning material should certainly be recognised. Blending the language learner’s own culture with study of the target culture is a promising start for improving intercultural competence, leading to higher intercultural awareness, better intercultural knowledge and even intercultural communication skills (Byram 1989b, Cortazzi and Jin 1999, McKay 2003). In particular, the device of cultural comparison can lead language learners to mediate between the target culture and source culture. Also, as many students pointed out in the interviews, learning source cultural content in English not only made the study of English feel more friendly, but could also help them to be articulate when presenting Taiwanese culture. This goal of teaching and learning source culture is also what the standard curriculum and textbook designers wish to achieve. Therefore, even though source cultural content may not be essential in any series of English textbooks, the quality of such content should not be compromised. Any misleading, confusing or even inaccurate representation such as that mentioned above is in urgent need of second thought. In this case, the treatment of source cultural content should have avoided trivialisation. As it is, the content only scratches the surface of localisation.

5.3.3. Juxtaposition of International Cultures

The final category of cultural content provided in the textbook relates to international cultures. Texts on general Western culture or intercultural knowledge are classified here. For example, Unit 7 in Book 1, 'Adding Some Colour to your Life', is about how colours can mean very different things to Chinese and Western people, and how colours can help to change people's feelings or attitudes. The biography of Mother Teresa, presented in Book 3, tells readers how the saint helped the poorest of the poor and the sickest of the sick around the world. Another unit in Book 3, 'Superstitions', gives examples of unlucky symbols, such as Friday the 13th and broken mirrors in Western culture, and of a lucky representation - fish - for the Chinese New Year. Unit 4 in Book 4, 'Water, Water Everywhere' introduces the traditional Thai New Year. Unit 12 in Book 6, 'Mysteries of the Past', describes world heritages in different countries.

In addition to these texts, there are also images which show various types of symbols in different cultures. The major characteristics of these texts and visual symbols are that overseas subjects or objects are presented, often in juxtaposition, with little explanation. Although this form of presentation may help students to learn about other cultures, it is argued that the juxtapositions of international cultures do not bring much profound content to language learners.

For example, in the Language Use section in Unit 10 of Book 2, there is a matching test between the Wonders of the World and correct names. Nine photos are shown: the Great Wall of China, the Grand Canyon in the USA, the Pyramids in Egypt, Niagara

Falls in Canada, the Eiffel Tower in France, the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy, Mount Fuji in Japan, the Golden Gate Bridge in the USA and Taroko Gorge in Taiwan.

II. Wonders of the world

A. Match each picture with the correct name.

a.  b.  c. 

d.  e.  f. 

g.  h.  i. 

1. the Great Wall (China)
2. the Grand Canyon (USA)
3. the Pyramids (Egypt)
4. Niagara Falls (Canada)
5. the Eiffel Tower (France)
6. the Leaning Tower of Pisa (Italy)
7. Mount Fuji (Japan)
8. the Golden Gate Bridge (USA)
9. Taroko Gorge (Taiwan)

B. Choose from Part A one of the places that you would like to visit. Then work in pairs and tell your partner why you choose it. You may use the following expressions to describe a special feature of the place.

10

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Figure 5.1. A Scanned Page View from Language Use of Unit 10, Book 2, *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*

In this example, there are only photos and names of the sites without any other description. This is a simple practice of picture recognition, with no intention to give substantial knowledge or information about these famous national geographic icons.

*Figure 5.2. Scanned Page Views from Language Use of Unit 11, Book 2, *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools**

The pictures representing different nations appear next to the exercise questions with blanks to fill out. There is not even a name to match to the pictures. Again, the images

Also in Book 2, the Language Use section of Unit 11 requests students to recognise banknotes of different countries and practise the exchange rate of many foreign currencies. The photos on the first page show banknotes from various countries. The drawings on subsequent pages represent different countries: the Statue of National Liberty Monument for America, Arc de Triomphe for France, The Kremlin for Russia, Mount Fuji for Japan, Sydney Opera House for Australia and Neuschwanstein for Germany.

LANGUAGE USE

I. Currencies

Look at the picture cards of notes from different countries and answer the questions that follow.



1. Which country does each bank note come from?
 2. What is each currency called?
 3. Which of the above bank notes do you like best? State the reasons for your choice.

II. Exchange Rate

The following table shows the exchange rates between the New Taiwan Dollar (NTD) and other currencies.

NT Dollar EXCHANGE RATES

Currency	Buying	Selling
United States	25.12	25.25
British Pound	1.28	1.25
Canadian Dollar	21.12	21.25
Chinese Renminbi	2.25	2.25
South Korean Dollar	20.12	20.25
Japanese Yen	1.25	1.25
Indonesian Rupiah	1.25	1.25
Malaysian Ringgit	1.25	1.25
Philippine Peso	1.25	1.25
Singapore Dollar	1.25	1.25
Thai Baht	1.25	1.25
Hong Kong Dollar	1.25	1.25
French Franc	1.25	1.25
West German Mark	1.25	1.25
Italian Lira	1.25	1.25
Spanish Peseta	1.25	1.25
British Pound	1.25	1.25

The following people are traveling to other countries. Help them exchange their money for other foreign currencies.

1.  Theresa is flying to New York. She has NTD 20,000. She will visit the White House and the Statue of Liberty. She can exchange her money for _____ U.S. dollars.

2.  Mei-ling wants to visit the Louvre Museum in Paris. She has been saving money for years. She plans to take NTD 40,000 with her and stay in France for one week. She can exchange her money for _____ Euro/dollars.

The Wangs will travel to Russia. They're all excited about visiting this mysterious country. They will take NTD 10,000 with them. They can exchange their money for _____ rubles.



Yanna wants to go skating in Japan. This will be the first time she travels alone. Her mother gave her NTD 10,000. Yanna can exchange her money for _____ yen.



Li Ling is an opera singer. She has been invited to sing at the Sydney Opera House. She will be paid for the performance, so she will take only NTD 10,000 with her. She can exchange her money for _____ Australian dollars.



Robert is a new school student. He wants to understand his school studies in Germany. He will take NTD 100,000 to pay for all the expenses of the first term. He can exchange his money for _____ Euro/dollars.



Figure 5.2. Scanned Page Views from Language Use of Unit 11, Book 2, *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*

The pictures representing different nations appear next to the exercise questions with blanks to fill out. There is not even a name to match to the pictures. Again, the images

serve as illustrations rather than information linking with the national cultures here symbolised.

The third example is a dialogue in the Conversation section in the unit on the biography of Mother Teresa. It refers to comparison between Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, although it is hard to discern the main point of the conversation. Again, it seems that the discussion does not make any meaningful point but simply comes to a rough compromise.

Audrey and Nathan are talking about the recent news of Mother Teresa's death.
Audrey: It's really sad that Mother Teresa died.
Nathan: It is, isn't it? There aren't many people like her in the world. She was a living saint.
Audrey: It's strange that her death should come so quickly after Princess Diana's.
Nathan: Yes, but do you really think you can compare the two of them, like a lot of people do?
Audrey: Well, both of them did what they could to help the less fortunate. Diana was involved in a lot of charity work, you know.
Nathan: But their lifestyles were worlds apart. Diana lived in a palace; Mother Teresa in a slum.
Audrey: Well, Diana certainly didn't sacrifices as much as Mother Teresa did to help others. But then how many people have?
Nathan: That's true. I guess it's not really fair to compare people, especially after they're dead.
Audrey: I think each woman made an impact on the world in her own unique way. Anyway, the world will certainly remember them both for many years to come.
<End>

Table 5.4. Excerpt from a Conversation transcript in Unit 7, Book 3, *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*

It is argued that once again, this example does not convey any important content. When the two internationally well-known figures are compared, no substantial information is introduced in the exchange. Mother Teresa's life has been taught in the main reading text and it is hardly new information that Princess Diana's residence was a 'palace'. It seems that the two personalities are simply put together for the sake of comparison. The bizarre thing is that after a series of comparisons

one of the characters states: “I guess it’s not really fair to compare people, especially after they’re dead,” followed by the other character’s concluding compromise. The purpose of designing such a dialogue for students to learn is a mystery.

The above examples show that many visual icons and follow-up discussions regarding international cultures are not treated in any depth. There are accurate pictures or realistic photos, but they are provided as isolated stimuli. They are simply juxtaposed as visual symbols rather than contextualised as international setting with deep meanings.

Overall then, this series of textbook demonstrates both strengths and weaknesses. It is good at assisting linguistic study, in that every unit is well organised with systematic introduction to new vocabulary words and grammatical knowledge after a wide range of thematic reading texts. The practice of language use is orderly in terms of difficulty level, and methodical in bringing a variety of exercises into play. Each unit is structured to cover the four language skills, which can be positive in developing users’ overall English proficiency and even communicative competence.

The textbooks provide a great deal of target cultural content, but do so without neglecting source culture or international cultures. An advantage of teaching and learning plural cultural content is the development of cultural identity in learners. Cortazzi and Jin (1999) argue that language learners’ cultural identity is developed through negotiating with a text, creating a dialogue with the text “to identify and confirm their own cultural identity or to ascertain its similarities and differences with

that of another cultural group” (Cortazzi and Jin 1999, p.207). That is, although people have a constant sense of who they are and what they are, many aspects of identity are dynamic, so that they can be “modified, confirmed, and challenged through communication and contact with others” (Coolier and Thomas 1998, p.112). In this sense, the representations of target cultural content and international cultural content serve as a mirror. They facilitate students to discern the characteristics of other cultures while reflecting on their own. This may lead students eventually to ponder their own identity and gradually form their preferred one. Moreover, introduction to source cultural content is also significant. As McKay (2002) argues, it is a start to lead students to possess ‘interculturality’ which means an ability to mediate between different cultures, including the learners’ own. Thus, language learners gain understanding of the target language and culture (or even culture of non-English-speaking countries) in the course of English study; while at the same time developing self-awareness and the ability to share their own culture with people from different parts of the world. Learning source culture in English empowers English learners to use the language at their disposal when they wish to articulate their cultural values, life styles or personal opinions in communication with international people.

However, despite the many advantages provided by the textbook, there are weaknesses in the treatment of cultural content. The target language and culture represented in the textbook is self-evident. The latent endorsement naturalises the authority of the target language as the sole paradigm. The consequence of such a ‘natural attitude’ is an apprehension that the textbook is subject to the standard language ideology and under the shadow of linguistic hegemony. Some possible solutions (Modiano 2001, Canagarajah 1999, Pennycook 1999, McKay 2002)

include the introduction for study of English varieties and alternative critical subject matters. The former would help to open up the myth of a single language paradigm to a wider international use. The latter would broaden students' vision from the partial world represented in the textbook to the wider international reality with up-to-date information. Such approaches are intended to encourage critical intercultural awareness in the classroom. Unfortunately, however, there is no attempt to encourage such critical intercultural awareness in this series of textbooks. The lack of counter stereotypes, reference to critical issues and representations of minority groups, the depiction of an unproblematic world and a mono-cultural American society is far from reality. The target cultural knowledge and communication skills delivered through the texts may be factual in a sense, but cannot be considered well contextualised or genuinely representative of the whole. Last but not least, trivialisation of source culture and symbols of international cultures is not helpful in enhancing intercultural competence. A twisted mirror with inaccurate guidance for speaking about one's own culture may cause confusion rather than reflection for developing self cultural identity.

6. Pedagogies and Implications for Intercultural Teaching

This study aims to provide insight from the teacher's perspective in order to answer the research question: "What cultural content is delivered in Taiwanese senior high English education and how does it contribute to intercultural learning?"⁴¹

In this case study, interviews were conducted with five teachers who used the same textbook, and with their students. To support the evidence from the interviews, three of the teachers' classes were observed. The observations also helped to validate the teachers' description of their teaching process, to examine various teaching techniques and to identify the relation between the pedagogy and cultural content delivered.

The results of the teacher interviews and the class observations are reported in this chapter. Although complying with the same curriculum standard and textbook, the informants manifested different teaching styles and delivered distinct cultural content. The research data is categorised into three different types of instruction. Under each teaching style, the findings are further analysed in terms of five main points, from general to specific:

a) **Background Information:**

This includes information about the teachers' previous academic training,

⁴¹ I considered the classroom reality in terms of teaching objectives, pedagogy and cultural content. Some interview questions were also important for the focus of observation in each teacher's class: a) How does a teacher cover a unit? b) What teaching techniques are employed? c) How do students respond to the pedagogy in class? d) What cultural content is delivered through the pedagogy identified, and how? This chapter aims to answer these questions.

cultural experiences and general viewpoints on language teaching.

b) Teaching Objectives:

Although teaching objectives are stipulated in the curriculum standard and also stated in the textbook, the results show that different types of teachers pursued slightly different teaching goals or beliefs.

c) Teaching Methodology:

The teachers' goals are evidently influential to their teaching methodology.

The analysis of teaching methodology covers a teacher's instructional procedure and techniques. Relevant supplementary teaching materials are also discussed when necessary.

d) Delivery of Cultural Content:

This part of analysis identifies what kind of cultural content is taught by the teacher in general, and further uncovers the relation between a teacher's pedagogy and the cultural content delivered.

e) Viewpoints of Language, Culture and Intercultural Teaching:

These findings show a teacher's general understanding of the relation between language and culture, as well as attitude towards teaching of culture. Different types of teachers are found to hold diverse attitudes towards teaching of target culture, native culture and international cultures.

The analysis in this section suggests a link between a teacher's personal experience (i.e. previous academic, travel or teaching experience) and perception of language and culture. The results also indicate how a teaching belief is formed, why a teaching methodology is employed and how cultural content is dealt with.

6.1. Teaching Style I:

The Grammar-Translation Method and Strong Test-Oriented Focus

The grammar-translation method has retained its mainstream status in Taiwanese secondary schools for decades. Even though the current official English textbooks claim to follow a 'Communicative Syllabus', many teachers still favour the conventional teaching method. The result of the preliminary telephone survey confirms this trend. Although in recent years some schools have introduced improved facilities or activities to enhance students' listening and speaking skills, the grammar-translation method, which emphasises writing and reading skills and is used alongside a series of tests, remains essential in senior high English education.⁴³

The interviewees Ms Chang and Mr Lee (pseudonyms) are considered representative of teachers who use the typical grammar-translation method in class. They both have excellent reputations as teachers among their students and peers.⁴⁴ The length of each interview was about one hour. In addition, Mr Lee's classes were observed, and some questions were put to him immediately after the observation.

⁴³ For the result of telephone interviews with twenty-two chief coordinators of English teachers please see the appendix.

⁴⁴ This impression was given in the interviews with the two teachers' students and in informal talk with their colleagues.

6.1.1. Background Information about Ms Chang and Mr Lee

Both Ms Chang and Mr Lee had been teaching in senior high schools for four years after obtaining their postgraduate degrees in English and American Literature. At first, both teachers said that their major did not exert much influence on their teaching practice because their teaching was based on the textbook, not necessarily literature-related. They indicated that their job demanded 'TESOL' (Teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages) skills rather than literature.

However, as the interview went on, they added more about the link between their previous academic training and their teaching. Ms Chang stated that although the textbook seldom included any literature, there were some poems. She said: "Personally speaking, maybe because of my major in English Literature, I prefer story-telling texts with deep meanings. They are [more] interesting to me. Some essays, like one talking about reading skills, I feel they are dull". Mr Lee had a similar opinion. He described teaching the text on scientific topics as 'torture' to him. He regarded those articles on 'robots' or 'cloning' dull and very often he had to consult his former students now studying in science for further information. He went on to say, "I think a teacher's major does influence the focus of teaching...For example, like Lesson 4 in Book 3⁴⁵ this semester, its literary meaning is deep. I enjoy teaching that story. When I taught it, I felt 'high!' I translated the text to beautiful Chinese expressions and even acted the part of main characters in the story for my students!"

⁴⁵ Unit 4 in Book 3 is a short story called 'Going Home', reprinted with permission from the January 1972 Reader's Digest. The story is related to the song 'Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree', about a man who once did something wrong and hoped for forgiveness.

Coincidentally, Ms Chang and Mr Lee shared many similarities in terms of academic background and preference of course content. Both of them had graduated from literary study. Their interest in literature resulted in their preference for teaching fiction with 'deep' literary meanings over essays on hard facts. This tendency reinforces the importance of grammar-translation in their teaching. When Mr Lee emphasised his pleasant experience of teaching a meaningful literary passage with 'beautiful translation', his idea coincided with Richards and Rogers (2001, p.5) statement about the characteristics of the grammar-translation method, that learning a foreign language means "to read its literature...to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development".

The two teachers also shared similar travel experiences. Both of them had enjoyed visits to North America. Ms Chang had been to the US and Canada. She particularly liked the latter, where she found the environment comfortable and people friendly. Mr Lee had a very good time in the US, where many people paid compliments to his fluent English. His experience in Europe was quite different. He experienced 'language shock' in England and especially in Ireland, where he hardly understood any Irish English. The impression of that trip was lasting. In brief, the teachers' travel experiences to English-speaking countries indicated their familiarity as well as preference for the target culture (i.e. American culture).

6.1.2. The Test-Oriented Teaching Objectives

When first questioned about the official objectives of teaching, the teachers were not sure what was meant. For example, Ms Chang wondered, "Is the preface of the textbook counted?" Then, she recalled that although in her school English teachers held

regular committees, they never claimed any specific teaching objectives. She said that in most of their meetings, they mainly discussed essential sentence patterns or grammar rules for teaching. After some thought, both of them finally pointed out the aims of their teaching. Ms Chang and Mr Lee coincidentally mentioned two common points:

- a) Help students to prepare for the university entrance examinations;⁴⁶
- b) Enhance students' English proficiency and four skills, although it is widely recognised as difficult to improve speaking and listening comprehension abilities.⁴⁷

The two teachers pointed out the importance of helping students cope with examinations. This test-oriented teaching objective influenced teaching priorities. For example, even though Ms Chang personally favoured literature appreciation as mentioned above, she often skipped the simple poems in the textbook. She and her colleagues only taught one or two of the most famous writers' works (e.g. Emily Dickinson's poems). She seldom spent much time on poems because "they are not the main point of exams!" When Mr Lee instructed his class, he put much stress on detailed analysis of grammar rules and drills of sentence patterns for the reason that reading and writing were essential in the college entrance exam. Since most class hours were spent on preparing the test items, it was hard to find time to cover those not assessed, that is, speaking and listening. Note that although the objectives mentioned by Ms Chang and Mr Lee might be practical in reality, they were not the

⁴⁶ The college entrance examination appears to be significant in the results of interviews with the teachers and students. It was mentioned many times in different interviews. For details about college entrance please see Chapter 2, Context of the Study. The examination of every subject is a written test. English is no exception. There are multiple choice questions for assessing candidates' vocabulary, grammar and reading comprehension abilities. There is another section on composition. Listening and speaking proficiencies are not examined.

⁴⁷ Since Ms Chang had made it clear that she had regular meetings with the committee, the teaching objectives she stated were presumed to be recognised by other English teachers in her school, too.

same as those stipulated in the curriculum standard. In particular, the specific objective of helping students to deal with the college entrance examination is not mentioned in the official curriculum.

6.1.3. A Structured Pedagogy: The Grammar-Translation Method in Practice

Ms Chang and Mr Lee also shared similarities in their pedagogy. Their teaching procedures could be characterised as highly structured. A better picture was gained by observing Mr Lee's class, followed by an analysis of both informants' teaching techniques.

Mr Lee's class had 37 male students in the second year of senior high school. My observation of his class took place between the beginning of the semester and the first term exam (from September 13 to 23, 2002). The unit I observed was Lesson 2, 'Advertising', in Book 3 of *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*. It took the teacher six sessions to complete the unit at what was considered a standard pace.

In the first session, the teacher began the new unit by teaching vocabulary. First, he led everyone in reading through the list of new words. Students repeated the pronunciation after the teacher several times. Then, the teacher asked students to look at each example sentence beneath the vocabulary. The teacher read it once, and asked students to repeat after him. Some sentences were simple, so the teacher only translated them into Chinese and went on to explain the next one. The teacher spent a little more time on those example sentences containing idioms or phrases. He asked students to underline important phrases and to take note of their usage. Also, he added further explanation on variations of certain vocabulary. The vocabulary list of Lesson 2 was quite lengthy. As

a result, it took the teacher a whole session to address it. The process was highly instructional and students seemed quite busy taking notes or memorising the words by heart (some of them were murmuring the words several times by themselves after the teacher's explanation).

The next session was on the following Monday. First, the teacher played a CD of the main reading text and asked students to concentrate on listening. "This is not long. Try to catch the main idea of each paragraph," the teacher said. The recording was standard American pronunciation. After playing the CD, the teacher asked: "What is the first paragraph about? What did you get?" No one answered. Soon the teacher gave the answer himself. Again, he asked: "What is the second paragraph about? Where does the advertising slogan – Just Do It – come from?" No one replied. Quickly the teacher called on a student to answer the question. "Nike," the pupil replied. "Very good, thank you," said the teacher. He went on to ask for the main ideas of the remaining paragraphs, although he provided most of the answers himself since the class was quiet. So far, everything had been delivered in Chinese by both the teacher and students.

After the first few questions, the teacher began to explain the meanings of the first two paragraphs. He paraphrased, using his own words to provide further explanation. At this stage, he did not translate the content into Chinese, but fully illustrated it in English. His English was fluent, fast and accurate, with a clear American accent. Next, he explained the main idea in the third paragraph - the meaning of AIDA [Attention, Interest, Desire and Action]. The first question was: "What does 'A' stand for?" The class was silent. The teacher called on a student to reply. The student translated the meaning and replied correctly in Chinese. The teacher then called on another three students to give the

meanings of the remaining abbreviations – ‘I’, ‘D’ and ‘A’ – in the text. After each reply, the teacher translated the student’s Chinese answers into English and added further explanations, also in English. Finally, he moved on to the last paragraph. “What does the last paragraph tell you?” “Let me tell you,” he continued, “it is about the function of advertising”. Then, he translated the definition of ‘function’ into Chinese. Soon he called on students to state the functions of advertising. In their answers, students were expected to explain the meaning of AIDA again.

While the last two questions were being asked and answered, some students were losing concentration. Some started chatting to each other quietly; others lowered their heads, and still others even took out something to eat. Perhaps the teacher also noticed this. He began to speak Chinese and talked about the origin of the slogan “Trust me, you can make it!” as mentioned in the text. It was from a popular TV commercial made by a chain of beauty salons. “Did anyone watch it before?” There was silence. The teacher reminded his students that the commercial was led by a famous singer, Yanglin. “Do you know her?” Most students seemed very confused. A few students sitting not far from me smirked and spoke among themselves, “Have you heard of her? Who’s Yanglin? Did the teacher say Jolin?”⁴⁸

The teacher did not allow the students’ trivial discussions to last long. He soon asked students to go back over the first paragraph. He read it sentence by sentence and stopped to remind students of certain vocabulary, asking them to underline some phrases or particular prepositions. He translated the meanings into Chinese and

⁴⁸ Jolin is a pop singer in her twenties with a large teenage following. She is perhaps twenty years younger than Ms Yanglin. The information and example provided by the textbook and the teacher could thus not be regarded as ‘updated’ for the students.

explained any special usage of vocabulary. He also formulated some example sentences for illustration. (At this stage, he explained the details in Chinese only.) The teacher pointed out several important sentence patterns in the text, such as: ‘so/such ... that...’, ‘part of something’, ‘...as well as...’ and ‘That’s why/how/...’ Many students were busy underlining them or taking notes, although two or three had still not finished their lunch. Finally, the teacher had gone through the first three paragraphs. “Any questions?” he asked. There was silence again. “OK, now everybody read aloud from the first paragraph”. While students were reading the paragraphs, the teacher stopped them now and then to correct their pronunciation. After the students finished reading, the session came to an end.

In the third session the teacher continued addressing the sentence patterns in the rest of the text. He did a lot of blackboard writing this time. For example, the first sentence pattern explained was: ‘the more... the more...’ He wrote down the following example sentences on the blackboard:

{	Q1: You smoke much.	}
	You are likely to get lung cancer.	}
{	Q2: You study hard.	}
	Your grades will be good.	}

Then, the teacher called on two students to make a new sentence based on the pattern. After the replies, the teacher wrote down the correct answers on the blackboard:

{	A1: The more you smoke, the more likely you are to get lung cancer.	}
	A2: The harder you study, the better your grades will be.	

After this, there was more on particular verbs such as 'encourage', 'force', and 'drive' somebody to do something, with the teacher giving examples to explain how to use the verbs correctly. He also pointed out several phrases in the text for students to note, for example 'a great deal of', 'a man of influence' and 'a man of prestige'. By the mid point of the session, after translating every sentence from English into Chinese and explaining the grammar points, the teacher had finished the whole text. He then asked students to read aloud the last two paragraphs and invited questions, although no one seemed to have any.

After the main reading text, the class moved on to reviewing the English learning magazine, *Studio Classroom*. The teacher asked students to take out the supplementary self-study material. Then, he quickly went through the vocabulary and idioms in each article. He gave students the page number, then pointed out which phrase or vocabulary was important in which line. He also gave Chinese translations and example sentences on these lexical items. Before the session ended, they had gone through almost the whole magazine.⁴⁹

In the fourth session, the teacher asked students to look at other sections in Unit 2. First, he referred to the Discussion section, which provided questions⁵⁰ for students to consider and discuss. According to the instruction, students were supposed to consider

⁴⁹ During these sessions, I found that most students concentrated harder when the teacher explained the vocabulary or sentence patterns. They stopped eating or whatever they were otherwise doing in order to take notes. This was in sharp contrast to their non-responsive state when the teacher was paraphrasing the main text in the previous session.

⁵⁰ The questions read: 1) Besides the slogans mentioned in the reading, can you think of any other familiar slogans? Give one that you think is an effective slogan, and one that you think is not so effective. 2) Does a TV commercial or newspaper ad affect you when you are choosing from among more than one brand? Have you been tricked by a catchy slogan into buying something expensive but of poor quality? If yes, share your experience with your classmates. (Shih, Lin and Brooks 1999, p.30)

some advertising slogans and discuss how they could promote the products. However, there was no time to discuss the questions. Instead, the teacher translated every question and moved to next section – Language Use, where students were requested to react to some newspaper advertisements. Again, the class did not have time for the activity; instead, the teacher quickly gave some examples in Chinese.

The class moved quickly on to the next section, Grammar Focus, which focused on the sentence patterns: ‘so/such...that...’ and ‘That’s why/how... + S+V’. There were examples and questions for practising each sentence pattern. The teacher called on students to give the answer to each question and he corrected or added some points to their replies. This part took a lot of time.

Finally, the class moved on to the Conversation section. The teacher played a CD and asked students to listen to the dialogue⁵¹ carefully. The speakers spoke standard American English. Then the teacher read the dialogue sentence by sentence and translated it into Chinese. While reading the dialogue, the teacher also reminded students how to vary their intonation to emphasise a main point in the sentence. When the teacher demonstrated part of the dialogue dramatically, students obviously enjoyed

⁵¹ The transcript of the dialogue is as follows:

Hannah: I need some shampoo. I think I’ll try a new brand.

Kurt: Look, here’s one for just 69 dollars.

Hannah: that’s not popular! I’m going to get this one – Clairol Herbal Essence.

Kurt: But why? It’s so much more expensive.

Hannah: Because they have a really cute commercial on TV.

Kurt: Oh, come on! Don’t be fooled by a silly TV commercial. Believe me, it’s no better than this cheaper brand.

Hannah: But I’ve never heard of that one. Anyway, this one has a prettier bottle.

Kurt: So you’re going to pay twice as much just because you like the commercial and the bottle?

Hannah: Yeah! That’s right! But it’s only because I’m just like you.

Kurt: No, no, no. I never let myself be influenced by advertising.

Hannah: You don’t? Then why did you pay twice as much for that Chicago Bulls T-shirt rather than a plain white one?

Kurt: O.K., O.K. Go ahead and get your shampoo. After all, it’s your money.

(Shih, Lin and Brooks 1999, p.35)

his live acting. At the end of the session, the teacher called on one pair of students to practise and read aloud the dialogue.

The next two sessions were all about the test. The fifth session was examination time. The teacher gave out question sheets at the beginning of the session, and asked students to write the translation questions first. Then, he collected the translation answer sheets and marked them while students were doing the rest of the test. In the final hour, the teacher gave students the question sheets back and checked over the answers with them. Except for the translation already marked by the teacher, the students helped to grade each other's answer sheets with the correct answers announced by the teacher. After this, the teacher began to explain each question individually until the end of the session. The instruction of Unit 2, 'Advertising', was formally finished.⁵²

Although Ms Chang's class was not observed, the interviews (with Ms Chang as well as her students) suggest that her teaching procedure had a lot in common with Mr Lee's. Table 6.1 summarises the steps and teaching methods used by the two teachers in covering a unit.

⁵² Although 6 sessions for instructing one unit was regarded as standard pace, the impression after observing the teaching process was that the speed of teaching was rather fast. As a result, the time for teaching in each session seemed pressing. Furthermore, the teacher had to spend some time managing the class. For example, he occasionally had to ask students to pick up rubbish near their seats or to stop eating their lunch!

Step	Ms Chang	Mr Lee
1	Discuss the 'Pre-reading' Questions	Teach Vocabulary
	-Call students to answer the questions, replying in either English or Chinese	-Read over the vocabulary list -Translate and explain the vocabulary and example sentences
2	Teach Vocabulary	Begin with the Main Text
	-Read over the vocabulary list first -Explain the meanings in Chinese -Give more examples on the new vocabulary	-Ask students about the main idea of the text - Call students to answer the question (though volunteers are rare). (Students can reply in either Chinese or English.)
3	Begin with the Main Text	Teach Each Paragraph
	-Play CD; let students listen to the reading paragraph by paragraph -Ask relevant questions -Call students to answer the questions (volunteers are rare)	-Read the paragraph and paraphrase it (in English), using simple language to point out the meanings again -Translate the meanings of sentences and explain important phrases/vocabulary in Chinese (After teaching the text, sometimes explain the content of other sections roughly.)
4	Teach Each Paragraph	Teach Grammar/Idioms
	-Explain sentence patterns, grammar, phrases, sentence by sentence in Chinese	-Ask students to underline the important phrases/idioms in each paragraph and memorise them -Use the new phrases to make other example sentences
5	Do Sentence Pattern Exercise	Final Check-up
	-Use the questions on the textbook for exercise or give additional examples -Occasionally ask students to write their answers on the blackboard	-Ask students to read the whole text aloud -Check if anyone is left behind mainly by asking students questions or observing their facial expression -If there is any confusing point, explain it again
6	Teach Conversation	Do Sentence Pattern Exercise
	-Listen to CD first -Summarise or explain the dialogue in Chinese -Occasionally ask students to have conversation practice (If there is time left, look at other sections.)	-Use the questions on the textbook for exercise -Ask students to write their answers on the blackboard
7	Weekly Test	Weekly Test

Table 6.1. The Grammar-Translation Teaching Procedure

Generally speaking, the instructional procedures observed here were teacher-centred. The teacher explained the vocabulary, translated the literary passage and taught grammar. The procedure appeared to be structured and efficient in terms of time management and content control. The teacher effectively helped students cope with the test items, spending a lot of time consolidating students' understanding of grammar points through a series of translation, explanation and exercises. However, the price to pay for this was that because most of the class hours were used to cover linguistic items only, speaking and listening skills were largely ignored. It was apparent that in this teaching style Teacher Talking Time (TTT) was far longer than Student Talking Time (STT).⁵³ Students were passively taking note of what the teacher said, completing grammar exercises or memorising the learning points by heart. There was thus little teacher-student or student-student interaction in class.

Based on Larsen-Freeman's (2000) review of techniques in the grammar-translation method, some essential techniques employed in this teaching procedure are identified as follows:

a) Translation of a literary passage

Translate a literary passage from English to Chinese for students. The meaning of each sentence is explained by direct translation in addition to analysis of syntax and lexicon.

b) Deductive application of grammar rules

Present grammar rules systematically with examples and exceptions

⁵³ In his book, *How to Teach English*, Harmer (1998) argues that it is a crucial part of a teacher's job to lead students to speak, to use the language they are learning. In his opinion, a good teacher should consider the balance of TTT (Teacher Talking Time) and STT (Student Talking Time) or even maximize STT and minimize TTT. This argument will be further discussed.

noted. After instruction, students need to apply the rule to further examples.

c) Word use in sentences

Request students to make up sentences for practising new words through a series of drills including textbook exercises and making new example sentences in class.

d) Emphasis on memorisation

Encourage students to memorise all the new grammar paradigms, words, idioms learned in class. The result of this memory is reinforced and assessed by the weekly test.

