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**A Thesis Submitted to
The University of Durham
in Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy
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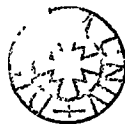
— Cultural Dimensions in College English Education

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ABSTRACT

Higher education in China in the last two decades has been heavily marked by the rapid development in foreign language teaching and this development is particularly evident in College English education, a nation-wide programme for all students at the tertiary level, except for English majors.

The College English programme claims the development of learners' communicative competence as its 'ultimate goal'. However, the development of cultural competence, a component part of the communicative language teaching model, seems to be absent from the policy documents for the programme and discussions on cultural studies teaching appear inadequate in recent publications. On the other hand, practitioners of College English and textbook writers are evidently aware of the significance of cultural studies teaching in foreign language education as the textbooks most widely used in the country are full of cultural information and background knowledge notes for teaching and the limited number of the published discussions on cultural studies show an overall positive attitude of College English teachers towards the teaching of culture to students taking College English.

By referring to recent discussions on the nature of foreign language teaching, it was hypothesised that cultural studies teaching for such a nation-wide programme can be very inadequate, even misleading, unless and until its importance and relevancy to foreign language education are fully recognised by policy makers and educationists and the teaching approach adopted truly attends to essential contextual factors.

To test the hypothesis, major contextual factors such as the national syllabus for the programme, the ideological concerns of foreign language educationists, and the most widely-used textbooks were examined through document studies and criteria-based analysis (Chapters 2-4). This was followed by an empirical research study of three key areas of enquiry, namely perceptions and attitudes about the target culture(s) and the people and sources of the perceptions. The empirical study was intended to find out the effects of the current practice of cultural studies teaching on learners and was conducted in six representative tertiary institutions in three cities in China among students taking different courses of the programme (Chapters 5-6). The analyses and the research data collected from the study offer indicative evidence that the hypothesis is valid.

The analyses and the research data suggest that a modification of the existing policy statement that was established primarily on the basis of the communicative language teaching approach is necessary if cultural studies teaching in the College English programme is expected to be meaningful. A model with Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) as the ultimate goal is proposed to systematise cultural studies teaching and to ensure that such teaching fits into the context of foreign language education in China (Chapter 7).

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

INTRODUCTION

Scene 1: On an autumn day in 1995 in a terraced house in an eastern district of London: "My excitement in studying here (in England) is disappearing quickly. Sometimes I wonder if I am in India or Pakistan. I find it difficult to understand their English. So quick and *non-standard*. I don't know where the British people are. Even when I travel by underground, I cannot find many." These were the remarks made by a newly-arrived Chinese Ph.D. student, translated faithfully from the original to the best of the author's memory. Before going to London, this particular student, like many successful English language learners in China, had not only finished the compulsory four band courses but completed the last two band courses of the College English programme (see Chapter 2 for detail). If his experience in learning English is put in statistical terms, by the time he was in London he had taken English courses for at least three years (four lessons per week) at college, on top of at least six years of English learning experience at secondary level, assuming that he had not attended one of those elite primary schools where English courses are offered.

Scene 2: A former colleague of the author told her tale of woe in a chat in Wuhan, China in 1997: During the first few weeks when she was in the United States studying for her MA, she was once invited by an American friend to a party. On her way to his house, she bought some fresh oranges and apples as a gift to her friend. When she got there she noticed that "all the other people" came with gifts like bottles of wine, flowers or chocolates. "I didn't actually think too much when I bought the

1

fruits. You know, they are good gifts here." she recalled. "But when I got there with the bag of fruits in hand, I really wished there were a deep hole somewhere in the front garden so that I could fall in and disappear. ... From then on, I was very aware of these cultural things wherever I was." By the time when she went to the United States, this colleague had had more than 7 years of College English teaching experience behind her.

Scene 3: At an international conference in Beijing in 1997, a senior College English lecturer presented a paper on how to use the communicative approach to help learners with their grammar. During his presentation, one of the 'erroneous' sentences he listed on the transparency was "She don't know much Japanese." In the Q & A session when a native speaker of English from the audience pointed out that this sentence is correct in the speech of many people in Detroit, U.S.A., the presenter, feeling 'losing face' (disgraced), replied in a huff "I'm teaching standard English, not black or back street English, you know? ..."

All these three genuine instances show how vulnerable speakers of a foreign language could be to frustration or embarrassment in cross-cultural interactions. It should be stated at this point that the presentation of these individual cases is neither intended to make generalisations on whether a foreign language programme is adequately designed and carried out to achieve its communicative goals, nor is it meant to show the language competence of practitioners involved in the College English programme. From a cultural point of view, many people like the postgraduate student in Scene 1, would experience some sort of 'cultural shock', at least in their early days, when they come to live in a new cultural environment. The frustration that he experienced should not, therefore, lead to a negative conclusion of his linguistic ability or his socio-cultural competence. The fruits given as a gift by the colleague in Scene 2 on that occasion might not be so culturally inappropriate as she deemed at that moment. On the contrary, the host might appreciate

something alien as a party present (including, but not necessarily, fruit) from her, a friend from a distant culture. The third scene was apparently a typical instance of cross-cultural conflict. While the sociolinguistic fact argued by the native speaker was most probably intended for scholastic discussion it was interpreted by the senior Chinese scholar as a challenge or a disrespect. The ignorance that the presenter showed in this case of this sociolinguistic fact existing in a variety of the English language does not, of course, suggest that this presenter had been ill-informed or inadequately prepared, as a single instance like this can not justify such generalisation.

On the other hand, the author would point out that the three cases reported above are by no means unique although they cannot be said to be representative of the entire learner and teacher population of College English. It is not a difficult task to make a long list of incidents like these three by reading the published sources that are culture-related or by eliciting similar stories from Chinese scholars or people with cross-cultural experience. The implications that can be drawn from these cases are significant to foreign language practitioners and education researchers. All the three cases reported above may suggest that culture teaching and learning of knowledge of language and society is not something that can be ignored or that is too extravagant to be included in a foreign language teaching programme. Cultural awareness and knowledge of sociolinguistic variations of the target language for example are clearly relevant to whether the teacher teaches the real language and the learner is eventually made capable of tackling cultural problems autonomously and communicating in the target language effectively. In the first case, the postgraduate student's perception about a cosmopolitan city like London implies that there might be a need for the College English programme to incorporate relevant source materials to help make learners aware of the growing multiethnicity and multiculturality in contemporary cosmopolitan cities. The second and the third cases may also suggest that cultural studies

teaching[1] ought to be integrated into foreign language teaching programmes as it clearly benefits both students and teachers for crosscultural communication.

Turning from the three cases to the title of this thesis, the author sees the need to offer some explanation. Many educators in Western countries are familiar with the phrase, 'the hidden curriculum'. In his influential book, *Deschooling Society*, Illich (1972) used the phrase in his examination of the intrinsic nature of schools to refer to the covert process of subtle repression as opposed to the overt curriculum of schools and other formal educational establishments. In another insightful discussion on cultural studies in foreign language education, Byram (1989: 1) also makes use of this phrase to refer to the "part of foreign language teaching which conveys information, attitudes, images and perhaps even prejudice about the people and countries where the particular language is spoken." Both scholars used the phrase apparently to indicate the multidimensional nature of the education process.

The title for this thesis, "The Veiled Syllabus", is intended to convey exactly the same denotation as 'the hidden curriculum' defined by Byram as 'that part of foreign language teaching' is the primary concern of the present study. The deliberate rephrasing, however, attempts to represent two culturally-specific connotations. First, the word 'syllabus' in replacement of 'curriculum' is intended to signify a strong semantic implication specific in the Chinese context. It is a fact that, in the West, there are different views among scholars on what it is that distinguishes a syllabus from a curriculum. Many scholars in language education apparently prefer defining the former in a narrow perspective, particularly when relating the term to the latter. For example, renowned language educationists such as Stern, Widdowson, and Allen (cited in Brumfit, 1984) agree that 'curriculum' is a general term which embraces the syllabus (WHAT) and the

methodology (HOW) of an education programme. Nunan (1988) also takes this view as his point of departure in discussing syllabus designing. In his recent monograph on intercultural communication, Byram (1997) agrees that a syllabus lists things that should be taught whereas a curriculum "involves a proposal for ordering what is to be taught in order to arrive at specific objectives, which may themselves be ordered and integrated into the curriculum." (p. 74) In China, *Dagang*, the assumed 'equivalent' to the English word 'syllabus', seems to go far beyond the scope of 'what' to be taught as defined by these Western scholars. It embraces teaching theory, methodologies, evaluation as well as the principles of selection and grading of contents. As *Dagang* is usually promulgated by an official body, in most cases the Ministry of Education, supported by specialists, the word suggests absolute governing power over all other elements in education. *Daxue Yingyu Jiaoxue Dagang*[2] ('The College English Syllabus' promulgated in 1985), for example, is often figuratively called (c.f. Han, Lu and Dong, 1995) "the dragon head" (to Chinese, the dragon is forever a symbol of absolute power and eternal authority) of the College English programme. Although it was just a revised version from an early version, this syllabus took a team formed by two national bodies of foreign language education a period of three years to complete (see Chapter 2 for detail). It was finally promulgated under the authorisation of the then State Education Commission in 1985. The syllabus contains, first of all, course objectives and contents which are in the form of four inventories detailing all the words, grammatical points, functions and notions, and micro-skills which are to be covered in the stratified 'band courses' of the programme. In addition, it prescribes time arrangements, teaching procedures, testing requirements and stipulates pre-band and post-band courses and extra-curriculum activities. Furthermore, it specifies principles for College English textbook writing, materials selection, teaching methodology for practitioners and classroom activities for students. The syllabus even touches upon the theory behind it, the communicative approach, and briefly addresses the

relationship between accuracy and fluency. Therefore, College English specialists such as Ying (1996) state that the connotation of the Chinese word *Dagang* is not the same as the English word 'syllabus'.

> The syllabus was written with the most up-to-date theories in language education, syllabus designing, materials writing and language teaching methodology. Above all, it was designed with the realistic situation and the characteristics of Chinese learners in mind. (p. 42, author's translation)

The syllabus is widely believed to have brought about fundamental changes to the foreign language programme which in turn have had a strong impact on the entire educational reform of the country (see Chapter 2). The changes brought about by the syllabus have apparently enhanced the semantic implication of the term in language education.

While the power and authority connoted by the word, *Dagang* (syllabus) are doubtlessly perceivable to the Chinese audience, *Kecheng*, the Chinese 'equivalent' for curriculum, does not carry as much semantic implication as that in English. Never does it seem to be interpreted by any Chinese scholar as the combination of 'What' and 'How', as defined by Western scholars, for an educational programme. In normal circumstances, in fact, the word is usually substituted with 'subject' or 'course'. It never seems to have been used to refer to authoritative documents which embrace the syllabus (WHAT) and methodology (HOW) of an education programme. Therefore, for the title of this thesis, 'curriculum' in the phrase is deliberately replaced with 'syllabus'. This replacement attempts to convey the strong semantic implication of this word not only to Chinese readers but also, through rephrasing the well-known phrase, to international readers who are sensitive to culturally-specific connotations.

The second piece of information that the title intends to convey is embodied in the word 'veiled', a synonym for 'hidden'. The former is considered more appropriate in meaning

6

than the latter in the context of College English education for two reasons. First, the word 'veiled' strongly suggests the existence of a real 'face', whatever it looks like, which could be seen through at a close range. Substantial evidence, to be given in later chapters, shows that most College English practitioners, textbook writers, policy makers and even students are aware of the importance of cultural studies for this programme and most, if not all, of them seem to adopt a certain approach or attitude towards culture teaching and learning. As there are only subtle hints indicated in documents (see below) addressing the cultural dimension of this programme, the objectives of culture studies can be described as self-determined and self-regulated so as to suit the needs and interests of individuals or groups of people involved in College English education. A typical example showing this self-regulating approach among textbook writers is given in Dong (1997) when she reports the principles of compiling 'College English' – the most widely-used College English textbook series (see Chapter 4 for detailed analysis) for which she is the general editor. Although there were no explicit guidelines stipulated for incorporating cultural knowledge into language teaching, Dong remarks, her team of textbook editors were all aware of this dimension and searched for language materials for their individual course booklets to help incorporate cultural studies teaching into the programme.

The second consideration for using the word 'veiled' is attributable to the content of the policy document, the College English Syllabus (1985), as mentioned above. There seems to be a thick 'veil' on the 'face' of the cultural dimension, which might be intended to function as a kind of 'protection coating' in times of 'unpredictable weather conditions' (see Chapter 3 for an examination of the ideological dimension in language education). In this 271-page syllabus which is often regarded as "the most comprehensive and detailed syllabus ever designed" (Huang 1997, p. 173) the cultural dimension seems to be totally ignored. The word 'culture' appears only once as an isolated word in the Vocabulary

Inventory that lists words to be taught for the 'foundation-stage courses' (see Chapter 2 for detail) of the College English programme. Notions such as socio-cultural competence, sociolinguistic competence and cultural studies commonly associated with programmes of foreign language teaching are completely absent from the syllabus. The link between culture and language, which has been presupposed universally to a lesser or greater extent for so long, seems to be totally forgotten by syllabus revisers, the majority of whom are themselves EFL professionals and College English textbook writers.

Entire absence of culture from an official document for a foreign language programme might be quite unique, considering the fact that cultural studies has evidently become an indispensable part to most foreign/second language education programmes throughout the world. In whichever way culture is perceived by policy makers, the cultural dimension is addressed in most modern language teaching programmes including those in Islamic countries where policy makers are generally very critical to foreign, particularly Western cultures. In the "United Formula for Goals of Subjects in General Education Stages in the Arab Gulf States" (cited in Byram 1997), for example, the objectives for foreign language teaching include the following two:

- acquire a favourable attitude to the English language;
- acquire a good understanding of English speaking people on the condition that the above will *not* lead to the creation of a hostile or indifferent attitude to the student's Arab/Islamic culture. (p. 23)

On the basis of the agreed objectives to foreign language education, each Gulf State could formulate its own lingua franca aims. In these Islamic states, the socio-political context has a clear influence on the aims of English language programmes and teaching methods (ibid.). None the less, it is clear that, sensitive cultural issues may be, the requirement for cultural studies in foreign language teaching programmes is distinctly stipulated in policy documents.

Is culture entirely forgotten by College English syllabus revisers as indicated above? The answer is a negative 'No' because a 'rough sketch of the face behind the veil' in this syllabus is still discernible at a careful look, though somewhat obscure. There are a few places in this version which suggest or hint the cultural dimension of this programme. In an auxiliary section, the syllabus states that,

> Language is a tool for communication, therefore, the ultimate goal of language teaching is to develop in the students the ability to communicate in the language via written and/or oral channels. It follows from this that, in teaching, the students should not only be given the necessary linguistic knowledge but also trained to use this knowledge, through the application of language skills, in reading extensively and in carrying out other communicative activities. Teaching should thus be directed towards fostering the acquisition of language skills and an understanding of language functions/notions, and towards developing the ability to use these in communication. During the course, the emphasis should gradually shift from language training at sentence structure level towards communicative training at discourse level. (p. 20).

This paragraph puts emphasis on discourse competence as well as linguistic competence, two of the major components of the 'communicative language teaching' model proposed by Canale and Swain[3] (1980). Other components such as sociolinguistic rules of language use and strategic competence suggested in Canale and Swain are not discussed. However, the tone of the paragraph, particularly the topic sentence, suggests the overall significance of developing communicative ability which is usually interpreted as including all these competences. Hence, it could be argued that the cultural dimension is implicitly touched upon in this paragraph that describes the 'ultimate goal'. In fact, this is a commonplace interpretation by influential figures in College English education (see 2.4 for examples). Another phrase in the syllabus indicates the cultural dimension in an even more indirect manner. As one of the "principles for the selection of materials", the syllabus stipulates

that the texts for textbooks should be "interesting and full of new information" (p. 267).

Surprisingly, textbook writers unanimously define 'new information' as socio-cultural

background knowledge (Dong, 1986 and Liu, 1987). This seems to exclude other possible

types of information such as those on science and technology as they are labelled 'purely

scientific and technological'[4]. Apparently, a researcher studying the cultural dimension in

College English education has to explore the programme even further as the 'syllabus' for

cultural studies teaching and learning may be hidden deeper than counterparts elsewhere.

It is an observable fact that in the past two decades or so in China, language teachers and

researchers have shown great enthusiasm in discussing the relationship between culture

and language. In this fervent discussion three academic camps are identifiable. The

newly-emerged 'cultural-linguistics' camp gathers the largest number of scholars with its

largest number of publications (a fairly comprehensive bibliography of their publications

from 1988 to 1993 is available in Chen and Tan (1993)). This camp focuses its research

on the relationship of Chinese language and its various socio-historical and socio-cultural

aspects. The second camp is formed by a large number of foreign language practitioners

particularly English language teachers and translators under the banner of the so-called

'contrastive culturology', a term coined by Yang (1996) to refer to comparative studies of

commonalties and differences between Chinese and foreign languages from a cultural

point of view. Major publications and representatives of this school are provided in Li

(1996). The scholars of the third camp focus their attention on why and how cultural

studies teaching should or could be incorporated in foreign language education. The most

influential works on this issue may include Hu (1982, 1985, 1988, 1992 and 1995), Deng

and Liu (1989), Chen (1992), Zhao (1992) and more recently Zhang and Zhu (1996), Shu

and Zhuan (1996) and Hu and Gao (1997). In addition to a fairly substantial literature on

language and culture in recent years, some scholars directly introduced to Chinese readers

Western theories and methodology on culture teaching by translating published sources such as B. Malinowski's *What is Culture?* (The first Chinese translation was published in 1946 in Shanghai and was reprinted in 1976 and 1987) and Samovar and Porter's (1988) *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (The Chinese version became available in the same year). The discussions on the relationships between culture and language and the thorny issues of cultural studies in foreign language education clearly indicate an overall interest in cultural studies among Chinese linguists and language teachers.

Then, the puzzle is why the cultural dimension in foreign language education seems to have been overlooked in policy documents, such as the College English Syllabus which was primarily written by language educators and linguists. Some might reason, sensibly, that as 'serious' discussions about culture in foreign language education did not start or resume until the early 1980s because of the Cultural Revolution (see Chapter 1 for detail), the syllabus revisers were perhaps not quite ready or aware of the necessity of addressing explicitly the cultural dimension, or perhaps they were not quite sure about how to deal with this dimension because of its sensitivity in a policy document. Whatever the case might be, despite the fervent discussions on cultural studies in recent years, the syllabus has remained unchanged as it was fifteen years ago[5]. Was it because the syllabus revisers happened to be those who object to cultural studies teaching? Or was it due to lack of real interest in teaching culture on the part of practitioners? Or finally is it because the College English programme is too short in terms of teaching hours to include such elements?

From the sources published since the promulgation of the syllabus by syllabus revisers, teachers and materials writers, one cannot find evidence of overt ignorance or lack of interest in culture studies teaching. College English specialists cum policy makers such as Yang (1995) and Lin (1996) state clearly that cultural studies plays a key role in foreign

language learning. Materials writers such as Dong (1992) and Liu (1987) claim that one of their major concerns in compiling their series was to determine how to represent the target culture in a suitable way so as to transmit ample cultural background knowledge to learners. The motivation levels of students of College English, like many other foreign language learners elsewhere in the world, are stratified from highly integrative to 'purely' instrumental. None the less, evidence (see particularly 6.4) shows that even the students with the 'purely' instrumental aim, i.e. to pass 'CET 4'[6], are very interested in learning about the people of the target cultures. The perspectives of cultural studies teaching and learning represented in recent publications indicate that the great majority of College English materials writers, teachers and students hold a very positive attitude towards the teaching and learning about the people and in the culture(s) of the target language.

The answer to the question of whether the College English programme is long enough to include culture teaching does not seem to be a simple and straight-forward one. On the one hand, the College English programme might be one of the most substantial foreign language teaching programmes of similar nature on earth in terms of length and stipulated reading amount according to the syllabus. As will be shown in detail in Chapter 2, the programme lasts in most cases for at least two years for the majority of undergraduate students. An average student, according to the syllabus, attends four lessons per week in the first two years, which amount to 240-280 hours in total. In addition, the syllabus prescribes a ratio of one hour of class teaching to two hours of out-of-class activities. This statistically means that this average student has to spend 720 -840 hours on College English alone during the first two years at college. In actual fact, as Chapters 2 and 3 will show, many students spend longer time at their own will than the stipulated hours learning English. Many of them may opt to take higher band or elective courses (in the case of "High-flyers") or be forced (if they start from pre-band courses or fail repeatedly

in CET 4) to take the courses for the entire four-year stay[7] at college. In terms of materials coverage, as the programme is reading-focused, an average student, according to the syllabus, should read texts intensively and extensively of 159,000 words in total in the first 4 band courses. These figures exclude the texts contained in listening and grammar exercise booklets and in other activities. The time spent by an average student on College English and the large amount of materials covered suggest that neither the length nor the reading amount could possibly be an explanation for excluding cultural studies from this nation-wide programme. On the other hand, 'lack of time to deal with cultural issues' is indeed a rather common response from both practitioners and students when they are asked whether they are interested in cultural studies (See 6.3 for evidence).

Nevertheless, a review of the literature (see 1.2 in particular) reveals that behind the seemingly heated discussions on the language and culture relationship and agreement on the relevancy of cultural studies to foreign language education many College English specialists and policy makers take cultural studies teaching as of secondary importance in foreign language education (Wang, 1999; Lin, 1996; Yang, 1995 and Zhang, 1991). Some of them make such an explicit statement that the teaching of culture is necessary but optional (Lin, 1996). Materials writers such as Dong (1992) demonstrate the same attitude (to be studied in Chapter 4). Most of these specialists and material writers assume that cultural studies teaching is done as long as the teachers know how to handle the content in the textbooks because most College English textbooks contain much cultural information.

By referring to recent discussions on the nature of foreign language teaching, the author of this thesis became aware that this assumption may not be well-grounded as it holds the teachers as the only people responsible for cultural studies teaching, ignoring all the other determining factors for this complex but crucial task. The author hypothesised before the

research study that cultural studies teaching for such a nation-wide programme can be very inadequate or even misleading unless and until its importance in and relevancy to foreign language education are fully recognised by policy makers, language specialists and materials writers and the approach adopted for classroom teaching genuinely attends to the crucial contextual factors. The identification of the contextual factors and the current practice of cultural studies teaching were, therefore, determined as the primary tasks for the present research study.

The identification was done in conjunction with three distinct purposes in mind. They, first of all, aim to fit the theories and methodology used in this research study into both the international and Chinese contexts. The literature review for this study, like many other studies, is intended to look at the most influential and the latest theories and research methodology influencing foreign language education. The focus of the review, however, will be on the viewpoints held by Chinese scholars and their discussions on culture-language relationship as their perspectives address what is called 'the Chinese characteristics', the socio-political and cultural contexts for foreign language education. The rationale of the literature review with such a focus lies first of all in the fact that to do things 'with Chinese characteristics' has been a maxim since mid 1980s for all fields of research or, more precisely, all realms in socialist construction[8]. Clearly, a research study with an aim for practical application ought to attend to this socio-cultural dimension and such an approach to literature review in Chapter 1 is a necessary step to this end. Chapter 2, which depicts the syllabus and the *status quo* of the programme, is also written with a focus on the 'Chinese characteristics' represented in the syllabus and the programme.

The second aim of the following chapters is to scrutinize and interpret foreign language education in relation to the general educational framework in China, with a special focus

on the socio-economic and sociocultural aspects of the College English programme in the last two decades. The rationale for studying the relationship arises from the assumption long and commonly held by policy makers and educators that a foreign language could be a potential pathway of ideological conversion while it is believed to be an essential part of education to lead to foreign expertise needed to strengthen and modernise the country. In foreign language education as a part of the entire education system, therefore, efforts have to be made to prevent a foreign language programme from turning learners into 'white experts' – academics/professionals who are experts in their individual fields of study but show little political consciousness (cf. Chen 1980 and Ross 1993). This presupposition, though a controversial one for over a century in China, has been the most predominant in foreign language education and is still firmly held by policy makers of foreign language education. Furthermore, the study of foreign language education in relation to the general educational framework is justified by the fundamental feature identified by education researchers that foreign language teaching is context-dependent (Byram, 1997)[9]. For any study of language education of any country, if the context were not thoroughly addressed, the significance of theories and methodologies developed at the international level would hardly make much sense to policy makers and educators involved in language education of this country and thus the value of the study is lost in view of application. The analysis of this relationship is done first with a diachronic review of traditional Chinese views on the aims of foreign language learning for gaining an insight into the long-term influence of some deeply-embedded sociocultural factors on ideological orientation in programmes of language teaching. Synchronically, major social aspects influencing the programme, such as the 'open-door' policy and criteria for professional promotion, will be looked into with a special view to relating the programme to learners' practical needs. Chapter 3 is written primarily for this purpose.

This thesis, as many other research studies in foreign language education do, aims, as its overall purpose on the basis of the realisation of the first two aims, to propose a model which effectively addresses the contextual factors identified, both socioculturally specific and theoretically essential for the programme. Besides the ideological dimension which is reflected by many 'Chinese characteristics', the model has to attend to other essential factors that are related significantly to language education and interest researchers of cultural studies in recent years. As the potential factors are numerous, decisions had to be made on what factors are the most relevant to the overall purpose of foreign language education and how they could be researched with respect to time and resources available.

Four other areas of enquiry were chosen for this research study on the basis of both theoretical and practical considerations. The first area is the analysis of cultural representations in foreign language textbooks. Modern textbooks should not only serve linguistic purposes, as those traditionally written, but also function as a good instrument for culture teaching and learning (Risager, 1991). The role played by textbooks in College English education could be even more important than those used for any other programmes for two major reasons. As College English is a nation-wide programme a textbook series could be used by over a million students each year over many years. The sheer number of users makes textbook analysis one of the major tasks for College English researchers. The other reason that makes the task crucial is that a majority of College English teachers rely almost exclusively on the textbooks for culture teaching, though they may not depend entirely on them for the teaching of linguistic skills. This may be due in part to the fact that the great majority of teachers have not had a chance to experience the target culture(s) directly and in part to the generous supply of background information in the teacher's books of the most widely-used textbooks.

The analysis of College English textbooks will be focused on four aspects which are often called the four major principles of materials selection used by textbook writers. The four principles assert that texts chosen be authentic, very interesting, full of new information, and enlightening. While the second and the third principles are stipulated in the College English Syllabus (1985), the last principle is apparently a self-imposed one, judging from published reports of textbook writing by textbook writers (Zhai, 1986; Dong, 1986; and Liu, 1987). This self-imposed principle may well reflect textbook writers' concerns of the ideological dimension and it is used to ensure that 'dross' be filtered out before it causes 'spiritual pollution'. This principle is, thus, examined in connection with the ideological dimension discussed in Chapter 3. The first principle deserves an equally careful discussion as the other three because authenticity widely taken as an important aspect for text selection is believed to be an effective criterion for choosing culturally-sound materials appropriate for cultural studies teaching. Most College English textbook writers such as those cited above claim that they follow this principle faithfully in selecting materials for their textbooks. An analysis of the definition of authenticity given by these writers, as well as the other three principles, is provided in Chapter 4 using three most widely-used textbooks as the target for analysis.

The other three essential areas of enquiry derived from the need to investigate learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the target culture and the sources of their insights and influence on their attitudes. These three areas have been investigated by some researchers in recent years and the findings have established the basis for discussing culture studies teaching and deciding the contents and methodology for foreign language programmes. The investigation carried out in Northern England by a team of educationists was perhaps the most systematic and extensive and this study was comprehensively reported in Byram (1989), Byram, Esarte-Sarris and Taylor (1991), and Byram and Esarte-Sarris (1991). The

aim of their study was to investigate the assumption that foreign language learning which embodies the learning of culture broadens learners' horizons and the consequences of this assumption "in order first to verify this justification for language learning and second to provide a basis for reviewing the methods used." (Byram, Esarte-Sarris and Taylor 1991, p. xii) For educationists of College English, besides lingua franca aims such as to equip learners with the language skills for the purpose of eventually mastering foreign expertise and technology to modernise the country, to widen their horizons is a commonly claimed goal of the programme, even though cultural issues are often cautiously handled in most policy documents. Many materials writers make expanding learners' knowledge range or widening learners' horizons an explicit objective in compiling textbooks (Liu, 1987). In addition to this research question, the author saw the need to investigate how justified the common belief is, that ideological conversion, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, could be prevented if learners are presented with 'appropriate' sociocultural materials as contents of cultural studies in a foreign language programme. An empirical study of learners' perceptions of and attitudes towards the target culture(s) and the people and the sources of their perceptions are necessary as data showing evidence of these concepts are hardly present in the literature. The methodology used to operationalise the three concepts and findings of the empirical study are the primary tasks in Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis.

On the basis of research into all these contextual factors and areas of enquiry, a model is to be proposed for the College English programme. The 'ultimate goal' and objectives of cultural studies teaching and the implementation of them are the focus of the last chapter. In order to define objectives of culture studies teaching for a language programme like College English, the theoretical grounds and the approach to teaching a foreign language are to be studied with the Chinese context in mind. The model and its objectives will be examined against the contextual factors identified and the culture of learning (cf. Cortazzi

and Jin, 1996). In addition, issues of assessment will be dealt with in detail as it is without doubt an important part of practice in language education. As Byram, Morgan et al. (1994: 135) point out, assessment "ensures that teaching and learning are given serious attention and status." This is particularly true in China where examinations have been administered at all levels and have performed the key function to stabilize the education system in an ever-changing society for more than two millenniums (see Chapter 3 for detailed discussion). In order to have a pertinent status, cultural studies learning in a foreign language programme must be testable in statistical terms. None the less, as many education researchers agree, the assessment of cultural studies learning is a thorny issue. The difficulty lies in the term 'culture' itself, as it is never interpreted uniformly within the foreign-language profession. In China, the number of College English educators who have begun to talk about cultural studies in a serious manner is still small considering the large teaching population. However, once realistic objectives of cultural studies for the College English programme could be clearly defined in policy documents, the means of assessing cultural learning would become less an insurmountable difficulty as the literature of cultural learning assessment has been developing in recent years both internationally and in China. Practical models are likely to come into existence. As an initial effort in this direction, Chapter 7 would also propose a tentative model for assessing cultural studies learning in accordance with the suggested objectives of cultural studies teaching.

Notes

1. The term, cultural studies, was coined by Byram (1989) to refer to "any information, knowledge or attitudes about the foreign culture which is evident during foreign language teaching." (p. 3) This reference is valid throughout the thesis.

2. *Daxue Yingyu Jiaoxue Dagang* (The College English Syllabus) is an educational document officially promulgated in 1985. It has been the guiding doctrine for the nation-wide College English programme

which this thesis is going to investigate. The syllabus and the programme will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

3. Canale and Swain's model of 'communicative competence' is often referred to by College English specialists cum policy makers such as Han, Lu, and Dong (1995). Therefore, it is used as a point of departure for the discussion in this thesis. The model will be further reviewed in Chapter 2 when the theories behind the syllabus are presented.

4. Most textbook writers claim that about 10-20% of texts they chose for their reading textbooks are related to popular science and technology. These textbook writers prefer to take these texts as language materials purely for familiarising learners with essential vocabulary and syntax used in scientific writing, even though many scholars such as Valdes (1990) argue that scientific and technological texts can not be considered culture-free language data.

5. Recent publications show that the syllabus is under revision now. Up to this date, it has not been promulgated to the general practitioners. The latest development of the revision will be presented in 2.9 in Chapter 2.

6. As CET 4 is made compulsory in most tertiary institutions some students who fail in the test have to keep doing the courses until they pass it. On the other hand, some 'high-flyers', after passing CET 4, go on to higher-band courses and other optional or 'compulsory' language courses. The learning of English could continue for the entire four years at College.

7. In Chinese universities and colleges, degree programmes usually last four years with exceptions of some academic subjects such as medicine which may last longer. Three-year programmes in most tertiary institutions lead to diplomas.

8. In June 1984, the former paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, met a Japanese delegation and later his talk was straightened out and published under that title "Build socialism with Chinese characteristics" (1985). Even today, "the theory of characteristics', as it is commonly called, is still designated as the guiding principle for foreign language education as well as for all other 'frontiers' of socialist construction.

9. This view is developed essentially from Byram's (1997: 22) argument that foreign language teaching always takes place in a certain context and 'that the nature of the intercultural communicative competence (ICC) required is partly dependent on context". This view of foreign language teaching is fundamental to my discussion of the College English programme in later chapters.

Chapter 1

What's in the Literature?

Introduction

Many authors offering guidelines for literature reviews such as Estrin and Roche (1992) and Newman et al. (1997) think that literature reviews normally contain the following component parts: definition of terminology in question, development of influential theories, methodology used for research and widely-cited findings and the current trends of research. Since it is widely assumed that theories and methodology develop from one stage to another in an accumulative and evolutionary manner, many literature reviews naturally follow a linear or chronological process. This assumption is apparently built on a strong historical basis and is justifiable in general terms. None the less, history also shows that the development of some academic disciplines does not necessarily follow a linear process because the development of some academic studies is often manipulated or even determined by sociocultural factors such as the dynamics of politics. This is precisely the case with many research areas of social science in China, including cultural studies in foreign language education. The pages below, therefore, attempt to conduct the

21

literature review in an approach slightly different from that described above. Instead of following the norm of depicting the most influential theories and methodology developed internationally in a chronological order, as indicated on page 14 in the Introduction to the thesis, the literature review on cultural studies teaching and research is to be first of all focused on the discussions by Chinese scholars and their viewpoints on culture-language relationship. The review will then gradually move to the international scene by introducing the sources most cited by local scholars. The author wishes to term this way of reviewing 'an inside-out approach'.

There are three reasons for using this approach. Firstly, the author takes as of direct relevancy to the present study the visions of local scholars and methodology used to do cultural studies. Byram (1997) and Byram and Fleming (1998) argue that foreign language teaching depends primarily upon a particular educational context. In deciding the content and methodology of cultural studies teaching, for example, the local scholars would take all sociocultural factors as well as the ideological issues into consideration. No matter how effective an educational model or theory developed elsewhere may have proved, the model or theory has to be interpreted and in many cases tailored by local advocates and proponents so as to fit it into the educational objectives of the specific context. Secondly, the literature of cultural studies in language education at the national level, as will be shown below, has mostly been published in the recent two decades. In foreign language education in particularly, cultural studies had been like a forbidden zone for some decades before the 1980s. In reviewing the literature for the last two decades, some scholars such as Hu and Guo (1997, see 1.2.3.4 for detail) attempted to adopt a chronological organisation of the literature but as the defined stages of development in the last two decades appear too short for a research area to involve significantly the chronological presentation does not seem to make much sense from the point of view of

theoretical development. The third rationale of using the 'inside-out' approach to literature review lies in its possibility of facilitating comparison. As the reviews of cultural studies research and teaching models are presented at two distinct levels, the approach allows the reader and the author to see how the studies carried out in China relate to the international scene. This approach is an attempt to contextualise the present study to the greatest extent and to fit theories and methodology developed internationally best into the Chinese contexts.

1.1. An Overview of Chinese Discussions

The literature on cultural studies by Chinese scholars is quite substantial in terms of the number of publications. A general review of the publications shows that the vast majority of publications on this issue are recent products of the past two decades. As these publications deal with divergent issues in cultural studies, it could be very confusing, if not impossible, to review them in global terms. Hence, the review in the following pages will be carried out according to classifiable but intrinsically inter-related areas, the scholars of which the author wishes to call three camps of cultural studies, namely cultural linguists, contrastive culturologists and scholars of cultural studies in language education. It is both interesting and encouraging to note that these areas of cultural studies are now considered 'buzz areas' of linguistics research which is honoured as 'a leading science' in the Chinese academic world (Zhang, 1999).

1.1.1. Cultural Linguistics

The most noticeable development in cultural studies is seen in what is called 'cultural linguistics' in China. Many scholars agree that most publications, in fact, came into

existence in the decade after 1985 particularly when You and Zhou (1986) published their *Dialects and Chinese Culture* in which they called for the establishment of a new discipline 'Cultural linguistics'. The call made a clear stir among the linguists, particularly modern linguists of Chinese language. The following six or seven years saw numerous publications, books and articles, dealing with cultural issues in relation to Chinese language and language education. In retrospect of the history of Chinese linguistics, many scholars such as Shao (1994) and Pan (1993) seem to agree that the period in the late 1980s is extremely important for linguistics research in China. In practical terms, they think the study of culture in relation to language has revitalized Chinese modern linguistics from what is often called 'bewilderment of grammatical studies'.