In general, the informants' classes were quiet unless the teacher requested students to answer questions. With the teaching techniques summarised above, the teacher was authoritative and at the centre of the class, giving all knowledge on language forms, providing meanings of the text and controlling the pace of study. In consequence, reading and writing were the primary skills studied, with much less attention given to speaking and listening, let alone pronunciation.

6.1.4. Prescribed Cultural Knowledge and Weak Intercultural Awareness

When the teachers were asked about the cultural content they had taught, Ms Chang indicated that most content in the textbook was on American culture, although she did not specify the units. Mr Lee recalled that he had taught some articles on the Songkran Festival in Thailand, Western superstitions, taboos, and the flea market/garage sale in the USA. He said that although students might consider these articles 'boring', he personally believed that they were useful in helping the

young people broaden their world view.⁵⁴ He also pointed out that a few units dealt with local culture. For example, Lesson 12 in Book 4 introduced customs and artefacts of the Paiwan Tribe (an indigenous group in Taiwan). Other units covered local tourist spots such as Jiu-Fen and Tai-Lu-Ge National Park. In brief, the cultural content the teachers taught was mainly the culturally thematic text. The teachers were aware of the cultural topics and taught the prescribed cultural knowledge provided by the textbook.

The teachers did not mention any difficulty teaching the target cultural content provided by the coursebook, but Mr Lee did once experience some difficulty in teaching a source cultural text. When he was teaching the article on the culture of the Paiwan Tribe, Mr Lee found that teaching native cultural content was not as simple as he had expected, since he did not know much about Taiwanese indigenous culture.⁵⁵ While introducing the indigenous artefact, Pottery Pot, he was interested in the story and would have liked to talk more about it.⁵⁶ “But unfortunately”, he said: “my own understanding of the indigenous culture has its limitations! I had no idea how the artefact was made; neither did I see the product in person!” The teacher depended entirely on the relevant information provided by the Teacher’s Book. His experience convinced him that it was necessary and important to have additional supportive materials for teaching such cultural content.

⁵⁴ Note that this comment was not necessarily accurate because later Mr Lee’s students revealed that they were interested in various kinds of cultural content. The reading texts related to culture were not considered as ‘boring’ by the students.

⁵⁵ Although Mr Lee modestly mentioned it was his ‘personal’ feeling, such native cultural content might be unfamiliar to many other teachers. After all, before the trend of localisation, there was seldom any course content on Taiwanese culture in textbooks. (For details please see Chapter 2, Context of the Study.)

⁵⁶ The teacher highly approved of teaching native culture. He said, “I would be glad to see someday they [students] are able to use English to promote our culture overseas...It would be brilliant introducing our positive stuff to the outside world”. “Besides, studying local culture while learning the foreign culture is a fashion now in Taiwan,” he said.

In his opinion, one of the best solutions was to supply “something real or vivid to show students. This will reduce the difficulty in [cultural] teaching”. More supportive teaching materials, media or even realia would be helpful in teaching specialised cultural content.

Furthermore, although the informants clearly indicated which reading texts they had taught were about Culture, and gave valuable opinions of their teaching experience of that content, the results from the interviews and class observation showed that much cultural content provided by the textbook was actually overlooked by the teachers.

For instance, when Mr Lee taught the unit on Advertising, he did not consider that the article provided any cultural content. Although he translated each sentence and explained each paragraph, a great deal of cultural information described in the text was not mentioned. For example, although the text referred to famous American/global brands such as Coca-Cola and Nike, and the Conversation transcript mentioned NBA Basketball Team the Chicago Bulls, it was not noted that all of these brand names represented the products of American popular culture. The representation of these target cultural products was so self-evident, and seemed so ‘natural’ to the teacher and students that it did not deserve any special attention. As argued in the chapter on textbook analysis, almost eighty percent of the textbook content is based on the target culture. It is hard to find any text that is culture-free. However, the teachers here tended to overlook those without clear culture-related titles or themes.

In brief, the cultural content delivered in the classes of the two teachers using the

grammar-translation method mainly lay in the reading passages related to cultural topics. In other words, the teacher taught the prescribed cultural content mainly through translating and explaining the literary passage.

As the teachers indicated, many of the texts were about American culture, and they experienced no difficulty in explaining the target cultural events such as garage sales or Halloween. There were also a smaller number of texts about Chinese/Taiwanese culture. In order to treat this minority cultural content fully, more supplementary materials such as multimedia or authentic objects would be helpful. Finally, those texts not directly related to Culture, but with context referring to general Western or American life, were often not specified by the teachers, but only translated. The representation of popular cultural products or American ways of life was taken for granted. The teaching process did not show much positive effect on encouraging critical intercultural awareness

6.1.5. The Conservative Perspective on Intercultural Teaching and Learning

Both teachers revealed a vague concept of the relationship between language and culture, although both clearly defined culture as including the whole of a people's life style. Arts and customs were also part of culture, said Ms Chang.

In contrast to their clear definition of culture, the respondents were rather uncertain about the link between language and culture,. Ms Chang said, "It is very difficult to describe it [the link between language and culture] concretely".⁵⁷ Mr Lee also admitted that it was "hard to say what influence the language brings to culture or

⁵⁷ Ms Chang tried to give an example. She later mentioned that if one knows the social relations of Japanese society, he/she may be better able to use the polite form of Japanese language. (Note that she had not learned any Japanese.)

vice versa”.⁵⁸ The impression was that for both informants, the question on the relationship between language and culture seemed too complicated to be articulated.

Moreover, the teachers’ attitudes towards teaching of language and culture were similarly reserved. Can cultural learning assist language learning? Neither Ms Chang nor Mr Lee gave a direct reply. After some hesitation, Ms Chang managed to respond that cultural teaching and learning might help pupils learn the root of some vocabulary words or how to use the language appropriately. Mr Lee pointed out that learning other cultures in Taiwan always had limitations. In his opinion, unless students could visit foreign countries in person, they would not be able to learn much cultural knowledge taught through Chinese (in Taiwan). Besides, personally he did not believe that learning foreign/target culture could help students learn the English language better. As an example he pointed out that even though students knew about Easter or celebrated Christmas, they did not gain any help from that in learning the language.⁵⁹

The teachers were also concerned about the role of examinations in their teaching, and the implications for the teaching of culture. Ms Chang said: “Even if there were such a course [on culture], it would be neither the main point for teaching, nor the focus of exam...After all, the time for preparing the exam is never enough, not

⁵⁸ Mr Lee gave an example from another context to illustrate his point here, though it was not necessarily accurate. In his opinion, the Chinese language, which “developed from oracle scriptures to its current state, [was] due to the profound culture of Chinese people”. That is, if “the use of language is sophisticated, it can indicate that the level and depth of culture behind it is deep.” Mr Lee was probably suggesting that the various life experiences of a people contributed to the usage of language, although he did not explain himself any further on this aspect.

⁵⁹ This statement is interesting though arguable. For more details please see the Further Discussion section at the end of this chapter.

to mention teaching or learning about cultures”. Mr Lee agreed, in that although he did not object to the idea of teaching Anglo-American culture, he thought it might be very difficult to teach more than that. That is, the course time was ‘limited’ and the teaching content should be prioritised. Both teachers emphasised that the senior high school English class taught students the ‘standard stuff’; the ‘advanced content’⁶⁰ should be left to a later stage. In other words, instead of seeing culture as interwoven with language teaching, both teachers tended to regard culture as a ‘subject’ which should be learned as an independent or advanced discipline, separate from the language teaching and learning at the senior high school level.

6.1.6 Summary of the Grammar-Translation Teaching Style

In this section, we have seen how teachers set the traditional goal of preparing students for exam, and how they used an effective approach, the grammar-translation method, to achieve this teaching objective. They used several teaching techniques, including translation of literary passages, instruction of grammar rules, sentence drills, memorisation and regular tests to help their students cope with the assessment of English reading and writing abilities for college entry. In spite of the cultural learning goals set in the curriculum, and the communicative syllabus provided by the textbook, cultural learning was not an essential part of instruction. The delivery of cultural content in class was thus subject to the texts provided by the textbook and the teacher’s translation of that passage. Inherent or subtle culture-related information in the textbook was not necessarily noted.

⁶⁰ In Ms Chang’s words, ‘advanced content’ refers to ‘cultural studies’ or ‘multi-cultural content’. Note that her opinion, in addition to Mr Lee’s agreement, was contradictory to other informants’ (of other teaching styles) who held more liberal attitudes towards intercultural teaching and learning.

The teachers' attitudes towards intercultural teaching were unenthusiastic. When asked whether it would be possible to integrate more multi-cultural content in the course of instruction, the teachers' responses were quite negative. The teaching objective and priority was preparing for the entrance college exam, and the grammar-translation based pedagogy seemed to have little room for accommodating extra cultural content beyond what was provided by the prescribed reading text.

6.2. Teaching Style II: The Conventional Teaching Method with Variation

We have seen that the grammar-translation method, as used by Ms Chang and Mr Lee, appeared to be highly structured. The instructional content was often centred on the literary passage and associated grammar points. Teaching of speaking and listening skills or cultural content was generally overlooked in the teaching process. Although the teaching method seemed conventional, it was popular and efficient for covering tested items. It was also believed to be the mainstream teaching method used by most teachers in the senior high schools.

Nevertheless, findings drawn from the interviews with another group of teachers and class observation showed a slightly different type of teaching.⁶¹ In the second teaching style, translation and instruction of linguistic items remained essential, but there was more variation to the conventional structured teaching process. For instance, a teacher might use authentic materials or more living examples to assist

⁶¹ In this case, the English teachers, Ms Wang and Ms Wu (pseudonyms) were interviewed and Ms Wang's teaching of one complete unit was observed. Ms Wu was the textbook editor as well as an English teacher. Some of her comments on textbook design were discussed in the last chapter while her opinions of English teaching were included in this chapter.

teaching; conduct ‘mild’ communicative activities for students to practice using the English language, or set reflective tasks for students to relate the learned course content to their own life experience. With these variations, listening and speaking skills were developed and cultural content was (more or less) integrated.

6.2.1. Background Information about Ms Wang and Ms Wu

In contrast to Ms Chang and Mr Lee’s literary background, both Ms Wang and Ms Wu had majors in English Linguistics and Master Degrees in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Ms Wang and Ms Wu felt that they owed their knowledge of and skills in English language teaching to their previous academic training. In particular, Ms Wang mentioned that what she had learned in her postgraduate study helped her with the specialty of language assessment. For example, she said that she had gained knowledge and confidence in forming and evaluating test questions. Since nowadays the school put stress on helping students pass the entrance exam, she found her expertise was very useful, especially in their regular meetings to discuss and review test questions. Moreover, both Ms Wang and Ms Wu recognised the importance of balancing the four skills in their teaching, because they both believed that the ultimate goal of English education should be facilitating students to ‘use’ the language appropriately in their daily life. This concept was in sharp contrast to the teachers with a structural goal of helping students master reading and writing skills only to pass the exam.

Ms Wang had studied for her master degree in the USA, so she felt familiar with American culture. However, she had once encountered an unpleasant incident in a restaurant, where she experienced racial discrimination. While trying to order, she

felt that the waitress deliberately neglected their table and served other later comers, all Caucasian, first. In her opinion, racial discrimination towards a non-native speaker in the USA was inevitable.

6.2.2. The Test-Oriented Teaching Objective with Communicative Goals

In Ms Wang's opinion, helping students to pass the college entrance exam was important, because that was what most students and their parents were concerned about. Since reading and writing skills were the main test items, they were essential in teaching. But she added, "If we say we wish that students can use the language in their daily life, I would stress more on speaking and listening skills". She added: "As a teacher, I certainly wish that students can apply what they learned to their daily life". Ms Wu, the textbook editor as well as an English teacher, held a similar opinion. That is, although both teachers recognised that the college entrance exam was crucial for teaching and learning, they were also aware of the importance of communicative competence.

Ms Wang said that in her class she tried to speak English as much as she could and often asked her students questions about their daily lives. This was intended to give her students more opportunities to practise listening and speaking, and to encourage them to realise that English could be both interesting and relevant. For a similar reason, Ms Wu also mentioned that she sometimes conducted communicative activities in her class. She tried her best to follow the communicative syllabus in order to give students opportunities to 'use' English in their lives.

However, it is worth noting that, at first, the communicative learning goals were not always recognised by students. “Things are not always on the ‘right’ track,” Ms Wang said. Students were less interested in speaking and listening because these skills were not tested by the college entrance exam. “Students care much more about the main points of the exam. They want the teacher to reveal what important points will be tested,” Ms Wang explained. In Ms Wu’s class, the situation was similar. At first, her students complained to her that the tasks she assigned were time-consuming. The students were too busy preparing for tests to do the tasks she gave them. It took her classes some time to adjust and eventually to enjoy different kinds of course activities. In other words, the two teachers tried to help students achieve communicative learning goals, although they also recognised their students’ serious concern over the exam and the importance of carrying out the test-oriented objective.

Finally, Ms Wang particularly mentioned that she would like to see English education benefiting students’ personal development. She took her students as an example. Since many of them were more interested in science, after entering the college and majoring in scientific subjects, they might no longer have the chance to study the humanities. For this reason, in Ms Wang’s opinion, the development of “upbringing in culture and humanity” for senior high students was valuable. Ms Wang hoped that learning English was not only a language study but a way of bringing her students to “better cultivation”.

6.2.3. A Semi-Structured Teaching Process with Mild Communicative Tasks

As the two teachers indicated, they focused not only on grammar or test points in

their teaching processes, but also on listening and speaking skills. It is worth observing how they approached the communicative learning goals set for their teaching. The following report is based on the results from observation of Ms Wang's class and interviews with both Ms Wang and Ms Wu.⁶²

First of all, let us enter Ms Wang's class and see how she normally covers a unit. At the beginning of the first session (December 22, 2004) for a new unit (Lesson 11 of Book I), the teacher reminded everyone that they were soon to study Lesson 11. She then asked everyone to close their eyes because she was going to give them a surprise. A few seconds later, a Santa Claus (acted by a student) entered the class with a big bag full of candies! The students who saw their classmate in the Santa Claus outfit could not help laughing. The teacher then thanked the student actor and wished her class "Merry Christmas!"

The students appeared to be very happy and enjoyed the sweets as the teacher was introducing the title of the new unit, 'Choosing a Bright Life'.⁶³ First, the teacher asked students for the meaning of 'bright'. Some students answered in Chinese, quietly. The teacher then paraphrased the word and later explained in Chinese. She told students that the story was about how a young man made a bright choice to face his difficult life. So far, the teacher had spoken mainly in English.

⁶² Ms Wang's class was observed from December 22 to 31, 2004. There were thirty-five students in her class: ten boys and twenty-five girls in the first year of senior high school.

⁶³ This part was regarded as the 'pre-reading' stage. According to Ms Wang, she used various kinds of pre-reading strategies to engage students in a new unit. Sometimes, she asked students relevant questions so that they could link the text theme to their daily life. Sometimes, she told a joke or a short story to draw students' attention.

Next, the teacher went through the vocabulary list in detail. She translated each word and its example sentence, giving one or two additional examples and then asking students to read aloud the word and example sentence. This method was very similar to the approach by the first group of teachers (Ms Chang and Mr Lee). A slight difference here was that Ms Wang tended to mention more about current issues or use some relevant authentic materials in class.

For example, while teaching the word ‘promise’, the teacher taught its adjective form, ‘promising’. Then, she gave an example sentence: “You are such a promising young man!” “If people say this to you, it means that they think you will be successful in future,” the teacher explained. Then, an idea seemed to come to her, so she continued (in Chinese): “Hmm... but sometimes it depends on how we define ‘success’ though. For example, is being a president a great thing? Maybe not, no matter what you have achieved for people, (in this country) you are scolded anyway. Our President Cheng is an example,” the teacher said with sympathy. Similarly, after explaining the meaning of ‘loneliness’ and the example sentence, the teacher asked the class to read aloud the sentence -“Vincent van Gogh suffered poverty and loneliness all his life”.⁶⁴ She then told students that she was going to play a beautiful song, ‘Starry Night’, about Vincent van Gogh’s life. She asked students to listen to it carefully and write down the first line of lyrics. After listening to the song once, the teacher checked the answer with the students by calling one of them to read his line. She then read the English lyrics and translated them sentence by sentence for students. Afterwards, the teacher continued teaching the rest of the vocabulary.

⁶⁴ The vocabulary list is prescribed in the *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools* Book I, pp.169 - 172.

By the end of the first session, the teacher has finished the list of twenty vocabulary words. She announced that a test of vocabulary would be held the next day. During the hour, the teacher and students did not have much interaction. Most students concentrated on listening to their teacher or taking notes.

At the beginning of the second session (on the same day), the teacher showed students some paintings. First, she showed some works by Monet, and asked students to state the most important feature of Impressionism. Some students answered in Chinese, “Light”. Next, the teacher demonstrated Pierre-Auguste Renoir’s ‘Luncheon at a Boating Party’ and briefly described it in English. She then displayed a poster of ‘The Birth of Venus’ by Sandro Botticelli. She asked students whether they knew who the girl in the painting was. Most of them did not know, so the teacher explained that the girl was Venus. She used magnets to stick the poster to the blackboard, and asked students to think about how to describe what they saw. She wrote down some words such as ‘giant’, ‘blow’, ‘attendant’ and ‘shell’ on the blackboard. Then, she taught students how to describe the painting in English. “You can say: There are two giants on the right of Venus blowing her to the land. There is an attendant waiting for her on the other side”. The last painting shown was a Chinese ink and wash drawing by the late famous artist, Qi, Bai-shi. The teacher asked: “Isn’t the Chinese painting quite different from the Western one?” The students looked and nodded. This demonstration of paintings took about ten minutes. The teacher explained that the purpose of showing so many pictures was because the unit they were going to study was about a Taiwanese painter, Hsieh, Kun-Shan.

After this, the teacher began to teach the first paragraph of the reading text. She read every sentence in English first and then translated it into Chinese. Within a sentence, if there was an important vocabulary word, the teacher emphasised its special usage. Some students were busy writing down what the teacher said. After finishing the first paragraph, the teacher asked students to read it aloud together. Soon they had gone through the first four paragraphs (about twenty lines). Before the class was dismissed, the teacher spent five minutes discussing some questions and answers of the previous weekly exam.

In the third session, the teacher began by testing Lesson 11 vocabulary. The students wrote down English spelling, Chinese meaning and one example sentence for each word. After the test, she taught one more paragraph of the reading text, using the same translation method as in the previous lesson.

At the beginning of the fourth session, instead of teaching course content directly, the teacher wrote down a news passage on the blackboard: "Official failed to announce public warnings after a massive undersea quake, which could have saved countless lives from the subsequent giant waves". The teacher then used English to explain every word of this sentence. This was a response to a current issue, the South Asia Tsunami.

Next, the teacher continued to teach the reading text sentence by sentence. She read every sentence and translated it. At the end of each paragraph, the teacher asked students to read it aloud. In this session, the teacher also emphasised some

vocabulary words and grammar points and added many phrases/idioms.⁶⁵ She wrote down these additional points on the blackboard; many students were busy taking note of points she made.

The reading text, the story of Hsieh Kun-Shan, was a moving biography, about how a young boy who lost his arms and one leg in an accident grew up with great courage and achieved excellence in art.⁶⁶ When the teacher had read how Mr Hsieh, in spite of the many difficulties in his life, had tried his best to graduate from senior high at thirty years old, she asked students what they would become when they were thirty years old. The class was quiet. She then asked students another question: “What did Confucius say about men being thirty years old?” Some students replied “三十而立 (san shi er li)”. The teacher said: “Yes, good. It means when a man is thirty years old, he is supposed to be already married and have a stable job. But now let’s think about Hsieh, Kun-Shan’s life. He was very different from most people. Having a hard time in his youth, his life began with thirty years old!” Then, she asked students if they could understand how difficult Hsieh’s life was. The teacher asked the class: “Can you imagine you come to school carrying your books without two arms and a leg?” Some students laughed and shook their heads. Later, she called on a student randomly and asked him to try to carry one book without using his arms. The boy tried many ways but could not even move the book. The class laughed at the performance. Finally, the teacher

⁶⁵ Although the teacher did not specify her teaching method as the lexical approach, she tended to emphasise correlation instead of single words while teaching vocabulary (especially while teaching the reading text). For example, when she explained the word, ‘fortune’, she not only translated the literal meanings, but also wrote down several common expressions such as ‘Fortune favours the brave’, ‘Fortune Cookie’, and ‘Do somebody a favour’ on the blackboard. She used the same method to teach many other words.

⁶⁶ In the interviews, many students said that it was one of their favourite units.

reminded the students: “Now can you realise how hard Hsieh’s life was? Do you know how lucky you are? Shall you cherish your healthy and fortunate life?” A few students smiled and nodded. After this demonstration, the teacher continued explaining the remaining paragraphs by translating every sentence from English into Chinese.

Before the class was dismissed, the teacher quoted a line from the movie, ‘Forrest Gump’: “Life is like a box of chocolates. You won’t know what the taste is until you open it”. She then explained it in Chinese, encouraging her students to face challenges in life bravely like the painter, Hsieh, Kun-Shan. The class ended with the students reading aloud the last paragraph together. Their homework was to complete the grammar workbook for this unit.

In the fifth hour, the teacher began the Grammar Focus section. She asked students to practise making sentences using the patterns provided. Calling on some students at random, she then asked those selected to write their sentences on the blackboard. She corrected every answer and gave more example sentences. Next, she asked the class to take out their grammar workbooks and began to check answers with them. The teacher spent a lot of time explaining how to use ‘whenever’, ‘whoever’, ‘wherever’ and how to distinguish them from ‘no matter when’, ‘no matter who’ and ‘no matter where’. She also gave some example sentences for demonstration.

In the sixth session, the teacher continued checking the answers of the grammar workbook. She then told the class, “Now let’s listen to some music! This is a band I like very much. It’s called ‘Queen’. Have you heard of them?” The class was quiet.

“Now listen to the song carefully and guess what it is about. Its title will appear in the next unit”. The teacher played the English song. She did not explain the lyrics but taught students one word, ‘pressure’, which would be a new vocabulary word in the next unit. Next, the teacher played a piece of Chopin’s piano music. “How do you feel about this piece? The composer expressed one word through it. Would you like to guess what it is?” Again, the students were quiet. “It expresses the spirit of ‘Revolution’. You will also learn the word ‘revolution’ in the next unit”. After this, the teacher led students to study the final section of this unit that she would teach: Listening.

She asked students to open the textbook and turn to page 177. There were photos of Hsieh, Kun-Shan and his teacher and wife. Students should listen to the recording and identify who the speakers were. When students were listening to the tape, the teacher wrote down some key words on the blackboard. The tape was played only once. When it stopped, the teacher explained the words and translated the transcript into Chinese. In the second part of the Listening section, there were six True/False questions. Instead of asking students to give answers, the teacher translated every question and gave the answer directly. The pace of teaching so far was a little fast. At the end of the unit, there was a proverb: “Where there is a will, there is a way”. The teacher asked the class to read it aloud. She translated it with a similar Chinese proverb and then gave one example relating to former President Lee. She said (in Chinese), “Don’t people often say 阿輝伯 (A-Hui-Buo)⁶⁷ had a strong will and a strong way?” “Who is A-Hui-Buo?” some students asked confusedly. “Former

⁶⁷ Before and after his retirement, former President Lee has been recognised as a controversial pro-independence activist. He has a lot of supporters as well as political opponents in Taiwan. ‘阿輝伯’ (A-hei-bo) is a Taiwanese nickname his supporters gave him, literally meaning Uncle Hei (his first name).

President Lee. Don't you know?" The teacher seemed a little surprised. This topic did not last long and soon the session ended by finalising the time for the weekly test for this unit.

In the eighth and ninth sessions, the class took a test, followed by checking and discussing the test questions and answers. The test paper included four pages with six sections: Vocabulary, Derivative, Grammar, Cloze, Reading Comprehension and Translation. They also spent thirty minutes in one morning (7:30-8:00am/self-study session) testing listening comprehension on the content of the English learning magazine. Unit 11, which took the teacher nine sessions in total, was now formally finished.

In general, Ms Wang's teaching was based on the grammar-translation method, although it was not as highly structured or standardised as the teaching procedure used by the first group of teachers. Ms Wang did not follow the sequence of textbook content closely. Some important sections (Reading Comprehension Check and Conversation in this observation) were omitted. Furthermore, instead of intense instruction of every section of the textbook, the teacher occasionally gave simple tasks⁶⁸ (e.g. description of pictures, information-gap or listening dictation of a song) or delivered additional stories or living examples (e.g. information about current issues or politicians). This teaching procedure accommodated more

⁶⁸ The meaning of 'task' is defined in a pedagogical perspective here. According to The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics: "an activity or action is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response)... Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative... since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake". (Richards, Platt and Weber 1986, p.289)

flexibility and variety in instruction, although it also meant that the teacher took more time to finish one unit.⁶⁹ Moreover, Ms Wang's teaching style was highly personalised. For example, she often told interesting stories, demonstrated art works or played music to assist teaching. Once she played the opera 'Carmen' to her class.⁷⁰ Ms Wang's choice of realia and teaching materials revealed her profound knowledge of and interest in the arts.

As Ms Wang said herself in the interview, she hoped to see more 'moral cultivation' in language education. Perhaps this is why she set some activities in which students reflected on their daily life after studying the literary passage. For example, as described above, when teaching the passage which described the painter's physical disabilities, the teacher asked the students to simulate the artist's daily motion. Although this task was not a significant part of instruction, it was somehow meaningful because it allowed students to understand the severe challenges faced by a minority group, and further encouraged them to put themselves in other people's shoes as well as to cherish what they possessed. In other words, in addition to simply reading through the article and providing literary translation, the teacher led students to relate the textbook content to their life experience and to think in a humanitarian way.⁷¹ Ms Wang's teaching procedure is summarised in Table 6.2.

⁶⁹ After observing so many hours of the teachers' classes, I came to feel that fifty minutes for a session seemed insufficient. Besides teaching the textbook content, the teachers also had to manage the class. If a teacher (e.g. Ms Wang) wanted to give additional stories or living examples, the class time appeared even more pressing. The teachers observed so far both used quite a fast pace when explaining course content.

⁷⁰ Through that opera, her students not only enjoyed the music but also realised how love could be destructive, which, in Ms Wang's opinion, was an important warning to all teenagers. "Sometimes, these teenagers are just too interested in the opposite sex," the teacher said.

⁷¹ It will be argued later that although playing music or showing realia in class only takes a short time, these additional teaching materials actually provided students with a lot of cultural information.

Step	Ms Wang
1	Pre-reading
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tell a joke, anecdote, story, etc. -Show relevant authentic materials (e.g. music, paintings, pictures, photos, etc.)
2	Teach Vocabulary
	-Translate the meanings of new words and example sentences
3	Teach Each Paragraph of the Reading Text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read each sentence and translate it into Chinese -Give additional vocabulary words and correlations -Give relevant living examples for students to reflect on their daily life -Sometimes ask the class to do tasks or role plays (optional)
4	Teach Grammar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teach Grammar Focus (including workbook) -Ask students to write answers/sentences on the blackboard and discuss
5	Teach Listening and Conversation (Optional)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work on listening practice -Translate listening comprehension questions and give answers
6	Weekly Test

Table 6.2. The Semi-structured Teaching Procedure

While instructing the vocabulary and literary passage, Ms Wang used the conventional grammar-translation method. She explained every word and sentence by giving detailed Chinese translation. She used various types of drills (e.g. practising a new vocabulary item by making up sentences in class and practising sentence patterns with a workbook) to help students memorise lexical items and grammatical rules. She was also careful to respond to her students' expectations on obtaining information for examination. These teaching techniques and the test-oriented concern were no different from those of the other teachers.

Nevertheless, the most distinctive aspects of Ms Wang's and Ms Wu's (the textbook editor) classes were their flexibility and use of course activities.⁷² Here the term 'activity' refers to a 'task' or an interactive assignment which took students time, effort and more than one language skill to complete.⁷³

Some people may argue that 'task' is a better term to describe the classroom activity, as many scholars have attempted to provide a definition of 'task' (Breen 1989, Long 1985, Richards, Platt and Weber 1985, Crookes 1986, Prabhu 1987). However, Nunan (1989) is right in saying that it is very difficult to offer a straightforward description for a task. My report of the tasks used in Ms Wang's and Ms Wu's classes is based on a set of useful criteria for distinguishing tasks from other exercise types (Ellis 2003), as well as on Nunan's (1989) framework for

⁷² Ms Wang and Ms Wu are supposed to be representative of those who attempt to use mild communicative activities in class. On the website of the Far East Book company, there is a section for teachers to post their teaching experiences and comments. Some teachers share the tasks they find effective in class (though they are not necessarily 'communicative' tasks).

⁷³ <http://www.hsenglish.com.tw/Teach/LessonInfo/SeniorHighSchool/Experience.aspx>
In the report we will find that some of the tasks the teacher gave her students were done through a series of assignments after class.

analysing communicative tasks.

Ellis (2003) suggests a practical set of features for identifying a task. They include six main traits:

- a) A task is a workplan.
- b) A task involves a primary focus on meaning.
- c) A task involves real-world processes of language use.
- d) A task can involve any of the four language skills.
- e) A task engages cognitive processes.
- f) A task has a clearly defined communicative outcome.

(Ellis 2003, pp.9-10)

In brief, in a 'task', unlike in an exercise or a drill, students participate in the assigned activity, which turns them into language 'users' rather than just 'learners'. The task-based activity provides "a certain semantic space and also the need for certain cognitive processes", which are related to the participants' choices of language (Ellis 2003, p.9). In other words, the participants in a task often need to comprehend a situation/context (through reading, listening, evaluating or selecting information, etc.), produce linguistic options (such as speaking or writing with meaningful content) and then interact with/respond to others (so as to achieve a communicative end). Most importantly, all these language usages and skills are those that could be employed in reality. According to these criteria, I thus distinguish role-plays and reflective activities⁷⁴ from 'language tasks' in the following analysis. Furthermore, each task can be analysed in terms of its "goal,

⁷⁴ Role-plays and reflective activities will be introduced after the analysis of tasks.

input, activity, teacher role, learner role and setting” (Nunan 1989, p.11).

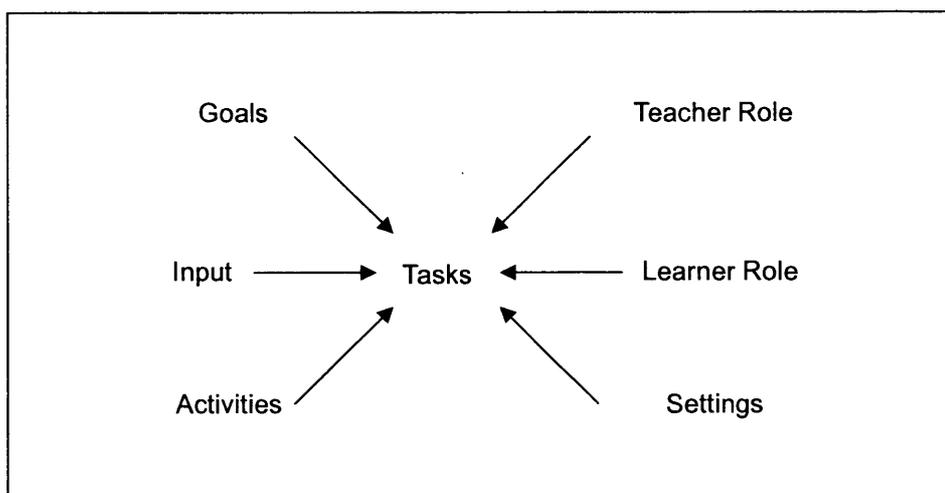


Figure 6.1. A Framework for Analysing Communicative Tasks

(Nunan 1989, p.11)

Based on the criteria stated above, the tasks used by Ms Wang and Ms Wu can be identified as follows. (The results were drawn from interviews and class observations.) Note that some of them are communicative while others are mild versions of communicative tasks.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Note that the teachers did not use the tasks for every unit. The use of tasks or activities was also subject to the reading text theme and time management, according to the teachers. Some tasks are considered ‘mild communicative’ partly because not every student was necessarily able to present, speak or perform in class due to the large number of students, partly because they sometimes involved only one language skill. It is also a pity that Ms Wu declined class observation; this meant that it was hard to discern the effect of her tasks in practice.

a) Task 1

- Topic:** Recycling (By Ms Wu)
- Goal:** Describing process
- Input:** A textbook article on garbage recycling
- Activity:**
- a) Students have group discussion after class on methods of recycling
 - b) Produce a poster in which the recommended recycling process is listed (in English)
 - c) Make a presentation, explaining the recycling process in English
- Setting:**
- a) Group brainstorming, discussion and poster drawing as homework
 - b) Group presentation is held in the class
- Teacher role:** Facilitator
- Learner role:** Presenters

b) Task 2

- Topic:** Internet and E-mailing (By Ms Wu)
- Goal:** Writing an e-mail
- Input:** A textbook article on functions of the Internet
- Activity:**
- a) Students open an e-mail account on the Internet
 - b) Write an e-mail to the teacher
 - c) The teacher replies with error correction
- Setting:** Homework/ individual work
- Teacher role:** Proofreader
- Learner role:** Writer

c) Task 3

- Topic:** Sports (By Ms Wu)
- Goal:** Using reporting language
- Input:** A textbook article on basketball
- Activity:**
- a) Students in groups collect information about a current sport event
 - b) Report the sport event as a news reporter in a broadcasting programme
- Setting:**
- a) Information collection and news reading as homework
 - b) News reporting activity is held in class
- Teacher role:** Facilitator
- Learner role:** Actor as a news reporter

d) Task 4

- Topic:** Robots (By Ms Wu)
- Goal:**
- a) Creative thinking
 - b) Using presentation language
- Input:** A textbook article on the robot
- Activity:**
- a) Students create functions of an imaginary robot
 - b) Draw the robot and its functions on a poster
 - c) Present and explain every function in English
- Setting:**
- a) Group discussion and poster drawing as homework
 - b) Presentation is held in class
- Teacher role:** Facilitator
- Learner role:** Presenter/inventor

e) Task 5

Topic:	Starry Night (By Ms Wang)
Goal:	a) Training of listening comprehension b) Appreciating music
Input:	a) Textbook vocabulary b) Brief introduction to Vincent Van Gogh
Activity:	a) Students listen to the English song - Starry Night b) Fill in the blanks to complete the lyrics
Setting:	Individual work in the classroom
Teacher role:	Facilitator/monitor
Learner role:	Music listeners

f) Task 6

Topic:	The Birth of Venus ⁷⁶ (By Ms Wang)
Goal:	Describing appearances and movements
Input:	Relevant vocabulary teaching
Activity:	a) Students look at the painting b) Describe/interpret what they see
Setting:	Individual work in the classroom
Teacher role:	Facilitator/ monitor
Learner role:	Speaker/story teller

As well as communicative tasks, the teachers also used other activity types, such as role-plays or class workshops on the arts. These activities are summarised as follows:

⁷⁶ One of the best interpretations of this painting can be found in Krausse's (1995) *The Story of Painting: From the Renaissance to the Present*. From the painting we see "Venus-the goddess of beauty and love standing on a scallop shell, the symbol of fertility. She is blown across the turbulent sea by the wind gods towards the shore where the flower goddess Flora is waiting with a red cloak ready to throw around her. Flowing hair and fluttering garments imbue the painting with a sense of whirling lightness. Following the example of Greek statues, Botticelli's Venus is shown in a *contrapposto* posture. This attitude of the central figure, inherently calm and yet animated, gives the picture a cheerful serenity which is further underlined by the use of light pastel tones which at the same time serve to emphasise the stylised representation". (Krausse 1995, p.12)

g) Role Play 1

- Topic:** The Blind Men and the Elephant (By Ms Wang)
- Goal:** Performing and acting a legend in English
- Input:** A textbook literary passage on the Indian fable-The Blind Men and the Elephant
- Procedure:**
- a) Some students were selected or volunteered as actors
 - b) Selected students were assigned characters in the fable
 - c) Role play of the characters in the classroom
 - d) Audience gave feedback on the performance

h) Role Play 2

- Topic:** A Disabled Artist (By Ms Wang)
- Goal:**
- a) Simulating the minority group's living conditions
 - b) Reflecting on one's own life
- Input:** A textbook article about Mr Hsieh, Kun-Shan's life
- Procedure:**
- a) Students act out a scene as the disabled painter to simulate his life at school
 - b) The teacher asks the students to reflect on their fortune in contrast to the severe challenges faced by the disabled artist

i) Role Play 3

- Topic:** Santa Claus (By Ms Wang)
- Goal:** Experiencing the Western festival and custom – Christmas
- Input:** Introduction to the seasonal custom - Christmas

- Procedure:**
- a) A student (in costume) plays the role of Santa Claus
 - b) The student Santa Claus gives out sweets and good wishes to the class

j) Workshop 1

Topic: Halloween (By Ms Wu)

Goal: Experiencing the Western festival and custom – Halloween

Input: A textbook article on Halloween

- Procedure:**
- a) Following the instructions
 - b) Students make a real pumpkin lamp in class

In summary, while teaching the literary passage, the second group of teachers, like the first group, spent much time translating the course content and emphasising grammar points to prepare for the exam. However, Ms Wang and Ms Wu also attempted to give students more opportunities to relate the learning content to their own lives. To this end they used various kinds of activities, some of them designed for communicative purposes, others in dramatic form, still others meant to be reflective. Although it would be crude to characterise their method as communicative language teaching, they did facilitate more student-student interaction, and added more variety than would be found in a traditional teacher-centred class using the grammar-translation method only.

6.2.4. Explicit and Implicit Cultural Content in Delivery

The cultural content delivered in the second group of teachers' classes appeared to be more substantial. In addition to prescribed cultural knowledge provided by the

textbook, the teaching methods used also send out many implicit cultural messages.

Ms Wang explained her approach to teaching the culture-related topics/articles in the textbook. In each volume there was at least one unit on a foreign festival or overseas event. The unit on Halloween, for example, introduced the origin of the festival and how it was celebrated today. At the end of the unit, there was a contrast between Halloween and the Chinese Ghost Festival. When Ms Wang taught this unit, she discussed the meaning of the Chinese Ghost Festival with her students. She told them that the traditional custom manifested a kind of universal love which Chinese people expressed to the departed. In Ms Wang's opinion, in every kind of ritual there was always something for the new generation to learn.⁷⁷ Her purpose was to deliver some cultural meanings through the English course content to her students. In other words, when teaching such a culture-related passage, in addition to translating the content as usual, she explained the tradition, thus introducing cultural knowledge.

Another type of cultural content provided by the textbook was, in Ms Wang's phrase, 'local stuff'; for example the unit about Hsieh, Kun-Shan. Although he lost both arms and one leg in his youth, Hsieh, Kun-Shan, a famous Taiwanese painter, faced his difficulties with optimism, finally completing his education while in his thirties. This biography depicted the poverty experienced by Taiwanese families in the past, and suggested the virtues valued by Taiwanese people, such as unflinching courage, stamina and the importance of receiving and completing education. Ms

⁷⁷ Note that Ms Wang tried to guide her students to do the cultural comparison and encourage intercultural awareness in spite of the shallow dialogue content provided by the textbook. For the details of this dialogue transcript please see the previous chapter on textbook analysis.

Wang used a reflective task to remind her students of these points.

Ms Wang also thought highly of some of the cultural content provided by the English learning magazine. She was particularly impressed with one article from *English 4 U*, which they used in school. This was about the trees planted along sidewalks in Taiwan, written by a foreigner who has lived in Taiwan for a long time. The author's sense of the subtle changes of the four seasons, gained through observing these trees, touched Ms Wang deeply. She was excited about teaching the article at the time when many goldenrain-trees around the school were just about to put forth golden blossoms. She was pleased to relate the content of a teaching material to students' everyday life. The magazine offered an advantage that the textbook failed to provide: up-to-date information on life style. All in all, Ms Wang appeared to have high cultural awareness. Although she saw herself as teaching cultural content mainly based on the teaching materials available, she indicated that she would be happy to see more content on culture in these materials.

Another type of cultural content was delivered effectively through classroom activities. For example, when the class received candies and good wishes from the student Santa Claus and their teacher, they felt joyful and in the holiday mood. As an Asian country where Christians are not in the majority, for most people in Taiwan Christmas has become a season of commercialisation and consumption (Wang 2003, Huang 2003). However, through this classroom activity, students learned the religious meaning of sharing and rewards for good children at Christmas, as a Western tradition. Similarly, through making a pumpkin lantern in class, Ms Wu's students learned how American children enjoyed themselves at

Halloween. The activity meant that the lantern was no longer just a picture in the textbook, but a real object in students' lives. Even though people in Taiwan do not celebrate Halloween, the students gained a better understanding of English speakers' experience of this special festival. Such course activities transformed the prescribed knowledge and abstract Western conventions into cultural experience in students' schooling.

In addition to the delivery of explicit cultural content, it is argued that Ms Wang and Ms Wu's teaching style, with the use of authentic materials and living examples, allowed students to acquire a great deal of implicit cultural content. When the teacher demonstrated various paintings in class, she led students to learn about Western arts and history. They were introduced to mythology as a conventional subject in a classic painting, and to the different styles of artists from different traditions. Similarly, when the teacher played English pop songs to the class, the students learned about the lyrics and foreign musicians. As some students said in the interview, the songs taught them about American culture and what their teenagers think. In other words, the students might latently learn about the current issues that were interpreted by the pop songs. The students were also likely to obtain cultural information from music. Even though a teacher might not necessarily demonstrate all the details of a cultural product (e.g. artistic or musical work), it was still possible that students were exposed to the implicit cultural content.

The last type of cultural content delivered through the second teaching style might be considered the most ambiguous or controversial. During the teaching process of

explaining the reading passage, for instance, Ms Wang sometimes gave living examples extended from the text content. These examples did not appear to be intentional instruction, but seemed more like random ideas flashing into her mind. However, these sudden ideas did carry subtle cultural connotations.

For example, when Ms Wang mentioned the meaning of the vocabulary word 'success', she said to students that in Taiwan it seemed hard to define. "Is being a president a great thing?" She answered the question herself: "Maybe not". She referred to the current President Cheng, saying that no matter how much he had done for his people and country, he was disrespected and criticised by his opponents. In this statement, she showed her sympathy with the president. It also implied the political conflicts within the nation. On another occasion, the teacher used a nickname to refer to former President Lee, and quoted an old saying to describe his personality in a positive way (while introducing a proverb provided in the textbook). Dr Lee was known as a pro-independence activist whose political statements often resulted in strong reactions from both his followers and enemies. The teacher's friendliness towards both President Cheng and former President Lee, who were regarded as possessing similar political standing and cultural identity, might reveal her own political leaning. Although it could be crude to assume that the teacher's political choice would influence her students' political/national identity, such examples given to the class could not be regarded as culture-free either.

Last but not least, when explaining the 'unusual' career path of Hsieh, Kun-Shan, the teacher referred to Confucius. She mentioned that in traditional Chinese

thinking, thirty was the right age to establish a family and career, implying that to settle down too much earlier, or (especially) too much later than this would be naturally regarded as unconventional or exceptional. Confucius' thinking has dominated Chinese/Taiwanese society for centuries (Tu 2002), here it was again, consolidated in this modern English class.

The examples given above suggest that the cultural content delivered in an English class is not confined in the textbook content. What a teacher says, as well as the activities given to the class, can also incorporate a great deal of cultural content. The variety and richness of cultural content can be decided by a teacher, although sensitivity over culture may be a requisite.

6.2.5. An Educational Perspective on Intercultural Teaching and Learning

Ms Wang regarded culture as representing the ways of thinking, behaving and living which regulate people's lives and influence their minds. In this definition, language is naturally part of culture. She gave an example of linguistic repression from Taiwanese history: when the mainlanders first immigrated to Taiwan, in order to gain political dominance, their strategy was to extinguish the indigenous languages in order to drive out other ethnic groups. Thus, she believed, language and culture were closely interrelated.

How does language learning relate to cultural learning? Ms Wu answered, "When a student learns a foreign language, he/she shuttles between two cultures [i.e. American and Taiwanese cultures]". Although it is arguable that when a student learns English, he/she may actually experience more than two cultures, Ms Wu here

pointed out a close link between language and culture.

In Ms Wang's opinion, interest in language learning and interest in cultural learning were also closely linked. She gave a current example. Recently in Taiwan, Korean soap operas have become increasingly popular. It was possible that some people had learned a little Korean before, and later became interested in Korean popular culture and TV programmes. It was also likely that if the audience watched Korean programmes regularly, they would in time become fans of some Korean actors, so that they would want to learn some Korean in order to get closer to the TV stars or the culture they admired.

She also pointed out the importance of providing a suitable sociocultural context for learners to learn and to 'use' the language. She added that cultural learning could be a process of upbringing. She found that many students were able to use English well, but not necessarily in an appropriate way. For example, sometimes she heard students carelessly using curses like "Go to hell!" The speakers knew the meaning of 'hell' but they had no idea how severe and offensive this curse could be to many Westerners or Christians. Ms Wang said that, in Taiwan, students were often encouraged to 'speak out loud', being told not to be shy while learning and speaking a foreign language. However, what they were not taught was to consider how native speakers use their language and how they feel when they use it. Ms Wang considered it a pity that current English education did not cover this part [i.e. sociocultural concerns]. As she pointed out, "if one excludes the language from culture, the language won't be a living thing anymore".

In order to address this concern, Ms Wang once suggested to her students that they join a bible study at the local church, where they might find foreigners who could have natural English dialogues with them. She also regarded travelling overseas, experiencing language and culture in person as a good idea, although she realised that this would not be affordable for most students. She always encouraged her students to read carefully those passages on culture-related topics in the textbook or in the self-study English learning magazine. When some students had doubts about the purpose of learning such culture-related content, she realised that their mind was preoccupied by the exam. Therefore, she would tell her students that even though they might not visit the foreign countries in the near future, they could write about foreign culture in the exam to make their composition more appealing.

When considering the type of cultural content to be taught, Ms Wang emphasised the significance of introducing local culture. “I think to enhance the understanding of local culture is the first point,” she said. This would allow students to use English to introduce the attractions of their own country to foreign friends. In her opinion, this should be the ‘fundamental ability’ for international exchange. Another consideration the teacher pointed out was the recent trend of localisation, which resulted in more and more test questions on Taiwanese history or geography. Therefore, Ms Wang believed that more textbook content on local culture would be helpful in coping with the exam.

Ms Wang also thought it was necessary to teach multiple cultures within Taiwan. She pointed out that nowadays in Taiwan, many children’s mothers are so-called ‘foreign wives’. “It is said that the ratio is 1:8. In other words, there would be five

immigrants' kids in a class of forty students".⁷⁸ "I think we should start to learn about their cultural backgrounds and living habits. For example, perhaps one of our common gestures could be an insulting act to them; [after all], we don't really know about their culture," the teacher said. As this situation would be more and more prominent, the teacher believed that "we really need to pay more attention to it".⁷⁹

Moreover, Ms Wang indicated that when most people talked about cultural teaching and learning, they inevitably focused on the 'dominant culture'. She was afraid that this would send a wrong message to the students: "Whenever they learn culture, they only need to learn the dominant". The consequence was that "they [students] don't care about the minority". She did not think this was a good thing. She recommended a wider variety of cultural content for study, for example learning about New Zealand in contrast to the focus on America only.

Finally, Ms Wang believed that a more integrative language course should be considered. She took the newly reformed junior high school curriculum as an example, in which different subjects were better integrated. In the senior high

⁷⁸ According to the National Police Agency, Ministry of the Interior, from 1998 to 2002, there were more than 100,000 cross-cultural marriages registered every year. From 1998 to 2000, the ratio of cross-cultural marriage in total registered couples raised from 6.13% to approximately 12%. The majority of foreign spouses are females from Vietnam, China, Indonesia and Thailand (Hsueh 2003, Hsueh and Lin 2003). From 1998 to 2002, the ratio of new born babies of foreign wives in the total number of new born babies in Taiwan increased from 5.12% to 12.46% (MOI 2003).

⁷⁹ The social phenomenon Ms Wang referred to has been considered a potential social problem because the cross-cultural marriages are often contracted by minority groups, for example, men of lower income, older age or disability. Through the marriage agent, they marry girls from South East Asian countries who need financial support. The 'foreign wives' are then responsible for child-bearing and whole family care. The immigrants often encounter language problems, culture shock or racial discrimination. Under these circumstances, how they can properly nurture their next generation becomes a serious consideration (Hsueh and Lin 2003). Many relevant issues are still under debate.

school system, every subject is independent. In her opinion, history or geography could be partly integrated into the English course so that students could gain a better picture of the international world along with the international language. Currently, the English learning magazine they used in school could be a good resource. For example, each volume of the magazine introduced at least one foreign city. The article often covered the people of that city and their living habits or food. She referred to a memorable article on Barcelona, where the Olympic Games had been held. In her opinion, geography and national culture could be more integrated into the English course in order to provide more meaningful content to the study of language.

Ms Wang demonstrated profound understanding of language and culture. She also contributed many insights into intercultural teaching, which appeared to be educational and humanistic. Her ideas regarding the integrative study of language and culture, incorporating minority cultures and referring to the international as well as the domestic, were broad-minded, and coincide with Pennycook's (1999) notion of critical pedagogy. Her words shed light on possibilities for the future of EFL in Taiwan, although it is questionable how many in-service teachers share the same view and are willing to put the ideal into practice. If the teaching of multiple cultures were to be implemented, there would need to be a lot more support in the form of teaching materials.

6.2.6. Summary of Teaching Style II

In this section, I have analysed another kind of teaching style, which retained the conventional grammar-translation method and test-oriented goal, but also

accommodated more variety in the teaching process and instructional methodology. Various course activities, such as communicative tasks, role plays, and workshops for producing Western cultural craft, were included. During the teaching process, in addition to translation of the literary passage and focus on grammar points, authentic objects, living examples and a teacher's personal opinions/ experiences were also employed. Through this semi-structured teaching process, it is argued that the students not only learned explicit prescribed cultural knowledge, but also acquired a lot of implicit cultural information.

These variations to the traditional teaching method were intended to meet the teaching objectives of helping students with their four language skills, communicative competence and personal development. The informants in this group revealed broad-minded intercultural attitudes and high cultural awareness. They understood the close link between language and culture and believed in the importance of integrating the teaching of culture into the language study. The teachers believed that this would enhance moral cultivation and intercultural understanding, and allow better mastery of the language within a sociocultural context. This group of teachers also believed that English education should take into consideration the critical concerns over local culture, minority groups, and peripheral world cultures.

6.3. Teaching Style III: Computer Assisted Communicative Language Teaching

The third teaching style reported here appears to be rather different from the previous two. Although literary translation and grammar explanation do play a part, the focus of the class shifts from the teacher to students, from the textbook to computer.

Ms Lin (pseudonym) was interviewed to represent the third type of teachers, who attempt to integrate ICT (Information Communication Technology) into teaching. Ms Lin had more than twenty-five-years teaching experience and had received several awards for teaching excellence. In recent years, she has been known for her contribution to CAI (Computer Assisted Instruction) which is regarded by most of her colleagues as a modern teaching approach. Ms Lin's involvement with several experimental projects run by universities and computer manufacturers meant she and her students had the chance to use the latest ICT to assist language learning. Ms Lin emphasised a learner-centred environment, learner autonomy and communicative competence through the use of ICT.

6.3.1 Background Information about Ms Lin and Her Cross-Cultural Experiences

The series of interviews with Ms Lin lasted about three hours in total. Like all the teachers, Ms Lin shared her experiences with enthusiasm.

Before teaching in the senior high school, Ms Lin had taught in elementary and junior high schools. At the time of the study she had been working in the senior high school for fifteen years. She majored in English literature and later gained her

Master degree in TESOL in the United States. She found that her academic study was important to her teaching job. She worked hard to improve her professional knowledge and teaching skills, she was influenced by her mentors, and she developed the teaching principles she lived by. Ms Lin said that the concept of ‘多作多得’ [the more one devotes oneself to teaching, the more one gains from it], taught by one of her mentors at college, was always in her mind. More importantly, her mentors had made her believe that a teacher’s job was to ‘motivate’ her students. As long as learners developed interest and strong motivation in foreign language learning, their study of English would gradually become autonomous. The result of such autonomous study, Ms Lin suggested, might be even more effective than what a teacher instructed. She indicated that modern society was very different from the past. Nowadays, there were many English programmes on TV and radio, as well as so much information and learning material in English on the Internet. In other words, she believed that if a student determined to learn a foreign language well, he/she would find that English resources were abundant. That was why she believed in the importance of good interaction with students, building up trustful relationships with them, leading them to develop long-term interest in the English language and to make good use of multimedia resources so that they were eventually able to study English efficiently on their own.

In common with the other teachers, Ms Lin travelled a lot during summer and winter vacations. As well as the USA, she had been to Europe, the UK and Canada several times. She spent around two months in foreign countries every year. She particularly enjoyed backpacking travel, communicating with people from different cultures on the journey. Like the other teachers, she had not experienced any

culture shock in the United States. However, while visiting a good friend in Germany, she had been surprised and confused to find that her German friend's attitudes towards sex education were completely different from the Chinese concept. She debated the issue with her friend and was shocked by his 'openness'. She also found it awkward when her friend introduced other male friends to her and they hugged her in greeting. As she concluded, "It was difficult to catch the comfortable body distance [with foreigners]. I was often bothered while getting along with foreign acquaintances and friends by this".⁸⁰ She believed this was a result of cultural difference.

6.3.2. The Learner-centred and Communicative Objectives

When asked about teaching objectives, Ms Lin clearly and without any hesitation stated that her aim was to let her students study English in an enjoyable way so that they were willing to learn spontaneously and develop proficiency in four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Expressing an idea similar to Ms Wang's, but putting it more explicitly, Ms Lin also hoped that her students "could broaden their knowledge and become people of excellent character through their study of English". This was the 'added value' in English learning, Ms Lin stressed. She found that the older she became, the more she was concerned about students' personal development. Therefore, she cared about the content of teaching materials, which should help students develop decency and ensure a pleasant

⁸⁰ During the interviews, Ms Lin mentioned this experience several times. She pointed out that this kind of cross-cultural/personal experience had led her to believe that culture was an important thing in everyday life.

learning experience. (Among the teachers interviewed so far, this statement of teaching objectives was perhaps the closest to the version stated in the curriculum standard.)

Another objective, Ms Lin suggested, was to allow the students to ‘use’ the language and to make friends. In her opinion, “English is a Humanistic subject and I feel that learning English should be also a matter of pleasure. [Besides,] learning a foreign language [should] enable kids to establish [cross-cultural] friendships and interact with foreigners”. Based on this belief, Ms Lin had been trying to give students opportunities to be in contact with foreigners. She hoped her students would enjoy the experience of using English and communicating with native speakers.

6.3.3. Communicative Language Teaching with ICT

Ms Lin’s instructional procedure was unconventional. In her class, there were many forms of activities for students to learn and use English. From grammar teaching to delivering text content, there were simple tasks requiring less than five minutes or activities taking students one to two months to complete. The instructional media were also various, ranging from the textbook and workbook, to e-books and teleconferencing. Her students appeared to possess a high level of computer literacy. Their homework extended from the written assignment to audio/video recording with Microsoft Power Point slides. Their English study continued outside class hours into their free time, and extended beyond the physical classroom into a virtual community.

Observation of Ms Lin's classes took place between 19th and 26th October 2004. There were forty students (half male, half female) in her class. Seven sessions on Unit 4, 'Halloween', of Book 1 were observed, and there were informal interviews with her students after some course activities. The following report begins with a description of how Ms Lin instructed Unit 4, followed by an analysis of her teaching techniques. The data examined here includes the results of both observations and interviews.

Ms Lin began the first session by announcing the result of the previous weekly English test. She told the class that most students had done well, though some should work harder. Then, she said that she was going to give an award to the best student with the highest score. She announced the student's name and took out a beautiful collocate flower. The whole class was very excited, applauding while the girl received the award. Two students even took out their digital cameras to take photos of their teacher and classmate. The class atmosphere was joyful.

The teacher then shifted from Chinese to English, saying: "Now please open your English textbook. Turn to page 24 - Vocabulary. Find a partner, read the sentence and translate it to your partner. When you finish it, please raise up your hand". Students seemed to be used to this instruction; they turned to the page and did the pair practice. Most students were reading and translating the vocabulary list and example sentences with their partners, except for three or four students who were quiet. The teacher stood on the raised teaching platform monitoring students, but she did not force the quiet ones to read aloud. (At this point, a drillmaster passed through the classroom. Standing outside the classroom, he had seen a student by

the window reading a comic book. He confiscated the comic book.) About ten minutes later, two students who finished reading first raised their hands. The teacher said, “Well done!” She gave the students extra points in her grade book.

When most students had finished reading and translating, the teacher gave students some time to highlight the important phrases in the example sentences on their own. The teacher did not translate every example sentence. She focused on some particular vocabulary words and called on students to translate those words, read the example sentences and translate them from English to Chinese. When the student’s answer was correct, the teacher awarded extra points. At this stage, no one made any obvious errors. For each word explained, the teacher added more relevant phrases, word forms or sentence patterns in both English and Chinese.

After vocabulary teaching, the teacher reminded the class that they should begin to prepare their presentation project on the Moon Festival for their American e-pals. She also said that the next videoconference with American students would be happening soon. Ms Lin pointed out that it was a valuable opportunity by which they would improve their English and make foreign friends. She told the class that in previous years, many students had been rewarded by the school because of their excellent performances in English study, especially through this kind of on-line cross-cultural programme. Now these students from her previous classes were all studying in very good universities.

Next, Ms Lin told the class that the reading text they were going to study was about Halloween. To illustrate the theme of festivals, she related her experience of

celebrating Thanksgiving with an American friend's family in the USA. On that special day, she expected a big feast like people in Taiwan have at Chinese New Year. At first, when she saw a huge turkey served, she was very excited. However, to her surprise, the turkey was the first dish as well as the last one! "They only had one turkey for the special day!" The teacher told the students that the meals associated with important festivals in the two cultures were very different. The students laughed at the teacher's disappointment as an interesting experience.

Before the end of the first session, the teacher asked students to take out their e-books.⁸¹ Students then left their seats to collect their e-books from their personal lockers. First, they used earphones to listen to pronunciation of each vocabulary word in Unit 4. Afterwards, they played a 'vocabulary game'. This was similar to a video game, with students 'shooting' enemy planes on their screen to win within a certain time frame. The difference was that the 'enemy plane' here was the vocabulary example sentence with blanks. The game player needed to fill out the blank with a correct vocabulary option. The visual-audio effect created by the game made the cloze test exciting. After a student finished his/her game, the final score was sent to the teacher's e-book at once through the wireless network. The teacher was able to know who passed the vocabulary game/test successfully with what score within how much time. She also knew which question or vocabulary word was the most difficult one for students to comprehend. The students were free to leave the classroom when they had finished the game.

In the second hour, the teacher reviewed some important words, according to the

⁸¹ An E-book is a simplified type of laptop with interactive learning programmes designed by the textbook publisher installed. The E-books used by the class were supplied by a computer manufacturer through an experimental project cooperating with Ms Lin.

result of the vocabulary game. She then began to teach the first two paragraphs of the reading text. She read one sentence and translated it. However, she did not do so sentence by sentence. For some sentences and words, she called on students to give meanings. She further translated only when the student failed to offer complete translation. As usual, she gave extra points to those who did well. After teaching the first two paragraphs, the teacher played the CD to let students listen to the native speaker's reading. The class ended with students reading aloud the first two paragraphs together.

The third session was special because it was an on-line interactive video conference led by an American teacher, Maryann (pseudonym).⁸² The class took place in the computer room. Every student had his/her own LCD (Liquid Crystal Display), computer, web camera, earphone and microphone. At the front of the classroom there was a large projector screen on which they could see Maryann talking to them. The interactive platforms they used were Join Net and Blackboard. The instructor could show MS PPT (Microsoft Power Point) slides as well as writing or drawing on the same picture frame in real time. The students could see not only the teacher talking to them but also images or words shown to them.

After introducing Maryann, Ms Lynn handed the class over to her. Everyone in the class was very excited, and they listened quietly to Maryann. The American teacher began by asking the students what words they associated with Halloween. Quickly, everyone responded by typing different words, and the teacher read all of those

⁸² An English course taught by a foreign teacher was not common in state-run schools. However, the school where Ms Lin worked hired native speakers to teach their students English in every summer vacation. Maryann had worked in the summer school, and subsequently, Ms Lin sometimes invited her to instruct American-culture related content in private. These sessions were all conducted through real time computer conferencing.

appearing on the screen. She gave some comments and example sentences on particular words. Then, she showed some pictures on screen: a black cat, vampire bats and carving pumpkins. She explained that they were the objects most people associate with Halloween. Next, she asked the students what the origin of Halloween was. Some students took out their textbooks, trying to find the answer in order to respond. Some students typed, “an Irish story” as they had learned the day before. After the teacher had responded to the students’ answers, she briefly explained the legend of Halloween: “A Celtic story goes like this: spirits of all who died in the preceding year were free to roam in the Earth on one night in the hopes they could possess a living human body and come back to life. And that day is known as Halloween now”.

Then, the teacher showed pictures of carving ‘pumpkins’, telling the story of ‘Jack’s lantern’. She also showed pictures of a costume party. She described the costumes shown in the pictures and then asked students what kinds of costume they would wear if they were invited to a party. Soon every student responded. Since students could see each other’s typing, they began laughing at their classmates’ costume choices. Again, Maryann commented on some of the answers.

Next, the teacher showed pictures of a ‘haunted house’. She posed many questions to students such as “What might you find in a haunted house?” “Have you been to a real haunted house?” Students responded with various answers. The whole class was attentive and very excited. Then, the teacher said that in the United States, people could pay around ten dollars to visit a haunted house. She described the

scary atmosphere and feelings in dramatic fashion.⁸³ The class laughed and enjoyed her demonstration very much.

The last couple of slides and key words were about 'witches'. Maryann asked the students what they knew about 'witches', for example, "What do they do for a living?" Students typed their answers on the message board, and the teacher responded to the answers. Then, she gave a lot of information about witches and how they were perceived in Western culture.⁸⁴ It was now nearly the end of the hour and Ms Lin asked the class to say goodbye to Maryann. Every student sent a message to her.⁸⁵ The majority of messages showed that the students were very fond of this American teacher. When the class finished, many students asked Ms Lin when they could see Maryann again.

⁸³ The American teacher arranged the topics in order of the key words listed in the textbook.

⁸⁴ Because the whole session was video recorded by Ms Lin, I was able to watch the recording again and transcribed part of the lecture. The following note is a transcript of the American teacher's lecture on the topic of 'Witch'. "When we say a witch is cooking, we say she is 'brewing'. She brews potion. Potion has evil purposes. It's always green. The witch's brew is always green. Now why is it green? I don't expect you to know the answer, but...hmm... it's green because it's a strange colour for food. Most food or drinks are not green, especially in Western culture, we don't eat or drink a lot of green food unless it's vegetable. Umm... like green soup or drink, we don't eat that. If food has turned green, it's 'mouldy', right? In Western culture, green food is considered as gross. Green food is something we never eat. That's why the witch's food is always green. Well... Tomato is popular as food. We eat more red food than we do with green. Green is the most unusual colour for food. And also, I think there's a strong relationship with spoiled food. Food has spoiled that turns green. Hmm...A witch always wears black. It's a dark, scary colour. The most important reason is that in Western culture, the colour of black is the symbol of death. If someone dies, we wear black. If we are in mourning, we wear black".

⁸⁵ The students' messages could be categorised into three types. The majority said 'thank you', showing their gratitude to Maryann. Messages like "Thank you, Maryann!" "I like your teaching! Thank you!" "I had a good time, thank you!" were typical examples. The second type were compliments to the teacher such as "You are so cute! I love you!" "Your voice is cute!" "You are a nice teacher! I will remember you!" Still other students asked personal questions. For example, "Can we visit you?" "What is your phone number?" "Are you married?" "What do you think about us?" Some questions were not necessarily appropriate and may even have been impolite but apparently the students were not aware of this. In general, the result showed that the students had a very good time during the session.

The fourth session was held next day. Before the class started, the teacher asked her students: “Did you like Maryann’s teaching yesterday?” The whole class replied loudly. “Yes!” Ms Lin praised her students: “You did very well yesterday! I am very glad that your reactions were immediate and listening comprehension was very good!” Ms Lin told her students that Maryann was also very happy with their performance, and she promised the class that if they kept behaving well, she would invite Maryann to the class again.