There are strong reasons behind the comment made by Shao and Pan. During the decades of the 20th century before 1980, 'Chinese modern linguistics' was predominantly influenced by Western linguistic theories, particularly the structuralist school of thought. You (1995), for example, commented that for a long time 'Chinese modern linguistics' focused its attention on grammar. The late nineteenth-century linguist, Ma Jianzhong (1844-1900), for example, identified his famous *Mashi wentong* (Ma's Grammar, considered the first Chinese grammar book in history) with Latin grammar. The renowned modern language scholars, Lu Shuxiang (1942) and Wang Li (1943 and 1944), also referred their works to O. Jesperson and L. Bloomfield. You (1995) continued to state that as Chinese differs so vastly from Western languages in forms and use, the study of 'Chinese modern linguistics' by imitating the Western methods was bound to dwindle. The most active scholar in this 'culture wave'[1] is doubtlessly Shen, Xiaolong who, within five to six years in late 1980s and early 1990s, amazingly had about ten monographs and more than a hundred essays published. He called the 'culture wave' a historical 'U-turn'

(*Fan Bo*) (1988) which fundamentally refuted all theories and methodology of Chinese

modern linguistics before the 1980s. Shen (1995) remarked that for a century the

bewilderment in Chinese modern linguistics lies in the fact that many Chinese linguists

rigidly applied to the study of the Chinese language linguistic philosophies developed in

the West, particularly the structuralist theories. They did not realise that many of these

theories do not fit into the Chinese context because of the unique anthropological features

of the Chinese language.

It is worth noting that the study of culture in relation to language was by no means an

entirely new concern of the 1980s. In China, thoughts on language and culture could be

traced to as early as Confucius's days (cf. Xing 1990 and Shen 1993). Discussions about

the correlationship, however, did not seem systematic until six or seven decades ago

when some Chinese anthropologists, ethnologists, historians and folklorists began to pay

special attention to this issue, especially the study of history and anthropological features

of some local dialects. According to Chen and Tan (1993) scholars such as Luo Xiang

Lin, Yang Chengzhi and Zhang Dongshun published their research findings which had

some theoretical implications even for today's language and culture study. The most

noteworthy contribution was perhaps the book *Yuyan yu wenhua* (Language and Culture)

written by Luo (1950) on the basis of a large-scaled investigation into the dialects spoken

by minority groups in south-western China. In this book, the close relationship between

language and culture is depicted in terms of place names and personal names, measures

and psychology in word formation and word borrowing. In the following three decades

after Luo's works, however, discussions on cultural issues remained practically dormant

owing to successive political campaigns represented by the ten-year Cultural Revolution

(from 1966 to 1976). Linguists as well as scholars of other social science disciplines in

these circumstances took or had to take languages, when they discussed them, as isolated

and static social phenomena and avoided associating them with societies and people that use them. You (1995) metaphorically used a classical phrase "refusing to eat cooked human food" as a comment on a very limited number of publications on Chinese modern linguistics. Most studies on Chinese language during the three decades were in fact done by Western scholars, most of whom were Chinese scholars living in Western countries. Zhao Yuanren and Li Fanggui, for example, were the first to integrate descriptive linguistic theories with traditional phonetics to study Chinese dialects and their history (cf. Shen, 1995). The history of the language and culture discussions in these decades indicates that the development of a discipline in social science depends to a larger extent on socio-political factors than on academic evolution. For an in-depth discussion on the cultural dimensions of an educational programme, clearly, a keen awareness of these background social factors needs to be established.

Today, almost all cultural linguists seem to claim that they deal with theoretical issues of linguistics as they aim for the establishment of 'cultural linguistics'. Naturally, it is in this camp where most serious debates among members take place, as theoretical concepts for a new discipline are inevitably subject to challenge and controversy. The very fact that three books published in the early 1990s bear exactly the same title 'Wenhua yuyanxie' (Cultural linguistics), with a few other similar books[2], may well indicate the seriousness of this debate. Many scholars identify three different schools in this camp (for example, Pan 1993 and Shao 1995) though some others prefer to divide the camp into two or four (cf. Dai 1993). The first school, in Shao's order, calls itself 'the cultural linguistics of social interactions' which focuses its attention on social norms, social change and psychology in relation to language use. This school is represented by Chen (1989) and it essentially adopts sociolinguistic perspectives. The second school collects scholars like You and Zhou (1986) and Xing (1990) and it claims to study the relationship between

culture and language in a reciprocal approach, from language into culture and/or from culture into language. This way of doing linguistics is, thus, also called the 'bi-directional cross-cultural linguistics' and it is said to be most relevant to language education.

The third school with Shen Xiaolong as the dominant figure takes language as the mode in which a nation looks at the world and a semantic system of the values which a nation is attached to. It is, according to Shen (1988), fundamental to identify the language the nation uses with its culture in a comprehensive fashion. This school is thus named as the school of 'cultural linguistics of comprehensive identification'. Although many scholars take Shen's theories and methodology as the right routes to develop Chinese modern linguistics, some critics (cf. Shao 1995) strongly reproach this school as 'floods and wild beasts' for two reasons: completely refuting Chinese modern linguistics by indiscriminately calling its contributions 'copycats' and arrogantly claiming itself as the nuclear discipline which includes many sub-branches such as sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, ethnology and so forth. However different the views may be, Shao (1995) remarks that there exist common perceptions in global terms, to study language in the cultural context and to move away from the traditional structuralist methodology to multidisciplinary and multidimensional perspectives in doing linguistics. The development is seen by Shao as the formulation process of macro-linguistics on the basis of micro-linguistics.

1.1.2. Contrastive Culturology

When referring to the literature of culture and language discussions published in the last two decades, one may also notice, perhaps with some surprise, that quite a large number of scholars have appeared so interested in what is called contrastive studies[3] which

involves the comparison of linguistic features between two or more languages and analysis of differences and generalities between people of two or more cultures. By Zhao's (1996) statistics, during 30 years from 1950 to 1980, only 38 papers comparing English and Chinese were published mainly in English in the whole world. But, from 1977 to 1994, about 25 books and more than 500 essays were published in China alone comparing and contrasting languages and cultures. He observed that this figure was evidently on the rise. The primary reason for this ardent discussion, in Zhang's (1999) observation, is that contrastive studies is very close to reality of the country and has a very strong implication in language teaching practice.

From the fairly comprehensive lists of publications on contrastive studies given in Li (1996) and Yang and Li (1990), one can easily see that Chinese scholars before the 1980s focused their attention on linguistic differences on the micro-level between English and Chinese in phonetics, semantics, words and grammar. The cultural dimension did not seem to attract much attention from scholars of contrastive studies although some foreign language educators and translators such as Yan Fu (cited in Li, 1996) who wrote *Ying Wen Han Gu* (A Chinese View of English) and Lu Shuxiang and Wang Li (cited in You, 1995) examined the cultural differences, particularly on the word level, between the target culture and their native culture in their discussions. From the mid-1980s onwards, however, contrastive studies in discourse analysis, language use and rhetoric comparison clearly became more earnest and gradually intensified. The fervent discussions inevitably extended to the cultural aspects and led to Yang's (1994) proposal of establishing 'contrastive culturology', the branch of study dealing with cultural differences and generalities between the target culture(s) and the native culture. He argues that 'contrastive culturology' could help solve numerous problems encountered in foreign language teaching, teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages and language

translation. The cultural contents in a foreign language teaching programme, for example, should be based on the contrastive studies of the cultural differences between the target culture(s) and the native culture.

Many Chinese contrastive culturologists refer to Western scholars such as James (1980), Breitenstein (1978), Fillmore (1971) and Lado (1957) who apparently had different views on application areas and approaches to contrastive analysis[4]. Chinese scholars, however, do not seem to differ significantly in terms of application objectives. Zhang (1999) summarises them as revealing the principles of applied areas such as language teaching and translation, helping solve problems of mother tongue interference and increasing predictability and scientificity of foreign language teaching programmes. What the scholars seem to differ in is the study focus and research methodology. Most writers, Yang's (1994) comments, are over-obsessed in examining individualities of and differences between languages for practical solutions to language teaching and translation dilemmas. From the point of view of modern linguistics development, he states, it is equally important to study language universals as this would have more theoretical significance than the study of language differences. He argues that the investigation of language universals would inevitably lead to the application of existing theories of cultural studies and help establish new theories of contrastive culturology. The study of cultural and linguistic differences between two languages, Yang further states, could have direct implications in translation and foreign language teaching and facilitate writing up foreign language textbooks, whereas the exploration of language and cultural universals could lead to theoretical essentials of contrastive studies. With respect to the study focus of cultural universals, Yang suggests five areas, namely "features of societies, nationalities, trends of times, cultural heritage and social systems" (614, author's translation). The study of these areas would lead to explorations of what intercultural

communication is based on: in which ways different cultures are acquiring new cultural traits in intercultural communications, and how nations can learn from each other through these communications to acquire a common world cultural perspective. Yang's intended focus areas are clearly different from those of many other scholars who take a pragmatic view for contrastive studies.

Zhao (1996) supports Yang's view by stating that the so-called 'atomism', i.e. obsession in representing individual phenomena in contrastive studies, should be changed. He believes that the study of linguistic universals will lead contrastive studies onto a new stage. Zheng's (1994) contrastive analysis of Eastern and Western philosophies coincides with Yang's argument for contrastive culturology. While comparing differences between Chinese and Western countries in interpersonal relationships, lifestyles, ways of thinking, value concepts, morals, aesthetic standards, etc., he analysed in global terms the development of modern physics and astronautics and the way Chinese traditional and Western medicines are integrated and concluded that the congeniality of Chinese and Western world views is the natural tendency of historic development. The interest in contrastive culturology has apparently widened the horizons of scholars of contrastive studies and helped globalise their views for cultural studies.

Contrastive culturology seems to provide its proponents with some theoretical ground in dealing with a thorny issue. It is observable that some scholars conduct contrastive studies with a patriotic motive or an ideological aim of refuting the so-called 'Wholesale Westernisation' contention by expounding and propagating the unique national individuality and values of China. Qian Mu (1895-1990), for example, whose works were comprehensively reviewed by Chen (1996), focused his attention on the individual characteristics of Chinese and Western cultures. He concluded that the most noticeable

and essential distinction between the Chinese and Western cultures is that Chinese have an agronomic culture which takes morals as its essence whereas Westerners have an extrovert marketing culture which regards materials as its pivot. He stated that both cultures have their strengths and weaknesses and history has shown that

> sometimes the East progressed smoothly and swiftly while the West looked degenerating and dismal and sometimes vice versa. ... We should not evaluate the whole process by looking only at the recent couple of centuries and conclude that we should totally accept the Western culture as the Chinese culture is essentially helpless. (Qian 1952, 62; author's translation).

Being fully aware of the impact of Western culture on Chinese, Qian stressed the difference of national individualities between Chinese and Western cultures and actively propagated Chinese value concepts. While affirming Qian's efforts in combating the widely-held 'blind faith in things foreign' and profound awareness of the multiplicity of world cultures, Chen (1996: 634) commented that:

> as he (Qian Mu) overstated the individual characteristics of the national (Chinese) culture, to a certain extent he negated and obliterated the common trends in the history of human cultural evolution. He blurred many differences over time with cultural differences between nations, thus the explanation and elaboration of intrinsic grounds of attainable intercultural communication became impossible (author's translation).

Interestingly after nearly four decades, a very influential figure in Chinese studies, Ji Xianlin (1991), proposed a theory of 'River East and River West' which resembles Qian's statement given above. He predicts that in the twenty-first century the Western culture that features the analytical way of thinking will give way to the Eastern culture which is characterised with the synthetic way of thinking. The next century will be thus the century for China and the Chinese culture. His remarks are explicitly challenged by contrastive culturologists such as Li (1996) who counter-state that the next century will be the century for Eastern and Western cultures to overcome one's weaknesses by

acquiring other's strengths. As Zheng (1994) argues, the inexorable trend of historic development is the mutual adaptability of Chinese and Western world views. In doing cultural studies, it is perceivable that, contrastive culturology, though still eagerly awaiting major breakthroughs[5], may prove to be momentous in the Chinese context as most proponents overtly advocate an intercultural perspective, opposing monocultural perspectives to view the world.

1.1.3. Cultural Studies in Language Teaching

The third camp primarily houses language teachers who are more interested in finding ways to teach culture for various language programmes. The publications by language teachers in the past two decades, first of all, demonstrate an ever-increasing awareness of the importance of cultural studies in foreign language teaching which was basically a neglected area before the 1980's. From edited books like those by Hu (1992), Chen and Tan (1993) and Wang and Wu (1994), authors who are foreign language teachers agree that teaching a foreign language today means familiarising learners with another culture. Though the great majority, if not all, of these practitioners are traditionally-educated teachers[6] they are all aware that traditional grammar-translation and pattern-drill type of teaching can not equip learners with the competence for communication with people speaking the target language in both spoken and written forms.

Although some scholars of cultural studies have made efforts to explore theoretical as well as practical issues in language education, the most quoted discussions, as will be shown below, are those that make practical suggestions, in most cases inventories of principles and cultural items to be integrated into language teaching, and those that represent culture as knowledge. The need for teaching foreign languages for ever-

increasing cross-cultural communication has led to constant search for suitable textbooks[7], many culture courses in tertiary institutions and numerous publications which present cultural know-how. A pragmatic approach to cultural studies is clearly adopted and preferred by most scholars and practitioners in foreign language education. The sub-sections below are intended to provide evidence for this approach.

1.1.3.1. Inventories

Like everywhere else, disagreement exists among Chinese scholars in their discussion on what cultural aspects to introduce and to focus on in language education. Many scholars offer their own inventories of culture teaching and these inventories could be represented by the following four. Zhang (1990) and Zhao (1992) suggests that the target culture for foreign language education should be put into two main categories: culture for communication and culture for understanding. The former, by their definition, may include those cultural aspects which have direct effects on verbal and non-verbal communications between the learner and the native speaker of the target language. This division enables them to make an inventory of 12 teachable cultural aspects for communication for the fundamental stage in foreign language education. Culture for understanding, on the other hand, refers to the cultural knowledge which does not directly impede accurate transmission and reception of verbal and non-verbal information during cross-cultural interactions (This category will be taken up again in 1.3.2). Chen's (1992) inventory is slightly different. It classifies cultural contents in foreign language teaching into three types: culture in the language structure, culture in the semantic system and culture in language use. The first type refers to the structural differences of languages caused by different cultural backgrounds while the second, culture in the semantic systems suggests the unique connotations embodied in the language of the target culture.

Typical examples of the second type are proverbs, culturally-specific words which cannot be translated into the native language because of socio-cultural differences, words which may have 'equivalents' in the native language but differ in meaning and cultural expectations and words which contain cultural traditions and values. The last type, culture in language use, refers to appropriateness of the language used in communication and it collects proper ways of greeting, thanking, expressing appreciation and respect, apologising and bidding farewell. Apparently both inventories presented above attempt to identify and/or stratify the 'teachable' culture elements in foreign language education according to communicative needs.

For some intensive English programmes in which learners, most of whom are to stay at a university in an English speaking country as students and visiting scholars, get trained for short periods like half a year, Tan and Wang (1993) suggest that culture be integrated with language learning by three stages. At the false beginners stage, they say, learners should be made aware of and familiar with the differences between the mainstream culture of the target language and learners' native culture for everyday interactive activities such as greetings, saying goodbye, chit-chatting, apologizing, showing appreciation, and replying to compliment. At the intermediate stage, culture teaching should be focused on connotations of culturally-specific words and proverbs and appropriate use of these words and phrases. For advanced learners, Tan and Wang suggest that the focus should move onto cultural differences in ways of thinking and interpersonal relationships. To this end, they strongly propose that the principles and inventories of culture teaching be stipulated in the Syllabus for Intensive Training Programmes. Their inventory by stages is often referred to in some essays by other authors of cultural studies (see right below).

Instead of making inventories of cultural items to be covered in a foreign language programme, some scholars provide lists of principles and methodology of culture teaching. A typical one is offered in Bao (1997) who lists four principles to introduce culture in a foreign language programme: principle of proceeding step by step (for which he refers to Tan and Wang presented above); principle of appropriateness in terms of contents; principle of mainstream culture; and principle of systematicity. Shu and Zhuang (1996) come up with a very similar list of principles. At the same time, they also offered teaching methodology which includes the following five techniques: providing cultural notes; fusing culture with language materials; exposing learners to authentic resources; comparing native with target cultures; and offering cultural courses or talks dealing particularly with those cultural aspects which may cause cross-cultural misunderstanding. Furthermore, they put an emphasis on the attitude of learners, stating that students with an ethnocentric outlook can hardly learn a foreign language and its culture(s).

For 'theoretical studies'[8], Hu (1994), an influential proponent of culture studies in English language teaching in China, thinks that nine areas which could be divided into four levels should be focused on. At the vocabulary level, studies should be done on connotations of words, lack of equivalents, culturally-loaded names of people and places, and frequently-used literary quotations. At the discourse level, textual patterns and stylistic features should be analysed. In the area of language use, the focus of study should be on the order of talking and other pragmatic rules. The fourth level is non-verbal communication. Hu also remarks that studies of value concepts is no doubt important in teaching and learning a foreign language. In order to carry out the studies effectively, he argues, a researcher must get to know a great amount of facts and data. He believes that there is lack of reference materials which foreign language teachers could rely on and calls for compiling reference materials and textbooks to meet the needs of cultural studies. This view of

cultural studies has been predominant in the last decade and, as a result, quite a number of textbooks for culture teaching and even dictionaries introducing target cultures have come into existence in recent years. The following section will offer detailed description about these publications and some typical courses of cultural studies offered in specialised foreign language institutions in China.

1.1.3.2. Culture as Knowledge

In the past decade or so, as cultural studies in foreign language education has drawn increasing attention from practitioners, the number of cultural readers, textbooks for culture teaching and even cultural dictionaries have greatly increased. Representative ones include Deng and Liu (1989), Zhu (1991 and 1994), Wang (1993a and 1993b), and Hu (1995). Most of these textbooks, readers and dictionaries present cultural facts of exclusively British and American societies. It is noticeable that many writers of the books have a specifically-defined audience, the tertiary level students, and show an intention of imparting cultural knowledge to these learners. Zhu (1991), for example, titles his book *Yinmei Wenhua Jichu Jiaochen* (Basic Course Book for British and American Cultures) in Chinese though he gives "Essentials of British and American Cultures" as the title in English. The majority of the texts in his book are chosen from authentic sources with many from *A Background to English* by P. S. Tregidgo (1971) and *Life in Modern America* by P. Bromhead (1978). As a course book, a vocabulary list and language or cultural notes are given after each text and these are followed by a series of comprehension questions. Hu's (1995) *Dictionary of British and American culture*, as the title suggests, is a collection of short writings by himself and other writers to introduce the mainstream British and American cultures. It is claimed in its preface to be the end-product of several years of research authorised by the State Education Commission. This

dictionary classifies culture into eight categories: basic necessities of life; socialisation; holiday and birthday celebrations; culturally-loaded words; non-verbal communication; literary allusions; religions and rituals; and value concepts. These eight categories, Hu explains, are the most relevant to everyday interactions between people of all cultures and thus is written to meet the needs of teachers and students who are aware of the importance of cultural studies.