Ms Lin then started to teach the remaining paragraphs of the main reading text. (She had finished two paragraphs last time and today she would teach another two paragraphs. There were five in total for the article.) “Please open your textbook. Now read one paragraph and translate it to your partner”. Students then took turns to read and translate the paragraph with their partners.⁸⁶ After some time, one or two pairs finished their work and raised their hands. “Well done! What are your student numbers?” the teacher asked, and she gave them extra points on her grade record as usual. When most students had finished, she asked the class about the main point of the third paragraph. “What do you think of Halloween? Do you think it’s interesting or scary?” Some students replied: “Interesting!” She told students that the main idea of the third paragraph was written in the first line; it was about the tradition of playing “trick or treat” on Halloween night. So far, the teacher had used English to explain everything. Next, she wrote down some sentence patterns

⁸⁶ After the class, I asked Ms Lin about the purpose of this ‘reading and translating aloud’ activity. Ms Lin explained that since there would be a cloze test of the textbook article in the school’s weekly exam, it was important for students to be very familiar with the text content. She was aware that most teachers would translate everything for students, but her activity aimed to let students read and study the text on their own. The student could always check if they were confused by anything. In Ms Lin’s opinion, ‘studying’ should be done by the student, not the teacher!

to explain the grammar rules, in this case infinitive complements. While explaining the grammar, she switched to Chinese. Later, Ms Lin asked students to give the main idea of the fourth paragraph. After calling on a student to answer, she explained other grammar points in the fourth paragraph. She taught students how to distinguish 'as' from 'as if', and 'alone' from 'along', which were key words in the text. She wrote down example sentences on the blackboard. Before the end of this session, the teacher asked students to take out their e-book to do the listening comprehension practice. She also reminded them that there would be a quiz in the next session. They would have to write the first two paragraphs of this article from memory.

At the beginning of the fifth session, while students were quietly writing the article from memory, the teacher set up her computer, the big front screen and the projector (the latter was fixed in the classroom). The big screen showed the cover page of Unit 4, 'Halloween', with animation. After collecting students' test papers, the teacher asked students the pre-reading questions shown on the screen. Some students were called to answer the three questions. Next, the teacher played the audio programme in which a native speaker read through the article, with the text shown on screen at the same time. The students could clearly see how each word was pronounced. Then, the teacher asked students to read aloud and translate the last paragraph to their partners. When the students finished reading and translating, as usual the teacher gave extra points to the quickest pairs. Instead of giving further instructions directly, she then asked the class to browse the paragraph again to find out an important sentence pattern. She asked the students, "If you were the examiner, what grammar point here would you test students on?" A student

answered that in his opinion, the sentence pattern ‘so... that...’- was important. The teacher gave this student an extra point for the correct answer. She further explained this sentence pattern and other grammar points in the final paragraph, such as the passive structures and past participles, in Chinese.

Finally, she reminded students that the organisation of English composition was different from the Chinese. The first line of each paragraph was the topic sentence which carried the main idea. She quickly reviewed the main idea of each paragraph with the students in the form of question and answer (the teacher asked the students what the main idea was and the students replied together). Before the end of class, she asked students if they still remembered the story Maryann had told them about how Jack played tricks with the devil. She quickly summarised the story again in English. Then, she posed more questions: “Do you believe in God? Do you believe in ghosts? Are you scared of ghosts?” Students discussed these questions among themselves. Soon the bell rang; and the class was dismissed.

Before the start of the sixth session, the teacher had prepared the computer and big screen. She showed students an animation on the new section – Conversation.⁸⁷ After playing the animation with sound twice, she asked the students, “So, who ate the food?” Some students replied with answers like ‘dog’, ‘children’ or ‘ghost!’ Others were not interested in this question. The teacher said that this conversation text was very ‘humorous’⁸⁸: “The American boy, Richard, will wonder who eats the

⁸⁷ The Conversation transcript for this unit is discussed in the previous chapter. The dialogue was between an American boy, Richard and a Taiwanese girl, Hua-Yin, about Halloween and the Chinese Ghost Festival. The girl did not know much about the Chinese Ghost Festival and concluded that the food for worship was gone next day.

⁸⁸ This comment is questionable. The dialogue might be intended to be funny, but it was arguably confusing to English learners learning how to introduce local culture to

food!” she said. The class were not keen to react at this point. The next task the teacher gave the class was a role play without reading the transcript. She gave the students five minutes to prepare. They were told to record their dialogue practice in their e-books. This task took about ten minutes in total. Later, the teacher picked one pair and played their recording to the class. Those who had not completed their recording were told to complete it as an assignment. Then, the teacher taught the expressions in the dialogue and gave some more example sentences.

After the conversation practice, the teacher showed a Chinese version of Jack’s story on screen. She then asked a student to read the whole passage in Chinese. In sharp contrast to their indifferent attitude towards the dialogue transcript, now far more of the students seemed interested in this Chinese text. They stared at the screen and listened to their classmate reading it. After reading aloud, Ms Lin told students that they could try to translate the text from Chinese into English. “How do you tell a story in English? Would you like to try?” She translated the first two sentences as a demonstration. There was no further practice; soon the teacher continued to teach the next section – Listening.

Students were asked to listen to directions for making a jack-o’-lantern. They had to match the number of each step with the correct picture. After listening to the CD twice, the teacher checked answers with the students. The last activity of this session was listening dictation. The teacher asked students ten questions related to Halloween and they had to write them into their notebooks.⁸⁹ Some of the

foreigners.

⁸⁹ The ten questions were: “1. What is Halloween? 2. What is the origin of Halloween? 3. What is the most popular activity on Halloween? 4. Is Halloween only for children? 5. What would adults do on Halloween? 6. Why couldn’t Jack enter Heaven? 6. Why

questions related to the article, others to what Maryann had mentioned in her teaching and still others elicited the students' personal opinions. The homework was to write answers to the questions. The teacher would check their replies later. In the morning self-study session next day, they would have the regular quiz in which they would write the article from memory and then check answers.

Before the end of the session, the teacher gave her students another quick review of the grammar points of Unit 4. She asked her students: "If you were the examiner, what questions would you give in the exam?" A student volunteered the reply "passive structure". The teacher said, "Good!" She then asked students to identify how many passives were written in the article. She called on students to read aloud those sentences one by one. The class ended with this reinforcement of grammar points for the test.

The weekly exam on Unit 4 took place in the seventh session, with answers being checked and discussed in the eighth class hour. Between those two class sessions there was an extracurricular activity, a cross-cultural video conference with an American senior high school in California, in which students in the two classes could talk to each another. Because of the time difference, the Taiwanese class needed to stay in school until 8:00PM in order to meet their American counterparts at 7.00AM their time. The one-hour video conference was planned in advance by Ms Lin and the American teacher, Sophia (pseudonym). The topic for the day was Halloween. Ms Lin told her students that they should introduce themselves first and

couldn't Jack go to Hell? 7. What image comes into mind when you think of Halloween? 9. What activities do you like most on Halloween? 10. What do witches hold in their hands?"

later they were free to talk about whatever they were interested in, although the topic on Halloween was recommended as they had already learned about this festival and American students would be celebrating it soon.

The beginning of the video conference was a little chaotic. Because the American school bus was stuck on the highway due to an accident, there were only five students in class on time. Consequently, about five Taiwanese students had to talk to one American student instead of one on one as planned. The American students also encountered some technical problems with their computers, and the voice and video qualities were not stable. Furthermore, many students were not familiar with the software so that they were confused about when and how they could speak within the group and make themselves heard. The turn taking was thus not smooth. The result was that many students ended up typing most of the time instead of speaking with their partners.

It was evident that most of the students were very excited. Some appeared to be even a little nervous, especially when their American partners talked to them. Many students used their electronic dictionaries to check words they did not understand or to find words for ideas they wanted to express. I walked around the groups and stayed with two groups for a longer time.

The first group I observed began by introducing themselves. Since they could see one another, the Taiwanese students paid a lot of compliments to the American girl they talked to. Most of the comments were quite personal, for example, "You are cute!", "You are beautiful!" or "Your voice is sweet!" During the exchange, the

Taiwanese students asked many questions of their American counterpart. Since four or five Taiwanese students were working with one American student, no-one was able to speak for very long. While one student talked, the others typed or listened. It was interesting that, when they had the chance to speak, it seemed natural for the Taiwanese students to ask questions. After asking some personal questions like: "How old are you?" and "Do you have a boyfriend?", they began to ask questions about Halloween. "How do you celebrate Halloween?" "Do you play 'treat or trick' on Halloween?" "What kind of costume have you worn on Halloween?" The American student speaking to the group was very patient, smiling and very willing to answer all the questions. When she gave her answers, she was considerate in that she typed some key words on the message board to help the Taiwanese students understand what she said. The two Taiwanese students who sat next to me (other group members sat in another row) were excited whenever they found some similarities between them and their American partner. For example, when the girl said that last year she dressed like Harry Potter, the Taiwanese students were very excited to reply that they also liked Harry Potter very much. "Wow! That's cool!" they exclaimed. They told the American girl that if they had participated in a costume party, they would have wished to dress like Harry Potter, too. In this group, most exchanges were conducted through typing rather than speaking. The Taiwanese students hesitated to speak, although their teacher was there encouraging them to talk. They typed or responded with short utterances or some delighted exclamations. Most of the time the American girl talked, but she also typed to explain her expressions.

In the second half of the hour, I moved to another group, in which four Taiwanese

girls worked with one American girl. These students were more active as well as cooperative in that they took turns to speak and others helped the master speaker with expressions.⁹⁰ While one student was talking, other students told me that they had already introduced themselves and finished the topic on Halloween. Now they were talking about their interests and hobbies. They asked the American girl what she did in her free time. She told them that she played the flute and really liked music; she also played tennis. The Taiwanese students replied that it sounded great and they envied her because they were very busy in Taiwan. Many of them studied late and went to the cram school at weekends. These students used simple sentences to communicate in English. Everyone looked happy, though still a little intense while speaking English.

At the end of the session, Ms Lin and Sophia told their students that the time was up because the American students were about to take their first class in the morning. It was also late for the Taiwanese students to go home. The Taiwanese and American students said goodbye to each other, and most said or typed that they would like to see each other again or to become friends in future. The class atmosphere was merry during the whole hour. After the videoconference, the teacher asked students to write down their feedback on today's activity and send it back to the teacher's computer before they left.⁹¹ This unit was now formally finished.

During this unit, from vocabulary teaching to instruction of the literary passage, the

⁹⁰ With the programme, JoinNet, only one master speaker from each side was allowed to talk at a time. Although other group members could hear the dialogue between the two masters, they could not join the chat. However, if they typed, everyone in the group could see the typing on the message board.

⁹¹ Students' responses are reported in the next chapter.

teacher had moved from one section of the textbook to another in sequence. She had focused mainly on the content of the literary passage and on the Listening and Conversation sections. Grammar points and practice were not particularly emphasised, although the teacher did lead students to consider the main points for the exam. In contrast to the other teachers, who asked students to do intensive individual written practices in class, in Ms Lin's class many exercises were done through the e-book and pair work. She also used computer conferencing to let her class interact with an American teacher (Maryann) and a group of American students. These real-time intercultural exchanges allowed the students to learn about Halloween from the native speakers' cultural knowledge and personal experiences, which further consolidated the study of the textbook content. In general, the students had many opportunities to speak and listen to English in class, and more interactions with their classmates and with foreigners.

Ms Lin used a variety of teaching techniques to help students with their grammar competence, as well as to create opportunities for listening and speaking practice. Although she retained part of the grammar-translation method, she also used the latest information communication technology to develop students' intercultural communicative competence.

Ms Lin transformed the grammar-translation method into a communicative pattern. Although she did use elements of the traditional approach to instruct,⁹² in her class there were more discussions and dialogues between the teacher and students;

⁹² For example, she also presented grammar rules systematically with examples in Chinese.

students and students.

a) Translation of a literary passage: student-student interaction

The teacher translated part of a literary passage from English to Chinese for students. However, she left students to translate the rest of the passage with their partners. Students were thus allowed to negotiate the meanings with their partners and have a chance to examine their own understanding of the text. In addition, the translation tasks were not only from English to Chinese. Students were challenged by translating other texts from Chinese into English.

b) Word use in sentences: replacing static drills with interactive learning programme

Instead of using the traditional series of drills to learn vocabulary, an interactive learning programme in the form of a computer game was employed. The game player needed to fully understand the usage of a word in order to fill in the blanks in real time successfully. The cognitive process was emphasised here rather than mere memory. The results were sent back to the teacher, which was useful in monitoring progress and helping students with any difficult vocabulary as soon as they showed any confusion.

d) Cognitive process V.S. memorisation: placing oneself in the examiner's position

Regular quizzes for students to write the text from memory were used to help students pass the school's weekly exam. Nevertheless, instead of giving every learning point to the students directly, the teacher often led her students to put themselves in an examiner's position to judge which

learning points were important and to study those items spontaneously.

In addition to the transformed grammar-translation method, the teacher also used various communicative tasks to facilitate language learning. Here are some examples drawn from the result of interviews and class observations:

a) Communicative Task 1

Topic: Grammar Learning

Goal: Learner Autonomy

Input: Grammar rules listed in the textbook

Activity: a) Students form groups and study the grammar rules on their own

b) Each group teaches the class the grammar rule they studied

Setting: Presentation in the classroom

Teacher role: Facilitator/ monitor

Learner role: Presenter/ instructor

b) Communicative Task 2

- Topic:** Full Moon Festival
- Goal:**
- a) Chinese/Taiwanese culture study
 - b) Using English to introduce Taiwanese culture
- Input:** Introduction to the festival from the teacher
- Activity:**
- a) Students research into production of moon cakes by interviewing elders or bakery
 - b) Produce slides (by MS Power Point) on introduction to the festival and moon cakes
 - c) Record audio explanation in English to the MS PPT file or produce video file
 - d) Send the file to American e-pals
- Setting:** Homework/ group work
- Teacher role:** Facilitator
- Learner role:** Researcher/Presenter

c) Communicative Task 3

- Topic:** Halloween
- Goal:** Interacting with a native-speaking teacher
- Input:** Textbook article on Halloween
- Activity:** Through a video conference, an American teacher gives real-time interactive presentation on Halloween and invites students to respond (interactions between the teacher and students, students and students).

Setting: Computer room
Teacher role: Facilitator/presenter/communicator
Learner role: Learner/communicator

d) Communicative Task 4

Topic: Halloween⁹³
Goal: Interacting with native speaking students
Input: Textbook article on Halloween
Activity: Through a video conference, the students interact with native speakers and exchange opinions and life experiences
Setting: Computer room
Teacher role: Facilitator
Learner role: Communicator

Last but not least, what was unique in Ms Lin's instruction was that she used a lot of 'incentives' to motivate her students to take part in classroom study. The incentive devices included physical rewards, extra marks in students' grades record and oral encouragement. For example, when students passed an exam with a high score, the teacher sent them a 'gift' such as chocolate or flowers. When they completed a task efficiently, the teacher noted the performance and gave points. Thus, whoever wished to get a high grade on this course had to work hard not only for tests but also in class activities. This was effective in stimulating students to respond to the teacher in class, which was rather different from the 'quiet'

⁹³ The video conference with American students was held once a month. Various topics were covered during the semester. Another topic the teacher mentioned in her interview was about a movie. Students on both sides watched the Chinese movie, Hero, and discussed their opinions about war.

conventional classes observed previously. The teacher also encouraged students through verbal recognition. For example, when a school test was finished, the teacher told the class that they had done a good job. Some students could work harder, but most of them had done well. After the videoconference, Ms Lin said that she was very pleased with the students' quick responses to the American teacher's questions. When her students achieved a goal, she did not hesitate to praise them: "You have done very well". "You are very good!" and "I am proud of you!" She also encouraged her class to look to previous students as role models. She reminded her students that the alumni had also participated in various cross-cultural activities at senior high school, that they spoke good English, had passed the college entrance exams successfully (with high scores in English), and were now all studying at good universities. This kind of example was intended to increase the students' self-confidence and motivation in their current English study.

6.3.4. Cross-Cultural Content and Experiences

The cultural content delivered in Ms Lin's class was mostly explicit and very wide ranging. It could be divided into at least three types: textbook article prescribed cultural content, personal anecdotes (related to the target culture) and cultural experiences facilitated through ICT.

The textbook article on Halloween was a good example of culture-related course content. It introduced the origin of the custom and how it was celebrated by modern people. As mentioned earlier, there was at least one unit on a foreign festival in each book of the series. When Ms Lin taught such content, she sometimes invited an American teacher to instruct her class. Through interaction

with the native-English-speaking teacher, the students learned many more details about the festival and the target culture than the textbook provided. In this case, the American teacher added a lot of information about Western culture such as the perception of the colour green for food, and legends about witchcraft. At the end of the lesson, Ms Lin reinforced this information by providing a version of the Halloween story in Chinese. The students had a chance to review their overall understanding of the custom in the language familiar to them. Ms Lin mentioned that she used a similar method to teach other culture-related topics⁹⁴. In other words, when the students learned about American culture from the textbook, the teacher usually supplied additional details or hard facts. The cultural knowledge the students learned from the textbook was thus made richer and more substantial.

Another type of cultural content covered in the class was by way of anecdotes provided by the teacher. Ms Lin has been to many foreign countries and she was glad to share her experiences with her students. We have seen how she talked about her personal experience of celebrating Thanksgiving with an American friend's family. Now and then she also mentioned her study experience in the USA. According to Ms Lin, she had become very interested in culture because when she travelled, she often made new friends and many people were very nice to her. Therefore, she enjoyed communicating with foreigners. She hoped that her students would not be afraid to interact with foreigners, and for that reason, she shared her own pleasant experiences with her students.

The most distinctive cultural content delivered in Ms Lin's class was the

⁹⁴ 'Culture-related topics' here refer to articles on customs, festivals or American culture which is clearly classified by the textbook (as a cultural text) or suggested by the article title.

cross-cultural exchange facilitated by ICT. Through the videoconference conducted with American students, the Taiwanese students learned about American life styles and exchanged a lot of cultural information. As well as Halloween, the teacher reported that later in the semester, the class had videoconferences talking about the Chinese Full Moon Festival in Taiwan, Thanksgiving, and a movie. There was a videoconference almost every month. The American and Taiwanese students prepared in advance, so that they all learned not only about foreign culture but also how to explain their native culture to foreigners. Although the topic for each videoconference was designed by the teachers, the content for presentation and discussion was decided by the students. In other words, the students learned to articulate their own culture to foreigners in parallel with learning cultural content from their counterparts. Here the cultural knowledge learned was first-hand, directly from native speakers' personal experiences. This was something more than description or translation from the textbook content.

6.3.5. Intercultural Teaching and Learning: An Integrative Element of Language Study

In the interviews and in her classroom teaching, Ms Lin appeared to be very interested in cultural issues. She also gave insight into the relation between the study of language and culture.

Ms Lin defined culture as a complexity of many things, such as people's lives, customs, values and attitudes. In one of her activities, 'Different Culture', she once asked her students to report on one national culture which interested them. For example, some of her students selected Japan and came to ask her what they could

report on Japanese culture. Instead of giving them a direct answer, she asked them to think about things that can represent Japanese cuisine, clothing, architecture, transportation, sports or arts. When her students replied with 'kimono', 'sumo', 'sushi' and 'sashimi', she told them that was a good start for them to do their research and later make a presentation to their classmates. Ms Lin believed that every national culture has unique aspects. When her students could find out the meanings of those unique points, they would have a better understanding of the 'different culture'.

Ms Lin also emphasised values as an important part of culture, a belief that had been reinforced by personal experience. She referred several times in the interviews to a misunderstanding with a German friend that had eventually affected their friendship. She had been shocked by her friend's attitudes towards sex education, body distance (between speakers) and passionate greetings with kisses and hugs. She felt frustrated when embarrassment occurred, but she realised that some misunderstandings were caused by cultural differences and could have been avoided. If she had learned the different cultural values or manners her friend possessed, she might not have been so shocked.

After all, "language and culture are closely related," Ms Lin said. The intimate greetings between French people were different those in Chinese culture. Taiwanese people did not say 'Hello' or 'Good Morning' to people they did not know in the neighbourhood as American people did. She also indicated that people in Taiwan did not often say 'Excuse me' when sneezing or hiccupping in public. Ms Lin was right that these expressions manifest differences not only in language

use but also in culture. In these examples, people from different cultures perceived interpersonal relationships, politeness and the private/public space differently.

Ms Lin believed that the more students know about the target culture, the more they will want to study the target language. In her class, she tried her best to create opportunities for her students to learn about American culture. Although she did not conduct formal research into her students' reactions, she was sure that most of her classes enjoyed the contact with American students. Time after time her students told her that they would do better next time and wished for more contacts with foreign students. "That's the incentive and motivation. The more they know about American culture, the more they like it and wish to study English," Ms Lin observed. In her opinion, combining learning of culture with language study was a 'great' thing because it not only improves students' English, but can also broaden their vision and knowledge.

In general, Ms Lin tended to lead students to consider learning target culture while studying a target language. In her school, students could choose a second foreign language such as French, German or Japanese. When she taught those who studied the second foreign language in addition to English, she encouraged them to have native-speaking pen pals. Correspondence could be undertaken in either the target language or English. However, Ms Lin did not restrict herself to teaching target culture only. Sometimes she designed tasks in which students were invited to report on any country they were interested in. She had seen a variety of interesting choices, such as France, Germany and the Czech Republic. She also mentioned that if she had the chance to let her class interact with British or Australian students, she

would like to do so. Currently the American classes cooperating with her were all arranged through personal networking. This suggested that if there had been more formal links with foreign schools, she could have provided more interaction possibilities. Ms Lin's conclusion was inspiring: "I feel that all students like culture-related content. After all, human beings have curiosity. Most students are attracted to different cultures and lives". This was why she believed introducing culture to language study was meaningful and motivating.

6.3.6. Summary of Teaching Style III

Ms Lin's teaching methodology encompassed both the traditional grammar-translation method and the new communicative language teaching style. Her teaching objective, distinct from the objectives of the other groups of teachers in this study, was to create a learner-centred classroom and to develop learner autonomy. She also believed that English should be studied for both personal development and communicative purposes. For these reasons, even though she retained elements of grammar-translation in her instruction, there was much more STT (student-talk-time) in class and many interactions between the teacher and students, students and students, students and native-English-speakers. Through the use of ICT, many interactive tasks and activities were implemented to achieve the communicative goal. The effect was that the cultural content delivered in Ms Lin's class was wide-ranging.

In the report on Ms Lin's teaching, we have seen various creative ways of covering cultural content. In addition to the real-time on-line video conference, there were personal anecdotes from the teacher and first-hand information exchanged with

native speakers. Ms Lin's previous academic training and personal cross-cultural experiences meant that she was highly aware of cultural issues and thus consciously incorporated cultural content into her everyday teaching. We have seen how she successfully provided students with solid target cultural knowledge such as the history and customs of a festival, and then led those students to apply prior knowledge learned in an exchange of opinions with native speakers through a computer conference. Ms Lin's example shows how the teaching of target language and culture can be properly integrated in practice.

6.4. Further Discussion: Pedagogy, Motivation and Outcome of Intercultural Teaching

In this chapter, we have seen at least three different teaching styles. The grammar-translation method is the most common pedagogy used by many senior high school teachers. The essential part of this method is the focus on teaching vocabulary words and reading text through a series of translations in addition to various types of drills for grammar learning. Most schools hold a weekly exam to consolidate the effect of teaching and learning of every textbook unit. The cultural content delivered through this method is the cultural knowledge prescribed by the textbook, and is taught through translation.

We have also seen some variations to the grammar-translation method, identified as another two teaching styles. While retaining the conventional method for teaching the reading text and grammar, the variations lie mainly in the frequency of use of communicative tasks, the degree of developing speaking and listening skills and the awareness of integrating cultural content. As a result, different degrees of

intercultural attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical awareness are achieved based on the pedagogy employed.

Note that although the teachers employed different teaching methods, they used the same textbook – *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools*. They even shared similar opinions about the textbook. They all thought highly of the *Reader*: there was neither criticism of the unit structure nor complaint about the text content. Furthermore, the teachers all approved of the teaching of American culture and regarded teaching source culture as meaningful. However, although the textbook was the same and the profile of the students was similar, the teachers' differing attitudes towards cultural teaching and choice of teaching methodology meant that the outcomes of cultural teaching and learning were distinctive. From teaching limited prescribed cultural knowledge provided only by the textbook, to facilitating intercultural experiences in the classroom, the study revealed that the pedagogy impacted upon the effect of cultural learning and the range of cultural content delivered in class.

More importantly, the research findings suggest that the pedagogy and integration of cultural content was highly related to the teacher's teaching objectives and conception of language and culture. For example, in Mr Lee's class, there was less interest in cultural teaching. He did not see any essential link between language study and cultural learning. He once said that learning about Easter or celebrating Christmas would not help students to learn English. That is, when a teacher did not perceive any close relation between language and culture and placed emphasis only on examination items, a 'hierarchical' concept of cultural teaching and learning, in

terms of time management and priority of teaching content, became prominent. The strong focus on test items meant that the teacher paid less attention to other aspects of English teaching. In these teachers' classes, language and culture were not learned synchronically, nor were the competences in each developed equivalently. In their conceptualisation, the knowledge of language and culture could be and should be delivered in separate spectra or on different levels. Under the pressure of exams, cultural content appeared to be ideologically graded.

Consequently, the priorities in the teaching process can be simplified into a logical linear order:

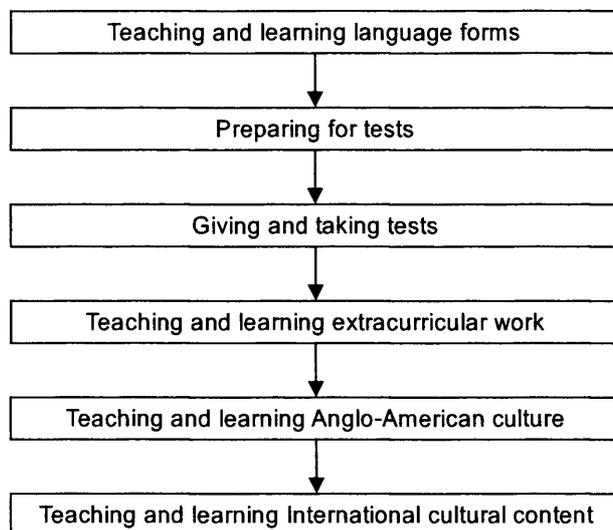


Figure 6.2. The Conventional Priorities in EFL: The Teacher's Point of View

However, Ms Lin's teaching demonstrated that students' cultural understanding of, for example, Halloween, could facilitate learning of language and communication. When the students had virtual contact with a group of American students, the common topic was used as an ice breaker. The American and Taiwanese students greeted each other, talked about Halloween and then from this common understanding, began to share more things in their lives. They talked about their favourite costume and the reasons for that preference. They also extended their conversation from the assigned topic to more personal interests and life experiences. Gradually, the students from two different cultures learned to find similarities between themselves and established a rapport. This process manifested a series of comparing, relating, negotiating and information exchanging which are all important intercultural communication skills. Therefore, Ms Lin's example gives us

a counter perspective to Mr Lee's opinion.

In other words, when teachers believed in the importance of developing students' communicative competence and personal development, there was more possibility to incorporate teaching of culture and the skills of listening and speaking. In this case, we even saw moral teaching which attempted to relate language study to humanistic thinking. In brief, an important implication here was that a teacher's teaching objective and 'motivation' could largely decide the pedagogy employed and the outcome of intercultural teaching and learning.

The theory of motivation involves psychology, cognition and the social context and so can be complex. It is important to emphasise here that my discussion concentrates on the domain of 'cultural' teaching and learning in Taiwanese senior high English classes rather than on any broader subject, such as motivation in overall language teaching and learning. I would like to base my following discussion upon a social constructivist approach (also known as Goal Setting Theory) as proposed by Williams and Burden (1997).

The models and recommendations made by Williams and Burden (1997, p.137) were originally used to account for motivation in foreign language learning in general. I do not intend to address their concept in detail, but I find their fundamental argument to be particularly useful in understanding the motivation in cultural teaching and learning in this study. The basic concept of their interactive model of motivation is:

- a) Motivation essentially involves choice about actions or behaviours.
- b) The decisions people make will be based on their own construction of the world.
- c) The decisions will also depend on the internal attributes that individuals bring to the situation; their personality, confidence and other factors.
- d) These choices will also be subject to mediating influences; the impact of mediators and significant others [parents, teachers, peers] in the person's life.
- e) [Finally,] both internal attributes and mediating influences are affected by the beliefs, the society and the culture of the world surrounding them.

Therefore, an individual's 'decision to act' is the centre of the model. Motivation is not simply a state of attention or impulsive curiosity; it comprises continuing endeavour which ensures the initial interest will grow in the individual over time in order to achieve particular objectives. 'Motivating an individual' thus means involving the person in a process of goal setting, decision-making and investing time and energy in a sustained way.

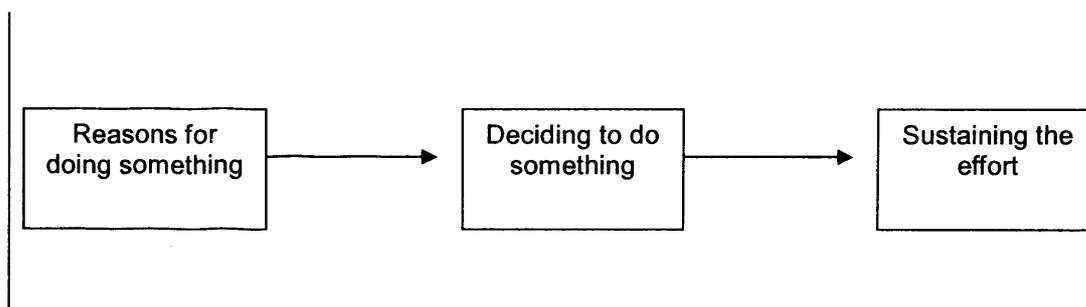


Figure 6.3. A Three-stage Model of Motivation

(Williams and Burden 1997, p.121)

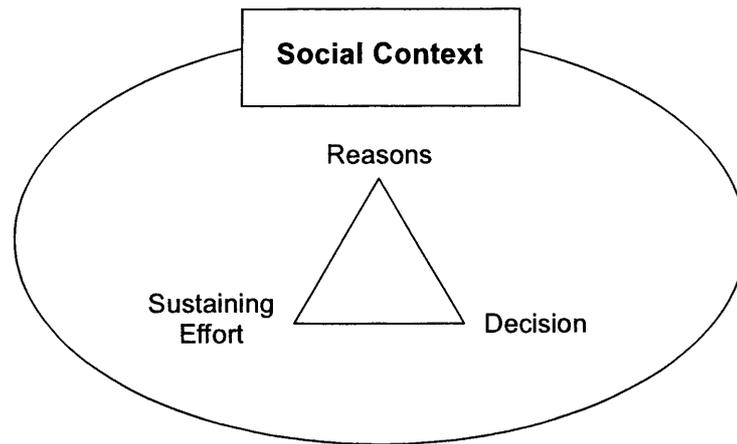


Figure 6.4 An Interactive Model of Motivation

(Williams and Burden 1997, p.122)

It is generally agreed that the teacher plays an important role in the pupil's learning process. What a teacher believes has a significant influence on his/her class. The case study so far confirms this tendency. Furthermore, as Holt (1968, 1969 and 1971) pointed out in several studies, many young learners tend to read their teacher's mind regarding performance goal orientation, a point supported by Williams and Burden (1997, p.132) who write that "in this instance, the learners are not concerned with learning for themselves but in trying to guess the teacher's required answer and performing accordingly". This phenomenon could be predominant in a collective cultural learning environment such as Taiwan, where the classroom reality is often teacher-centred. Therefore, in order to gain further understanding of cultural learning in language education, it is essential to realise the teacher's intentions and motivation.

The findings so far have shown that the official goal of promoting cultural understanding stated in the standard curriculum was not necessarily recognised by every

teacher.⁹⁵ As argued above, this may be due to a teacher's conception of a weak link between language and culture, as well as to the test-oriented teaching objective. Also, in the teaching observed, even though some teachers indicated their interest in varieties of culture, international cultural content was rarely taken into account. The preference for Anglo-American culture was dominant, while other varieties were relatively under-esteemed. As a consequence, it was hard to achieve the official goal of broadening students' vision and understanding of the international world.

Widdowson (1979) and Brown (2001) analysed why language teachers were reluctant to teach cultural content or become involved in the innovative World English paradigm. Some crucial reasons behind this were insufficient training, limited resources and restricted support. Their studies touched on the nature of the difficulties faced by many language teachers. From here I would like to advance the discussion on the choices made by the Taiwanese teachers and try to elaborate on why some of them were not motivated to adopt the newly reformed teaching methodology, and avoided integrating culture into language teaching.

My analysis is based on an educational administration theory which explains 'personal reasons' for resistance to innovations in the educational setting. According to Chang (2003), there are four key factors preventing educational staff from acquiring a new practice: Habit, Dependence, Insecurity and Status Quo.

⁹⁵ It might be worth conducting a large scale survey on how the standard curriculum is understood and carried out by in-service teachers. For further recommendations please see the final chapter.

a) Habit

It is known that unless a dramatic change is imposed on an organisation or group members are severely complained about, most people tend to adapt to a new situation in the way most familiar to them.

In this case, all the interviewees appeared to be influenced by their prior academic background. Some teachers had received training in Applied Linguistics or TESOL and they appeared to use various types of activities in class. Others had specialised in classic literature and were accustomed to grammar-translation. They favoured teaching short stories with deep meaning, perhaps because their natural strength lay in literary appreciation. For these teachers, applied linguistic knowledge such as intercultural communication and language teaching methodology, was not part of their prior training. Consequently the grammar-translation approach was their customary method. One important implication here is that without any new input, the teachers are likely to stick with the habitual and perpetuate the conventional practice.

b) Dependence

Dependence is not necessarily a negative thing, but over-dependence is known to jeopardise self-confidence, or, in this case, 'awareness'. We have seen that every teacher interviewee depended greatly on the prescribed content. One consequence was that the users of the book became too ready to adopt the so called 'standard paradigm' which points to a single English variety endorsed by the textbook. The teachers neither attempted to question this choice of language and culture, nor pondered other possible

representations.⁹⁶ Another result was that for those who used the conventional translation method, the textbook content defined the scope of teaching and learning.

c) Insecurity

Every member within an organisation needs a sense of security, in the physical as well as the mental sphere. If a change threatens this state of mind the individual may regress to a reserved mode or resort to minimum action.

In this case, the 'mainstream' teachers set their main goal as helping students with examinations. Since in the past, the use of grammar-translation has proved effective in achieving this goal, would teaching in a different way, including adding extra cultural content or extracurricular activities, be likely to undermine the existing performance? If the result is unpredictable, this could be expected to produce an insecure state of mind. There is no room for a new perception of other, equivalently important, goals for language education.

d) Status Quo

Finally, when changes threaten vested interests or bring instability to the status quo, resistance may be increased. Current teaching practice assures the teacher's authority, especially the grammar-translation method which casts the language instructor in the role of main source of knowledge. Any changes to the teaching method, in the form of dynamic communicative tasks for example, may alter the role of the teacher. Furthermore, teaching unfamiliar 'cultural' content also represents a challenge to the

⁹⁶ With the exception of Ms Wang, who subtly indicated that more varieties of culture could be introduced to the teaching material.

instructor's speciality, and might imply the need for more course preparation or even further study. This would destabilise the teachers' long-held advantages.

The discussion in these four dimensions substantiates some of the teachers' perceptions of and hesitations about cultural teaching. Their concerns are not easily waived. The teachers undertake complex tasks under certain pressures. All of the motivational factors noted above should be taken into account when looking ahead to the development of cultural teaching in the senior high school.

7. The Learner's Perspective on Intercultural Teaching and Learning

In this case study, thirty-five students from Ms Chang's and Mr Lee's classes were formally interviewed and filled in written questionnaires; another thirty students from Ms Lin's class gave written comments on a cross-cultural activity, and five of them were informally interviewed. (The reactions of some students from Ms Wang's and Ms Wu's classes were also included in the report on the interviews with those teachers.) The following report is based on the data from the thirty-five formal interviews, although the results from the other students' responses are also integrated. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of all the student respondents.

The student respondents were all aged 16 or 17. All had intermediate English proficiency although a few of them considered themselves to be at a higher level. The majority of interviewees had been learning English formally from the first year of junior high school. Some pupils had taken an overseas English programme in their early teens, in the USA, Australia, UK or the Philippines.

More than half of the interviewees had visited foreign countries. Among English-speaking countries the top destination was the USA, followed by Australia, Canada, the Philippines, Singapore and New Zealand. One student had visited the UK. (Note that some of the students had toured more than one country). In terms of their future plans, 91% were preparing to enter Taiwanese universities, while the others intended to study in the USA or, in one case, Mainland China. The questions

posed to the students ranged from conceptual questions to the content they learned from the textbook and in class. The results of the interviews are reported as follows.

7.1. Sociolinguistic Implications

7.1.1. A Weak Relation between Cultural Learning and Academic Language Study

When students were asked how they thought learning about a country's culture could help them to learn the language of that country, it was striking that none of them indicated an immediate link between the two. They did not think cultural learning could help them to learn the language. A few pupils indicated that the historical origins of English vocabulary came from culture. They seemed to suggest, albeit indirectly, that learning the culture might be helpful in knowing more about English vocabulary or expressions. Some of the students considered that cultural learning could not assist their language learning because the effects of learning a foreign culture in Taiwan were very limited. They emphasised that culture had to be 'experienced' in person.

Other students did not see any relation between the two fields. Indeed, David Cheng gave a counter example: "Many people are familiar with American culture. For example, they dress pretty much like Americans, but it does not necessarily mean that their English is good". Still others were convinced that "it does not make a big difference at this stage. What we learn about the English language is mainly reading and writing. I haven't had much contact with English culture so far," said Jade Cheng. That is to say, as Blair Lin emphasised, the influence of cultural learning over how language is used "only occurs to advanced learners". Even those who participated in the

cross-cultural exchange through videoconferencing did not regard the computer conference as a 'cultural' learning process but only as a speaking activity. In other words, most students did not associate 'culture' with language study. To them, learning of culture was something extra, not necessarily relevant to their study of English, and especially not to the coursework or exam.

7.1.2. The Strong Link between Cultural Learning and Intercultural Communication

Despite the negative responses noted above, the students gave some interesting replies about how cultural learning could possibly 'motivate' them to study English. For example, Bob Huang said, "Learning culture will make me want to learn more about that country, including its language". Irene Lee put this more clearly, saying, "Understanding of a country's culture will motivate me to learn its language. Besides, it is possible for me to travel to that place!" These ideas were even more prominent among those who had participated in the cross-cultural exchange through videoconference. The five students who accepted the informal interviews after the cross-cultural activity all claimed that they enjoyed the conference and so were interested in making friends with the American students they met on-line. In order to communicate with the native speakers better next time, they were determined to study harder so that they could improve their spoken English. Thus, cultural learning meant more to students as a means of increasing their interest in English learning, rather than a way to improve specific language skills for academic study.

It is worth noting that the majority of interviewees expressed positive opinions about the advantages of cultural learning for 'using' the language. For example, Darrel said, "Learning a foreign culture can let me know more about their [foreigners'] thoughts.

[Besides,] learning how to use a word on certain occasions can avoid embarrassment”. Other students shared this pragmatic concern: “Different cultural backgrounds may cause misunderstandings. If we don’t know the other speaker’s culture, we may offend him/her,” said Fannie Lin. Dennis said “Yes, I think learning about culture can help us know foreigners’ thoughts and opinions”. More down-to-earth, Helen Lin asserted that “I learn much living stuff and life style from movies. There are things like everyday conversation, which can be used in the supermarket”. Or, as Bruce put it, “Learning culture helps to understand local dialect. [It] enables us to understand more colloquial usage”. All of these replies could best be summarised by Irene’s comment that “if learning culture means to realise the people’s values and life styles, it will help us understand how they use their language for communication”.

This majority approval of the usefulness of cultural learning to communication was confirmed by the responses to another question. When students were asked whether they thought learning cultural information in advance could be helpful to them when visiting a country, almost all of them replied in the affirmative. There were passive statements suggesting that cultural learning could provide more preparation for ‘avoiding’ embarrassment, misunderstanding or offence. In the positive responses, students showed a desire to gain more knowledge in order to get along better with local people or to know about the interesting places in that country. Although one boy answered ‘No’ to the question, he did not totally refute the idea, but emphasised instead the importance of cultural encounters experienced in person.

In conclusion, all the respondents agreed that a certain amount of cultural learning

before visiting a foreign country would be useful, either to allay their worries or to help them obtain more pleasure and knowledge in the foreign environment. Although many of them did not associate cultural learning with their academic study in English, or believe that cultural learning could help them do better in the subject, the majority believed that cultural learning could be beneficial in terms of increasing their interest in English study and improving their communicative competence while interacting with foreigners or travelling abroad. In other words, the students appeared to be interested in the learning of cultures, but they did not feel the immediate need to do so in the senior high school English class. Most of the affirmative responses were about their future use of English for travel and communication.

7.1.3. English as an ‘International Language’

Moreover, how can foreign cultures (especially of non-English-speaking countries) be learned? With only a few exceptions, the majority of interviewees believed that English learning could help them to learn about the cultures of foreign countries because they regarded English as a world language through which most knowledge and information was presented.

Coincidentally, this majority point of view reflected the parents’ attitudes⁹⁷ towards the English language and the purpose of English learning. When students were asked what their parents thought about English learning, only four said that their parents regarded English merely as an academic subject, while the majority believed that English played a far more important role. Many students said their

⁹⁷ The parents’ opinions were gained through interviews with students. They were asked what their parents said to them about English learning.

parents told them that English was a ‘world language’ and learning it was essential for future work and further study: English was “for connecting to the world”. Many parents also showed a ‘domestic’ concern. The students were told by their parents that learning English would be a trend as Taiwan was becoming more open to the world. Some parents even expected their children to master English as fluently as their first language.

In brief, the parents predicted an internationalised Taiwanese society and were preparing their children for the process of internationalisation. They encouraged their children to study English well and made them believe that English would be a common language used in the global village. It is worth noting here that English was regarded both as a useful medium to reach most knowledge and cultures in the world and, by some, almost as a native language. Both these viewpoints recognised the importance of English and suggested the significance of the language for a learner’s life and career. Looked at in this way, the meaning of English study goes far beyond that of a mere academic subject learned in school.

7.2. Ideological Implications

7.2.1. Perception of English Culture and Foreign Countries

This section focuses on how students perceived English-speaking countries and their own native culture. When students were asked to define culture, the majority regarded it as people’s way of living, in contrast to a more static perception as ‘unique regional landscape and characteristics’ as described by a small number of pupils. Some students believed that culture was a representation of people’s

thinking and values, and only two said that culture meant the customs people followed through the generations.

When asked about English Culture, almost half the respondents associated it with American Culture; ten students associated it with British Culture and two thought about the general culture of English-speaking countries, with only one mentioning European Culture. One student also associated the term with the 'Culture of Capitalism'. Interestingly, a few of those who mentioned British Culture added some descriptions, such as the 'noble' British, 'expensive' sterling and the 'old age of The Mayflower'.

In order to find out the level of students' awareness of the world English-speaking countries, they were requested to list the three foreign nations most familiar to them, other than the well-known Inner Circle countries such as the USA, UK, Canada and Australia. Top of the list was Singapore, followed by the Philippines, New Zealand and South Africa. A small number of respondents referred to Ireland, India, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. The most interesting result was that a few students also mentioned some nations of the Expanding Circle, namely Holland and Switzerland in Europe; Mexico, Brazil and Cuba in South America.

Later, students were asked to name their favourite English-speaking country and offer comparisons and contrasts between that nation and Taiwan. The results showed that more than 60% of respondents had a strong preference for North America. The USA, not surprisingly, had the majority vote, far exceeding Canada. Other countries mentioned were Britain, Australia and Singapore.

Most of the students who chose the USA as their favourite English-speaking country were able to describe precisely the similarities with and differences from Taiwan. For example, Fannie Lin, who had been to the USA for two weeks, pointed out that both Taiwan and the USA provided convenient transportation systems, and that the young people in both countries liked fried chicken and similar pop music such as Hip-Hop and R & B. The differences were, first, educational values such as how parents educated their children and what schools teach pupils. Second, American food was described as less delicate and sophisticated than Taiwanese cuisine. Finally, the term 'neighbour' was used differently in the USA because of a much greater distance between households there. Chris Chang, who had never been to the USA, also provided detailed comments. He indicated that both Taiwanese and American people tended to arrange full schedules for their weekends. They had similar foods such as bread, milk, hamburgers and sandwiches. In addition, one could find convenient mass transportation systems in the two countries. On the other hand, Americans lived in bigger houses with gardens and garages while most Taiwanese people resided in apartments. Furthermore, according to him, Americans preferred high-calorie food much more than Taiwanese people did. Finally, it appeared to him that American young people reached puberty much earlier.

In sharp contrast, those who mentioned Britain as their favourite country seemed to have far less understanding of that nation. None of the respondents gave full replies (by giving three points of similarity and difference) on comparisons and contrasts between the UK and Taiwan. Fiona Lee said that "everyone in the UK is handsome," while Joyce Cheng stated that "there are some outrageous events like

Carnivals or parades”. Daniel Yu responded more fully, although his responses were not necessarily accurate statements. According to his description, the British, like the Taiwanese, adored brands, used MRT [Mass Rapid Transportation Systems] (it seems he had confused the British transportation system with the one used in France) and had the habit of taking a nap. The differences were the staple diet of the two countries and better city planning in the UK.

When asked which countries they would most like to visit if they had plenty of time and money in the future, pupils gave their priorities and reasons. Once again, the majority expressed a preference for North America. Many of them wished to visit the USA and Canada. The majority of students praised the USA as a highly advanced country with all kinds of advanced technology. Fannie even replied enthusiastically, “every aspect of the USA is superb!” As a result, many of them would like to study as well as tour there. For those who wished to visit Canada, the most impressive attraction was the natural scenery. They wanted to see the ‘beautiful and natural scenery’ or experience the ‘clean environment’ in Canada.

Interviewees also named European countries as potential destinations, although the total votes were much fewer. Among them, Britain was No.1, with eight votes. Some students wanted to study language in the UK, while many others wanted to make the trip mainly because of Britain’s famous ‘heritage and culture’. Others wished to visit France because the country is ‘romantic’ and ‘full of culture and good food’. Another three wanted to study law or mechanical engineering in Germany. Other European countries named by one or two people included Italy for her ‘arts and architecture’, Spain for the ‘cosy life style’, Greece and Russia for

their culture and Finland for ‘watching the deer’! To sum up, with the exception of Germany which was considered by a few respondents for serious further study, most European countries were admired mainly for their tourism or cultural attractions. Students’ responses and descriptions of the European countries were also stereotypical.

Among the Asian countries mentioned, Japan was top, followed by China. Many students wished to visit Japan out of ‘curiosity’ and for its novel popular cultural products such as comics, video games and technological gadgets. Seven people showed interest in China, but unlike the reasons for travelling to Japan, all of them mentioned Chinese historical heritage. The third most popular country was Singapore, which was described as ‘technological’, and the last was Thailand, described as ‘historical’ with reasonable living costs. Other regions named by interviewees included Australia and New Zealand for their natural scenery, Egypt for the pyramids and the Arctic areas for adventure.

The students’ responses on their favourite countries and places to visit were fairly diverse. However, the USA as the target language nation was the majority preference. Many respondents demonstrated their strong interest in the country and a good understanding of American culture. In contrast, although some students expressed a wish to visit other countries, they showed much less understanding of those destinations; many of their answers were brief and stereotyped.

7.2.2. Perception of Source Culture

Students were asked what they associated with Chinese Culture and any differences

between that and Taiwanese Culture. While talking about Chinese Culture, some thought of the culture of Mainland China; however, Frances Lee emphasised, “I do not associate it with China’s modernisation but the under-developed part”. Others associated Chinese Culture with the culture of the Chinese people and their ‘5000-year-old history and culture’, ‘profound and ancient culture’, ‘the classic literary text in the Chinese literature textbook’ or ‘something like ancient architecture’. In brief, most associations of Chinese Culture tended to be with the formidable history or artistic legacy.

Responses on perceptions of Taiwanese Culture were even more diverse. Some said, “Taiwanese Culture is the culture of Taiwan, including the local language”. “Taiwanese culture should mean the popular culture in the modern age,” Flora Lee added. Others associated it with the culture of ‘indigenous tribes’ [native people in Taiwan]. Still others seemed confused or uncertain. One student, Helen, said, “As for Taiwanese culture, I think about the night market and messy images because the culture of Taiwan has so many various aspects”. Fiona stated, “It seems that Taiwan has no particular culture of our own”. Another girl, Harriet Sun, even said, “For me, I feel a lot of things we have and see in daily life are presented in English. For example, [we don’t have our own movies]; what we watch are all from Hollywood. In Taiwan, it seems that we attach more and more importance to English [culture]”. There seemed no agreement on a definition of Taiwanese Culture and some were even apprehensive of the ambiguous position of that culture.

Nevertheless, when asked to compare and contrast Chinese and Taiwanese cultures, a few said there was no big difference. Darrel also indicated that he was

comfortable with both Chinese and Taiwanese cultures, although, intriguingly, he added, “I feel better with Taiwan. I think so far we have more content [in the textbook] about Taiwan”. One of his classmates, Daniel, shared a similar view: “When we say China (or Chinese Culture), I feel great respect rising in my heart. When we say Taiwan, it sounds much more local and friendly”.

The students were also asked whether learning about foreign ways of life influenced how they identified with the local culture or how they felt about the way of life in Taiwan. Of those students who replied in the negative to this question, a few explained that, “English is just one academic subject to deal with,” and “we emphasise grammar while learning English in Taiwan, so it does not influence daily life a lot”. Some students said that they had not been affected at this stage, but, as Benson Lin added, “I may know more (or even change my mind) after I go abroad.” Bob Huang agreed, saying, “maybe some day when I go abroad, I will see foreign life style and feel the difference and even think that it is pretty good”. However, he also believed that “Taiwanese culture is just like it was a long time ago. I think learning a foreign language (or culture) won’t change or influence these life styles”.

Some other students held a contrary opinion. For example, Chris Chang said, “I feel that foreign school life has both good as well as bad sides. In a foreign country, teachers do not discipline students and then pupils become wild. I think that is not really good”. Charlotte Tasi also commented on the school life, saying, “I got a feeling that foreign students have more complicated social circles; that is different from us”. Gilbert Cheng made a more neutral statement: “There are good and bad

sides [of both cultures]. Here we lay stress on solicitude and amity, while the westerners emphasise reason and rationality.” Joyce Cheng put it more passionately: “In Taiwan, everyone regards English highly while paying less attention to our own language and culture. It seems that people don’t think it is important. But for me, I don’t agree. I prefer Taiwanese culture”. She was not alone in her opinion. “Taiwanese people do not respect and appreciate our own culture that much,” George Tsai said thoughtfully. The students here showed their appreciation for Taiwanese culture while at the same time revealing their concern that people tended to patronise local culture.⁹⁸

Whereas the respondents quoted above felt that learning about foreign ways of life had made them more appreciative of their own culture, others indicated clearly what ‘improvements’ should be made in Taiwan. For example, Cynthia Tasi said: “I feel that pressure of exams is not that strong in a foreign country. After comparison, I feel that the pressure in Taiwan is too strong”. Clair Lin expressed her admiration towards foreign countries, saying that, “many ideas in the foreign country are more open. I think some of them are pretty good. Sometimes I think we can learn from them... For example, their teachers and students are more like friends. [I like this.] This is very different from Taiwan”. These students seemed to depict Western styles of teaching and learning as open and free-minded without pressure from examinations.

Other students talked about social manners. Barnett Cheng said: “There are many different customs between the foreign and local, like ceremonies. I think Taiwanese

⁹⁸ Note that this kind of response coincides with the misrepresentation of local culture in the textbook.

manners are vexing, like in funerals, we have to kneel down for respect”. David Cheng felt that, as foreign people were characterised as open and direct, he could learn from that by being “more frank and fearless while speaking and working”

Another respondent, Helen, gave a personal example:

When I returned from the USA years ago, I found a big difference in the way people queued for public toilets. In the USA, everybody queues outside. Those who come first get in first. But when I got back to Taiwan, the way of queuing was different. Some people, who arrived later, got in first. It took me some time to get used to it.

Finally, respondents commented on the difference in living environments. Bruce had been to Canada and was impressed by their neat housing and communities. In contrast, he had found that most Chinese households, whether in Taiwan or in the Chinatown areas of foreign countries, tended to install iron bars on windows in order to prevent burglary. However, “that really doesn’t look pleasant. I think that is what Chinese people should improve,” he concluded. Cody Chang asserted: “Foreign life seems more comfortable and has wider living space. I think this is what we can learn”. Jade Cheng gave an example from another perspective: “[Learning the foreign way of living] may be a bit influential, but won’t be deep... For example, I had an experience of visiting Japan. After I returned to Taiwan, I felt it was dirty here. However, after a period of time, I got used to everything again”. Jade’s conclusion, “I think sometimes we tend to bring the feeling of being abroad back to Taiwan. We just have the wish to make this place better,” might well explain the more negative responses stated above. In other words, behind that severe criticism was a kind of affection for their mother land.

7.3. Pedagogical Implications

In this section, the findings concerning the teaching and learning processes are presented. The findings cover general information about the English teaching and learning process, analysis of students' interest in learning, and the interaction between textbooks, media and cultural learning.

7.3.1. General Teaching and Learning Process

The teaching processes used by the interviewed teachers were confirmed by class observation and interviews with their students. Isabel Lin, whose teacher used the grammar-translation method, described the teaching process as follows:

- (a) In the first hour, the teacher explains vocabulary, explaining the meanings and variations of the words.
- (b) In the second hour, the class begins to study the text. The teacher explains sentences of the text. Normally in this part, the class studies a lot of idioms, phrases and participle constructions.
- (c) Next, there is the Language Focus section, where the grammatical points of the whole text are reviewed again.
- (d) After this, the class move on to the Conversation section. The teacher talks briefly about the meaning of the dialogue, and then plays a tape for the class, although this part is finished more quickly.
- (e) Finally, there will be a test of the lesson.

According to this description, there were five major steps. The teacher normally began by teaching vocabulary, then covered the main text, grammatical rules, and conversation practice. Finally, there would be a test. This description confirmed what their teachers said and what was observed in the class. This teaching approach, which emphasised vocabulary, grammar and translation, was teacher-centred and test-oriented.

When students were asked about their favourite part of the teaching and learning process, Irene said:

I like reading the main text [most] because it is the richest part. Sometimes we read short stories and occasionally the teacher lets us do some small activities. [For example,] in Lesson Two on the topic of advertisements, the teacher introduced several different advertisements and allowed us to discuss them. I think that was quite interesting.

Isabel had a different favourite session, Conversation, because she liked reading the dialogues herself, practising spoken usage. But she also pointed out that “we seldom practise conversation in the class. Normally it is the teacher that reads the dialogue through and explains the meanings”. This reinforced the finding that in this class, reading and writing skills were emphasised rather than communicative skills.

Next, students were asked to identify which variety of English they learned in the school. Half the respondents specified it as American English while another fifteen students, surprisingly, claimed it to be Taiwanese English. One student believed it

to be British English, and another one International Standard English. Respondents also evaluated their own English proficiency. One interesting result was that the number of pupils who regarded themselves as better at reading and writing was twice that of those who felt they were better at listening and speaking. The majority thought they were better at grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. This result coincided with the skills emphasised by the teachers in class time. Furthermore, when students were asked what they wished to improve or learn more in the future, the majority selected speaking/conversation. Very few chose to learn writing or listening skills, and none felt a need to enhance reading ability.

7.3.2. Interest Analysis

When asked for their opinion on the current textbook and their interest in studying its content, around 30% of respondents described the texts they had to read as ‘boring’. The majority regarded most articles as ‘impractical’ or ‘tedious’. Some students offered a clear reason behind these feelings. Blair Lin expressed the view of several of the students when he said: “They [textbook editors] think they write something fashionable, but actually everything they say is out of date. What they say is what we already know, very boring”. Another major factor mentioned was that the content was ‘irrelevant’ to students’ lives, and the texts “had nothing to do with us”.⁹⁹

However, not all the students had negative views on the texts they had to study. Many students gave examples to explain which kind of texts especially appealed to them. A great number of students preferred short stories or tales. Their favourite texts included

⁹⁹ Note the analysis of the textbook confirms that some of the texts provided were indeed out-of-date.

Lesson 8 in Book 2 [The Kind Monkey's Heart: an African Folk Tale] and Lesson 4 in Book 3 [Going Home] a short story reprinted from Reader's Digest. Some students favoured biographies, with many mentioning the story of the Taiwanese painter, Hsieh, Kun-Shan. "I prefer those [texts] related to my life, for example, talking about a particular person in Taiwan," said Harriet. Others preferred texts about other cultures, with examples on units about Christmas, Halloween, table manners, meanings of colours and English telephone manners. It is worthwhile noting that most of the examples the students gave here were highly culture-related, although they were not aware of this at all.

Overall, the results show that students were interested in a wide variety of topics. Their preferences could be categorised as fiction, foreign features, entertainment, and current issues or professional knowledge. In terms of fiction, respondents were interested in adaptations of original novels, legends and fables, and short stories. Many students wanted to see more course content on foreign festivals/customs and foreign life-styles.¹⁰⁰ Entertainment topics, such as music, fashion, sports, games or movie stars, were also popular. Compared to these topics, the last domain appeared to be more serious. Some pupils expressed a wish to study 'the latest knowledge of science, something more inspiring' in the English class. Greg Lee put it more directly: "It'd be better that all subjects such as history or chemistry could be learned in English. Make English part of life, and then it [English] will become really useful". Similarly, some respondents said they would like to study current issues such as news stories on the

¹⁰⁰ Note that although many students used the word 'foreign' in their responses, it was believed that they actually meant 'Anglo-American'. Evidence will be presented later in the report that most students did not show much interest in non-English-speaking cultures.

World Cup, the 9/11 tragedy or the latest scientific discoveries. The four types of interest were nominated by fairly equal numbers of respondents, around 7 to 11 people each.

There were also other interesting replies which did not fit into any of the categories but nevertheless gave illuminating ideas on teaching and learning. Some students said that if they were the textbook editors, they would change the text presentation rather than the content itself. They wanted a more 'active' format for the course content. For example, they would like to see play scripts for students to act out or movie adaptations of novels for students to learn English speaking and listening. They believed that this would make students more willing to learn. Although the textbooks already had sections on Conversation and Listening, as Clair Lin criticised: "The current script [the dialogue script in the Conversation and Listening section] was too unreal!" She complained: "Sometimes I don't know what sense they try to make at all!"¹⁰¹

Finally, some respondents added that the teacher's teaching methods could be helpful in making the content more interesting. For example, some students were impressed with their teacher's (Mr Lee) dramatic interpretation of the touching story 'Going Home' (in Book 3). They also liked the song their teacher played, which made them feel good about that story. One of Ms Chang's students said that she particularly liked the Internet material her teacher used. While teaching Mother Teresa's biography, the teacher had shown the class stories and photos of the saint on the Internet. However, these flexible methods were not common in the classes that focused on grammar-translation and tests. Harriet gave her insightful opinion:

¹⁰¹ This feeling is also confirmed by the textbook analysis. For examples please see Chapter 5, especially the section on cultural comparison and representation of source culture.

I don't think there is much scope for the textbook to change. If there is, it should be the teacher's pedagogy. The publisher should provide not only the books but also tapes and other materials. It is up to teachers to make good use of them. But I think it must be difficult for teachers to do that because it is impossible not to focus on grammar. The exam is always important. Besides, our parents' thinking is also essential. If everyone expects to learn grammatical things, then it must be hard for teachers to bring their talents or skills into full play.

Here, Harriet seemed to be happy with the current content of the English course, since she indicated that it was not necessary to change the textbook. However, as she suggested, although a teacher's approach to instruction could make English learning more interesting, this hardly ever happened in the current test-oriented environment in which many parents, students and teachers placed stress on grammar learning rather than development of students' learning interest or more creative pedagogy.

7.3.3. Textbook and Cultural Learning

This section reports students' opinions about the cultural content in their textbooks. They gave comments on target culture, international cultures and the source culture.

Some students regarded the current course content as helpful in learning the culture of English-speaking countries. Three pupils mentioned that they had learned about Western ideas on the meanings of colour. For instance, the colour white was 'divine' for foreigners, whereas Taiwanese people associated it with funerals, which was a taboo. Fiona Lee talked about the different sense of humour, "for example, the jokes and some

dialogues from the textbook and radio programme are dry. This [must be] a feature of culture”. Atwood Chang said that he had learned from the textbook about cultural differences in the custom of giving and receiving gifts: “In Western culture, they open the gift in front of the sender, which is different from our culture.”

Other students stressed the importance of visiting countries in person to realise the cultural difference. For example, George Tsai said, “I think once I arrive in the [foreign] country, there must be a big difference between what is learned and the reality”. Gilbert Cheng indicated another great difference between the textbook and reality. He said that what they learned in school was “really formal language” while according to his personal experience, he knew that foreigners did not talk in that way at all. In the opinion of these students, culture cannot be fully ‘learned’ in class but must be experienced personally.

Some respondents thought that their English study in school did very little to help cross-cultural understanding. In Isabel Lin’s words, this was because “what we learn [from the textbook] is only skin-deep”. As Atwood explained, the textbook taught them trivial details rather than general Western values. In his opinion, even though they studied the reading text in detail, and had, for example, learned from the textbook how to receive a gift from a foreign friend, they were still not familiar with English speakers’ values. Finally, a small number of pupils considered that what they had learned in school was totally unhelpful, mainly because “many texts only emphasise reasoning and grammar”. For these students the course content did not lead them to learn specific cultural knowledge or skills for cross-cultural communication, but served only as a material for learning grammatical points.

Next, students were asked to comment on the texts about Chinese and Taiwanese culture. Why did they think the writers put these topics in the English textbook? How did they feel about this? Many students believed that the textbook editors meant to make the teaching material more ‘friendly’ to them. Several of them agreed with Harriet Sun’s statement:

I think it is because some people feel that English is far away from everyday life. Having the content about Taiwan may be able to change this kind of thought. Even though the language is unfamiliar, the topic is about something around us.

In other words, this type of content is intended to reach some kind of balance between the internationalised and localised texts. In this way, English learning would become much ‘closer’ to students.

Another group of responses focused on how such content helped students to learn linguistic forms. These pupils believed that Chinese or Taiwanese culture-related content was used to impress upon them certain important grammar rules or vocabulary. Barnett Cheng said that “they [the editors] may hope for us to learn English [grammar and vocabulary] more happily (with familiar things to us)”.

In addition, around 35% of respondents expressed their opinions in an international perspective. Many of them considered the importance of English to introduce the local culture. As George Tsai commented:

After Taiwan enters the WTO, the society will be more and more open. At that time we may need to introduce our own country in English very often.

After all, after internationalisation, it is possible to meet any kind of people here [Taiwan].

Others had similar ideas. “If we meet foreign friends, we can use English to introduce our own culture. We will have more topics for chatting with them,” said Chris Chang. In brief, many of the respondents believed that the educators wanted them to be able to use English to describe native culture or customs for international communicative purposes, and they agreed with this purpose.

Finally, what were students’ attitudes towards learning international cultures such as those of non-English-speaking countries? This question was supplementary to the main body of the interview, and due to the limited interview time on occasion, only about fifteen students had the chance to reply. However, surprisingly, the results showed very little enthusiasm among the respondents. A few agreed, although half-heartedly, and most made direct negative replies.

Among those students who expressed approval, Atwood Chang pointed out that “having more understanding of other culture is not bad. This can prevent deficiency in oral communication in the future”. Others replied with some hesitation or reluctance. Blair Lin said: “It’s all right for me. We have to memorise new words anyway”. Although Jade Cheng said “Yes. I would like to know a bit about non-English cultures,” she emphasised that this would be, “maybe not for deep understanding though. It would be just for fun”. It seemed that these students wanted to learn international cultures, but conditionally. They might consider the possibility, but it was definitely not a serious study.

Another interesting response was a strong statement of rejection, which had seldom been heard from the pupils interviewed so far. Andrew Cheng said: “No, [I am] not really interested. If I learn the culture of non-English speaking countries, it must be due to obligation”. Similarly, Joyce Cheng said: “No, because those things are (still) foreign. It seems that I don’t have desire to study those things. If they were about Taiwan, maybe I would be interested”. The rest of the negative replies were milder, along the lines of “Yes, maybe,” or “Non-English cultures can be presented in the form of stories”. Another lukewarm response was: “This should be a good thing. But I think we can read them on our own anyway”.

In brief, students did not show a strong interest in learning cultures of non-English speaking countries, compared to their understanding of and interest in American culture. The international cultural content seemed distant to the students. In a sense, it was relevant neither to their lives nor to their study of English subject matter. They also felt that such content could be studied for leisure or on one’s own. Students appeared to feel apprehensive that such content might become an additional point of study, meaning more vocabulary words to memorise.

7.3.4. Media and Cultural Learning

Students were asked about the key sources they used to gain cultural information. Not surprisingly, the main source mentioned was the mass media, followed by reports from people who had visited the foreign country, such as teachers, friends, families or relatives. Students also gained information from supplementary learning materials such as English learning magazines. Other sources mentioned were

students' own travel experiences and other classes they had attended such as history, geography or private language courses. A small number of students indicated that they obtained cultural information from the English textbooks used in the school.