Nowadays, tertiary institutions of foreign studies[9] or foreign language departments in most comprehensive universities in China generally offer courses of cultural studies that focus on knowledge or facts on British and American cultures in parallel with training courses of language skills such as reading, listening, speaking and writing. Cultural studies courses are generally named 'Yingmei gaikuang' (An introduction to the United Kingdom and the United States of America), 'Yingmei wenhua' (British and American

Table 1.1.3.2.1. — Common features of cultural studies courses

Aspects	Features
Teaching objectives	There are no specifications for culture teaching stipulated in the Syllabus. Cultural studies courses are generally seen as supplementary things for developing students' linguistic competence.
Major contents	• A great amount of general cultural knowledge about the history, geography, politics, traditions and customs of the target cultures • Literary works and background of the authors of the target cultures • A focus on British and American cultures
Teaching methodology	• Cramming (introducing students to large amount of factual information) • Comparing and contrasting (make students compare a cultural aspect of the target culture with that of the native culture for differences)
Textbooks	• Focusing on factual information • Presenting cultural knowledge in extensive reading materials • Designing exercises for improving linguistic competence (training reading comprehension and practising with vocabulary)
Role of teacher	• Transmitting the knowledge of the target culture • Emphasising differences between the target culture and the native culture

Source: Cao (1998) (author's translation)

cultures) and '*Yingmei lishi*' (British and American history). The courses are usually offered to English majors at senior levels in these institutions and departments. Cao (1998) summarises some common features of the courses in Table 1.1.3.2.1, concluding that the teaching of culture in these institutions indubitably stays at the level of cultural knowledge transmission. He suggests that cultural studies teaching at this level is necessary but knowledge transmission is only the first step towards developing cultural understanding in learners. The numerous readers and textbooks of American and British cultures claimed for use in classrooms and the articles about the teaching of culture published in recent years give evidence for Cao's comment.

1.1.3.3. "Literature Is Culture"

While most scholars and language teachers accept the broad perspective in cultural studies, some stick to the conventional ground, that is, to study the literature of the target language is to learn its culture. Their major argument is that many renowned scholars and successful learners are well cultured in literature. Hu (1996) cites the anecdotes and autobiographies of ten renowned Chinese scholars of English mostly presented in Ji (1988) and firmly concludes that to learn English through literature is in fact a lively way to learn how to use the target language appropriately. Through reading authentic literary works, he continues, one does not only learn the target language but also strengthens his cultural competence, which is clearly an effective coordination of the learning process. He goes further to suggest three stages of literature reading. Initially, learners should read what he thinks can be called the literature summits of the Western world, namely *Tales from Shakespeare*; *Myths of Greece and Rome*; *Bible Stories*; and *The Arabian Nights Entertainment*. Except for *Tales from Shakespeare*, the other three are all English translations from other languages, which, Hu argues, could enable learners to build up a

basic foundation for studying the world classical culture. He includes *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*; *Aesop's Fables*; and *Andersen's Fairy Tales* for the second stage reading. At the third stage, Hu suggests reading some modern British and American literary works. They include *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; *The £ 1,000,000 Banknote*; *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; and *Gone with the Wind*. Above all, Hu states that the best textbook writers of English should be great literary masters such as Conan Doyle, Mark Twain and Ernest Hemingway. He overtly asserts that "Culture is literature" (p. 43). Despite the three stages he suggested above, he goes on to recommend, vaguely to beginners of the language, what he calls the "one book approach" (p. 48), i.e. to intensively read and digest one carefully-chosen literary work. All in all, he states that,

It benefits you as long as you open a literary book. So long as you attach importance to literature English learning will become effective, no matter what learning methods you adopt. As the saying goes, all roads lead to Rome. Thus, the important advice is you should make literature your best teacher and your best friend. (p. 47, author's translation)

Clearly, Hu takes the reading of literary works as the panacea, solution to all language learning problems, linguistic or socio-cultural.

As stated above, Hu's viewpoint of learning a foreign language and its culture solely through literature is not shared by many scholars in foreign language education, not even the authors in the same series to which his book belongs (the series is titled Contemporary Educational Theories of Academic Subjects and it contains six books on foreign language education. Zhang and Zhu (1996), for example, state that the development of students' cultural competence is a complex issue. They suggest that teachers should adopt a macro perspective and take a multidimensional approach to culture teaching. None the less, Hu's 'literature is culture' point of view can never be underestimated owing to two hard facts. His book is one of the principal books projected in the National '95' Scheme and the previous version of this book bearing the same title published in 1990 won the philosophy

and social science achievement award in Beijing in 1991. Though this viewpoint does not seem to be popular within the domain of foreign language teaching and research, its influence can be perceived in many English language programmes for English majors or non-majors and in materials writing. It is a fact that the core course for senior English majors in most foreign studies universities and English departments are called 'British and American literature' or 'Appreciation of literary works'. The main reason of this influence, as briefly shown above and by the author's observation[10], is that advocates are normally senior scholars in positions to act as referees for academic publications and to direct the courses of teaching programmes and textbook writing.

1.1.3.4. Some Comprehensive Studies

In recent years, there have been some publications which show increasing interest in more comprehensive studies of cultural issues in foreign language education in China. Among them are Hu and Gao (1997), Jia (1997), Lin (1996) and Guan (1995). On the one hand, these authors offer a considerable amount of cultural information about the target culture(s), again mostly British and American culture(s). On the other hand, they demonstrate in their individual works an intention to establish a theoretical framework for cultural studies. Guan's book is most representative in this respect. He makes clear efforts to address issues of interpersonal relationships in cross-cultural situations and uses quite a few chapters dealing with communication problems between countries and issues concerning cultural exchange programmes. In his book, Guan uses many examples and terminology of media studies. At the end of the book he even puts in the appendices "The principles that all countries should follow in utilising satellites to transmit TV and radio programmes". His way of doing cultural studies is obviously influenced by media studies.

Jia's (1996) *Kuawenhua jiaojixue* (Intercultural communication) is the thickest books among this group. Noticeably, he adopts a more sociolinguistic approach than the other writers to cultural studies. He frequently refers to the ideas by sociolinguists such as J. A. Fishman, D. H. Hymes, and N. Wolfson. He states,

> In the field of intercultural communication, scholars are generally concerned with what we just mentioned the broad communicative environment (the macro-level settings for communications between different cultures). They do not attach enough importance to the crucial elements of the settings of real interactions. In fact, the research done by sociolinguists is very enlightening. (pp. 43-44, author's translation)

While advocating a sociolinguistic methodology for cultural studies teaching, Jia expresses explicit disagreement to the straightforward approach to comparing and contrasting cultural differences between countries. Instead, in a later chapter, he suggests that comparisons should be focused on differences in discourse systems, a central issue in Scollon and Scollon (1995). On the other hand, Jia also discusses vocabulary, syntax and pragmatics from a cultural point of view and, of all the books, his covers the widest range of topics.

Hu and Gao's (1997) book, on the other hand, tops the list in terms of relevancy to cultural studies in foreign language teaching. Their works consists of seven chapters dealing with a variety of issues closely related to cultural studies. The main issues include, definitions of culture, models for cultural studies teaching home and abroad, teaching methodology and contents, and further research. In their observation, the theoretical research of cultural studies in China has been through three stages: introducing theories and methodology of cultural studies from abroad, digesting these foreign ideas and reviewing them critically. At present, Chinese scholars have begun to innovate ways of doing cultural studies of their own. In the third chapter, based on their discussion on four special features of cultural studies teaching and research they state that the research

has moved from a single discipline on a dominant language to a multi-disciplinary and multi-language approach. In Chapter 4, they suggest that three dimensions of language competence be taken as major objectives of foreign language education: namely micro-level dimension of linguistic competence, middle-level dimension of communicative competence and macro-level dimension of sociocultural competence. They maintain that the overall goal of a foreign language programme should be the development of the macro-level sociocultural competence.

In the last chapter of Hu and Gao they make a suggestion which is both philosophical and practical. In view of the complex nature of cultural studies, they make efforts in defining and detailing the relationships between notions such as cultural differences and universals, subjectivity and objectivity, and inferiority and superiority. They further the discussion by introducing and reviewing the notions, "cultural stereotypes" and "paradox of cross-cultural communication" (p. 219). They conclude that the effective path of cultural studies teaching is, as a first step, to help learners construct the stereotypes, then encourage them to challenge the stereotypes and eventually to 'break them up'. This would in their view eventually enable learners to find new solutions to cross-cultural problems. The same viewpoint was presented in a published paper two years earlier in Gao (1995). Apparently, their perspective of cultural studies teaching is more insightful than those held by other scholars as their argument takes cultural studies teaching a step further, from treating culture solely as facts for imparting in classrooms to dealing with 'paradoxes' in cross-cultural communication.

To construct the stereotypes, a list of cultural aspects is proposed by Hu and Gao as contents for cultural studies teaching for inclusion in syllabuses. Their list is made on the basis of the inventory of cultural studies suggested by Wei and Bian (1992) for teaching