Next, students were asked to specify what sort of cultural content they learned from the media they were exposed to. They reported that movies gave them vivid pictures of foreign life styles such as what foreign people wear and where they live.

For example, Fannie Lin described the American high school prom. She added: "My feeling is that their senior high life is fun. For example, they can wear whatever they like. But if you do the same thing in Taiwan, it can become controversial". Movies also taught students more 'colloquial expressions', and how native speakers expressed emotions. The respondents found that American people did not speak in the way the textbook taught.

Quite a few students enjoyed listening to English songs or ICRT (International Community Radio Taipei, the only English radio channel in Taiwan), where they heard a lot about English popular culture or current issues. Some mentioned that announcers on ICRT often talked about 'American stuff'. Other topics drew students' attention included American 'openness' expressed in lyrics describing 'kissing in the street', love, or parties. They believed that the pop music reflected how American teenagers react towards society.

Other students read English learning magazines and listened regularly to their radio programmes. They learned a great deal about foreign characters' biographies, exotic customs, geographical knowledge, history, tourism information and fashion news. A few respondents mentioned that the magazines not only introduced foreign

cultures but also covered domestic cultural information such as stories about the development in Taiwan of successful global chain stores like Starbucks and 7-Eleven.

Overall, students gained a lot of cultural information through various different channels, although the most important media for most students remained the English learning magazine assigned by their school. The content of the magazine was not necessarily explained in class but relevant listening comprehension, grammatical and lexical items were tested weekly. Thus, the effect of cultural learning through outside-school media depended on individual learning interest and effort.

7.3.5. Cross-cultural Experience in Class

In addition to the thirty-five students who accepted structured interviews, another group of students, this time from Ms Lin's class, gave responses on one of their course activities. In one of her classes, on October 26, 2004, Ms Lin and her students conducted a video conference with an American high school.¹⁰² The Taiwanese and American students communicated with each other through the interactive software JOINNET and web cameras. Near the end of the activity, Ms Lin asked students to send her a message to tell her what they thought about the activity. Everyone then followed the instruction, typing in English and sending the message back to the teacher. As soon as she received the responses, and before reviewing them herself, Ms Lin e-mailed them to me. The activity finished around 9:00PM and I then interviewed five students informally for about twenty minutes.

¹⁰² This was the second video conference the class had had in this semester. In the first video conference, Ms Lin's class worked with a different class of the same American teacher. Details on how this conference was held can be found in the previous chapter.

In their replies to Ms Lin, most of the students expressed their pleasure during this cross-cultural experience. Many students indicated that this activity was 'fun', 'interesting', 'happy' or 'exciting'. Some of them regarded it as a 'special', 'great' and 'good' experience. One student even said, "I love it!" A few students said that they were excited and nervous when they talked to the American students, while one respondent said that this experience made her feel more confident in herself. Many students expressed their wish to conduct this activity again.

Students also commented on their American counterparts' personal features, praising them for their appearance or temperament. Some admired their partners as being 'so cute', 'beautiful', 'young' and 'pretty'. Others described the American students as 'friendly', 'kind', 'interesting' or 'great'.

The more negative comments were mainly related to technical problems. For example, at the beginning of the activity there was no video image or sound. The voice volume was sometimes problematic, too. Some students felt that the time allocated for each person to talk was too short. Three students said that they had not had a chance to speak with the foreign students at all, so that they hoped for another opportunity.

When I spoke to five of the students after the video conference, I asked them how they had felt about the activity and how well they had done. The students said that they were excited as well as nervous during the activity because sometimes they could not find the right expressions to say what they meant. I asked them how they

overcame this problem. The students revealed that the solution was 'cooperation'. For example, one person would type the message while her classmates helped her check vocabulary. Another approach was that they had begun by concentrating on the topic of Halloween. Since they had already learned about this festival in class, it was easier for them to discuss it. They had asked many questions about Halloween and the costume party and their American partners had replied. Also, the students emphasised that their partners were very friendly and patient and that had put them more at ease. In particular, two girls said that their English was too poor to communicate with the Americans, but that their partners' patience and broad-mindedness had made it possible for them to enjoy themselves during interaction. The interviewees excitedly indicated that they were really fond of the friends they had just made! Moreover, the students found it exciting when they discovered similarities between themselves and the American students. For example, one student said that both she and her partner liked Harry Potter. She believed that if they had more time to talk, they would find more things in common. More importantly, these students said that this activity made them want to learn more English. All of them believed that they would do better next time. Two of the students even said that they had already sensed their own progress since the first video conference conducted weeks ago. They believed that as time went on, they would be able to speak better English and make more foreign friends. They looked forward to the next opportunity of communicating with the American students.

Thus, although the activity did not run perfectly on that day, the results of observation and interviews show that it was indeed a motivating task for students. If the teacher's objectives were to further students' interest in learning English and

enhance their understanding of the target culture, this activity was apparently effective. The students appeared to enjoy the cross-cultural exchange experience and had positive feelings toward their new friends. They were eager to interact with their American counterparts and looked forward to making more contacts. We can conclude that Ms Lin's class enjoyed the intercultural communication experience and felt motivated to learn English and cultural content spontaneously.

7.4. Intercultural Teaching and Learning: Bridging or Creating Discrepancies?

So far we have learnt what students thought about intercultural learning. However, the findings showed several discrepancies between the teachers' points of view and their students', and between the students' needs and the textbook design with regard to the aims and goals of cultural learning and provision of cultural content.

Attitudes toward intercultural teaching and learning differed greatly between Ms Chang and Mr Lee and their students. Cultural teaching was not regarded as important in Ms Chang's and Mr Lee's classes, and cultural content was valued chiefly according to the degree of 'pleasure' it brought to the teaching process. Mr Lee assumed that students might feel 'bored' with the units on culture, while Ms Chang supposed teaching world cultures might have made the class more 'interesting', but that since it was not the main point of teaching, such content served more as an 'embellishment' to the class. Like their teachers, the students did not, at first, point out any immediate link between the studying of language and learning of culture. However, some pupils indicated that learning cultural content 'motivated' them to know more about a country and its language. This kind of response was even more prominent in Ms Lin's class, which often took part in intercultural video conferences with American students. Thus,

although cultural content might not directly help to improve students' linguistic knowledge, it increased their interest/motivation in language learning. Eventually the result of such motivation might benefit the outcome of their language study.

As mentioned earlier, some teachers tended to think about cultural knowledge independently of the discourse in which it is manifested and constructed. However, the students held a contrary view: for them, English language learning was intertwined with cultural content. Their responses suggested the possibility of seeing language and culture as a whole. For example, when students were asked about what they were interested in learning from their foreign language class, the results showed a wide variety of culture-related issues. With the exception of a few students who mentioned content-based instruction (such as teaching and learning science, chemistry, or history in English), most respondents wished to study more authentic stories or legends, and to learn more about foreign festivals, everyday life and current issues, or articles on music, fashion and sports. Although they did not specify the word 'culture' in their replies, what they wanted to be involved in was actually content about various cultural behaviours or products which are expressed and mediated in the English language.

Some teachers said that the focus of their teaching would not be affected by awareness of the different kinds of international people their students might encounter in future. They considered that the language skills they taught were standard and fundamental. However, in contrast to their teachers, the pupils did envisage the prospect of intercultural communication and saw the function of cultural learning more dynamically. For example, the majority of student interviewees enumerated the advantages of cultural learning as understanding foreigners' thoughts, values, behaviours, life styles

and everyday communications. These points of view, involving many intangible characteristics of culture, not only approved of the value of cultural learning but also demonstrated a broader perception of language and culture. Moreover, almost every student interviewee agreed that prior cultural learning was helpful in either alleviating anxiety or ensuring more comfort while visiting a foreign country. They believed that obtaining cultural information in advance could assist them to learn more practical knowledge, to make local friends, or to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings abroad. That is, the students associated cultural learning with the intercultural communicative purpose of possible international encounters in the near future. The students' future needs could have been taken into consideration by their teachers.

Moreover, were the students' wants and needs satisfied by the current syllabus and textbook? At least one third of the respondents thought not. Many texts in the coursebook were criticised as 'impractical', 'tedious', 'irrelevant to daily life' or 'unreal'. What is worse, in spite of so many cultural codes laden in the current texts, the majority did not feel that they had learned much about cultures from the curriculum. As we have seen from the analysis in the previous chapter, although many texts in the coursebook have cultural themes, their content or meanings were seldom profound. This was also discerned by one pupil, who said, "what we learn is only skin-deep". He felt that what they had learned in school was more like "trivial details, not general Western values".

Overall, the results of the interviews have shown that many students had a strong interest in learning a wide variety of culture-related themes and possessed explicit reasons for acquiring intercultural understanding in order to visit foreign countries in

future. However, to assert that the students have 'motivation' in learning cultures, may be to leap to a premature conclusion. In fact, the students' emerging interest in cultural learning remained at an underlying level.

One particular piece of evidence for this is that when the students were asked about their attitudes towards learning 'international cultures', the responses they gave were almost all negative. Many rejected the idea directly and some said that they could study these things on their own. In other words, although students recognised the importance of intercultural communication, it did not move them to go further from there. Another example is that within all the classes observed, the students were generally passive. They were silent most of the time, focusing on studying new lexical items and grammatical rules which were apparently the main point of examinations.¹⁰³ They were busy taking notes and memorising new vocabulary by heart. Most students paid more attention to the teacher's explanation of linguistic forms rather than the content of the reading text. In the highly structured classroom (with grammar-translation method only), it is even open to question whether the students had any chance at all to be aware of or reflect on any '(cultural) content' they had learned.

In this case, we actually see two different kinds of goal-setting among students. One is that of 'learning goals' in which students perceive the prospective advantages of learning cultures; the other is 'performance goals', pursuing favourable results of immediate evaluation, for which students actually make efforts in school. Dweck (1989) further explains that 'learning goals' lead individuals to do their utmost to master

¹⁰³ Although in Ms Lin's class, the teacher used incentives and simple tasks to engage students, and tried to maximise Student Talking Time, the class could not be regarded as 'truly active'. They still followed the teacher's instruction closely. The students did not ask questions or interact with the teacher spontaneously.

something new and to increase their ability constantly, whereas 'performance goals' guide them to strive to achieve short-term accomplishment, which should by no means be the aim of 'education'.

Thus, although the students realised that cultural learning could facilitate intercultural communication in their future, they did not necessarily consider making an effort to learn it in school. Neither the emerging interest in cultural topics found among the interviewed students (in Ms Chang's and Mr Lee's classes), nor the eventual need for intercultural competence, was seen to develop into sustaining motivation. Instead, priority was given to the short-term performance goal. This was where the intercultural experience provided by Ms Lin's class, which motivated the students to study both language and culture, became valuable. In order to achieve intercultural learning, it is worth considering how to help students develop the learning goals, looking at the long-term advantage of cultural learning and giving due care to personal development.

Part V. Further Discussion and Conclusion

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

In Taiwan, intercultural teaching and learning at high school level has been an under-researched area. The most relevant studies have focused predominantly on target culture in ELT. The wider possibilities for teaching cultural pluralism or for enhancing students' intercultural competence pedagogically have rarely been discussed. One of the aims of this research has been to address this problem.

From the starting point of my initial research questions: "What cultural content is delivered in the EFL class?" and "How does it facilitate intercultural learning if there is any?", this research has investigated the interplay between the three parties within the EFL classroom: the textbook, the teacher and the students. It has analysed the national standard curriculum and content provided by the authorised textbook. Through a series of interviews and class observations, it has examined how and why different teachers' pedagogy delivers different cultural content, even though the teachers use the same textbook. Last but not least, it has presented students' opinions, which not only highlight their learning interests, needs and wants, but also indicate the problem of pursuing performance goals instead of intercultural learning goals.

8.1. The Three-party Interplay

According to the National English Language Curriculum Standard, an important aim of the senior high English programme is to enhance students' cultural understanding, cultivating learners' abilities concerning international affairs, appreciating foreign cultures and arts and articulating features of local culture. However, it does not specify the type of cultural content, the cultural teaching method or the assessment of the target abilities.

Despite the lack of explicit direction for cultural teaching, the *Far East English Reader for Senior High Schools* is based on an American English paradigm, and the majority of the textbook content presents target (American) culture with a small proportion of reading texts representing source (Taiwanese/Chinese) culture and international cultures. The series, composed of six books and seventy-two reading texts, incorporates a wide range of interesting themes with various types of useful linguistic exercises.

However, we should note that the results of the textbook evaluation show that the target cultural content and communicative skills/functions taught by the textbook mainly represent the life and behaviours of the dominant social group in American society. It fails to incorporate other social identities, such as U.S. ethnic minorities, different social classes or regional identities. It also naturalises the choice of this language and culture as a paradigm. As a result, it does not raise awareness to avoid target cultural stereotypes or counter ideological tendencies.

Responding to the trends of localisation and internationalisation, the textbook also

introduces source cultural content and international cultures, but the treatment of such cultural content is paradoxical. Some texts, in the form of cultural comparison or juxtaposition, appear to trivialise local culture or minimise the representation of international cultures. Representation of this kind is arguably too confusing as a model for students to learn how to use English to articulate and relate to the international world.

Most teachers in Taiwanese senior high schools follow the textbook closely. The grammar-translation method, which remains the mainstream pedagogy, makes the teacher the centre of the class and main source of knowledge. The teachers translate and explain the reading text. If it is composed of cultural knowledge, that is taught as part of the translation and explanation. The focus of teaching is grammatical understanding and preparation for examination, as cultural content plays no part in assessment. The implication is that the cultural content students learn in such English classes is confined to textbook content. Without a critical view and guidance for questioning of that content, students study representations of target culture, source culture and international cultures from the textbook, which is often partial and inaccurate, as argued above.

By contrast, the findings of this research show that a more varied choice of pedagogy can broaden the cultural content delivered in class. Some variations to the grammar-translation method, such as a mild communicative task, reflective activity or living examples given by a teacher, could provide much additional cultural knowledge or time for students to relate the English course content to their daily lives. However, since these variations are not norms of teaching stated in the

textbook or Teacher's Book, the quality and design of such variations depend on a teacher's speciality. One example cited in this case study shows how a teacher who has cultural awareness and is concerned about students' personal development, by making some variations to the grammar-translation method, can lead her students to reflect on their lives while learning the cultural content provided by the coursebook.

More encouragingly, with the help of ICT, it is possible to bring intercultural experience to life. Another example in the case study shows that students can learn cultural content beyond the textbook or even the classroom. Students learn to develop intercultural communication skills through real-time on-line conference with native speakers. The teacher who holds regular computer conferences allows her students to decide what they would like to discuss with their American counterparts and encourages them to gain mutual cultural understanding and eventually to establish intercultural friendship. Thus, cultural content is no longer learned through memorisation but is understood through communicating with people who live in that culture. Note that the teacher concerned also applies a similar idea to encourage her students to have contact with other international target cultures.

Generally speaking, the students' comments on the textbook content were critical. The majority of interviewees neither found the reading texts interesting nor regarded the cultural content provided by the textbook as useful. They realised that cultural learning could be helpful for their future travel or career and pointed out their learning interests in various types of cultural content. However, the

performance goal, which prioritises exam preparation, restricts the cultural learning goal. The exception is that the students who participate in the on-line intercultural exchange activities show strong motivation to continue learning both English language and culture. Their intercultural experiences indicate that, from a starting point of some common cultural understanding, intercultural friendships are likely to develop and strengthen.

Given that a teaching pedagogy can significantly influence the effect of cultural learning, it is relevant to ask why there are different choices of teaching practices even though the teachers use the same textbook and follow the same standard curriculum. People might assume that younger teachers tend to be more familiar with the latest communication technology or be more willing to try unconventional teaching methods; however, this research shows that age is not the key factor.

The teacher who used ICT to facilitate her teaching was the oldest among all the informants. Her belief in the importance of learner autonomy and cultural understanding had led her to use methods that most of her colleagues were reluctant to consider. The positive responses from her students had reinforced her belief that the decision to integrate ICT as well as intercultural communication into language study was the right thing to do. Other teachers who attempted to use communicative tasks or who held positive attitudes towards cultural teaching shared a similar perspective as well as a deeper understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

The teacher's motivation to integrate cultural content into teaching practice is

crucial. It appears to be related to several factors, such as the teacher's previous academic training, perception of language and culture, and teaching objectives. On the other hand, the factors motivating resistance to the reformed curriculum, in which the learning goal of intercultural communication competence is emphasised, can be attributed to habit, dependence, insecurity and reluctance to challenge the status quo. The implication is that if no new training is introduced, the conventional practice will persist and successful intercultural teaching will not take place.

8.2. Towards an Integrative Model of Intercultural Teaching and Learning

There are important elements of intercultural communication competence that are ignored by the senior high school EFL programme. More improvement could be made in intercultural teaching and learning in terms of intercultural attitudes, intercultural knowledge, intercultural communication skills and intercultural critical awareness (Byram et al 2001).

The importance of cultivating intercultural attitudes indicates the need for a 'decentring' stage. This means that material designers, teachers, and students should hold a broad-minded view of cultures different from their own. When they meet representations of different cultures, they should be ready to reflect on their own, with attitudes that are curious or even respectful, rather than defensive or reserved. To achieve this, it is essential to put the egocentric mind to one side. However, in the Taiwanese context, the 'decentring' stage may be twofold. First, both educators and language learners should be cautious about what impact Chinese/Taiwanese culture has on them in their judgements of people and things. Second, this research shows that Americanisation is prominent in Taiwan. The

material designers, teachers and their students take the study of American English and culture for granted. The American world is ideologically depicted as equivalent to the 'International World'. It is thus crucial for everyone in the field to learn that American culture does not represent the whole Western world (though it may be significantly influential worldwide). A more open attitude towards the understanding of world cultures will be needed.

We have seen that textbook content is only one of many sources of cultural knowledge. In school, the students learn different types of cultural content through various channels such as a classroom task, an extracurricular activity or intercultural experience, a teacher's anecdote, the English learning magazine or multimedia, where that is available. It is also likely that the students learn 'Big C' cultural content in other subjects such as History and Geography. There is therefore a variety of sources open to the English teacher to promote cultural learning.

In order to improve teaching of cultural knowledge, some recommendations drawn from the research results are as follows:

- a) The curricula across academic disciplines could be more integrated. The teaching of English should respond to what is taught in other subjects, so that students can not only study one single reading text, but also have guidance to develop greater understanding of world cultures.
- b) If American English and culture is the chosen variety, then the standard curriculum and textbook should make it absolutely explicit that while this target language and culture is a prominent variety, it is also one of many. While teaching knowledge and behaviour codes of the target culture, teachers should

lead their students to be aware that the cultural rules they learn in school do not necessarily apply to every country in the world.

- c) The textbook and teacher should deliver accurate and up-to-date knowledge about the target culture. This means that the course content should present a realistic depiction of the nature of American society as multi-racial and multi-cultural. It should also be recognised that every nation has its problems as well as achievements, and that a wide spectrum of social issues will always exist. Critical discussions on such social concerns could be introduced into the English class.
- d) The tendency to trivialise local content should be avoided. Interculturality indicates not only students' appreciation of foreign cultures but also their understanding of and respect for their own culture. It is crucial that students are given accurate and appropriate examples in order to learn how to verbalise their opinions and articulate their culture in English, whether this is in the form of cultural comparison, dialogue practice or an essay. This training is one of the most important paths to develop students' interculturality and link them to the international world.
- e) Consideration should also be given to increasing the amount of material on international cultures or intercultural comparisons. This approach presents students with a mirror of what the global world is really like. Teaching cultural pluralism connects students with the real international world.

Moreover, since it is not possible to acquire all relevant cultural knowledge before an intercultural encounter, it is crucial to develop integrated skills for intercultural understanding and communication. The development of effective intercultural

communication skills incorporates students' abilities to relate to, interpret and reflect on the cultural content they are exposed to (Byram 2001). It means that students are able to relate to, compare and contrast the constituents of another culture with the constituents of their own. They are thus better placed to interpret the divergence of cultures. They may question what different values, beliefs and behaviours mean to them and seek explanations to specific questions. They may even learn how to negotiate meanings during an intercultural encounter. Finally, students can reflect upon what they have discerned in other cultures on the basis of what they know about their own culture. These skills empower students to gain deeper understanding of others as well as themselves.

However, it is evident in this research that many of these skills are unlikely to be developed if students remain in a teacher-centred classroom with minimum time for reflection and interaction between the teacher and student or students and students. When course instruction is highly structured, there is no time for any communication practice, not to mention reflection. However, the use of a computer video conference demonstrates that the development of these skills is possible, as students have the chance to apply prior cultural knowledge to relate to, reflect on and work out their own communicative strategies in order to establish intercultural friendships. Students should be given opportunities to develop the ability to apply the language they have learned to capture what is unfamiliar to them in order to avoid misapprehensions or to resolve communication barriers. Giving students a context for intercultural collaboration can be one of the most effective ways of helping them to discover cross-cultural perspectives and to develop communication skills spontaneously.

More specifically, it is worth considering the 'ethnographic study' proposed by Byram and his colleagues (Byram 1997a, Dark et al 1997). A large-scale cultural exchange may not be possible in an EFL country like Taiwan, due to the large number of students and the high cost. However, the use of ICT to facilitate intercultural communication can be encouraged. The equipment and technology is not a problem for many schools, while the point is to establish a wider platform for senior high schools to create a bridge to the outside world. The cost of promoting on-line virtual intercultural exchange is presumably much less than funding students to go abroad.

Critical cultural awareness indicates "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram et al, 2001, p.9). Because in Taiwan, as this research has shown, teachers and many students are all too ready to accept a naturalised standard language ideology and cultural norms, this ability is perhaps particularly crucial. Material designers, teachers and students should be encouraged to ask: "Why is this cultural representation the way it is? Are there other possible representations or interpretations? Why do I believe/accept this cultural content? What is the difference between this foreign culture and my own? What is the reason for the difference?" Such questioning helps English learners to be cognisant of their being in a multicultural world, and can be the frontline in resisting any ideological tendencies imposed by the textbook.

Finally, such an integrative model of intercultural teaching and learning will only

happen when there is sufficient communication between the policy makers, material designers, teachers and students. In addition to improvement to the curriculum and textbook design, teachers' motivation to integrate cultural content into language study, and vision for developing cultural learning goals, will also facilitate the aim of integrative intercultural learning. The teacher's development is thus crucial. The alteration to teacher priorities must be achieved through a careful process of communication. Possible solutions are to introduce the concept of teachers as themselves 'cultural learners', and to offer the teaching methods they need within the teacher-training process. The former indicates leading teachers to study the close relationship between language and culture and gradually develop intercultural competence as part of teaching ability. The latter refers to pedagogical concern in that teachers will need appropriate methods to deliver what they know. A large-scale survey is thus recommended to further confirm the correlation between the pedagogies used by the senior high school teachers and their previous academic training. This may be helpful to detect what specific support and teaching methods are needed to facilitate intercultural teaching. For example, if many literature specialists tend to use the grammar-translation method, it may be useful to identify what specific teaching techniques can be tailored to these teachers' needs. Of course, some other concerns are also likely to affect a teacher's choice of pedagogy. For instance, there is always the wider social context, where parents and the prevailing social mentality emphasise the importance of the college entrance exam. I hope there will be more attention paid to these concerns.

It is surely time for people to aspire to higher goals in English teaching and learning at secondary level in Taiwan. Following the recommendations above

would help students develop a broad mindset towards the international world, acquire integrated skills for intercultural understanding and communication, and eventually intercultural critical awareness as well as greater linguistic confidence. Successful intercultural teaching and learning can help EFL learners to fulfil their language learning goals as well as realise human goals. I will look forward to seeing more studies written in this field in the future.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Consent for Thesis Research Project Participation
參與研究訪談同意書

Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL:
With Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan

I understand what this research is about and realise that I am free to request further information at any stage.

我了解這份研究計畫的性質，並可以隨時要求更多的相關資訊。

I know that:

我知道:

- ✓ my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
我的參與是自願的
- ✓ I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
我有自由在任意時刻退出且不影響我的權益
- ✓ I may decline to answer any particular question(s) which I feel hesitant or uncomfortable and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage;
在訪談過程中，我可以拒絕回答任何令我覺得猶豫或不妥之問題，或者我可於任意時刻退出且不影響我的權益
- ✓ the data (audio-tapes) will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which they will be destroyed;
訪談錄音帶將會在研究終止後銷毀，但原始資料將妥善保存五年後銷毀
- ✓ I will be given a copy of the transcript of my interviews and will be able to make any changes or give comments;
我會收到一份訪談謄本的副本，並可以做任何更改或給予意見
- ✓ the results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved.
這份研究結果可能會出版，但我的名字將會被保密

I give my consent to take part in this project.

我同意參與這份研究

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

(日期) (參 與 者 簽 名)

Appendix 2

Telephone Survey Questionnaire (for state-run senior high schools in Taipei) 電話訪談問卷 (訪問台北市各市立高中)

Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL: With Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan

Senior High School 學校名稱:
Telephone Number 學校電話:
Coordinator of the English Subject 英文科總召集人:
Attention Number 分機號碼:
Time/Date 訪談時間/日期:

(Greeting)

Dear Mr/Ms _____, How do you do? I am Cindy Lee, an instructor from English Department of Fu-Jen Catholic University. May I bother you a couple of minutes asking you some questions about English teaching? Thank you very much!

____老師您好，我是輔仁大學英文系李欣欣老師，是否可以打攪您幾分鐘的時間，以電話訪問方式向您請教幾個有關英語教學的問題，謝謝您!

1. _____ Yes 好的 _____ No 不好 Thank you very much! 感謝您!

2. This is the first question. What version of English textbook does your school use? 第一個問題想請教您 貴校所使用的英文教科書是那一個版本?

(1) _____ Far East 遠東 (2) _____ Sang Miong 三民 (3) _____ Long Tuong 龍騰 (4) _____ Others 其它

3. How many English teachers are in your school?

請問 貴校大約有幾位英文教師?

(1) _____ 5-10 (2) _____ 11-15 (3) _____ 16-20 (4) _____ 20-25
(4) _____ Others

4. Could you please describe how most English teachers in your school teach a unit?

可否請您簡述 貴校大部份教師的英文教學方式?

(1) _____ Teach vocabulary; translate/explain the reading text; instruct grammar rules and then give a test

教授字彙、翻譯說明課文內容、講解文法規則並考試

(Additional Notes or Details 其它細節或變化:)

2) _____ Teach the written text (e.g. vocabulary, the reading text and

grammars) and spend equivalent time on listening, pronunciation and conversation or other communicative activities

教授語文含字彙、課文、文法等，並花費同樣時間在聽講訓練或其它溝通式活動

(Additional Notes or Details 其它細節或變化:)

3)_____ Others 其它

5. Are there any other special characteristics of English education in your school?

請問 貴校的英文教學有無其它特殊特色是您想要補充的?

This is the end of our interview. The result of this survey may be published but your anonymity will be preserved. Thank you very much for your valuable time and opinions!

以上是我們所有的問題。本研究結果可能會出版，但您的名字與資料將會被保密。非常感謝老師您的寶貴的時間與意見!

*Total Time 總訪問時間: _____

Questions for the Interview with Teachers 教師訪談問題內容

Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL: With Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan

I. Background Information

背景資訊

1. How long have you been teaching in the senior high school?
請問您在高中任教多久了？
2. What is your academic background? (BA/ MA in English Literature/ Linguistics)
請問您在大學/研究所的主修是...？
3. Do you think your academic background influences your teaching? If so, How?
您認為您在求學時期的主修，是否有影響到您的教學？有的話，是什麼樣的影響呢？
4. Have you been to any English-speaking countries? If so, where, how often and for how long?
是否曾去過英語系國家？若有的話，是哪裡，有多常去，每次去待多久呢？
5. Could you please pick one of those English-speaking countries (either most liked or disliked) and talk about your experiences (the most impressive or shocking one)?
請挑選一個(您最喜歡或最不喜歡的)國家講述您的旅遊經驗(印象最深刻或衝擊最大的)

II. Teaching the English Language

英語教學

6. How would you describe the variety of English you are teaching to the class? (American English/International Standard English/British English/ Taiwanese English/Others)
您會怎麼形容目前高中所教的英文屬性？(美國英文/國際英文/英國英文/台式英文等等)
7. What is the official objectives do you follow as an English teacher?
對於高中英語教師，什麼是您必須遵循的教學目標/宗旨？
8. Could you please briefly describe your teaching method for the English class?
可否請您簡述您的英語教學方法和步驟？
9. When I say TEFL and TEIL, what does either one of them mean to you?
當我說外語教學(TEFL) 和國際英語教學(TEIL) 時，對您而言，這二個詞彙的意涵是什麼呢？

III. Teaching Cultural Content

文化教學內容

10. How do you define 'culture'?
請問您如何定義文化？
11. How do you think language and culture relate to each other?
您覺得語言和文化有什麼關聯嗎？
12. Do you agree that teaching cultural content will help students learn or use the English language better? Please give reasons for your answer.

‘學習文化內容可以幫助學生學習英文或是把英文使用的更好’。您同意這樣的說法嗎？(請簡述理由)

13. Have you ever tried to provide or teach cultural content to your students? What were your intentions and approaches?

您嚐試過教導或提供學生文化相關內容嗎？請簡述這個嘗試的目的和方法。

14. Some people say that our students may communicate more with Asians than with English native speakers in future. Are you aware of this? If so, what effect could this have on your teaching English?

有人說未來我們的學生與亞洲人接觸的機會會比和英語人口溝通的機會還多，依您個人觀察，您有注意到這樣的現象嗎？(或是對這樣的說法有什麼樣的想法?)若有，這會對您的教學產生什麼樣的影響呢？

15. What do you think about teaching multi-cultural content (for example, teaching the cultures of our neighbours, non-English speaking countries)?

您對多元文化教學有和想法？(多元文化教學在這指的是：例如教導台灣鄰國地區/非英語系國家的文化)

IV. Materials

教材

16. How would you describe the cultural content of the current textbook you are using? What do you think about it?

請您簡述目前您所使用的英文課本裏的文化內容。您對這些內容的評價是什麼呢？

17. There are some lessons in the book about Chinese traditions or resorts in Taiwan. What do you think the compilers' intention is?

在英文課本中有幾課課文提到中國文化，或是台灣的著名觀光景點。依您推測，英文課本中放入這些內文，編譯者的用意是什麼？

18. Do you use any supplementary materials? Why do you choose them? What sort of cultural content do they provide? How do you use them?

您通常會使用輔助教材嗎？您為何會選擇這些教材？這些教材提供什麼樣的文化內容呢？可否簡述您使用這些教材的方法及步驟？

19. How do your students respond to these extra materials?

您的學生對這些教材有何回應呢？

20. How do you describe the situation (reality, possibilities or difficulties) of teaching the cultural content in practice?

可否依您的實務經驗，簡述對教導文化內容的看法？(可行性、困難度等等)

[Additional Questions]

- *Would you like to add other opinions?

您有任何意見要補充嗎？

- *Other questions shall be subject to the interview time to time.

其它問題視每一次的訪問內容而定

Questionnaire for Student Interviewees

Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL: With Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan

Sex: _____ School: _____ Class: _____ Name: _____

(If you need more space, please use the back of paper and specify the question number.)

I. Introduction

1. How long have you been learning English? (Including after-school courses)
 - a. Under 3 years.....
 - b. 3-6 years.....
 - c. More than 6 years...
- 1-1 Did you ever attend any English school overseas?
 - a. Yes , when I was _____ years old, I studied in _____ for _____(duration).
 - b. No.
2. Please describe your English proficiency:
 - a. Speaking, listening, writing and reading skills are all good
 - b. A specific area is better Please circle your strength as below:
Grammar/Vocabulary/Reading Comprehension/Conversation/Listening
- 2-1 When you work in future, which area do you think you will want to improve the most?
 - a. Listening.....
 - b. Conversation...
 - c. Reading.....
 - d. Writing.....
3. Which variety of English are you learning in the school?
 - a. British English.....
 - b. Taiwanese English.....
 - c. American English.....
 - d. International Standard English.....
4. What are your plans in the near future?
 - a. To study at a College of Science and Technology (Polytechnic-type University)....
 - b. To study at a general university.....
 - c. To study at a foreign University in _____(Country).....
 - d. To Work
 - e. Others
5. Please list three English-speaking countries which are familiar to you (except for USA, UK, Canada and Australia):
 - a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

II. Cultural Experience

6. Have you been to any foreign countries?

a. No..... (Please go to No. 8)

b. Yes... (Please answer No.7)

7. Please list the countries you have been to.

Which COUNTRY have you been to?	How many TIMES have you been there?	How LONG have you stayed?	What is the PURPOSE for your stay?
a.			
b.			
c.			