Chinese as a foreign language and by Zhang (1991) for teaching Russian as a foreign language. In their list (Fig. 1.1.3.4.1), cultural aspects are divided into cultural behaviour and cultural psychology

```
                          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                          │      Cultural Aspects        │
                          └─────────────────────────────┘
                            │                        │
                            ▼                        ▼
        ┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
        │ Aspects of cultural  │      │ Aspects of cultural  │
        │ behaviour            │      │ psychology           │
        └──────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────┘
           │              │                         │
           ▼              ▼                         │
  ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐                │
  │ Aspects of   │ │ Aspects of non-│              │
  │ intervening  │ │ intervening  │                │
  │ behaviour    │ │ behaviour    │                │
  └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘                │
        │                │                         ▼
        ▼                ▼
  ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────────┐
  │ Necessities of│ │ Necessities of│    │ Value concepts   │
  │ life         │ │ life         │     │ of society       │
  │              │ │              │     │                  │
  │ Interpersonal│ │ Family life  │     │ Value concepts   │
  │ relationships│ │              │     │ of life          │
  │              │ │ Entertainments│    │                  │
  │ Entertainments│ │              │    │ Morals and       │
  │              │ │ Marriages and│     │ ethics           │
  │ Attitudes and│ │ customs      │     │                  │
  │ feelings     │ │              │     │ Concepts of      │
  │              │ │ Knowledge,   │     │ beauty           │
  │ Viewpoints and│ │ thoughts and│     │                  │
  │ opinions     │ │ education    │     │ Concepts of      │
  │              │ │              │     │ nature           │
  │ Individualism│ │ Obligations in│    │                  │
  │ and privacy  │ │ society      │     │                  │
  │              │ │              │     │                  │
  │ Space and time│ │ Religious   │     │                  │
  │ concepts     │ │ activities   │     │                  │
  └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘     └──────────────────┘
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Figure 1.2.3.4.1. — A proposal of cultural studies teaching for syllabuses of English language majors (Hu and Gao, 1997, author's translation).

according to their functions. Two subcategories are listed under the former category, cultural behaviour. The first subcategory, intervening behaviour, refers to those activities that usually take place in the learner's native land but are carried out in the target

43

language and the 'non-intervening behaviour' refers to those activities that do not normally take place in learner's native culture. Despite the fact that, in their monograph, they refer to many sophisticated models for cultural studies teaching developed in other countries, Hu and Guo's proposal still seems to indicate that transmission of cultural knowledge and teaching of facts are the 'core tasks' of cultural studies teaching. Even the element of 'attitudes' put under the subcategory 'intervening behaviour' are primarily another inventory of cultural knowledge as, according to their elaboration, the teaching covers such aspects as expressing anger, excitement, doubt, disappointment, gratitude, appreciation, and so forth. In this proposal for syllabus designing, they obviously exclude other important objectives of cultural studies teaching such as the development of intercultural skills, critical cultural awareness and 'tertiary socialisation' for intercultural communication (cf. Byram, 1997) although they favourably touch upon these issues at a later stage.

1.2. Discussions by College English Educators

It should be noted that the majority of publications, the courses of and approaches to cultural studies presented in 1.1.3. have been written or designed with English majors as target learners. Most scholars are also professionals teaching this type of students. What is the situation in the area of cultural studies with the huge population of non-English majors, i.e., undergraduates who take the College English programme? How do College English teachers discuss cultural studies teaching? Do they have the same attitude towards cultural studies as the scholars cited above? By referring to the published sources, one may find it difficult to answers these questions as publications on cultural studies teaching by College English specialists are not at all comparable, both in terms of quantity and quality, with those by the scholars who have English majors as target

learners. The number of publicized discussions on this issue seems to be in reverse proportion to the College English teaching population which is much larger than that for English majors.

The explanation of the lack of literature is not a simple one. In a rare paper related to cultural studies teaching in College English education by Zhang (1991), four problems are listed as primary concerns for 'promoting' cultural studies teaching in College English education. Topping the list is a call to increase teachers' awareness of importance of 'culture teaching' for the programme. The second issue in Zhang's list is the relationship between the teaching of culture and the prescribed requirements for linguistic elements. The third stresses the guiding role of teachers in culture teaching. And the last suggests extra-curricular activities as an effective way to transmit cultural knowledge to students. Though the article does not seem to shed new light on *how* to develop students' socio-cultural competence as the title suggests, the first issue raised by Zhang indicates that there are many people who are still wondering *whether* to teach cultural studies in College English. As Zhang points out, "while various courses, such as British and American history and introduction to Western cultures, are offered to English majors in specialised foreign language institutions and departments, culture teaching for the College English programme has not attracted enough attention." (p. 36, author's translation). This unequivocally suggests that the discussion on the cultural dimension for the nation-wide foreign language programme is still at the very initial stage, i.e. on the significance of cultural studies.

Zhang's comment proves practical and realistic as the discussions on cultural studies teaching are indeed rare even after the publication of his article, considering the huge population of College English practitioners. In a recent essay, however, Lin (1996) shows

an exceptional interest in this dimension. After a lengthy discussion on the relationship between culture and language, he concludes that a learner's ability to communicate cross-culturally is restricted by his/her insight in the target culture. He suggests that the introduction of the target culture(s) could be done in three phases considering the present situation of College English teaching. At the first phase, he says, the teaching should focus on linguistic elements such as grammar and vocabulary. Cultural knowledge would not be introduced unless the understanding of the text requires it. This phase is therefore mainly for providing essential background information about the culturally-specific words and phrases to beginning students in tertiary institutions. Relatively systematic rather than arbitrary introduction of culture could be done at the second phase when the students have acquired basic linguistic competence. At this phase, the cultural framework for a course book and for each text in the book should be determined and the relevant cultural information should be conveyed to students prior to or after the teaching of each text. Lin in fact suggests the integration of the functions and notions stipulated in the College English Syllabus with cultural studies teaching. The third phase, according to Lin, is the integration and generalisation of the cultural aspects covered during the second phase. It primarily deals with the conceptual aspects which form the bases of the target culture(s). The second and third phases, Lin states, are suitable for foreign language majors or non-majors at an advanced level.

Lin's three-phase suggestion takes the existing structure of the programme into account. The implementation of his three-phase culture teaching plan, as he explains diplomatically, would not affect the application of the current teaching methodology, the teaching materials and the testing system. Perhaps, it is this intention to mediate the cultural dimension with the existing programme, or his diplomatic strategy, that makes him conclude that

It (the introduction of the cultural contents) is only an extension, supplementation and development of our traditional foreign language teaching. ... While teaching, the grammatical structures of the cultural phenomena of the target language could be introduced. The cultural information to be introduced could be substantial or minute in amount or *it could even be ignored completely*, depending on the available time and interests of learners and the amount of cultural training the teacher has received. (p. 5, author's translation and italics)

In a later paragraph, Lin also asserts that the idea of teaching cultural studies should not have any effect on the existing textbooks, as it can be done with any textbook, and result in any changes to the existing testing system. This extremely 'elastic' attitude obviously denies the significance of cultural studies teaching in foreign language education. The essay by Lin in general, as was reviewed above, shows his positive attitude to cultural studies teaching. But the concluding remarks apparently contradict with his general stance as they suggest that cultural studies teaching is something that may or may not be necessary. The reason behind Lin's sudden move to a conclusion that makes his stance obscure and even inconsistent has to be explained in connection to ideological concerns and the teaching culture of the College English practitioners. These issues will be further taken up in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

In a few more recent papers, however, the tone arguing for the inclusion of cultural studies teaching in the College English programme appears obviously stronger. Wang (1999) states that with the deepening of the open-door policy and the ever-increasing communications between China and other countries, cultural studies teaching is not only necessary but a must for the College English programme. In this paper, Wang also argues for cultural studies teaching with his analysis of the cultural information found in some College English test papers. He then discusses the general principles and methodology to

teaching culture. At the end he even suggests that cultural studies teaching be stipulated in the syllabus.

1.3. The Most Cited Foreign Sources

Many scholars such as Hu and Gao (1997) and Li (1996) agree that the literature of cultural studies, especially in foreign language education and comparative studies, was basically the introduction of Western ideas and models, particularly in the 1980s. This is considered a natural consequence as the dynamics of politics had kept academics away from this area of research for decades. In reviewing the foreign literature cited in the numerous publications, one can easily notice that, in addition to introducing models of cultural studies teaching, these sources are cited for two other distinct purposes. Many Western scholars, particularly anthropologists, are quoted for arguing for the importance of cultural studies and its relevance to foreign language teaching or research while many other contemporary scholars are normally used as support for suggested models of comparative and cultural studies.

1.3.1. To Show Significance

The relationship between language and culture has long been a focused issue among scholars of various disciplines of social sciences. As early as the eighteenth century, according to Shen (1993), G. Vico (1668-1744), an Italian philosopher, was perhaps the first scholar to call language the key to the myth of the origin and development of human society and culture. Early in the nineteenth century, renowned German scholar, W. von, Humboldt (1767-1835), shed some new light on the inseparability of language and human knowledge development. He argued that the different ways in which language describes

or classifies the real world impose on the mind ways of organising human knowledge and, thus, the variety of languages is not one of sounds and signs but a variety of world perspectives. Humboldt's insight greatly influenced the German intellectual world and led to long and often intense debates about the relationship between language and *Landeskunde* among language teaching professionals in the country. Despite the changing and sometimes contradictory role culture has played in language teaching (cf. Buttjes, 1991), the teaching of culture (*Kulturkunde*) has been part of most foreign language programmes since the aims for teaching culture were widely accepted in Germany early in this century. Like Shen, in many recent writings by Chinese scholars, Humboldt is often cited as a scholar who gave philosophical explanations to the relationship between language and culture.

Of all social scientists, educational scholars seem to agree that anthropologists at the beginning of this century, perhaps, made the greatest contributions to the discussion of the relationship between language and culture. B. Malinowski, (1884 - 1942), whose book *What is Culture!* (1944) was briefly mentioned in the Introduction, observed in his anthropological fieldwork in the South Seas that the language of the islanders in that region could only be comprehensible when it was closely placed into its cultural setting. On the basis of findings and arguments, he concluded that "the study of any language spoken by a people who live under conditions different from our own and possess a different culture must be carried out in conjunction with a study of their culture and of their environment." (1946: 306). His insight into the nature of language learning is clearly shared by many language educationists today. Another heavily quoted figure in language and culture discussions is E. Sapir (1884 -1939), an American anthropologist, who viewed language as a social link in maintaining social relationships and ensuring orderly life for members in a particular society. Sapir stated that, "language does not exist apart

from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determines the texture of our lives." (1921: 207). His student, B. L. Whorf (1897-1941), is often believed by Chinese scholars such as Hu, Liu and Li (1988) to have made an even greater contribution to the language-culture discussion. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, also referred to as Whorfian Hypothesis, argues that people do not perceive the world freely but rather they do so through language – a filtering structure – which may distort the reality and thus influence and control their thought. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis could be vividly represented by the following statement, "if Aristotle had spoken Chinese, his logic would have been different." (cited in Hu, Liu and Li, 1988: 240). The hypothesis kept a wider conception of language in relation to thought, culture and society. The theories developed by these anthropologists at the first half of the century, as presented above, are greatly admired and frequently quoted in writings by Chinese scholars when they discuss the relationship between culture and language or the relevance of cultural studies to language teaching (Hu and Guo, 1997; Shu and Zhuang, 1996; Shen, 1993; and Xing, 1990). They all seem to agree that the contributions made by these anthropologists form the basis for investigating language and culture and for discussions about cultural studies teaching in language education.

1.3.2. To Lend Support

The works by Western scholars like Lado (1957 and 1964) and Hall (1959 and 1966) are frequently cited by contrastive linguists and scholars of cultural studies teaching in China as reference to the proposed models for cultural studies teaching or as theoretical support to their arguments for cultural studies research. For example, there seems to be an agreement among many scholars that Hall's book *The Silent Language* (1959) signifies the beginning of the study of intercultural communication (Zhuang 1997 and Qi 1996).

These scholars believe that Hall's work theoretically explores the most profound and subtle cultural aspects that are often taken for granted by native speakers but in fact determine human behaviour. Practically, his books also provide interesting cultural information for use in classroom. Hu (1995) used Hall's viewpoint to back up his study of non-verbal communication and selected information from the two books by Hall (1959 and 1966) for his dictionary cum textbook of British and American cultural studies teaching. Lado seems to exert an even greater influence on cultural and contrastive studies in China. His three-level comparative approach to cultural differences, namely form, meaning and distribution is greatly appreciated by contrastive linguists. Wang (1985) remarks that Lado practically provided means to compare phonetic systems, syntactic structures, lexical systems, semantic systems and cultural differences and suggests that his theories be applied in contrastive studies. Li (1996) further comments that Lado's way of doing linguistics has practical significance not only in contrastive studies but also in language translation and foreign language materials writing.

As many language practitioners are interested in practical issues such as what cultural aspects to teach and how to teach them, foreign scholars such as Oswalt (1970), Chastain (1976), Samovar and Porter (1972) and Seelye (1984) are repeatedly quoted in many publications by Chinese authors. Zhang and Zhu (1996) observe that in recent years most scholars seem to classify culture into Oswalt's "big C" and "small c" categories. The two types of culture, i.e., culture for communication and culture for understanding proposed by Zhang (1990) and Zhao (1992), as presented in 1.1.3.1, are clearly developed on the basis of Oswalt's classification of culture though Bao (1997) argues that Oswalt's classification is a less succinct summary than the two types classified by the Chinese scholars as the latter are more concerned with the cultural dimension in foreign language teaching. The 44 topics recommended for foreign language programmes by Chastain

(1976) focusing on the culture in its narrow sense are also often referred to by Chinese authors whenever they discuss the contents for culture teaching (see Chen, 1992 and Tan and Wang, 1993). Samovar and Porter's works are even more influential as their 'Reader' (1988) is translated into Chinese. Hu (1988, pp. 3-4) quotes their words in the 1985 version to help define culture and communication and he comments that their 'reader' is one of the most influential works on intercultural communication published in the 1970s. The main attraction of this book to Chinese learners, as it may to learners of other countries, is, as its title suggests, its function to serve as a direct source material for culture learning. Some of the practical techniques of culture teaching presented in Seelye's editions are appreciated, particularly those which inject small 'doses' of foreign behaviour into the foreign language learners (Qin, 1988). However, his explicit objection to what he calls the "facts-only" approach to cultural studies teaching is largely ignored by Chinese authors.

Another major group of Western scholars often cited are sociolinguists, such as Hymes (1967), Labov (1972), and Trudgill (1983). Sociolinguistics, as is commonly agreed, was developed in the 1960s and it studies the relationships between language and society by searching for clues in a particular culture for explaining grammatical structures, lexicon and other linguistic phenomena. Studies in the 60s and 70s quickly advanced linguistics into a multidisciplinary field which sees language as a socio-cultural phenomenon and links language study with the social sciences, especially social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and human geography (cf. Trugill, 1983). As a flourishing field of study, sociolinguistics was quickly introduced into foreign language classrooms in Chinese tertiary institutions in the early 1980s. Hymes's four parameters for language and other forms of communication are so popular that very few authors would not refer to them in their discussions on cultural studies in foreign language education. Shu and Zhuang

(1996) interpret the second and third of Hymes's four parameters, namely feasibility and appropriateness, as socio-cultural competences in language use. Zhang and Zhu (1996) summarise the impact of Hymes's theory of communicative competence on foreign language education in three ways: reformation of teaching objectives, increased awareness of appropriateness in language use and importance attached to authenticity of language teaching materials. In retrospect, this impact is evidently the most profound on foreign language education as communicative competence is stipulated as the ultimate goal for many foreign language programmes, including the College English programme, even though cultural competence is ignored in its official documents (See Chapter 4 for detail). Many works by sociolinguists in the West, such as Trudgill (1983) and Hudson (1980) find their Chinese versions widely used by scholars and students in tertiary institutions.

1.3.3. To Introduce Models of Cultural Studies

In the last decade, as the discussion on cultural studies for foreign language education, mostly for teaching English majors, has become intensified, more recent models for teaching culture have been introduced though many still stay interested in discussing the significance and listing cultural knowledge areas for teaching. Hu and Gao (1997), Jia (1997), Cao (1996) and Hu (1992) represent the writers for the introduction. These scholars apparently attempt to bring the discussions one step forward as they basically agree that the 'stereotypes level' should not be the permanent station-stop (Hanvey, 1987). They cited arguments such as those by Seelye (facts are "meaningless until interpreted within a problem-solving context" (1984: p. 3)) and by Crawford-Lange and Lange (the 'information-only' approach would actually establish and enhance stereotypes in learners rather than increase their cultural competence since this approach does not

help learners account for cultural variation and offer them tools to process new phenomena not previously studied (1987)).

The models they reviewed include:

1. Hanvey's (1987) 'four-stage' approach. He lists four stages into which the majority of students can be distributed. At the first stage, students are shown as possessing information of visible and superficial traits, such as isolated *facts and stereotypes*. At the second stage, students focus on expanded knowledge about the culture in terms of both significant and subtle traits that contrast with those of their own culture. They show *shallow understanding* of observable phenomena. When students reach the third stage, they begin to show *in-depth comprehension* and a degree of acceptance of the culture at an intellectual level. At the last stage students start to see the culture from the viewpoint of the insider. This level is what is called *empathy*, achievable only through immersion in the target culture. Hanvey further notes that, though it is ideal for a second language learner to achieve Level 4, Level 3 is certainly more attainable. This four-stage scheme is widely accepted as significant, particularly if learners study the target language in the country where it is spoken as a native language because the achievement of higher levels, especially the level of empathy, depends, as mentioned above, on immersion in the target culture.

2. Seelye's (1984, p. 9) goal statements.

> 1) *The sense, or functionality, of culturally conditioned behaviour*. The students should demonstrate an understanding that people act the way they do because they are using options the society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs.
>
> 2) *Interaction of language and social variables*. The students should demonstrate an understanding that such social variables as age, sex, social class, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave.
>
> 3) *Conventional behaviour in common situations*. The students should indicate an understanding of the role convention plays in shaping behaviour by demonstrating how people act in common mundane and crisis situations in the target culture.

4) *Cultural connotations of words and phrases*. The students should indicate an awareness that culturally conditioned images are associated with even the most common target words and phrases.

5) *Evaluating statements about a society*. The student should demonstrate the ability to evaluate the relative strength of a generality concerning the target culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating the statement.

6) *Researching another culture*. The student should show that s/he has developed the skills needed to locate and organize information about the target culture from the library, the mass media, people, and personal observation.

7) *Attitudes toward other cultures*. The student should demonstrate intellectual curiosity about the target culture and empathy toward its people.

3. Lafayette's (1988, p. 49-50) basic repertoire.

Category 1: Knowledge of "high" culture: ...

Category 2: Knowledge of "popular" culture: ...

Category 3: Affective objectives: ...

Category 4: Multicultural objectives: ...

Category 5: Process objectives: ...

4. Kramsch's (1993) 'four-step' model to develop 'a third perspective'.

1) Reconstruct the context of production and reception of the text within the foreign culture (C2, C2').

2) Construct with the foreign learners their own context of reception, i.e. find an equivalent phenomenon in C1 and construct that C1 phenomenon with its own network of meanings (C1, C1').

3) Examine the way in which C1' and C2' contexts in part determine C1" and C2", i.e. the way each culture views the other.

4) Lay the ground for a dialogue that could lead to change. (p. 210)

The most notable review is perhaps the one by Hu and Guo (1997) in which Byram (1989) and Byram, Morgan, et al. (1994) are introduced under the heading 'the latest development of comprehensive integration of cultural studies teaching with language teaching'. The review takes the major part of the chapter entitled 'The development of language teaching methodology and cultural studies teaching abroad'. In this review they showed particular interest in Byram, Morgan, et al.'s cultural studies assessment model,

their discussion on teaching cultural studies through 'key words' and their view of doing cultural studies in an ethnographic approach. There are two reasons to take notice of Hu and Guo's reference to Byram's works. The first reason is apparent in that both authors are most prominent figures in cultural studies teaching in China with the former being chairman of the Chinese Research Society of Cross-cultural Communication and the latter deputy secretary general of the society (see Hu and Gao's (1997) biographic information). Their viewpoints in publications are more likely than those of other scholars to influence policy making in foreign language education. The second reason enhances the first in that among their publications this 1997 book is the only monograph they have co-authored on cultural studies in foreign language education. In their publications before 1997, they had usually referred to the literature published in the United States such as Seelye (1984), Smith (1981) and Kachru (1982). The shift of attention to Byram indicates their special interest in his theories of intercultural communicative competence developed recently, which can be a significant factor for consideration for proposing a cultural studies model in the last chapter of this thesis.

1.4. Summary

As this chapter has shown, the literature of cultural studies by Chinese scholars is quite substantial in terms of the number of publications. The majority of these publications are the products of the past two decades. The 'sudden' interests demonstrated by Chinese scholars in cultural studies clearly reflect the dynamics of politics of the country (this will be taken up further in Chapter 3). At the same time, as argued by some scholars of cultural linguistics, the sudden increase in publications clearly reflects a long awareness of the relationship between language and culture and the ever-increasing opportunities in cross-cultural communication.

The discussion on the relationship between language and culture involves scholars of various disciplines, particularly those of Chinese linguistics, foreign language teaching, and those teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. The theories and methodology in doing cultural studies used by scholars of different disciplines do exert influences on each other as scholars of one discipline often cite ideas from another. As shown in 1.2.3.4, for example, Hu and Gao's (1997) proposed model for cultural studies teaching for English majors was formulated on the basis of the models suggested by scholars teaching Chinese as a foreign language and teaching Russian as a foreign language. In terms of cultural studies teaching objectives and methodology, the review clearly shows that the models used in foreign language teaching in China focus primarily on transmission of cultural knowledge even though some more sophisticated models are being introduced into the country. The literature by foreign language educationists in China has hardly touched upon the notion 'intercultural communicative competence' that has been enthusiastically discussed in recent years by foreign language scholars throughout the world (for examples, Byram and Zarate, 1994; Byram, 1997; Jin and Cortazzi, 1998; and Kramsch, 1998). This notion will be taken up again in the last chapter.

The discussion on cultural studies teaching for the College English programme is still at its very early stage – whether it is necessary to incorporate culture into teaching. It seems true that many College English specialists strongly believe that though culture is important it should be placed after language skills. As the programme only allows time for developing students' basic language skills such as vocabulary and grammar, the cultural elements have to be made optional. This view of treating culture as of secondary importance clearly derives from the traditional belief that culture and language are separate entities and cultural studies teaching is therefore knowledge transmission or

literature teaching. Few seem to have truly realised that cultural studies is an inseparable part of foreign language education and cultural studies teaching, as Byram (1997) points out, plays a crucial role in restructuring learners' outlooks of the world by helping them explore alternative ways of thinking.

Notes:

1. 'Culture heat' or 'Culture Wave' are commonplace pet phrases which are used not only by linguists dealing with Chinese language but also frequently occur in publications on foreign language teaching and research.

2. The three books are written by Xing, Fuyi (ed.) (1990), Shen, Xiaolong (1991) and Guo, Changjiang (1992). It is interesting to note that they don't seem to share much in common in term of methodology and even of contents, though their titles are exactly the same. More interestingly, prior to his book in 1991, Shen had published another book entitled *Zhongguo wenhua yuyanxue* (Chinese cultural linguistics) (1990) which deals with Chinese language in relation to Chinese culture, Chinese anthropology and Chinese history exclusively. Three years later, You (1993) had his *Zhongguo wenhua yuyanxue yinlun* (An introduction to Chinese cultural linguistics) published.

3. 'Contrastive linguistics' or 'contrastive analysis' are often used in China to refer to the type of discussions about linguistic differences and generalities between Chinese and a foreign language. But, in recent years, the discussions in China have developed from micro-level comparisons of linguistic features such as phonetics and words to macro-level studies for cultural, pragmatic and discourse differences. The term 'contrastive studies' is, thus, used here to reflect the development of this area of concern.

4. The divided opinions on contrastive studies could be best represented in *The PCCLLU Papers* (1971) edited by Whitman, R. L. and Jackson, K. L. This is a collection of papers presented at the Pacific Conference on Contrastive Linguistics and Language Universals held at the University of Hawaii in 1971. Wang (1985) observes that these papers could show three distinctive groups with different attitudes towards contrastive studies: proponents, sceptics and revisionists.

5. A common view on the *status quo* of contrastive studies is aired in several essays in Li's (1996) edited collection, such as Zhao, Liu, and Li herself and in Zhang (1999). That is, the contrastive studies is in the ascendant; nevertheless, the studies apparently lacks systematicness and the theoretical foundation needs further building up.

6. Traditionally-educated language teachers here refer to those who graduated before the 1980s and who were taught in the grammar-translation approach in which the cultural dimension was perhaps only vaguely addressed.

7. In these years many universities have introduced quite a number of textbooks such as *Look Ahead* (1999) jointly published in a bilingual verson by the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press and Longman Group Asia Ltd. and *Family Album, U.S.A.* (1997) published, again in a bilingual verson, by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing.

8. It seems that the term 'theoretical studies' is usually used by Chinese scholars of cultural studies to refer to the micro-level discussion of the problems encountered in cross-cultural communications and the search for solutions to these problems, as well as to efforts in establishing reasoned arguments based on known facts and information.

9. According to Fu's (1986) statistics, there are seventeen specialised foreign language or foreign-language-related universities in China. In 1980s, most of these formerly called 'foreign language universities', if not all, were renamed 'universities of foreign studies' though the names in Chinese for some of them remained unchanged. This change of English names clearly demonstrates an increasing awareness of the relationship between language and culture.

10. In the summer of 1997, the author attended two international conferences of College English Teaching held respectively in Beijing and Nanjing. At both conferences, a few senior renowned colleagues such as professor Li Funin of Beijing University stressed the importance of literature in English language learning in their keynote speeches

Chapter 2

College English

— Its Syllabuses and *Status Quo*

Introduction

This chapter is intended to give a detailed account of the College English programme. As the following pages will show, the review of the background, the component courses, the theoretical grounds of the programme and the classroom practice are part and parcel of the investigation into the sociocultural dimensions in foreign language education in China. It is apparent that, while the review depends mostly upon a study of the policy documents, the syllabuses, such a review would be inadequate without a comprehensive analysis of the supporting literature by College English specialists which offers interpretations of the policy documents. The detailed account, therefore, is both a continuation of the literature review done in the last chapter and an introduction to the investigation of the ideological dimension to be carried out in the following chapter.

2.1. Background of the Programme

Chinese historians and other social science researchers usually draw clear lines in their depiction of the history of the People's Republic according to momentous historical events which affected the socio-political life of the nation as a whole. Thus, most of the history books and encyclopaedia (for example, *Zhong Guo Lishi* ...1992) divide the 'post-liberation' age (from 1949 till today) into four distinct periods: the early socialist construction period (1949 - 1957); the period of constructing the Chinese socialist version (1958 - 1965); the Cultural Revolution decade (1966 - 1976); and the post-Mao period (1976 up to present). Most education researchers also follow this line although, as to be shown below, some would subdivide the post-Mao period as they argue that fundamental changes in education have taken place within this relatively stable period.

2.1.1. From 1949 till 1976

Language educationists generally agree that foreign language teaching in higher education has gone through five major changes since the year of the founding of the People's Republic. From 1949 till the mid-1950s, teaching and learning Russian as a foreign language remained the main stream due to the country's close economical and diplomatic relationship with the former Soviet Union. With the door of the country tightly closed to the Western world, English and other modern languages were almost stamped out (cf. Feng, 1988). Starting from about 1956, when the relation between China and the Soviet Union became bitter, through to the onset of the Great Cultural Revolution Russian was

gradually losing its popularity while English began to be restored as a foreign language into the curriculum of tertiary institutions. In 1962 the Ministry of Education promulgated its first English syllabus, called *English Language Teaching Syllabus* (*a Trial Draft*), applicable to non-English majors of five-year engineering universities. This syllabus apparently helped unify the so-called 'public English' (*Gonggong yingyu*) and boost up the size of the student population taking the EFL course. According to Feng (ibid.), in 1965 EFL takers made up 30-40 % of the total students' population of the first year group, a percentage slightly smaller than that of the Russian learning population in the same year group.

During the first four years (from 1966 to 1969) of the Cultural Revolution, China's higher education system virtually ceased to function and the tertiary institutions all over the country stopped enrolling new students. In the so-called 'worker-peasant-soldier students' (*Gongnongbing Xueyuan*) era[1] from 1970 to 1976, English language was a dominating course of all foreign languages while Russian was basically 'forgotten', a sharp contrast to the situation in the early 1950s. None the less, the impact of the Cultural Revolution on foreign language education was so strong that foreign languages in general were labelled as channels leading to capitalism, Westernisation or revisionism (in the case of Russian). English learning was, in fact, not foreign language learning in its proper sense but a kind of symbolic learning of "political slogans" or quotations of Mao Zedong. Some 'Western-culture-free' texts were selected entirely from Chinese periodicals such as *Beijing Review* and *China Reconstructs* (Dong, 1986). Ideological or political orientation for all English courses was the ultimate concern for textbook writers and teachers during the period of the Cultural Revolution.

2.1.2. From 1977 till Present

The fourth change began from 1977, the year after the Cultural Revolution when the country revived its annual college-entrance examination and when its tertiary education was claimed to be back to normal. As the country became more and more exposed to the outside world, especially to Western countries, owing to its 'open-door and reform policy', its awareness of the importance of English as the language of international commerce and communications increased accordingly. This awareness was evidently reflected, among other things, by the rapid expansion in the late 1970s of the 'public English teaching and research departments', a widely-used name for an English language teaching unit or an English centre, in all tertiary institutions and the speedy importation of a great amount of English teaching and learning material from western countries (cf. Fu, 1986). With the rapid development of the EFL industry, formally trained English graduates could not meet the demand and there was severe shortage for qualified English personnel. Therefore, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, people with any kind of English background or training could become teachers[2]. The majority of former Russian language teachers who had theoretically lost their jobs swiftly transformed themselves into English teachers usually by taking a short training course (Feng, 1988). At the same time, a considerable number of native ELT teachers or speakers from Western countries were invited in, mainly to train teachers-to-be students or in-service teachers, mostly those former Russian teachers. The lengths of the curricula varied, from half a year to four years (cf. Fu, 1986). Despite the mixed backgrounds and abilities of the teachers the 'public English' programme in China experienced not only a recovery as was generally described but great advancement over the period from 1977 to 1985 (cf. Little et al., 1994). The conventional

grammar translation approach was gradually moving toward multi-skill training to meet the learners' needs and the ELT reforms in tertiary institutions were in full swing.

This period saw the promulgation of the second syllabus. Entrusted by the Ministry of Education, Qinghua and Beida, two leading universities in Beijing, drafted the syllabus which was issued to tertiary institutions after it was modified and approved by the Committee of Foreign Language Textbook Writing and Editing for Science and Engineering Institutions (Fu, 1986). It was titled the *Service English Syllabus* in its English version even though the Chinese name of the programme remained the same as that given the 1962 syllabus. Most of the components of the syllabus remained basically unchanged. The differences shown in the 1980 syllabus from the 1962's include: 1) after the 240-hour foundation reading stage for four semesters, the former stipulated a speciality reading stage which allocated two hours per week and would last for two to three semesters; 2) the 1980 syllabus specified graded requirements for reading speed; and 3) as the 1965 syllabus, it stipulated as the first principle that the programme must be ideologically guided by Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zhedong Thought. However, the 1980 version states that the programme should also reflect objective principles of English language teaching. This change in tone seems to suggest that the revisers were aware of the effects of the ideological orientation on foreign language education.

The syllabus promulgated in 1980 turned out to be short-lived. In 1982, the Ministry of Education organised a national conference with its focus on evaluating of the 1980 *Service English Syllabus* and its applications. In the summary of the conference by the ministry, two main reasons were listed for the syllabus 'deficiency'. First, the objectives of the *Syllabus* were established on the basis of the entrance level of the college students of 1979. They could no longer address learners' needs. Second, the deficiency could be seen

in the lack of clear teaching goals and means of assessment (pp. 263-4, *College English Syllabus* 1985). In the document, the ministry authorised two national associations to work together as the Syllabus Revising Team: the All-China Supervisory Committee for College Foreign Language Education of Science and Engineering and the All-China Association of Foreign Language Teaching and Research. As both associations were made up largely of English language specialists from leading universities and were of equal level, the ministry, with a clear intention to prioritise English language education for science and engineering students, made it plain that the former committee was the 'backbone' of the Syllabus Revising Team which would be supported by the latter formed by ELT specialists from ten leading comprehensive universities. The 'backbone and support' relationship between the two bodies, as Chapter 3 will show, clearly reflects the belief long established in policy makers in China that foreign language education leads to advanced science and technology which are needed for the modernisation of the country[3].

1985 and 1986 saw the promulgation of two College English syllabuses by the then State Education Commission with *College English Syllabus – Applicable to Undergraduates of Science and Engineering* issued to tertiary institutions of science and engineering in early 1985 and the *College English Syllabus - Applicable to Undergraduates of Humanities and Sciences* in 1986 to comprehensive and normal universities all over China. Since then, Chinese tertiary institutions have entered their College English era. Unlike their predecessors, these two syllabuses have been extra-ordinarily influential. Education authorities, teachers and undergraduate students have shown more and more vigour in College English because passing rates in the nation-wide examinations represent the academic reputation of the institution (see 2.4 for detail). Ying (1996) remarked that there does not seem to exist another syllabus, home and abroad, which can be compared with these two syllabuses in view of profundity, scopes and significance in foreign language

education. All EFL and other foreign languages teachers and undergraduate students throughout the country are, without exception, guided or influenced in some way by the syllabuses.

2.2. The Two Syllabuses

When comparing the two syllabuses promulgated in 1985 and 1986 respectively, one can easily discern some differences in the format, course contents and the number of class contact hours. The inventories contained in both, especially those on vocabulary, also diversify. None the less, the two syllabuses could not, and do not, differ significantly for two obvious reasons. The first reason is given in the 1986 syllabus which states that it is based on the 1985 syllabus in such essential respects as course objectives, contents, band division and time arrangements. The second is obvious in that both direct to, or aim at the same nationally unified 4th and 6th band tests (see 2.4. for detail). Some of the noticeable differences have been in fact gradually disappearing and the two syllabuses are clearly in the process of converging. The two vocabulary inventories in the two syllabuses, for example, list some 5,000 entries respectively for the band courses 1-4 at the foundation stage (see 2.3.2). According to statistics by Han, Lu and Dong (1995), of the 5,000 entries more than three quarters of them are common in both inventories. As the content validity of the vocabulary section in the 4th band test was constantly questioned (see 2.4) after the nationally-unified test had been launched in 1987, the two inventories for band courses 1-4 were re-tailored and the *Common Inventory of College English Vocabulary (Bands 1-4)* was formally published in 1993.

Despite all the commonalties of the two syllabuses and merging of the two vocabulary inventories, the 1986 version declares itself to differ in two respects from the 1985 version. The first difference is its universal applicability; it alleges itself as the new and common syllabus applicable to undergraduates of humanities and sciences that may include all social and natural science disciplines that can be named. The 1986 syllabus declares that it does not only explicate in theory the necessity and possibility of integrating College English teaching for students of all subjects, but also sets out clear stipulations for course objectives, contents, arrangements, principles for material writing, and standards of testing. The clear stipulations under its claimed integrating scheme include emphasising the principles for materials writing that suits the purpose of developing basic linguistic competence (which refers to the learning of 'common core' elements (see 2.3. for detail)) in the student, and stipulating that tests should focus on the basic language elements.

The approach to textbook writing and testing adopted in the 1986 version is indeed different from that taken by the 1985 syllabus. The latter suggests that the coverage of the content in teaching should be wider than the 'common core' components and the part extended from the 'common core' should cover both features common to 'general English' and others common to 'scientific English'. As far as the contents of tests are concerned, the 1985 syllabus specifies that both linguistic abilities (the equivalent to basic language elements in the 1986 version) and communicative competence (see definitions in 2.5) should be tested. Miao (1996) comments that the difference in approaches to textbook writing and testing reflects the protracted debate among EFL researchers in China in foreign language education over such issues as whether to include the features of scientific English in the band 1-4 courses of College English and whether and how to develop in the learner communicative competence in College English education.

The second difference is the deletion of the requirement for "translating ability" in the 1986 version. This syllabus argues that the emphasis of the foundation stage (see 2.3.2. for detail) should be laid on developing basic linguistic skills in the student and his ability to directly acquire information through reading and listening. It further suggests that under favourable conditions, a translation course can be offered to a student after he/she finishes the foundation stage because translation involves some theory study and the course can be sub-divided into written translation, oral translation, editing translation, selective translation, E-M (English to Mother tongue) translation or M-E translation. After the strong argument and the suggestion, the syllabus cautiously continues with the remark that though translation is deleted from course objectives it does not mean that translation should not be taught in the foundation stage and the skills of translation can not be tested in examinations. It seems likely that the statement is made to leave room for the incorporation of translation in College English teaching in case it 'loses the battle' to exclude translation from tests. This flexible statement has proved to be necessary because the 'battle' was indeed lost as E-C (English into Chinese) translation was formally introduced as a test item into CET 4 in 1995.

Clearly, the differences between the two syllabuses claimed in the 1986 version are not significant as College English education is, to a great extent, regulated by the two tests rather than the syllabus (see 2.5 and 2.6 below) – the 'wash back effect' tagged by some educators (Zha, 1995). Though the question on the rationale of promulgating two similar syllabuses is often raised (Miao, 1996) no one seems to have an answer to it. When asked about the reason in the pilot study interview, an informant at a departmental rank responded, "In principle, the two (syllabuses) are not different. But, as the 1985 version is said to apply only to undergraduates in science and engineering institutions, there must be something as a formal document to cover those that do not belong to this category" (FT4,

author's translation). In other words, if the applicability of the 1985 version were stated to be universal, with perhaps some rephrasing at certain places, there could be only one syllabus instead of two.

From a socio-political point of view, as the author indicated earlier, the 1986 syllabus could be the 'side-effect' of the 1985 version although the former vigorously claims itself the common syllabus for all students taking the College English programme. This view could be supported with two facts presented above: the 'backbone and support' roles of the two national bodies and the 'lost battle' of translation skills by the 1986 syllabus. The emphasis put by policy makers on science and technology in foreign language education has been evident for more than a century as proficiency in a foreign language has been seen as the pathway to foreign expertise, technology and thus modernity (see Chapter 3). This emphasis, though important for studying the socio-political dimension in foreign language education, seems to be easily over-looked by educators.

Many College English specialists such as Miao (1996) think that it is quite abnormal to have two discordant syllabuses for the same programme and suggest designing a new syllabus integrating the present two versions. The syllabus is under the process of revising and it may be promulgated in the very near future (see 2. 9 for latest development). In the following sections the source to be referred to about the constituents of the syllabuses is primarily from the 1985 syllabus for the sake of brevity and clarity. The 1986 version will not be discussed unless a considerable difference between the two emerges.

2.3. Main Constituents of the Syllabus

The College English Syllabus consists of three major sections. The beginning section is simple but it contains all the key stipulations: course participants, general objectives, course specifications, course structure, testing and other stipulations related to College English Education. The middle part consists of four long inventories of vocabulary, grammatical structures, functions and notions and micro-skills. At the end of the syllabus, there is a section which gives a brief account of the historical background, the rationale and the features of the syllabus.

Course participants, according to the two syllabuses, comprise all undergraduates, except English majors, in more than a thousand tertiary institutions all over the country. The overall aim is to develop in a student different language skills to different degrees of competence. Three ranks of skill training are given: great emphasis is laid on improving his reading ability; listening and translating abilities are to be developed to a relatively lesser extent; and only basic training in writing and speaking is to be given to him. In the last section of the syllabus, the rationale of designating these three degrees of competence development is provided (see 2.3.4. for highlights of the rationale). After stipulating the course objectives, the syllabus (p. 1-2) continues that "the English learnt should be regarded not as an end but as a means of enabling the student to acquire information in his own field of specialisation and as a solid foundation for further improvement of their competence in English." The policy statement does not sound specific enough as a course objective but it clearly suggests both the importance of learner's future language use

especially in the area of receptive decoding skills and the necessity to develop a student's communicative competence as an ultimate goal.

College English comprises three major 'stages': pre-foundation stage, foundation stage and speciality reading stage. In addition, they state that universities may also offer elective courses at an advanced level to students in their third or fourth year at college. According to the syllabus, the emphasis of College English education should be laid on the *'common core'* elements which refers to the overlapping areas of general English and scientific English. More specifically, it refers to those elements such as the fundamental vocabulary, essential grammatical structures, basic functions / notions and necessary micro-skills. These four 'common core' elements are itemised in the four inventories which take up nearly 90 % of the physical space of the syllabus. As it is the first four courses at the foundation stage that are supposed to incorporate all the 'common core' elements the focus of the College English programme is clearly laid on the first four courses of this stage.