8. Suppose you have plenty of money and time in the future, which countries do you want to visit the most? (Please list at least three in the order of your favourite options.) (You can repeat the countries above.)

Which COUNTRY do you want to visit the most?	What is the PURPOSE for this visit?	How LONG do you want to stay?	What is the REASON of choosing this country?
a.			
b.			
c.			

9. Please comment on your favourite English-speaking country and fill in your answers in the following form.

Have you been to that country?	WHERE is your favourite English-Speaking Country?	Could you please IMAGINE when you were there, what might impress or surprise you? Please give one example.
No.		
Have you been to that country?	WHERE is your favourite English-Speaking Country?	When you were there, what impressed or surprised you the most? Please give one example.
Yes.		

9-1 In this country, what can be the **same** with Taiwan? Please give three examples.

Category Food/Clothing/Housing Music/Leisure/lifestyle, etc.	Examples
a.	
b.	
c.	

9-2 In this country, what can be very **different** from Taiwan?

Category Food/Clothing/Housing Music/Leisure/lifestyle, etc.	Examples
a.	
b.	
c.	

9-3 Where do you learn these things/examples mainly? Please fill in the order of the key sources. (No. 1 represents the most important, 2, 3, etc.)

- ___ I have been to this country, so I experienced these things myself
- ___ From the English textbook used in the school
- ___ From the supplementary learning materials (English Learning Magazines/Articles/Books)
- ___ From the media (TV/Movie/Radio Programme/Newspaper)
- ___ From people who have been to that country (my teachers/friends/families/relatives)
- ___ From other classes (Geography/History/Private Language School, etc.)
- ___ Others _____

9-4 Do you think learning the cultural information (like above) **in advance** would be helpful to you in visiting that country?

a. Yes.... because

_____.

a. No..... because

10. We have mentioned about culture, could you please use one sentence to define 'culture'?

Thank you for replying this questionnaire!

Appendix 5

Questionnaire for Student Interviewees
學生訪談問卷中文版

Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL:
With Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan

您的性別：_____ 學校：_____ 年級：_____ 英文名字：_____

(若您需要更多空間，可使用問卷背面空白處，並請註明問題題號)

-
1. 請問你學習英文有多長的時間了？(含課外學習)
 - a. 三年以下.....
 - b. 三到六年.....
 - c. 六年以上.....
 - 1-1 是否參加過國外的語言學校課程？
 - a. 是...，在_____歲時，我曾於_____國，共學習_____週/月的英文
 - b. 否...
 2. 請形容你的英文程度：
 - a. 聽說讀寫皆流利.....
 - b. 特定領域比較好..... 請圈選下列專長 (單選)：
文法 / 字彙 / 閱讀測驗 / 會話溝通 / 聽力練習
 - 2-1 未來出社會，你覺得以後你會最想加強的英文技巧是 (單選)：
 - a. 聽力.....
 - b. 會話.....
 - c. 閱讀.....
 - d. 寫作.....
 3. 你覺得在學校學的英文是哪一種英文 (單選)：
 - a. 英式英文.....
 - b. 台灣英文.....
 - c. 美式英文.....
 - d. 國際標準英文.....
 4. 你未來的升學計畫為何 (單選)？
 - a. 報考/就讀於國內技術學院/科技大學.....
 - b. 報考/就讀於國內一般大學.....
 - c. 可能會到國外唸大學，_____國.....
 - d. 就業.....
 - e. 其他:_____.....
 5. 請列出你三個你所熟知的英語系國家(除美國、英國、加拿大、澳洲以外)：
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

6. 你是否去過外國？

a. 否……… (請跳答問題 8)

b. 是……… (請續答問題 7)

7. 請列出你所去過的英語系國家：

曾去過的 國家名稱	共去過的 次數?	待了多長的 時間?	此次旅程的 目的?
a.			
b.			
c.			

8. 假設你未來很富裕並有時間,你會最想去哪些國家?(請依照喜愛度排序)
(可重複填寫第七題中曾去過的國家)

最想去的 國家名稱	去這個國家 的 目的?	會想待多長的 時間?	選擇這個國家的 原因?
a.			
b.			
c.			

9. 請回答有關你最喜愛的英語系國家的下列問題：

是否去過 這個國家	你最喜愛的英語系 國家 國家名稱	請想像若是你到了這個國家,什麼樣的人/ 事/物可能會讓你覺得印象深刻或感到驚 訝?請舉例
否,沒去過		
是,曾去過		

9-1 請列舉這個國家中三件和台灣相同的事：

範疇 生活方式/食/衣/ 住/行等	例子
a.	
b.	
c.	

9-2 請列舉這個國家中三件和台灣不同的事：

範疇 生活方式/食/衣/ 住/行等	例子
a.	
b.	
c.	

9-3 請問你如何得知上述資訊呢？(可單選；複選者請依照最主要的來源排序，1 為最主要，2 為次要，3, 4, 5...以此類推。)

- 我曾去過這個國家，所以我親身體驗
 從學校的英文課本中學到的
 從輔助教材中得知(如：英文學習雜誌/學校推薦之文章/書籍等)
 從傳播媒體上得知的(如：電視/電影/廣播/新聞/報紙)等
 聽去過這個國家的親朋好友提及的(如老師/同學/朋友/父母家人/親戚等)
 在其他的課堂上學到的(如：地理課/歷史課/英文補習班等)
 其他：_____

9-4 你覺得若事先了解上述文化相關資訊，對你造訪這個國家會幫助嗎？

a. 會... 因為

b. 不會. 因為

10. 我們剛剛多少有提到一些文化相關的議題，可否請您用一句話定義文化？

謝謝您填寫此份問卷！

Questions for the Interview with Students
學生訪談問題內容

Intercultural Teaching and Learning in EFL:
With Specific Reference to the Senior High School in Taiwan

1. Do you think learning about a country's culture can help you to learn the language of that country? Please give reasons for your answer.
你認為學習一國的文化可以把該國的語言學的更好嗎？請說明原因。
2. When you hear me say 'English Culture', which type/variety of culture do you think I am referring to?
當我說 '英語文化' 時你認為我指的是哪一種文化？
3. Do you think English can help you learn the culture of others? (Including non-English-speaking countries)
你覺得學習英文可以幫助你學習其他國家的文化嗎？(含非英語系國家)
4. What do your parents think about your learning English? Do you agree with them?
你的父母對你學習英文有什麼樣的看法？你同意他們嗎？
5. Do you watch English movies with/without reading subtitles, read English magazines, listen to English songs/radio programmes or browse English websites? What kind of cultural information do you learn from them?
你平時有看英文電影、英文雜誌、聽英文歌/廣播、或上英文網站嗎？你從中學到麼樣的文化資訊呢？
6. We mentioned the English skills that you are good at or want to improve in the future. How do the English media you are using help you learn English? Which skills are especially beneficial? Please give reasons for your answer.
剛剛我們有提到你比較擅長以及未來最想加強的英文技巧，你覺得就目前常接觸的這些英文媒體，對你的英文學習有什麼樣的幫助？對哪一樣技巧特別有幫助呢？為何？
7. In school, in addition to textbooks, have you tried other English media or additional materials? What cultural information did you learn from them?
(This question can be combined with question 8.)
在學校的英文課裏，除了英文教科書之外，是否有嘗試過其他的英文媒體或教材(哪一些)？從中學到什麼樣的文化資訊呢？
(可合併於第八題)
8. How do you think such materials help you learn English? Can you give any examples?
你覺得這些教材對你學習英文的幫助是什麼？請舉一個例子。
9. Please recall the lessons in the English textbook. What would be your impressions of or comments on those lessons in general? Please specify examples of what you like or dislike.
請回想課本中的課文，大致上你對這些課文的印象或評語是什麼？請舉例你喜歡或不喜歡的內容。
10. Do you think the content of the lessons mentioned above is useful or helpful in your learning of English? How do the textbook lessons help you to learn the

culture of English-speaking countries?

你覺得這些課文內容對你學習或使用英文有什麼樣的幫助嗎？對於了解英語系國家的文化有什麼樣的幫助嗎？

11. **Parts of your textbook focus on Chinese Culture and tourist resorts in Taiwan. Why do you think the writers put these topics in the English textbook? How are these images (regarding local features) presented in the textbook?**

在你們的英文課本中，有些課文提到中國文化或是台灣的風景區等，你覺得編者或作者在英文課本中放入這些內容的用意是什麼呢？上述這些有關本地特色的內容是如何呈現在課本中呢？請表示你的看法。

12. **From your personal experience (of learning English or studying overseas), do you think learning about different ways of life (especially foreign living) will influence how you identify with the local culture? Please give reasons for your answer.**

就你學習英文(或出國遊學的經驗)，你覺得學習不同的生活方式(尤其外國人的生活方式)，會影響你對本國文化或生活方式的認同(或看法嗎)嗎？

13. **If you were a textbook writer, what kind of (cultural) topics do you think senior high students would be interested in? (What do you and your classmates want to learn? Please give reasons for your answer.)**

如果有一天你是英文課本的編者，你會放入什麼樣的課文內容？(你和同學都想學什麼樣的課文內容？請說明你的理由)

[Additional Questions]

[附加問題]

1. **Are you interested in learning the culture of non-English-speaking countries such as our neighbours: Malaysia, Japan, Korea and so on? Please give your reasons.**

你有興趣在英文課堂中或是在課文中學習非英語系國家的文化嗎？(例如馬來西亞、日本、韓國等等鄰國的文化)為何？

2. **How would you identify/define Chinese Culture/Taiwanese Culture?**

請定義中華文化/台灣文化

Transcript Sample
Interviews with Students
Group MN3(1)
 12:30-13:00, 12/09/2002

I. List of Codes:

Codes	Pseudonyms
MN3CHS(1A)	Cheng, Acton
MN3HSI(1B)	Hsiao, Alfred
MN3CHE(1C)	Cheng, Andrew
MN3WIC(1D)	Wei, Addison
MN3CCY(1E)	Chang, Atwood

II. English Transcript:

1. Do you think learning about a country's culture can help you to learn the language of that country? Please give reasons for your answer.

MN3CHS (1A): Yes. It should help me to learn the language better.

MN3HSI(1B): Yes. If we talk about any relevant content, we can understand it better.

MN3CHE(1C): Yes.

MN3WIC(1D): Yes. The process of learning culture leads us to learn people's customs and expressions. This will help us learn the language better.

MN3CCY(1E): Yes. I agree that the process of learning culture leads us to learn people's customs and expressions.

2. When you hear me say 'English Culture', which type/variety of culture do you think I am referring to?

MN3CHS (1A): American culture.

MN3HSI (1B): American.

MN3CHE (1C): American.

MN3WIC(1D): British culture.

MN3CCY(1E): American.

3. Do you think English can help you learn the culture of others? (Including non-English-speaking countries)

MN3CHS (1A): Yes. English is used all over the world.

MN3HSI (1B): Yes. Like in Japan, many forms of address and usages are either translated from English or expressed in English.

MN3CHE (1C): Yes, because most knowledge is presented in English. Chinese materials are limited.

MN3WIC(1D): Yes, I think it can help. For example, German and French

share similarities with English. Learning English must be helpful in learning those languages, and further helps us understand their cultures.

MN3CCY (1E): Yes. I also think learning English can be helpful in learning other cultures, but I don't think it is helpful in learning other languages. After all, the difference between languages is tremendous.

4. What do your parents think about your learning English? Do you agree with them?

MN3CHS (1A): My parents think learning English is important because English is necessary for working in any companies in the future. Besides, we also need to read English textbooks at university.

MN3HSI (1B): My mother regards English as one of many academic subjects. My dad thinks English is extremely important, especially for working or studying abroad in the future.

MN3CHE (1C): They think it is important because much knowledge is delivered in English.

MN3WIC(1D): They think learning English is very important. They hope for me to learn it as if it were our native language, taking it as one of our daily communication tools.

MN3CCY(1): They think it is important. They expect me to use English as naturally as Taiwanese, to start from speaking and use it naturally, just like another means of communication in everyday life.

5. Do you watch English movies with/without reading subtitles, read English magazines, listen to English songs/radio programmes or browse English websites?

MN3CHS (1A): I listen to English songs. This is helpful for my listening ability.

MN3HSI (1B): I read English magazines, mainly Studio Classroom.

MN3CHE (1C): I read Studio Classroom and surf the Internet. I am interested in Computers. Sometimes I find relevant information on the Internet.

MN3WIC(1D): I listen to English songs, and browse English websites. I am interested in electronics and mechanical engineering, so I often check relevant information on the Internet

MN3CCY (1E): I normally read Studio Classroom.

6. We mentioned the English skills that you are good at or want to improve in the future. How do the English media you are using help you learn English? Which skills are especially beneficial? Please give reasons for your answer.

MN3CHS (1A): Listening comprehension.

MN3HSI (1B): Reading ability.

MN3CHE (1C): Reading.

MN3WIC(1D): Reading ability, because most of the time I only read.

MN3CCY (1E): Reading.

7. In school, in addition to textbooks, have you tried other English media or additional materials? What cultural information did you learn from them?

[This question is combined with question 8.]

8. How do you think such materials help you learn English? Can you give any examples?

MN3WIC(1D): I read Studio Classroom. It helps me to learn some more sentence patterns and vocabulary.

MN3CCY(1E): I agree.

MN3CHS (1A): The same here. We learn more sentence patterns and vocabulary.

MN3HSI (1B): Agreed.

MN3CHE (1C): Agreed.

9. Please recall the lessons in the English textbook. What would be your impressions of or comments on those lessons in general? Please specify examples of what you like or dislike.

MN3CHS(1A): Most are boring unless they are adapted from the original novels.

MN3HSI(1B): I agree, only those adapted from the original are interesting, but the stories written by foreigners are not numerous.

MN3CHE(1C): I like the interesting but not difficult ones.

MN3WIC(1D): Well, most texts are simply written to teach us sentence patterns and vocabulary.

MN3CCY(1E): The lessons in the English textbooks are hardly interesting. Even if they are interesting, the meaning of content won't be significant.

10. Do you think the content of the lessons mentioned above is useful or helpful in your learning of English? How do the textbook lessons help you to learn the culture of English-speaking countries?

MN3CHS (1A): I think they introduce some American culture.

MN3HSI (1B): Yes, the books introduce a bit of American culture.

MN3CHE (1C): Agree.

MN3WIC(1D): It is more or less helpful in understanding the culture of one English-speaking country. But it is just about part of that culture, not overall .

MN3CCY(1E): What the textbook teaches is more about cultural details, for example, the custom of giving and receiving a gift. In Western culture, they open the gift in front of the sender, which is different from our culture. But this is not really helpful for us to understand the entity of western culture. [What do you mean by 'entity'?] Well, what I mean, in this case, should be Western values. We are not familiar with their values.

11. Parts of your textbook focus on Chinese Culture and tourist resorts in Taiwan. Why do you think the writers put these topics in the English textbook? How are these images (regarding local features) presented in the textbook?

- MN3CHS(1A): They may want us to have deeper impression which can help us memorise important grammar more easily.
- MN3HSI(1B): I guess they may want us to learn more vocabulary, so they compile these lessons to teach us particular words, otherwise it is not necessary to introduce a Chinese subject in a foreign language.
- MN3WIC(1D): I think this is totally unnecessary. What they describe are the things we are already very familiar with.
- MN3CCY(1E): I think the intention may be to help us to have deeper impressions that help us to remember the important points of grammar and vocabulary.

12. From your personal experience (of learning English or studying overseas), do you think learning about different ways of life (especially foreign living) will influence how you identify with the local culture? Please give reasons for your answer.

- MN3CHS(1A): I feel no influence.
- MN3HSI(1B): No opinion.
- MN3CHE(1C): There is not too much change in me.
- MN3WIC(1D): I think learning English means to contact some more international stuff. As for understanding of the local, we use Chinese to learn it. It is just like we learn American culture through English. So, I think the influence is quite all right. There is no big conflict between the two.
- MN3CCY(1E): I feel that there is no too obvious influence on me because I see English as just one academic subject to deal with. It seems to have little influence on my daily life.

13. If you were a textbook writer, what kind of (cultural) topics do you think senior high students would be interested in? (What do you and your classmates want to learn? Please give reasons for your answer.)

- MN3CHS(1A): I would want to read various kinds of original novels.
- MN3HSI(1B): The textbook could introduce some more foreign festivals.
- MN3CHE(1C): I don't know. I guess the current editors must feel that they have no way out. There don't seem to be many topics for them to talk about.
- MN3WIC(1D): I would like to put in more stories, especially personal experiences. Either Chinese or English extracts would do.
- MN3CCY(1E): I wouldn't want boring texts, like those composed of many new words, unfamiliar grammatical patterns and long sentences which are difficult to memorise.

[Additional Question]

1. Are you interested in learning the culture of non-English-speaking countries such as our neighbours: Malaysia, Japan, Korea and so on? Please give your reasons.

MN3CHS(1A): Yes, it sounds not bad.

MN3HSI (1B): Yes, maybe. But what the textbook teaches may not be necessarily what we want to know.

MN3CHE(1C): No, not really interested. If I learn the culture of non-English-speaking countries, it must be due to obligation.

MN3WIC(1D): Just all right. Non-English cultures can be presented in the form of stories. This can be tried. But I think we can read them on our own.

MN3CCY(1E): Having more understanding of other cultures is not bad. This can prevent deficiency in oral communication in the future.

Appendix 8

Transcript Sample Interviews with Teachers Interviews with Teachers (3)

◆ List of Codes:

Name	Pseudonym	Interview Time
Ms Lee, L. S.	Ms. Lin	90 minutes
		35 minutes

◆ Chinese Transcript:

I. Background Information

1. How long have you been teaching in senior high school?
A: I have been teaching English for 33 years. (Q: You look young for your experience!) Ha-ha, not really...hmm... I have spent 15 years in senior high school. Initially, I began teaching in elementary school and then in junior high school. In fact, I enjoy my teaching at every stage. Kids of different ages are all lovely.
2. What was your major?
A: I had two majors. One was in education and the other was in English with the National Normal University. (Q: Was it a double major?) Yes, it was. Later, I did my Master degree in Wisconsin and majored in TESOL.
3. Do you think your major has influenced your teaching? If so, what kind of influence is it?
A: My major certainly affected my teaching, because I have been involved in this area for a long time. My college professor's motto, "the more you do, the more you get" has influenced me. This concept is always with me. I have been making progress together with my students. The more I do for my job and students, the more my students and I learn from it. It is enjoyable that the more we do, the more we learn and get.

I often hope my students can keep making progress. Some teachers feel upset when their students do poorly at examinations but I seldom do. I often tell my students that things will be fine when they improve next time. As long as we keep improving, we will feel joyful. Therefore, I make an effort with my students. I also often tell them that English is a subject that can be memorised by heart. I can't save them from the hard work, but I am not likely to mislead them, either. The reason is simple: we are so lucky that we live in a technological world where information is available all around us. One can easily become involved in an English language environment. One can listen to the radio or watch various

English programs on TV. That's why I think, whatever a teacher's own language proficiency and ability, he or she won't affect a student too much. As long as the kid has interest and motivation in English, he or she will be willing to immerse themselves in the English environment and learn the language well or even better than me. As a result, I feel that we need to have good interaction with kids. As long as you have good learning ability [as a good English teacher should have] and good interaction with students, they will like English and be willing to follow your steps and learn English on their own. I think many of these ideas come from my college teachers.

(Q: Apart from your belief in teaching, are other things in your teaching influenced by your major?)

Oh, yes, my major influenced not only my beliefs at work, but also my ability. For example, if I had not studied hard for my major, I could not have been outstanding in my career. More importantly, when I was in the graduate school (in the US), I studied very hard. If I were not good enough, it wouldn't be possible for me to bring much to my students in later days. Therefore, my own ability, that is, professional knowledge, is very important. You see, I teach English, if my English is not good, how can I expect my students to follow my instruction? So, I do think hard work in my college years was very important to me and also very helpful to my job.

4. Have you ever been to English-speaking countries? If yes, which countries and how often and for how long each time?

A: I studied in the United States. I've also travelled to Europe. I enjoy travelling a lot. I've also been to the UK and Canada. I spend two to three months in foreign countries almost every year. I enjoy backpacking travel, communicating with different people and experiencing different cultures. I simply feel happy about it.

(Q: You mentioned you have stayed in the USA, but for how long?)

I was there for a year and came back right after completing my Masters degree.

(Q: Have you travelled around the States?)

Yes, my brothers and sisters all live in the States. There are also some relatives and friends in Canada. I visit them and also visit the UK often.

5. Could you please pick one of those English-speaking countries (either most liked or disliked) and talk about your experiences (the most impressive or shocking)?

A: To me, the culture shock didn't happen in the English speaking countries. Hmm, let me think... I think the greatest culture shock I experienced was in Germany. I used to have a good German friend. Once he invited me to visit him and stay at his place for two months. It was then that I realized that there were many differences across cultures.

(Q: Could you please give me some examples?)

Sure, for example, when we visited France, I found that French people's self-esteem was so high that they felt they were the best in the world. They did not praise other people easily.

I have also been to Baltic countries. Well..., I don't find many cultural differences in the English speaking countries though. Perhaps that's because I did my study in America. However, I did find more differences in Russian speaking countries, for example.

(Q: How about Germany?)

Right, when I was in Germany and Austria, I really noticed the kind of 'romantic' atmosphere there. How should I put it? Hmm.. for example, when I went skiing with my friends in the Alps, I felt that the German and French were quite 'open'. Compared to them, I seemed much more reserved. At that time, I did feel 'cultural shock'.

(Q: Could you please give an example?)

Yes, Germans are open. For example, didn't I tell you that I stayed at my friend's place? One day he took me to see his daughter's room. His daughter was still studying at university at that time but he gave her a 'castle' as a birthday gift! Anyway, we visited her huge bedroom in that castle. There was a giant bed in the centre of her room. Seeing this, I was wondering why a little girl needed such a big bed. Then, my friend told me that the big bed was for the times when her boyfriend came to stay with her. At that moment I was shocked by what I heard!

You know, it is something most Chinese [Taiwanese] people cannot accept, so I asked him: "You have no problem with that? Your daughter and her boyfriend sleep together [before they are married]?" "Why not? That is human nature," he replied.

Later, he even said it was no wonder that my daughter wasn't married yet because I never allowed her to have any experience of sex. He said that since my daughter has never had the chance to feel her 'needs', she didn't rush for marriage at all. He insisted that regardless of whether men and women are married, they mean to be together. "Having such needs is natural," he said. This was a true shock to me. Don't you think so? Cindy, you teach at the college. You tell me. Are college students now as open as German girls? [Haha... I am not sure I can answer this question. My students seldom talk about their personal lives to me.]

Anyway, I felt shocked at that time. I think the longer I stayed with my [European] friends, the more I recognized cultural differences between us. My German friend could not understand why I was always so reserved. Perhaps he couldn't accept my conservativeness at all. I think this is a cultural difference.

(Q: In other words, you feel that we Taiwanese people are more conservative than Europeans?)

Yes, yes, I think so. For another example, when we went skiing, my German friend introduced his male friends to me. They hugged while greeting each other but it was awkward for me. I was not really used to that.

(Q: Hmm... I can understand that...)

You see. Oh, yes, there is another problem. It is sometimes difficult for me to catch comfortable body distance, especially when getting along with foreign acquaintances and friends, as I just said.

II. English Teaching

6. How would you describe the attributes of English taught at high schools? (American English /International English etc.)

A: English is a Humanities subject and I feel that learning English is a matter of happiness. Learning a foreign language enables kids to make more friends and allows them to interact with foreigners. I always give my students opportunities to interact with foreigners [Americans]. So far they have conducted three activities since the beginning of this semester. The first task was using MS Power Point to introduce themselves, their school and families to foreign students. They recorded their voices within the PPT file. The second task was to speak with foreigners [American students]. Students had to prepare a script in advance and lead their conversation. The third one was to explain the Chinese Moon Festival to foreigners. For example, if today we talk about Halloween, we will see how kids in other countries celebrate this festival. Also, students may learn about foreign kids' happiest things, favourite parties and so on.

Oh, to your question, I think it is American English, not British English. Students learn American English in Taiwan.

However, in our school, we often have foreign teachers from different countries. Once we had an Australian teacher who spoke with a heavy British accent. Personally I was not used to his accent, but surprisingly, my students were quite happy with him. For another example, sometimes when I interviewed foreign teachers and had applicants who spoke British English, I tended to hesitate. Nevertheless, I still hired one or two [of those who spoke British English] with good abilities. Initially, I thought students might not be able to get used to those British/Australian teachers. However, students were quite adaptable. They were more accustomed than me.

(Q: I am sorry, but I am not sure I catch what you mean by hiring foreign teachers. When did you hire foreign teachers?)

Oh, we hire foreign teachers to teach in summer sessions. Normally they teach four hours in the morning in summer. They should design teaching materials on their own. When I interview foreign teachers, I always ask them how they are going to design their lesson and teaching materials. We need to know how much he/she will focus on the four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. I find that every teacher has different teaching methods and focus. Generally speaking, the ratio between speaking/listening and reading/writing ranges from about 6:4 to 7:3.

(Q: Are these official or compulsory lessons?)

No, these are not on the official curriculum. Students pay for summer sessions. Since we have been running summer sessions (during summer vacations) regularly for years, it is not a big issue for teachers or students.

7. What are the official objectives you follow as an English teacher?

A: It is to have students study in a happy environment. Students' learning objectives are to learn English happily so that they develop proficiency in four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. I also hope that they can broaden their knowledge and become people of excellent character through their study of English. Because of this, I always set high standards for teaching materials. I want my students to develop their personalities and become honest and amiable people. Most importantly, they learn in a pleasant way. Therefore, as well as emphasising the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, there are other added values in English learning. You see, the older I get, the more I emphasise kids' personal development.

(Q: May I have a glimpse over your supplementary teaching materials?)

Sure, no problem. I hope you can come to visit my class in another school. In that school, I teach English listening with materials designed by myself. If you come to observe my class, you will have a better understanding of my teaching method and the materials I use. (My pleasure!)

8. Could you please describe your teaching method and steps?

A: My teaching method is basically learner-centred. I put students first and allow them to express their ideas. First, I ask them to interpret and translate the content of the textbook by themselves. Next, I ask what the key point of this text is and what they have learned. For example, there is a unit called 'Gift of Love'. When I taught that unit, I kept posing questions to them. I asked them many questions such as: "Who are the main characters in the story?" "What happened to them?" "What were their problems?" "Did they have problems because of poverty?" Some students replied that although the characters were poor in property, they were rich in heart. This was an interesting answer, so I continued asking them the reasons. My students said it was because the main characters loved each other and that was important. I kept asking them: "Is love the most important thing?" They thought about the answer for a while and then told me that 'life' was even more important than love because if there is no life, there won't be love. Finally, they concluded that health was the most important thing because health is the key to a valuable life. These were all the answers from my students. Once they had realized the importance of health, and I asked them how they could stay healthy, the answer was in their minds already. Sometimes, I asked them other questions such as "Which is more important, beauty or knowledge?" I believe they have the ability to ponder these questions. They will learn how to protect themselves by thinking about these questions. OK, this is the way I teach. In brief, I encourage my students to find the answer on their own. I put them at the centre of teaching and learning.

(Q: Thanks for your sharing. I agree with you that teenagers should be encouraged to think positively and independently. Could you please give me

more examples on what you said about 'learner-centred' in your teaching method?)

Right, I will give you another example. For instance, I like to give students 'objective-oriented' activities.

(Q: Excuse me but what does that mean?)

For example, there is no moon festival overseas and we don't have Halloween here. Now if we want to interact with foreigners, how do we introduce our unique culture to them? So, I ask students to consider some cultural examples like the Moon Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and Taekwondo. Later they can explain these things to foreigners. There is another example. Once when we discussed American culture and other different cultures in the world, I asked my students to choose their favourite foreign country, not including the USA because it is mentioned in the textbook already. Next, they were divided into several groups and managed to find their interviewees from that country. At the end, they summarized their interviews into a report.

(Q: When and how did students conduct this kind of interview?)

They set the times and places for their interviews on their own. Also, they had to prepare questions in advance. After this, they showed me their plans and I reported to school to ask for leave of absence for them. Our school enjoys a good location as you can see. In this area, you can meet a lot of foreigners who work nearby. Our campus is also very beautiful. Some of them invited their interviewees to visit our school, and some held the interviews at McDonalds. In other words, I give my students after-class activities as well as in-class teaching.

(Q: How about students' reactions?)

Ha-ha, sometimes after conducting an activity, my students would come to see me, looking at me with admiration. They seemed to adore me and kept asking me when they could have a similar activity again.

When I give students activities, I often set up competition among them as well. I give prizes to those who do their best. Perhaps that's why my students all look forward to the next activity. I usually keep them guessing, "Let's see your performance. If you learn well, I will design another activity for you."

(Q: Have students ever mentioned any difficulty or problem when they carry out this sort of assignment?)

Hmm... I think they all quite enjoy it. Perhaps I am lucky because most of my students study hard and have high learning ability. For example, this morning we had a university professor come to offer my students training on how to use a new platform. They were required to complete six different tasks within one session. I don't think it's easy, but the professor told me that the students all did well and reacted very quickly.

(Q: Did you mention anything about grammar teaching?)

Normally after we finish the reading text, I ask students how many grammatical points they can find in the text. When they answer my question, I write what they say on the blackboard. It only takes around 20 minutes. Once we used PDA for a semester. Students had a grammatical quiz with their own PDA and the results passed to me as soon as they finished. It only took 5 minutes to test and I explained their mistakes. (Q: PDA? Did every student possess a PDA?) Oh, yes. That was an experimental project. A university worked with us, so they supplied the equipment to our students. But after that semester, we didn't continue, although this semester we worked with a computer manufacturer. They supplied us with E-Books. When you come to observe my class, you will see the E-Book used by the students.

(Q: Is this common in other high schools?)

I guess I am somewhat different from others. Many teachers are creative anyway, and they all have their own teaching style. It is important to see what the outcome is. I used to experiment a lot in teaching. Whomever I taught in the past, they all did well in the Joint Entrance Examination of Universities, at least ten points higher than the average. We are not in the so-called elite school, so I am very content with such a result.

(Q: Do you suggest that your teaching method is effective for students?)

Yes, absolutely. I think my student-centred teaching method is helpful to students. It is better and more interesting than if I were to sweat over a lecture.

(Q: You are good at computer assisted teaching, aren't you? Why would you be interested in CAI at the beginning?)

When I began teaching in the in S.C. senior high school [pseudonym], the school was involved in the field of CAI research. However, not many people were interested in the new subject at that time. Perhaps because I was newly recruited, when everyone was silent in a meeting on CAI, the chair noticed me. After that, I took part in CAI research for the school. The school gave me many opportunities to attend related seminars in the first year. Later I also presented my research findings in the first CAI symposium and received a lot of positive responses. After that, I became more involved and interested in computer or technology assisted language teaching. I participated in almost every relevant seminar or conference in Taiwan. You can say that I learn by teaching and I teach while learning. I am truly happy when I learn a lot of things and keep updating my teaching method. The advancement of computer and information technology certainly does a lot to facilitate students' study.

(Q: How would you summarise the features of your teaching at the present time?)

Right, it would be E-learning.

9. When I mention TEFL and TEIL, what kind of content would you refer to?
A: I think I have been doing both and I try to integrate them into my teaching.
In R.C. senior high school [pseudonym], I focus more on TEIL.

(Q: Why did you say 'more' on it?)

I teach English listening comprehension in R. C. senior high school and we don't use any textbook there. Therefore, it is simple for me and I teach whatever I like.

(Q: Could you please name an example for me?)

For example, sometimes we visit a Korean website and listen to its content in English. We do the listening dictation right after listening.

(Q: Do you mean the website tells a Korean story in English, for example?)

Oh, no. It is a website produced by Koreans with various language options, like English, Japanese, French, German, Chinese etc.

Normally I like to play songs or short stories to students. After their listening dictation, the score will come out immediately. You will see this if you come to visit us. I always choose excellent stories and share them with my students.

III. Contents of Cultural Teaching

10. How do you define culture?

A: To define the word 'culture'? Hmm... For example, I designed an activity called 'Different Culture'. Many students came to ask me what culture means, though they have learned this vocabulary before. I asked them in return what country they would like to report on. For example, if they said, "We would like to introduce Japan and Japanese culture," all right, there are many references about Japan that can be found or downloaded from the Internet. Then, I asked them, "Talking about Japanese culture, if your group members would like to present Japanese clothes, arts, sports or cuisine, what would you think of? For example, what would you say about Japanese clothes?" You tell me, what Japanese clothes would you think of? [She looked at me and expected the answer.] (A: Kimono?) Right, that's correct. How about sport? [She looked at me again.] (A: baseball?) Aha, well...you might say Sumo, which is unique in this world, isn't it? When mentioning cuisine, one can talk about Sushi and Sashimi. There are also issues like climate and geography.