2.3.1. The Pre-Foundation Stage

Before a student begins a College English course, he is to take a placement test, the result of which will decide which band course he is going to start with. If his level is shown in this test to be lower than that required for CE 1 (College English band 1) he has to start with a pre-foundation stage course. The *pre-foundation stage*, the stage prior to the foundation stage, is divided into two bands which are coded CEP 1 and CEP 2 in the 1985 syllabus and CESB 1 and CESB 2 in the 1986 version. Both band courses are intended to develop in students basic linguistic skills in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and for

71

simple training on the four language skills. The student who takes these two courses is expected to finish a total of 120 - 140 contact hours in two terms before advancing to the foundation stage. It is made plain that if a student at a key university[4] starts with the pre-foundation stage he must study through to the basic required achievement level of the foundation stage, which means to pass CET 4. In the case of non-key universities, however, the institution itself may decide how far the student should advance through the course. The syllabus uses more than two pages tabling details such as the course codes, the number of contact hours, 'study areas' such as pronunciation, grammar, reading, listening, vocabulary, writing and speaking, and 'specifications' which elaborate on the exact requirements for each study area.

2.3.2. The Foundation Stage

Theoretically, the overwhelming majority of undergraduate students can start with any of the first four band courses of the *foundation stage*, which are coded CE 1-4 (CEB 1-4 in the 1986 version), depending on the results of the placement test. In practice, however, most of them start from CE 1 or CE 2, understandably for the purpose of administration convenience. CE 1-4 bands are intended to take the students up to the basic required achievement level while CE 5-6 bands are meant to take them up to the upper required achievement level. It is made plain in the syllabus that for the majority of students the basic required achievement level is obligatory but those students who start from CE 2 or CE 3 may go through to CE 5 or CE 6 to achieve the upper required achievement level.

Each band itself is a one-term course with a recommended timetable of four contact hours per week, 60-70 hours per term (in the 1986 version 70 contact hours, instead of a flexible

60-70, are required) and with a time ratio of one in-class hour to two out-of-class hours for assignments. At the end of each band course in the foundation stage an achievement test is administered. For CE 4 and CE 6, the test is administered on a nation-wide scale while for the other band courses, it is done locally in accordance with the specifications set out in the syllabus. If a student passes a band test the score is marked in his academic record. If he fails he will have to repeat the course. On the other hand, a student may attempt a test for a higher band than the band he is in, and if he passes it he may skip that band (CES 1985, p. 6). This stipulation makes the nature of the tests rather blurred as a test so designed is obviously used for measuring the student's English language proficiency rather than the achievement as claimed in the syllabus. This issue will be further discussed in 2.4.2 when the two tests are analysed.

The band codes, contact hours, 'study areas' and their 'specifications' for each band are specified in detail in tables just as they are done for the two pre-foundation stage courses. The study areas and specifications include vocabulary (what type of and how many words and phrases are required to be memorised by students during each band course), reading speed and accuracy (words/pm and comprehension accuracy level requirement), grammar (what grammatical structures are to be learned for each specific band course), listening (comprehension accuracy level requirement for texts presented at a certain speed), writing (ability to write on a given topic at a certain speed), speaking (ability to express oneself or to interact). For CE 4-6, translating ability is also specified (translating from English into Chinese at a required speed). The statistical requirement for the four 'common core' elements is made explicit in these study areas and specifications.

2.3.3. The Speciality Reading Stage and Elective Courses

The *speciality reading stage* is aimed to direct students into reading authentic materials relevant to their own fields. The syllabus claims that this stage is very important and, therefore, is compulsory for students who have completed the foundation stage. The speciality reading stage is supposed to comprise a total of 100 -120 classroom contact hours which stretch over three terms (with a time schedule of 2 hours per week). The reading amount of a total number of 250,000 words is also specified in the syllabus for this reading stage. What is unique is the specified approach to reading instruction for this stage. The 1985 syllabus stipulates this stage to be taught by subject teachers, with the assistance of language teachers where necessary. In the 1986 version, two different methods for speciality reading instruction are suggested: a) to teach a subject course of a student's speciality by using genuine subject course books and b) to assign reading tasks to the student such as reading reference books related to his specialised subject. None of these methods seems to involve much teaching responsibility on the part of College English teachers. The first method recommended in the 1986 version sounds very similar to the methodology stipulated in the 1985 syllabus although it does not specify who is responsible for conducting the speciality reading course. The second in the 1986 version seems to imply that the speciality reading stage may not necessarily take the form of a course but may be carried out, under some guidance, by the student himself. This method, apparently, gives the speciality reading stage an even greater flexibility.

Alongside the speciality reading stage stand the elective courses which have as their prerequisites the completion of either CE 4 or CE 6 of the foundation stage courses. The elective courses include advanced reading, listening and writing, translation techniques,

English conversation, and second foreign languages and they may be offered to students in their third year onwards in those universities where "necessary favourable conditions" exist. Judging from the context of the syllabus, these favourable conditions are most likely to refer to necessary teaching resources as manpower and facilities which are only available in key universities. In non-key tertiary institutions where the teaching resources are limited and the students' level is low, elective courses can be ignored.

The syllabus does not specify how the elective courses are to be scheduled and how the speciality reading stage and the elective courses are to be sequenced. It is deducible that the elective courses are supposed to be taken on a parallel basis with the speciality reading stage because the latter may not necessarily take the form of a formal course or, even if it does, it will take only two hours per week, as is stipulated in the syllabus.

There is an ambiguous point in both syllabuses which needs clarifying. On top of the elective course list are CE 5 and CE 6 in both versions although these two courses are specified as two band courses of the foundation stage. The purpose of this double treatment is probably to reiterate or confirm the two distinctive levels at the foundation stage: the basic required achievement level and the upper required achievement level. The listing may also serve as an indication that CE 1-4 are the real foundation stage courses, as mentioned in 2.3.2 above. None the less, there is no indication from the listing of language items in both syllabuses which can serve to justify the listing of CE 5 and CE 6 both as the last two band courses of the foundation stage and as elective courses. Furthermore, listing in such a way makes the prerequisite for the speciality reading stage somewhat equivocal as the prerequisite for this stage is the completion of the foundation stage which includes CE 5 and CE 6. The contextual clue, i.e., the speciality reading stage "stretches over terms 5 - 7 in the third year and fourth year", seems to suggest that the prerequisite for this stage

is a pass of CE 4 achievement test, which is the case in real practice. As a national syllabus the language used needs to be clearer and more precise.

2.4. Theoretical Grounds

The syllabus does not provide the theoretical grounds of the course objectives, except the mentioning of the findings of a survey conducted in 1982 (see 2.4.2 for detail). After the promulgation of the syllabus, key members of the Syllabus Revising Team made some attempts to present the theories behind the syllabus. It is the controversy of the theoretical grounds that could more thoroughly demonstrate the importance of socio-political factors in the process of syllabus designing in particular and policy making in general.

2.4.1 The Communicative Language Teaching Model

Right after the promulgation of the 1985 syllabus, Han (1985), a member of the Syllabus Revising Team, clearly states that the College English syllabus drew inspiration from the 'eclectic' model advocated by Brumfit (1984). In recent discussions College English specialists, most of whom are members of the Syllabus Revising Team, have made new attempts to 'unveil the theories' behind the syllabus. Han, Lu and Dong (1995) and Yang (1995) explain that the syllabus does not model itself on the communicative approach in its narrow sense but adopts principles of communicative language teaching in a broad perspective. These principles, according to Han, Lu and Dong, include: 1) moving from the teacher-centred model to the student-centred activity model; 2) developing from a TALO (text as linguistic object) approach to a TAVI (text as vehicle for information)

approach; and 3) using the target language as the medium in classroom instruction. To justify the communicative teaching approach so 'broadly defined', they cite quite a number of international scholars such as Canale and Swain (1980), Krashen (1981), Richards (1985) and Harmer, (1991)[5].

The author has to point out that, strangely in their paper, the theoretical framework of communicative teaching proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) is altered even though they make a direct reference to the source in the paper. In Canale and Swain's proposal, three components of communicative competence have been identified: grammatical or linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence which "is made up of two sets of rules: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse" (1980, p. 30)) and strategic competence. In Han, Lu and Dong's (1995) essay, Canale and Swain's three-component framework becomes a four-competence model: linguistic/grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategy competence. This 'misquoting' probably arises from a confusion between Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). Whatever the case, these College English specialists seem to prefer keeping sociocultural elements out of the programme. Even more strangely, the confusion or misquoting of Canale and Swain's three-component framework has never been challenged or even mentioned so far by any scholar. On the contrary, the four-competence model with Canale and Swain's 1980 article as the source has been repeatedly recited in Chinese in quite a few papers such as a recent one by Yang (1999).

2.4.2. The Basis for the Ranking of the Skills

The syllabus itself also makes explicit efforts in justifying the ranking of four skills for the College English programme with survey evidence. According to the syllabus (p. 270), a survey was conducted in 1983 among approximately 2000 graduates. The findings of the survey suggest that:

   a) reading remains the main language skill needed by students of science and engineering to acquire information,

   b) students read mainly scientific and reference materials,

   c) the other three language skills are also used, but to a lesser degree than reading.

Therefore, the syllabus states that the training of the four skills should be ranked as the future needs for the skills are not commensurate. Reading was determined as the most important skill for students taking College English while "a medium degree of competence" in listening and translating were required for them (CES, 1985: 271). Only "a relatively low degree of competence" in writing and speaking was needed.

It is this ranking that has resulted in great controversy among College English specialists and students. Many researchers have tactfully challenged the survey and the ranking of the skills in the syllabus by presenting their own survey findings. Ying (1996) reports that a survey conducted by six universities in early 1991 among 1,445 graduates (with 697 returns) showed that the three most needed skills for them in the coming decade would be "the ability to write in English essays, scientific reports, theses, and conference papers, the ability to use English for negotiating contracts, and the skills to interact in English" (p. 43, author's translation). In 1993, Ying replicated the questionnaire survey among 800 graduates (with 431 valid returns) and compared in her report the survey finding with that from the 1983 survey cited in the syllabus. The figures from her survey (see Table 2.4.2.1

for highlights) clearly show that graduates' needs for listening, speaking and writing skills contrast dramatically with those found a decade earlier. In a later part of her report, she notes that when asked about the most useful skills for the coming decade in interviews her informants' responses went most favourably to listening and speaking skills.

Table 2.4.2.1. — A comparison of two survey results for the skills needs analysis with the 1993 findings highlighted.

Skills	Most needed	Needed	Sometimes needed	Not needed
Listening and speaking (1983)	7.95% (87)	21.39% (234)	45..51% (476)	27.15% (297)
Listening (1993)	25.29% (109)	42.00% (181)	23.43% (101)	8.56% (37)
Speaking (1993)	23.29% (103)	37.82% (163)	29.00% (125)	8.82% (38)
Writing (1983)	3.65% (39)	21.54% (230)	38.68% (415)	35.95% (284)
Writing (1993)	23.20% (100)	38.28% (165)	28.77% (124)	9.24% (40)

Source: Ying (1996, author's translation with the format slightly altered to save space)

In another questionnaire survey, Xia (1997) asked her graduate informants which skills they felt the weakest after four years at college. She reports that nearly 70% of them felt that they were weak at listening and speaking and more than a third thought that their writing skill was poor. Many of her informants made comments that the biggest problems with College English education include the neglect of speaking and listening teaching, the test-oriented attitude and the lack of measures to develop abilities to communicate in the target language. To study the issue further, Xia also conducted a survey among a selected group of employers in Guangzhou and reports that there is a big gap between the employers' expectations and the actual abilities the graduates demonstrate. Major findings of her survey are shown in Table 2.4.2.2. Xia's findings, particularly the figures to the last question in the table, suggest that most graduates could hardly satisfy the needs of companies and firms where good oral communication skills are prerequisites. It is also interesting to note that when asked about their criteria for employing people, none of the .

employers thought that the CET 4 and CET 6 certificates (see 2.5) reflect graduates' English language competence truthfully though the great majority took them as reference for employment purpose.

Table 2.4.2.2 — Selected findings of Xia's (1997) investigation into graduates' English language abilities among employers in Guangzhou. (n = unknown)

Questions	Responses			
Which English language skill(s) is/are the most important for employees in your company?	Communica-ting orally 56.5%	Writing 34.7%	Translating 21.7%	Oral inter-pretation 4.3%
What is your general comment on the English abilities of graduates in your company?	Quite good 8.7%	Not bad 47.83%	In need of fur. training 34.78%	Not good at all 8.7%
What skill(s) do you think univ. graduates is/are the weakest and should improve most?	Listening & speaking 69.5%	Writing 26%	Translating 17.39%	Reading 0%

Source: Xia (1997, author's translation)

Quite a few other survey reports such as the ones by Zheng and Wei (1996), Feng (1998) and Zhao (1998) provided further evidence of the students' future needs and their keen enthusiasm in developing oral skills. Zhao's report went further to offer clear evidence of teachers' willingness and capability of offering oral-skill instruction.

It is worth noticing that in a recent paper, two important figures in College English education, Huang and Shao (1998)[6], make some of their survey findings public, without mentioning the sample size and the time of the survey, though. Their reports show an even more negative view of the employers about the oral and writing skills of graduates. According to their report, 52% of them gave the oral ability of graduates an 'average' rating while 37% rated it 'low' or 'very low'. The employers' rating of graduates' writing skills was very similar to that of oral skills. With further implementation of the 'open-door' policy and the development of the country's economy, Huang and Shao remark, employers would have higher and higher expectations for the oral and writing skills for graduates. Without an immediate reform to the programme, the gap between employers' expectations

and the communication skills of future graduates will become wider and wider. The positive attitude is explicitly demonstrated by these two influential figures cum policy makers to raising the status of speaking and writing skills in the programme.

All the evidence published indicates that the College English syllabus should give oral skills high status in view of the learners' future needs and their enthusiasm. On the other hand, none of the scholars cited above intended to rank reading behind the oral skills and some of them stated clearly that all language skills should be given equal status. Despite the overwhelming evidence showing the inadequacy of the ranking of the language skills for College English, the 'theory' of reading as 'the most-needed language skill' is going to stay in the new syllabus under revision (see 2.9 for detail). It seems clear that socio-political factors could in fact be more influential than needs analysis and other theoretical studies in the process of policy making, at least in foreign language education.

2.4.3. Other Theoretical Issues

Another 'special feature' of the College English programme is the so-called 'common core' elements which are claimed to be set up in association with the 'chief aim' (see 2.5 for detailed discussion) of developing "the students' abilities to use English as a tool for acquiring information in their fields of specialisation" (p. 266). In their review of the College English programme, Han, Lu and Dong (1995) state that the 'common core' view as a teaching guideline has been widely recognised nowadays. It is accepted as a theory which has taken both teaching practice and the features of general English and scientific English into consideration. Obviously, the 'common core' hypothesis is specially needed for theorising the four inventories which form the main part of the syllabus. On the other

hand, it is important to note that, Han, Lu and Dong clearly put more emphasis on the 'common core' vocabulary and grammar than the functions/notions and micro-skills. This emphasis was also obvious in Yang's (1995) paper. The emphasis shown in these two semi-policy documents[7] has strong implication in directing College English teaching and the running of the whole programme.

Despite the needs analysis which showed her reservation about the ranking of the skills, Ying (1996) concludes in explicit terms that the 1985 syllabus was designed in line with the characteristics of English language teaching in science and engineering institutions by absorbing the merits of the structural or grammatical syllabus and functional/notional syllabus and taking as its basic foundation the teaching of language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, writing and translating. The syllabus, in her words, integrates theories of current foreign language teaching research and reflects the country's conditions and the characteristics of the Chinese learners. It seems that, whatever fundamental principles or teaching approaches are offered to support the syllabus theoretically, College English specialists apparently agree on the assertion that the syllabus is not based on any single theory but established upon many dominant foreign language teaching syllabuses and teaching approaches. They also seem to show a tacit understanding that policy documents are correct in general, whatever theoretical weaknesses they may demonstrate.

2.5. The "Chief Aim" and the "Ultimate Goal"

The syllabus uses quite a few pages to rationalise the stipulated 'chief aim', another term for the first course objective listed above, i.e. to develop in the student a relatively high

level of reading proficiency, and to discuss its relationship with the *'ultimate goal'* of foreign language teaching – to develop in him the ability to communicate in the target language via written and/or oral channels. The 'chief aim' is claimed to be stipulated on the basis of the result of the 1983 survey just mentioned above. Although the other language skills were necessary in view of ever-increasing international communication, it would be unrealistic to expect a student to develop all language skills at an equal level of proficiency within the limited number of contact hours for the programme.

After the discussion of the 'chief aim', the syllabus brings up the issue of developing in students communicative competence and claims that this is the ultimate goal of language teaching. Communicative competence is referred to as "the ability to employ appropriate skills at discourse level to acquire and convey information", as opposed to linguistic competence defined as "the ability to use one's knowledge of language to comprehend and construct sentences" (CES, p. 267). The syllabus elaborates the correlationship between these two competences in College English education:

> It follows from this that, in teaching, the students should not only be given the necessary linguistic knowledge but also trained to use this knowledge, through the application of language skills, in reading extensively and in carrying out other communicative activities. Teaching should thus be directed towards fostering the acquisition of language skills and an understanding of language functions and notions, and towards developing the ability to use these in communication. During the course, the emphasis should gradually shift from language training at sentence structure level towards communicative training at discourse level. (pp. 20 -21, CES 1985)

This paragraph seems to suggest a gradual expansion of course objectives in College English teaching, from those which give emphasis to the training of learners' language

skills, particularly the reading skill, to the development of all areas of language use, i.e. the competence to communicate in writing and speaking.

In a later paragraph, however, the implication of developing students' communicative competence appears slightly different.

> The CES suggests that the higher the bands, the higher the ratio of communicative competence to linguistic competence should constitute in the whole teaching process. The CES stresses that English teaching should be closely guided by the principle that the students are taught to master English as a tool for acquiring information in their fields of specialisation and thus teaching should be organised not only at sentence structure level, but more importantly, at discourse level as well. (p. 267-8, CES 1985)

The first sentence makes it clear that more and more efforts should be made in higher band courses in developing students' communicative competence. However, this sentence seems to imply that linguistic competence is a prerequisite, instead of part and parcel of communicative competence. Furthermore, the phrase 'for acquiring information' in the second sentence suggests that teaching should aim only at receptive areas of language use (reading and listening), rather than at communicative competence in all areas of language use. The ambiguity or subtle difference from normal interpretations of the communicative language teaching approach shown in the syllabus suggests that the 'chief aim' and the 'ultimate goal' could be flexible terms which may be interpreted differently.

This is indeed the case. While many educators take it for granted that the 'ultimate goal' refers to the development of all areas of language use, particularly speaking and listening skills, publications show that some College English specialists covertly take linguistic and communicative competences as separate entities and advocate the 'receptive-skills-only' perspective. Guo (1995) asserts strongly that in classrooms of College English there is

basically no probability to train students' speaking ability as it is the most difficult skill in language learning. His argument, without giving any evidence, is that speaking ability is needed only by a small proportion of the students' population. Their needs could be met by other means such as attending elective courses and other oral activities like the 'English corner'. In another recent essay, Gu (1997) makes similar remarks, but in a modified fashion. He argues, without giving reference, that the 'comprehension model' developed in Western countries attaches most importance to listening and reading skills. The model follows that when these receptive skills reach a certain level, productive skills (speaking and writing) will be automatically developed. He reasons that the experience and theories developed home and abroad reveal a universal rule in foreign language teaching: receptive skills first and productive skills second. This rule, in Gu's view, is the major basis for policy making and methodology development in China.

As mentioned in 2.4 above, influential figures in College English education such as Han, Lu and Dong (1995) and Yang (1995) practically put more emphasis on 'common core' vocabulary and grammar than on functions/notions and micro-skills, while suggesting to strike a balance between communicative competence and linguistic competence. This emphasis covertly supports the receptive-skills-first, if not the receptive-skills-only view. Evidence of attaching less importance than stipulated in the syllabus to functions and notions and micro-skills could also be found in articles by materials writers. In reviewing the feedback in the use of her textbook, for example, Dong (1992) evaluates the book against the vocabulary and grammar inventories only. Although the micro-skills inventory is touched upon in her article, it is appreciated but said to be the imitation of Munby's (1978) syllabus that needs revising. The functions/notions inventory, however, is totally forgotten. All these seem to show that the 'ultimate goal' of developing the students' ability to communicate in the target language is interpreted by many as to develop their