One picks a topic and the presentation can cover many things about a country's culture. Now let's go back to the question on defining culture. I think it simply includes many things such as customs, values and attitudes.

(Q: Can you give another example?)

Didn't I just mention my personal experience in Germany? I was greatly shocked then, really. I don't know if university students in Taiwan do the same as my friend's daughter? Do they? [She looked at me and expected an answer.]

(Q: Ha-ha, I really have no idea. Some students may write something about love affairs in their journals, but not ...)

No issue like sex, right? (A: No, they do not mention that in school I think. It would be hard for me to talk about that with students I guess.) Sure, I also feel that it's difficult to bring up issues like that with my students. If my students came to me to talk about their personal issues in love or sex, it would be very difficult for me to discuss with them. Fortunately, I am lucky. So far I have only had one student who had some trouble in her love life. That's a special case; after all, I have taught so many students.

11. How do you think language and culture relate to each other?

A: I think language and culture are related. For example, Americans express their ideas more subtly, but we do it more directly. The French give intimate greetings while meeting each other, but we do little. When I lived in the United States, I noticed that a lot of people say hello to you no matter where you are. In comparison, we Chinese seem more indifferent, don't we? I think this is cultural difference. There are many expressions of greeting in their language. The phrases and attitudes they use are also different from ours. Oh, one more thing, somehow I feel that there is cultural difference between the British and the Americans. There are also cultural differences between the two countries.

By the way, don't you feel that Americans like to say 'excuse me' a lot? Sometimes, things like sneezing or hiccupping which are not a big deal to us are treated seriously by them. In Taiwan, we don't need to say 'sorry' or 'excuse me' to the person next to us if we sneeze, do we? But in America, sneezing and hiccupping are such serious and impolite things!

12. Do you agree that teaching cultural content will help students learn or use the English language better? Please give reasons for your answer.

A: I feel that the more you understand other people's culture, the more interest you will have in their language. Therefore, I think they are related. The person will want to learn more about that language. It's like the activity I designed for my class. In the activity, students get to know foreign friends. Afterwards, they want to learn even more. Every time, many of them came to me and told me that they would like to have another chance because they would do better next time. That's the incentive and motivation. The more they know about American culture, the more they like it and wish to learn English more. This can broaden their vision and knowledge too, so I think it is a great thing.

13. Have you ever tried to provide or teach cultural content to your students? What were your intentions and approaches? (This question has been answered earlier.)

14. Some people say that our students may communicate more with Asians than with English native speakers in future. Are you aware of this? If so, what effect could this have on your teaching English?

A: I don't really feel in this way. Perhaps it is because I have a lot of foreign friends. I don't really have much contact with the Japanese or people from Hong Kong. I guess it is because of my job. Most people I know speak

English. Besides, I don't think my students have more contact with Asians. Some students may know people from Singapore, Malaysia and so on, but I believe their experience is related to their family background.

There is another thing. For example, when I taught 'Japanese class', I encouraged the students in that class to correspond with Japanese pen pals; 'German class' with German pen pals; 'French class' with French pen pals. Our school has Japanese, German and French classes.

(Q: What are these classes? Are these foreign language courses compulsory?)

Yes, they are compulsory and tested in regular examinations. If they fail the test, they will be downgraded.

(Q: Are these courses offered under a particular budget?)

Not really. In our curriculum, there is the second foreign language.

15. What do you think about teaching multi-cultural content (for example, teaching the cultures of our neighbours, non-English speaking countries)?

A: Oh, when I ask students to pick their favourite countries and cultures, they have various choices such as France, Germany, Czech Republic and so on. Students' choices may have something to do with our exchange student program. Once we had four French students here, students had a lot of communication with them.

(Q: It seems to me that your school is very international. What's the driving force of your school to provide such an international environment?)

Perhaps it is because we often hire foreign teachers. They have friends and the English teachers in our school also have foreign friends.

(Q: How do you get to know so many friends?)

It is lucky that we live in a metropolitan city like Taipei where there are a lot of foreigners! For example, we hire foreign teachers for summer sessions. I will try to get to know them if I feel I like them. If any one of them is particularly good, even though the contract ceases after summer, I ask him or her to teach my class personally. For example, once I asked one of them to teach writing in my class. I observed how the foreign teacher taught composition. You know, their teaching method was quite different from a Chinese teacher's. I also learned a lot from them.

Anyway, I have a group of foreign friends and get along with them very well. For example, in the Lantern Festival, I would show my foreign friends around or we would celebrate other Chinese festivals together. Sometimes, I take them to spring resorts. For another example, when foreign teachers visit us, like those from our distance learning partner schools, I give them a warm reception. In this way, I have one more new friend.

IV. Teaching Materials

16. How would you describe the cultural content of the current textbook you are using? What do you think about it? How many different versions of textbook are on the market now?

A: Currently, the best English textbook is Far East, followed by Shan-Ming. Long-Ton and Nan-I are another two, but they are far behind Far East in terms of quality and content. Most senior high schools use Far East. Its market share has always been around 80%. Hmm... it may drop slightly this year as some more schools are trying Shan-Ming this year. (Q: Do you also use Far East at the other senior high school where you teach listening comprehension?) That school used to use Far East for all three years. But from this year, they are using the Far East version for first-year students, Shan-Ming for the second and third grades. But in our school, we use the Far East version throughout all three years.

(Q: Why has Shan-Ming become more popular recently?)

Oh, it is because the publisher made extra effort in providing teaching resources. They invited a teacher from S.C. senior high school [pseudonym] to edit many MS PPT slides for each unit of their textbook. They promoted their textbook strongly with new supplementary materials and convinced teachers that they wouldn't need to prepare their lessons anymore. They stressed that their teaching resources could help teachers a lot. Some of my friends in other schools told me that they quite liked the idea, so they changed to Shan-Ming. However, later when I asked them whether they used those power point materials in class or not, ha-ha, guess what, they told me those slides were not as helpful as they had expected at all.

Well... in my opinion, every version has its strengths. I have compared two versions. The content of Shan-Ming has improved a lot. However, it is true that Far East provides better and more activities. I believe that Far East enjoys its overwhelming success due to its design of course content and sound teaching instructions given to teachers. Shan-Ming is catching up with them mainly because they send teachers a lot of supplementary materials, though their content is not bad, either.

I think there are some criteria for considering a textbook. The most important thing is to see if the content is suitable for students' language level. Second, is the course content tedious? If it is, we won't choose it. Third, hmm... it should be the publisher's ... hmm... package. For example, do they provide good supplementary materials like good quality cassettes? But personally, I still think the content is the most important thing. It should be easy to instruct. For example, if students don't like the content, they will fall asleep easily. Whether or not the content is appealing is really important.

17. There are some lessons in the book about Chinese traditions or resorts in Taiwan. What do you think the compilers' intention is?

A: They definitely did it consciously. They selected those that could represent Taiwanese characteristics. For example, they pick Jo-Fen which is quite representative. They also include Stonehenge to represent Britain in one unit. You have been there; I guess you agree that it can represent the country.

When I taught these units, I often asked students to extend the course content. I asked where their favourite places or countries are. I also asked them the reasons, and how they would like to introduce these spots.

The editors need to collect a lot of information about different cultures and regions. Just recently I heard that some of them said they might introduce the island La-Yu because people in Taiwan island know little about it. They will find some unique places to attract young people's attention. You know, because of the unit on Jo-Fen, almost every school asks their students to visit it. They somehow advertise for Jo-Fen, ha-ha. I think Ying-Go is also a very good spot. Actually I don't really think they pick any particular tourist spot on purpose. They must have a lot of information to choose from. I guess they just select one which is easier to develop teaching material for and then focus on it. However, when I teach and give my students tasks, I won't fix on any particular place. [They choose where they would like to explore and report on.]

(Q: Are all tasks or activities done in English?)

Certainly, this is an English course. They audio or video record their report in English in those activities.

18. Do you use any supplementary materials? Why do you choose them? What sort of cultural content do they provide? How do you use them?

A: I often use the Internet.

(Q: Is the content from the Internet culture-related?) Sure, you will see some examples when you visit our school.

19. How do your students respond to these extra materials?

A: I think they like it very much. They often ask me where I find such great stuff. Normally I reply, "I can show you where it is from if you like it." (Q: Does it take you a lot of time?) Well, I am a person who enjoys reading, using my eyes and ears.

20. Could you please give your opinions on the situation (reality, possibilities or difficulties) of teaching cultural content in practice?

A: I feel that students all like culture-related content. After all, human beings have curiosity. Most students are attracted to different cultures and lives. I encourage them to collect information to interview and videotape. Now they have E-Books. They can do recording directly.

(Q: Finally, do you have any other comments?)

Ha-ha... I will say... I feel myself very lucky. There is plenty of information in Taipei and abundant useful hardware and software for teaching. I love to see students every day. This makes me really happy.

-Thank You-

-End-

Appendix 9

Interview with the Teacher (3) -2 [Informal Conversation Interview after Class Observation] Ms. Lin / 35 Minutes

1. You often conduct many interesting activities and use computer technology to assist your teaching. What is the driving force behind this?

A: As I told you before, I believe the more I do, the more I will learn. I have been working in the junior high and senior high schools for many years. In the very beginning, most of my colleagues were reluctant to learn how to use computers. As you know, we had a very heavy workload. Therefore, in one meeting, I was assigned to participate in a conference on ICT. From then on, I devoted myself to this field. I have been learning all my life. The more I learn, the more I can give my students.

Besides, I know my weakness. My English doesn't sound as good as yours. It's hard for us at my age to speak like a native speaker. However, I don't think this is a problem because there are just too many resources on the Internet. Students are exposed to various kinds of media every day. They can learn how to speak English properly through multimedia. If they are interested in English and know how to use the resources around them, I believe they will learn English well. In my class, I want my students to learn happily. With the help of ICT, I believe they will be able to learn English well.

2. Many of your activities seem very much culture-related. Why and how are you interested in such a lesson plan?

A: I like travel myself. Every year I travel either by myself or with a few friends. I also have many international friends. Making new friends is really a wonderful thing. Like now I am getting to know you. Isn't this so nice? I think knowing about cultural background is important when we get along with foreign friends. Last time I told you about what happened between my German friend and me. I was shocked by many of his ideas. I think many misunderstandings between us were caused by the different cultures behind us. Did I tell you this? After that trip, we almost lost contact. Isn't it a pity?

By the way, some of my friends are teachers, too. The American teachers I work with are all my friends. Once you know each other, cooperation becomes easy.

3. It seems to me that your students have much more time than others to conduct a lot of activities. How is it done?

A: No, no, they don't have time. Nowadays students are all very busy. But I am lucky because in our school my classes and students are interested in English. Sometimes they negotiate with the teachers of other subjects and borrow their class hours. Or they stay later in school for the activity.

4. Will there be other activities or new ideas after this semester?

A: Haha... Yes, there is one. In the winter vacation, I am thinking of taking some students to study in the United States. Do you remember you came to observe

the video conference session? We are thinking about having our students study at that school for two or three weeks. This should be fun. Our students will be able to experience American life in person!

(Q: Will there be any sponsorship?)

A: Hmm... We are very lucky because the American school is willing to offer free study opportunities to our students. Any volunteers will need to pay for their flight tickets only. However, to be honest, I am not sure how many students can afford this at the moment. I am very excited about this project.

5. Have you thought about working with students from other countries rather than the USA?

A: Sure. It would be interesting. Aren't you studying in the UK?! Do you think you can arrange some British school to work with us? I can teach you how to use the interactive software. When you return to England, you can find an interested teacher and then we can work with his/her class. This would be great!

(Q: Haha... This sounds interesting. I will try if possible. Do you always arrange this on your own? Does the school provide any official link with other international schools?)

A: Hmm...Normally I work with teachers I know. That's why I like making friends. The more people you know, the more you may find opportunities for cooperation. I am very lucky. The school supports this kind of study exchange and provides good computer facilities. Do you mean do they find a school for us? No, they don't do that. I contact the foreign school by myself.

(It's really talking to you. Thank you very much!)

-End-

Senior High School English - Standard Curriculum

(English Translation)

I. Aims and Objectives

The senior high school English program builds on the junior high school course to extend students' language proficiency in preparation for further study or future occupation.

As well as improving language ability, this course aims to train students to develop correct learning and thinking methods and to cultivate a broad worldview through an understanding of culture.

[I] Overall Objectives

The senior high school English course should achieve the following objectives:

- (I) develop the ability to listen to, speak, read and write correct English and to apply these skills in daily life;
- (II) develop effective learning methods and a positive attitude towards learning as the basis for further independent study;
- (III) encourage students' interest in the language as a means to appreciate or participate in English culture;
- (IV) enhance students' understanding of international affairs, foreign cultures and advancements in technology so that they become familiar with Chinese and foreign cultures and with world trends.

[II] Objectives of the Four Skills

(I) Language Abilities

1. Listening

- (1) Students can understand instructional language and everyday English used by the teacher.
- (2) Students can understand course content delivered in plain English and ask relevant questions.

(3) Students can comprehend simple dialogues, stories or narration relevant to the subject of the main reading text (in English).

(4) Students can comprehend simple English dialogues in everyday life.

(5) Students can comprehend radio and television broadcasts in simple English.

2. Speaking

(1) Students can use English to answer the teacher's questions about daily life.

(2) Students can discuss the content of the reading text in English.

(3) Students can use English to restate the content of the reading text or retell a story in simple English.

(4) Students can use simple English to ask questions and conduct simple conversations.

(5) Students can use simple English to describe daily subjects and objects.

3. Reading

(1) Students can read aloud using natural pronunciation and intonation.

(2) Students can preview the reading text and understand the main idea.

(3) At the end of the lesson, students can fully understand the content and plot of the reading text.

(4) Students can assume meanings of words and sentences through word formation, word in context and grammar structure.

(5) Students are familiar with reading skills and can apply them to reading real texts.

(6) Students know how to use a dictionary or other tools to read extracurricular reading materials with a level of difficulty similar to that of the textbook.

(7). Students can understand and appreciate essays of different styles and themes.

4. Writing

(1) Students can use learned vocabulary and sentence patterns to write correct sentences.

(2) Students can write answers to questions related to the reading text.

(3) Students can write a summary of the reading text.

(4) Students can write a short essay relevant to the reading text.

(5) Students can write a simple letter, story, message, play script and review.

(II) Learning Strategies and Attitudes

1. Students can preview the course content without prompting, and cultivate a habit of independent reading.

2. Students can use various kinds of reading skills to comprehend the main idea.

3. Students can consider and question the content of the reading text and look for relevant information.

4. Students can study strategies and techniques for learning the English language.

5. Students can find their own opportunities to enhance their English communication ability.

(III) Learning Interest

1. Students choose, and are able, to read extracurricular materials written in simple English, for example stories, novels and magazines.

2. Students can appreciate English songs, programs, plays and movies, etc.

3. Students can use English in spontaneous communication.

4. Students are willing to participate in English language related activities.

(IV) Cultural Cultivation and View of the World

1. Students can understand international affairs and absorb modern knowledge.

2. Students can understand and appreciate foreign customs.

3. Students can use English to introduce the customs and culture of their own country.

4. Students can compare and contrast Chinese and foreign cultures and can understand the reasons for the differences between them.

II. Time Allocation

There are five sessions per week for each of the three school years.

III. Framework of the Teaching Material

[I] Principles for Compilation

The senior high English textbook is a synthesized teaching material, covering the development of the four skills. In addition to training in listening, speaking, reading and writing, it emphasizes the application of overall language ability. In order to realise the principles of advancement, accumulation and repetition, the course should advance step by step and link to junior high English. The teaching materials should be divided into six books for the three school years. The compilation should be based on communicative language teaching methodology, featuring lively, active and practical content. In the first year, the course should synthesize the four skills, while in the second and third years reading comprehension abilities should be emphasized.

Decisions regarding the number of units, the length and content of reading text, vocabulary, grammar, activities and exercises must comply with the following principles:

(I) Number of Units

As a general rule, each book should comprise ten to twelve units. In practice, a book may contain more units in order to meet the needs of different kinds of students.

(II) Length of Reading Text

Reading texts for the first year should not exceed 600 words, rising to a maximum of 800 words for the second year, and 1,000 words for third year texts.

(III) Vocabulary

For first year students there should be no more than thirty words of new vocabulary in each unit, and these should be drawn from the most frequently used 5,000 words. For second year students there should be no more than 40 new words, drawn from the most frequently used 6,000 words. For third-year students there should be a maximum of 50 new words in each unit, chosen from the most frequently used 7,000 words. (For the most frequently used words please refer to the notes.)

Over the three years of the course, the textbook teaches a total of around 2,800 words of new vocabulary: 700 in the first year, 900 in the second year and 1,200 in the third year.

Pronunciation is based on KK Phonetic Symbols, which are consistent with junior high English.

(IV) Grammar

Grammar teaching materials should be based on practical concepts and structure, avoiding rare or unfamiliar ones. The grammar rules taught should also relate closely to the reading text. In order to bridge grammar taught in junior high and senior high schools, a fundamental grammar book, covering all the sentence patterns and grammar taught in junior high school, should be provided.

(V) Content of Reading Text

The reading texts should be full of variety, with interesting, practical and lively features. The selection of content should take into account students' home background and intellectual development. Consideration should be given to ways of enlightening the meaning of life, and to cultivating a spirit of democracy and positive attitudes towards the pursuit of science and knowledge.

(VI) Activities

Activities can include exercises on pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar, as well as Q & A, listening, speaking and writing exercises, games, singing and role play.

(VII) Exercises

Exercises should guide students to review the reading text, vocabulary, phrases and sentence patterns. The exercise can stand alone or be integrated.

[III] Methods for Compilation

The contents page should list the theme of each unit, grammar structure and communicative functions.

Each unit should contain a background picture, reading text, vocabulary, phrases, activities and exercises as follows:

(I) Background Picture

Before the reading text, there should be one-page illustration which points out the subject of the text. The picture should be a lively colourful photo or a painting.

(II) Reading Text

The selection of reading texts should be full of variety. Texts can be warm prose, humorous short essays, famous literary works, introductions to domestic and foreign cultures, informative texts about technology, the environment and ecological protection, or inspiring articles. Themes can include sports, entertainment, social etiquette, travelling, dining, living, dressing, transportation and so on. They can be in the form of, for example, short stories, letters, manuals, poems, short plays, news stories or advertisements.

The first year:

Each reading text should be divided into two parts. The first part should be mainly warm and humorous prose or a short essay. The second part is a dialogue script with a theme that is relevant to the main text and/or to everyday life, for example greeting, introducing, thanking, apologizing, congratulating, inviting, asking for directions, travelling, shopping, ordering food or speaking on the telephone.

The second and third years:

The reading texts should be informative, interesting and practical. Literary work and knowledge of new technology can also be included. Some of the texts should specify the theme, be structurally complete and clearly organized, so that reading and writing skills can be introduced. In order to allow students to explore some topics or themes in depth, one unit can span two or three lessons.

(III) Vocabulary and Phrases

1. Among the vocabulary taught, the most frequently used words should be categorized as 'vocabulary for production', and less frequently used words as 'vocabulary for recognition'.
2. Vocabulary for production should be listed first, and should be specified with phonetic symbols, definitions in English and Chinese and an example sentence. Vocabulary for recognition only needs phonetic symbols and English and Chinese definitions.
3. The explanation of vocabulary should be based on the meaning used in the reading text. For the first year, it is not necessary to list extended meanings, but in the second and third years, extended meanings can be listed.
4. Phrases and idioms must be accompanied by Chinese and English definitions and by practical example sentences.
5. English definitions of vocabulary, phrases and idioms should avoid using new words. Example sentences should be natural and meaningful and avoid difficult or rare words.
6. Vocabulary for production, phrases and idioms should be repeated in the following reading text or exercises, so that students can review them constantly.
7. The new vocabulary in the reading text should be printed in bold.

(IV) Activities

Activities can include training in the four skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. They should be relevant to the theme, form and grammar of the reading text to make each unit complete and sound.

Types of activities can include:

1. Reading Practice

(1) Reading text related activity

a. Pre-reading Q & A

Based on the background picture before the reading text, questions engage students' interest and help them to catch the main idea.

b. Post-reading Q & A

Questions here can be divided into different levels – questions for comprehension, for contemplation, and for argumentation - from easy to difficult, from simple to complicated.

(2) Development of reading skills and competence

- a. From the second year, introduce reading skills systematically, for example, understanding words in context, skimming, scanning, looking for the topic sentence and getting to know the main idea of the text.
- b. Broaden students' exposure to the language by selecting authentic materials relevant to the reading text, for example advertisements, letters, newspapers, magazines, manuals, short essays.

2. Grammar Practice

(1) The sentence patterns taught should be selected from the reading text. Important sentence patterns should appear evenly throughout the six books. Repetition should be avoided. Where a sentence pattern is repeated, the difficulty level should be different.

(2) Grammar exercises can be oral or written and should fit into a meaningful context.

(3) Exercises should be lively and avoid difficult and rare words.

(4) Exercises should include three levels:

- a. mechanical practice: e.g. replacing and transforming;
- b. meaningful practice: e.g. general Q & A; comprehension Q & A;
- c. communicative practice: e.g. authentic Q & A; problem and solution, role play.

3. Vocabulary Practice

(1) Introduce synonyms and provide exercises for students to learn the usage of these words.

(2) Introduce vocabulary relevant to the reading text and provide appropriate exercises.

(3) Introduce collocation and provide example sentences and exercises.

(4) Introduce phonics and train students to guess pronunciation; and strengthen students' understanding and application of the principles of spelling.

(5) Enhance students' vocabulary ability by introducing frequently used vocabulary structure, including prefix and suffix.

4. Pronunciation Practice

- (1) Practise vowels and consonants, especially the phonemes that are difficult or confusing for junior high students.
- (2) Practise syllabus, rhythms, contractions and intonation.

5. Listening Practice

Listening exercises can range from listening to and recognizing phonemes, to listening comprehension. The content can include a single sentence, conversation, short essay, broadcast or weather report; the theme should match the topic of the reading text. Exercises can take many forms, including:

- (1) Listening comprehension– true or false questions, multiple choice, picture matching and responses to actions;
- (2) Dictation A – filling out blanks, oral Q & A, writing answers after listening;
- (3) Dictation B – listening and writing sentences, short essay or cloze.

6. Speaking Activities

Design simple and practical speaking activities that are relevant to the reading text, grammar, listening practice and communicative functions. Activities can include the following types:

- (1) Sentence patterns practice– use speaking to practise sentence patterns relevant to the reading text;
- (2) Simple and short question and answer A – design short Q & A practice according to different contexts and communicative functions;
- (3) Simple and short question and answer B - ask students to answer questions after looking at the picture;
- (4) Completing dialogues – ask students to work in groups to complete the dialogue;
- (5) Conversation in context – provide contexts and relevant vocabulary for students to create their own dialogues;
- (6) Telling a story based on pictures - provide one or a series of pictures and relevant vocabulary for students to create a story.

7. Writing Practice

Design writing exercises of various types and levels to match the sentence patterns, content and topic of the reading text.

- (1) Sentence practice – select appropriate vocabulary, phrases and sentence patterns for students to learn how to make, complete, revise, combine, link and translate sentences.

- (2) Question and answer – with answers ranging from a single sentence to an organized paragraph according to the difficulty level of the questions.
- (3) Summary writing – ask students to summarize the reading text.
- (4) Adaptation exercise – adapt the reading text to a dialogue or play script, or adapt the poem or dialogue to a short essay.
- (5) Letter writing – introduce the format of English letters and ask students to practise writing a letter
- (6) Introduce students to writing – for example, write a topic sentence, a paragraph, a composition upon a text, or a story.

8. Other Activities

Other activities include games, singing or relevant multimedia activities. The content should be related to the reading text.

(V) Exercises

Exercises for each unit should be separated from the textbook and edited into an independent workbook. The content should be based on a review of the reading text, words, phrases and sentence patterns. For each unit, exercises should include practising how to write a single sentence and synthesize several sentences. Exercises should be varied, meaningful and at different difficulty levels to meet students' needs.

[III] Teaching Materials

(I) Fundamental Materials

- 1. Textbook: One coursebook for each semester of three senior high school years, six books in total
- 2. Workbook: One workbook for each coursebook
- 3. Audio tapes: Audio materials with clear pronunciation and at a natural pace
- 4. Fundamental grammar: One book for first-year students, summarizing the grammar rules taught in junior high school
- 5. Fundamental vocabulary: For first-year students, a list of vocabulary in alphabetical order with definition, example sentences and sources
- 6. Extracurricular reading materials: One book for each semester. The texts should be lively and interesting, but less difficult than the reading text in order to cultivate students' independent reading. Every unit should include definitions of new words, with comprehension questions. The length of the texts should be given so that students can evaluate their own reading pace.

7. Teacher's Book: One for each coursebook

- (1) Each book should note the goal and implementation methods provided by the Standard Curriculum for the teacher's reference.
- (2) For each unit, teaching points and procedure include:
 - a. Teaching objectives
 - b. Hints for teaching methodology, coursebook content, teaching activities and how to use multimedia
 - c. Definition of reading text, dialogue, vocabulary, and grammar structure
 - d. Allocation of teaching time and process
 - e. Answer keys to activities and exercises: As many answers as possible should be listed. Where there are no standard answers, references or recommended answers should be offered.
 - f. Where words are not included in the coursebook, they should be listed in the Teacher's Book for reference, but should not be included in the examination.
 - g. Background information to the reading text and culture: This includes details of festivals, people, places and sources.
- (3) The Teacher's Book should provide references of teaching sources.

(II) Additional Materials

1. Guidelines and test questions for assessment: These include principles, techniques for assessment, introduction to good test questions and examples for each unit.
2. Video tapes: For students' study
3. Teaching methodology and demonstration video tape for teachers' reference
4. Audio recording and video tapes relevant to the reading text: for example, lectures by famous people, poetry readings, or video tapes on culture
5. Computer assisted teaching software.

IV. Implementation Methods

[I] Principles of Teaching

- (I) Cover training in the four skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. As well as teaching each skill individually, the emphasis should be on synthesized training of all four.
- (II) Teaching activities should centre on students' practice assisted by teachers' instruction. Every kind of practice or activity can proceed individually or in groups.
- (III) The role of the teacher should be to supervise students' learning, while the student should be a positive learner. The teacher should lead students to participate in all kinds of teaching and learning activities spontaneously.
- (IV) The teacher should use English as much as possible in the classroom to increase opportunities for students to practise and use English.
- (V) The point of teaching should lie in leading students to actively use learned vocabulary, phrases and grammar.
- (VI) The teacher should use all kinds of multimedia in order to increase students' learning interest and achievement.
- (VII) The test should cooperate with the teaching objectives and the content of the teaching materials to assess students' real ability to use English.

[II] Teaching Methodology

(I) Teaching Reading

1. Advise students to preview the new material and increase the proportion of self-study.
2. Before explaining the reading text, the teacher can use the picture to introduce the main idea of the text, thus helping students to understand the course content.
3. While explaining the reading text, try to use English as much as possible and avoid translating sentence by sentence.
4. While explaining the reading text, emphasize the organization and the logical relationship between each sentence and each paragraph, avoiding unnecessary or trivial explanation.
5. Encourage students to participate in discussion on the content of the reading text.
6. The method and content of Q & A can be adjusted according to students' proficiency.
7. Encourage students to summarize the main idea of the reading text in plain English.

8. Encourage students to read the text aloud and familiarize themselves with pronunciation. Lead students to learn how to express meaning through different intonation.
9. Train students to use reading skills such as guessing meaning according to context, skimming, and scanning to find the topic sentence and understand the main idea of the text.
10. Provide relevant and interesting extracurricular reading materials to encourage students to read independently using dictionaries. Students can also provide their own choice of articles to share with their classmates.

(II) Vocabulary Teaching

1. The teacher should distinguish between vocabulary for recognition and vocabulary for production. Students only need to know the pronunciation and meaning of the former, but should be familiar with the usage, spelling and application of the latter.
2. Vocabulary teaching should go with the context: words should appear naturally in the sentences, dialogues and short essays so that students understand the meaning and usage.
3. While explaining the vocabulary, teaching should incorporate pictures, actions and examples, avoiding the use of direct Chinese translation.
4. Teaching of phrases should focus on overall meaning and usage. It is not necessary to introduce the meaning and usage of each single word in the phrase.
5. Teaching vocabulary and phrases should allow students to use them in the context of real language. For example, they can review and repeat them through questions and answers, reading, conversation, telling a story, making sentences, writing or games.
6. Train and strengthen students' ability to use spelling principles, pronunciation and memory.
7. Guide students to note prefixes and suffixes and explain these from the vocabulary in the reading text.
8. Use sentence construction exercises to enhance students' ability to use vocabulary for production. In addition, encourage students to read extracurricular materials in order to increase vocabulary for recognition.
9. Guide students to note and distinguish word forms; help them to practise verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs.
10. Help students learn collocation, combination and application of relevant vocabulary.

(III) Teaching Grammar

1. Grammar teaching should emphasize students' ability to apply grammar structure and sentence patterns.
2. Grammar instruction should be clear and systematic. Use sentences, paragraphs and dialogues to practise grammar in order to learn how to express meanings.
3. Grammar teaching should be limited to the usage in the reading text. It is not appropriate to add extra usage.
4. Grammar structure or sentence patterns should be applied repeatedly, so that students can constantly review and learn the usage.
5. Grammar structure should be divided into structure for production and structure for recognition. For the former, teaching should emphasize application, allowing students to practise the grammar rules fully and apply them in the four skills. For the latter, students only need to understand the meaning conveyed in the reading text.

(IV) Teaching Listening and Speaking

1. The teaching of listening and speaking should proceed gradually and should combine the two skills closely.
2. Listening should focus on comprehension; speaking should emphasize expression.
3. Teaching activities should be conducted in English in order to increase opportunities for students to practise listening and speaking.
4. The teacher should avoid too much instruction and should instead design activities and create opportunities for students to participate in actual listening and speaking.
5. Review activities can use more oral questioning and answering, dialogue and play.
6. Train students to improve their listening ability by asking them to imitate the speaker on the audio tape.
7. After practising imitating the model speaker, students can record their own audio tapes as homework. This provides another opportunity to practise correct pronunciation and intonation.
8. As well as the reading text, the teacher can provide additional materials relevant to the topic, such as tongue twisters, songs, jazz chants, news stories, broadcasts or weather reports.

9. Encourage students to access English broadcasts or English teaching TV programs. In the class, the teacher can spend some time explaining or discussing the content of the program in order to increase students' learning interest and confidence.
10. Provide situations and relevant sentence patterns and phrases for students to edit and perform dialogues or short plays.
11. Encourage students to use their vacations to record audio tapes of dialogues, interviews and short plays in English, and play them at the start of term.
12. Encourage students to express themselves bravely and not to give up when experiencing difficulty. They should try to use general vocabulary or simple sentence patterns to express themselves.

(V) Teaching Writing

1. Writing teaching should advance gradually from sentence construction, questions and answers, to paragraphing, summarizing, keeping journals, writing letters and so on.
2. Writing activities should be adjusted according to students' proficiency.
3. When writing a short essay, students can provide relevant vocabulary and phrases and learn to apply them actively.
4. Dictation, Q & A and discussion can be used as warm-up exercises.
5. The teaching of writing can proceed individually or in groups.
6. Compositions can be marked by peers as well as by the teacher.
7. When advising students or marking assignments, the teacher should adopt a positive attitude.
8. Encourage students to produce English cards, posters or class newsletters.

[III] Assessment

- (I) Assessment should match the teaching objectives, teaching materials and activities.
- (II) Assessment should include not only formal examination but also participation in class, homework, learning attitude and progress.
- (III) Methods of assessment should be various, including written and oral tests, listening comprehension, and reports.

- (IV) Assessment should include language elements such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar; and language proficiency such as listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. The emphasis should be on proficiency.
- (V) The priority of testing should be fundamental and practical English, avoiding difficult and rare questions.
- (VI) The statement and options of multiple choice questions should use correct grammar, so that students do not learn incorrect usage from the test.
- (VII) Assessment of each unit should be based on the content of the textbook. It is not appropriate to include additional teaching materials.
- (VIII) The content of test questions should be based on the teaching materials and according to students' level. The test should not be too difficult in case it affects students' confidence.
- (VI) The result of assessment should not only evaluate the learning result, but also diagnose the difficulties experienced by students in order to help them to improve.
- (X) After every test, the teacher should analyze and evaluate the test questions and the results of teaching.
- (XI) The teacher should use a computer to establish a personal database of test questions.

Notes:

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