competence in the receptive areas of language use only instead of their competence to communicate via both written and oral channels.

What looks the most unusual for a syllabus, as mentioned in the Introduction to the thesis, is the total absence of explicit stipulation for cultural studies though implicit reference to socio-cultural competence is identifiable. While the ultimate goal is to develop students' communicative competence, one can not find, throughout the syllabus, common notions such as cultural competence and sociolinguistic competence, though the latter is claimed as a component of communicative competence in many papers by those College English specialists like Han, Lu and Dong (1995), Chen and Yuan (1991) and Zhang (1991). The syllabus offers no explanation for the lack of addressing explicitly the cultural dimension in College English, the importance of which has been so long and so widely recognised and can hardly be overstated in foreign language teaching and learning.

2.6. CET 4 and CET 6

Both *CET 4* (College English Test for Band 4) and *CET 6* (College English Test for Band 6) are nationally unified tests and they are administered twice a year to College English students. The two tests are normally considered the key links of the whole programme, systems engineering in Han, Lu and Dong's (1995) terms, and are regarded as the driving force in implementing the syllabus and in improving teaching and the status of College English (Feng, 1994 and Han, Lu and Dong, 1995). While a pass of CET 4 gives a student a certificate of the basic required achievement level, a pass of CET 6 wins him/her a certificate for the upper required achievement level. Both certificates are stratified into two

classes differentiating 'high-fliers' (85% or above out of 100%) from 'averagers' (60%-84%). This cut-off line serves as a motivation stimulator. In line with the syllabus, CET 4 is taken by all undergraduate students with the exception of those in non-key colleges who start from a pre-foundation stage course. According to official statistics, about four million students had taken CET 4 from 1987 to the end of 1994. Among them were even a considerable number of diploma students from more than 200 vocational institutes in the country (Feng, 1994). In a recent talk, Yang[8] gave a figure of about two million test takers every year. Compared with CET 4, CET 6 is relatively flexible and is taken by those who have passed CET 4 and then, at their own will in most cases, have finished CE 5 and CE 6 courses.

The first CET 4 was administered nation-wide in September 1987, two years after the promulgation of the College English syllabus. Following that year, as expected, while the second CET 4 was conducted in an even larger scale in more institutions, the first CET 6 was organised in many key tertiary institutions by the then State Education Commission (Feng,1994). It is a fact that, in its long history since Confucius, China has cultivated a culture of highly valuing unified examinations of whatever kind (see Chapter 3 for more discussion). Both the government and the general public have sincerely believed that the real quality of an educated person is exhibited in unified tests and, more importantly to the general public, real equality comes from tests. Therefore, in the post-Mao decade when examinations resumed after the Cultural Revolution during which examinations were negated, CET 4 and CET 6 quickly gained momentum and, starting from 1992, the annual band tests became semi-annual with one being administered in early January and the other in mid-June. The role of CET 4 and CET 6 has become more and more decisive in College English education.

2.6.1. The Contents of CET 4 and CET 6

As Table 2.6.1.1. and Table 2.6.1.2. show, CET 4 and CET 6 look very much like TOEFL in terms of format and contents. The majority of test items are multiple-choice questions (four choices for each test item) and the sequence of test sections are exactly the same as that of TOEFL. A careful look at the test papers shows some slight differences in length, weighting system and language level. The reason for the similarity does not seem to be documented in recent publications. In the pilot survey conducted by the author in late December 1995, a College English specialist commented that the similarity may be due to two apparent factors according to the time (in the late 80s) and the situation when the tests were first introduced: the relatively high objectivity and comparative simplicity of TOEFL-like tests for marking hundreds and thousands of papers after each test and, perhaps more importantly, the huge and increasing number of students taking TOEFL (Note-2). This view was shared by some other informants in interviews (cf. FT6).

Table 2.6.1.1 — Contents of CET 4*, time allocation and percentage for each part

(Total testing time: 120 minutes)

Parts and time needed	Skills tested	Test format	Percentage
Part I (20 minutes)	Listening Comprehension	20 multiple choice questions	20 %
Part II (35 minutes)	Reading Comprehension	20 multiple choice questions	40 %
Part III (20 minutes)	Vocabulary and Structure	30 multiple Choice questions	15 %
Part IV (15 minutes)	Cloze	20 multiple choice questions	10 %
Part V (30 minutes)	Guided writing (a guiding phrase in Chinese for each of the 3 paragraphs)	Not less than 100 words on a given topic	15 %

* Source: Li, Y., Peng, J. and Hu, S. (1994a)

Table 2.6.1.2 — Contents of CET 6*, time allocation and percentage for each part

(Total testing time: 120 minutes)

Part I (20 minutes)	Listening Comprehension	20 multiple choice questions	20 %
Part II (35 minutes)	Reading Comprehension	20 multiple choice questions	40 %
Part III (20 minutes)	Vocabulary and Structure	30 multiple Choice questions	15 %
Part IV (15 minutes)	Error Correction (ten mistakes in a passage)	Changing, adding or deleting words to make passage right	10 %
Part V (30 minutes)	Guided writing (topic given in Eng., outlines in Chinese)	Not less than 120 words	15 %

* Source: Li, Y., Peng, J. and Hu, S. (1994b)

N.B.: At the time of the publication of Li et al's books, translation was not yet a formal test item. It was not formally tested until 1995.

Except for the language level, there is hardly any observable difference between CET 4 and CET 6 in terms of length, basic format and testing areas, though, as the tables above show, minor differences in testing forms exist in part 4 and part 5. Error correction in part 4 of CET 6 is, perhaps, assumed more challenging than cloze in multiple choice form in the same part of CET 4. The outlines for the writing part of CET 4 and CET 6 used to be given in English, but from 1992 onwards they were given in Chinese (Li, et al. 1994). This minor change of testing format was based on the assumption that when outlines for a writing task were provided in Chinese, translating ability which is specified for higher band courses including CE 4 and CE 6 could be tested to a certain extent. Therefore, part 5 of both tests, a section testing writing by name, served a dual purpose during the three-year period. This change also indicated that to include translation into the tests was inevitable. Consequently, in 1995, translation as a formal test item made its appearance in the form of

translating from English to Chinese selected sentences from the reading comprehension passages of the tests.

2.6.2. Matches and Mismatches

As the syllabus claims, both CET 4 and CET 6 are achievement tests. Therefore, the contents of the tests should correspond with the 'study areas' and their 'specifications' for the courses in the best possible way and the learner should have finished the course before he attempts the corresponding test. In general, the five parts contained in each test match most of the 'study areas' and their 'specifications'. Statistically, the first four parts of the tests correspond broadly to the 'study areas' such as vocabulary, listening, and reading. The generous allocation of 40% of the total marks to the twenty multiple choice questions in part 1, reading comprehension, conforms the stated chief aim of developing a relatively high level of proficiency in reading. It should be noted that translations in Chinese to some words can be found in most reading comprehension passages because these words are not stipulated in the vocabulary inventory. This shows that vocabulary is the best-matched area with the syllabus. As was mentioned in 2.4.1 above, translation has become a new testing item, which is also a positive step towards the conformation of the tests with the 1985 syllabus.

Strictly speaking, however, CET 4 and CET 6 cannot be dubbed as achievement tests because they do not comply with the commonly-accepted definition for such tests. An achievement test by common definition (cf. Bachman, 1991; Richards, et al., 1985; and Widdowson, 1990) is based on the content of a particular course and is usually used to measure how much someone has learned in that course or programme. CET 4 and CET 6

do not satisfy the prerequisites in three aspects. Firstly, the syllabus allows a student (a high flier) to attempt a test one band higher than the band course he is in, (practically, it refers to any band test including CET 4 and CET 6) as was mentioned in 2.3.2. This suggests that the tests do not exactly measure what has been taught or the progress in learning and, thus, cannot be claimed to be related to the curriculum. They are, in this aspect, rather like proficiency tests in that they in fact measure what a learner is capable of doing as a result of his/her cumulative learning experience (Bachman, 1991). Secondly, when comparing the overall contents of the two courses with the two tests, one can easily detect two obvious mismatches. Totally missing from the two tests is the part testing speaking skills which form one of the course objectives of the syllabus. No remarks throughout the syllabus suggest conditions of waiving the speaking test. In no way does the requirement for a relatively low level of speaking ability specified in the syllabus justify the absence of speaking testing because writing ability, which is ranked side by side with speaking, takes 15% of the total marks in both tests. For foreign language programmes such as College English, it is, of course, practically difficult to administer the test in view of the large population of test takers and limitation of resources. The long absence of the speaking test, none the less, will undoubtedly do a disservice to the whole programme as the 'ultimate goal' of it is to develop communicative competence via both spoken and written forms.

2.7. Classroom Practice

In recent years, classroom teaching has been a central issue of discussion among College English practitioners. Some papers present how the writers as individual teachers use

particular techniques to deal with students (for examples, Huang, 1998; Hou and Lu, 1997; Zhang, 1995; Li, 1991) or make calls for improving teaching methodology (Han, 1998 and Li, 1995). From these papers, one can get some ideas about what an individual could do in College English classrooms and in which ways the programme could be directed. Individual cases are often accounts in which 'model' teachers used effective techniques to achieve teaching 'success'. Zhang's (1995) paper, for example, tells how he used the communicative approach to successfully develop his students' competence in all four areas of language use. In his classrooms, many interactive, student-centred activities were claimed to be used effectively. These activities include oral presentations, group discussions, students' paraphrasing and retelling texts, teacher-questioning and students-answering, transforming written information into graphic forms, and (teacher) checking students' previewing. He claims that several years of practice has shown that his students usually outperform other students at his university. His students' passing rate of CET 4 is used as a tool for justification of his statement.

'Success' stories like this are rare because many practitioners find it difficult to finish the contents they are supposed to cover in classes. Some scholars in recent years begin to study what ordinary College English teachers do in classrooms by conducting surveys into classroom teaching. A large-scaled questionnaire survey among both teachers and students was done by Zheng, Wei and Cheng (1997). In this survey, 351 teachers were first asked to estimate how long they spend in each class 'instructing' students and in a similar way 3,224 students were asked to estimate how long their teachers spend in each class 'talking to them'. Tables 2.7.1. and 2.7.2. present the major findings of their survey. Contrary to the claim made in Han, Lu and Dong (1995; see 2.4), they found that most of the classrooms were very teacher-centred. About two thirds of the teachers estimated that

% of time talking	Number of answers	% of answers
21-40%	13	3.7 %
41-60%	74	21.1%
61-80%	160	45.6%
80% above	79	22.5%

Table 2.7.1. — Teachers' replies to "How much time do you spend instructing in class?" (n = 351*)

% of time talking	Number of answers	% of answers
21-40%	177	5.5 %
41-60%	645	20.0%
61-80%	1254	38.9%
80% above	1148	35.6%

Table 2.7.2. — students' replies to "How much time does your teacher spend talking to you in class?" (n = 3,224)

* 25 teachers gave no answer to the question.

Source: Zheng, Wei and Cheng (1997: 2-3)

they used more than 60% of class time teaching grammar and explaining words and texts. The percentage given by the students about teachers' talking time was even higher than the self-estimation of the teachers. Nearly 75% of the students estimated that their teachers' talking time was 60% and above and more than a third of the students even think more than 80% of the class time was 'teacher talk'.

To confirm the findings, the researchers conducted some classroom observations and interviews and noticed that in intensive reading classes (see 3.3.1 for detailed account), a majority of teachers kept on explaining language points, grammar in difficult sentences and translating long sentences while their students mainly remained passive, listening and taking notes. Some often made their students do mock test papers, checked their spellings and had dictations. The tools for classroom teaching remained traditional: a textbook, a piece of chalk and a blackboard though the use of language laboratories was found on the rise. Few classes in their observation were found conducted in a communicative teaching approach.

Another interesting finding from their survey was that many teachers reported that they used the target language as the medium of instruction. This supports the claim made by Han, Lu and Dong (1995). Table 2.7.3. below shows how the teachers responded to the question "Which language do you use as the medium of instruction?":

Table 2.7.3. — Teacher's responses to the question on the medium of instruction (n = 351)

Medium of instruction	Number of people	% of people
No answer	26	7.4%
Always in Chinese	2	0.6%
Almost always in Chinese	3	0.9%
Mostly in Chinese than in English	27	7.7%
Half in Chinese and half in English	74	21.1%
Mostly in English than in Chinese	125	35.6%
Almost always in English	85	24.6%
Always in English	9	2.6%

Source: Zheng, Wei and Cheng (1997: 4)

These figures, as Zheng, Wei and Cheng noted, show that the medium of instruction used in College English classrooms is in sharp contrast with that two decades ago when the grammar-translation model was dominant and when almost all lessons were conducted in Chinese. There are two apparent explanations for the switch of code: the ever-increasing awareness of the importance of oral skills among teachers and teacher trainers and the students' expectations for communicating orally (cf. Cortazzi and Jin 1996). The switch has clear significance for the development of the College English programme.

In another recent survey, similar observations were made. With a purpose of analysing the quality and quantity of 'teacher talk', Zhao (1998) managed to observe and record a number of reading classroom interactions between teachers and students. After analysing the recorded data she reported eight cases which she took as representative. Table 2.7.4.

shows the comparative lengths of time taken by the eight teachers and their students in a class of 45 minutes.

Table 2.7.4. — 'Teacher talk' time in a 45-minute reading class (n = 8)

Teacher number	Time in minutes			
	Class time	Teacher talk	Student talk	Other activities
T1	45	40	3	2
T2	45	40	4	1
T3	45	38	4	3
T4	45	35	9	1
T5	45	30	7	8
T6	45	26	12	7
T7	45	29	13	3
T8	45	28	7	10
Percentage	100%	65 - 90%	4 - 28%	0 – 20%

Source: Zhao (1998: 17)

The figures show that students' roles in the classroom could be even more passive than the teacher-self-reported data given by Zheng, Wei and Cheng (1997). During classroom observation, she noticed some features which indicate differences between a lesson with much 'teacher talk' and a lesson with comparatively less. In those classes where teachers talked almost all the time, the students appeared inattentive and bored and some even spoke in each other's ears. Whereas, in some other classes where a teacher talked less, the classroom atmosphere was clearly more active and interactive. The students showed more interest in the 'teacher talk' and gave quicker responses to questions raised by the teacher. In her discussion on the data, strangely however, Zhao offers no definition to 'other activities', the last type of figures in the report. Apparently, she takes that as insignificant. None the less, these figures could be worth discussing owing to the fact that Teachers 5, 6 and 8 spent quite some time on these activities.

In her report, Zhao goes on to list the number of questions asked by each teacher, put the questions into open-ended and closed types and categorise the ways in which these questions got answered in the classrooms. The findings are given in Table 2.7.5. She notes that although most classes were teacher-centred, both the quantity and the quality of

Table 2.7.5. — The number of questions asked by the teachers and the ways the questions were answered.

Teacher No.	Total No. of Qs	Types of Qs		Ways the Qs were answered			
		Open Qs	Closed Qs	By nomination	In chorus	By volunteers	By teacher self
T1	2	0	2	1	0	0	1
T2	24	0	24	0	5	9	10
T3	29	0	29	14	3	5	7
T4	55	0	55	10	11	21	13
T5	36	1	35	12	2	9	15
T6	62	0	62	0	12	50	0
T7	60	1	59	9	10	38	3
T8	51	0	51	3	12	27	9

Source: Zhao (1998: 19-20)

interaction between the teachers and the students varied greatly. Teacher 1 raised only two closed questions one of which was answered by him/herself whereas Teacher 6 asked 62 questions to the group and the questions were responded either by volunteer students or in chorus. The figures show that interactions took place between teachers and students in some classrooms but they did not suggest that these classrooms were student-centred as almost all the teachers' questions were closed. Zhao comments that open-ended questions are more likely to lead students to explore the text content in depth and to enable them to express themselves creatively by using their own background knowledge. This would have an obvious positive effect on students with a view to improving their communicative

competence. She suggests that teachers should increase the use of open-ended questions in classrooms.

As far as the quality of 'teacher talk' is concerned, Zhao provides one short tape script which in fact helps to explain why some teachers talk too much:

> T: Now, let's look at paragraph 1, paragraph 1. "A nuclear power has just declared war on another nation." In this sentence, the phrase "declare war on" is useful and popular, "declare war on", and it means "announce war, announce war on," In Chinese, "*Xianzhan*", "*Xianzhan*". Now I shall give one example, "Britain declared war on Germany in 1914", "Britain declared war on Germany in 1914", um, Comrade × × (nominating a student), would you please explain it in Chinese?
>
> S: *Yingguo zai yijiuyusinan xang deguo xianzhan.*
>
> T: *Dui* (meaning 'That's right'.). Sit down, please. *Yingguo zai yijiuyusinan xang deguo xianzhan.* If you have time, you can practice this phrase after class. And then, paragraph 2, second line, "Rocket blasts shatter the silence just before dawn." Here, "rocket blasts" is the subject, "rocket blasts" is the subject, and verb is "shatter". As we know, sometimes, the word "blast" can be used as a verb, but here, "blast" is not a verb. It is a noun, together with "rocket blasts". Here the word "blasts" means "explosions", "explosions", um, I suppose most of you know that the word means "*Baozha*", umh um. Don't you know another word for "*Baozha*"?
>
> Ss: (silence).
>
> T: How to say "*Zhayao*"? It's "explosive". (writing the word on the blackboard) Although these two words are nouns (pointing at the blackboard), this word "*Baozha*", this word "*Zhayao*". (p. 18)

The tape script, though short, illustrates some interesting features in a College English classroom: the way a teacher explains grammatical points and sentences containing new words and expressions, the interactions between him/her and the students and the way he/she expands the vocabulary under study. Through her interviews with teachers, Zhao reports that many of them first of all believed that in reading classes the teacher should give detailed explanation to the language points so that the students could have a good understanding of the text. She also notes that most teachers held the view that 'teacher

talk' could save time as using questions to check understanding, or any other methods to ensure comprehension, may be too time-consuming and affect the progress of the course. Furthermore, she indicates that spoon-feeding has been the culture of teaching in China and many students expect the teacher to explain everything and their responsibility is to take notes. Some teachers may have prepared some questions in advance, but when they found that students are 'unwilling' to respond or make mistakes whenever responding, they would turn back to the spoon feeding practice.

Despite their efforts in revealing teachers' classroom behaviour, neither Zhao (1998) nor Zheng, Wei and Cheng's (1997) showed interest in discussing the causes of teacher-centredness in College English classroom. Cortazzi and Jin (1996), however, offer an explanation from a cultural point of view. They argue that teacher-centred classrooms in fact reflect the Chinese "culture of learning" – the hidden curriculum embodying "taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, values, attitudes and beliefs about what constitute good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education." (p. 169) Cortazzi and Jin surveyed among 135 students. They found that more than a third of these students regarded 'deep knowledge' as the most important quality of a teacher. Only about 16% of them considered teaching methods crucial for a 'good teacher'. A 'good student', on the other hand, was thought to be 'hard-working' and 'respect and obey the teacher' by paying attention to him/her in class. These expectations have institutionalised the teacher-centred approach, which is adopted in the 'intensive reading' course, the backbone of the College English programme. In this course, 'learned' teachers talk volubly, explaining grammar and language points, while respectful students listen attentively, absorbing knowledge.

Clearly all these empirical studies into the College English classrooms are of value in that they reveal teachers' and students' classroom behaviour and the Chinese culture of learning from different perspectives. The large-scale survey conducted by Zhen, Wei and Cheng (1997) provides quantitative data for classroom research. While Cortazzi and Jin's (1996) discussion sheds some new light on the learning culture of Chinese students and teachers, Zhao's (1998) study is particularly relevant to research into behaviour of College English teachers. None the less, none of the studies touched upon cultural studies teaching though all of them were investigations into College English classrooms.

2.8. Evaluation

The sections above have given a general account of the context for the present study. It is widely believed that the syllabus together with the two tests have brought about direct changes in foreign language education and exerted a strong influence on the education system of the country (Ying, 1996; Han, Lu and Dong 1995; and Feng, 1994). But what changes have exactly taken place and in what ways do the syllabus and tests influence the country's education system? Why are the impacts of CET 4 and CET 6 on the country's education system so strong as is widely claimed? Do practitioners and scholars always react positively to the effects brought about by the tests? Does College English education in actual fact widen the students' horizon and enable them to communicate competently with people from other cultures? It is obviously difficult to provide answers to all these questions, particularly the last one (this will be taken up in Chapter 6), but this section is intended to answer most of these questions by presenting the published evaluations.

2.8.1. Positive Reactions to the Syllabus and the Tests

The significance of the College English programme is frequently underlined by education policy makers in China. The most decisive comment came from Zhou (quoted in Han, Lu and Dong 1995), Director of the Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education,

> College English is the most substantial programme in the country. It attracts the greatest attention from students. The programme is decisive in the country's education reform and the two tests have great impact in the country. (p. 45, author's translation)

His words are frequently cited by many writers when they review the College English programme. The 'improved results' of the two tests are often quoted by College English specialists to defend the programme which is believed to have helped make important breakthroughs in English education. In the 1997 New Year message, Wu (1997), Chief Editor of *Wai Yu Jie* (Journal of the Foreign Language World), states that his journal has its focal point on College English because it is a programme for millions of students and thus the improvement of the English level of these students would have a strong impact on Chinese socialist construction in the twenty-first century. He also states that to focus his journal's attention on this programme means to address the needs of the 'dragon head' for foreign language education of the whole country.

Since the promulgation of the syllabus and particularly the introduction of the two nation-wide tests, not only educators but administrators in tertiary institutions have in general reacted positively and implemented it vigorously. The positive reactions are thoroughly featured in the fifty papers which were presented at the National Symposium on College English Teaching and Research held in late July 1994 by the Daqing Petroleum Institute. Many of these papers including those by keynote speakers were published in *Wai Yu Jie*

100

(Journal of Foreign Language World) which has on the average dedicated one third or more of its space in each issue to College English education in recent years. The positive comments from these papers and some other related reports are summarised as follows:

1. The teaching principles set out in the syllabus are scientific, comprehensive and reciprocal. The syllabus has proved to be realistic and practical in terms of students' needs, students' levels, time arrangements and teaching resources. The reasons given for the evaluation include: a) the 'common core' elements are universally recognised and have proved to be effective in improving content validity and developing in the student basic language competence (Han, Lu and Dong 1995); b) the dividing of the College English programme into band courses greatly facilitates the quantification of content for teaching and learning and provides convenient parameters for allocating a student according to his level of language ability (Ying 1996); and c) the stipulation on the correlationship between the 'chief aim' and the 'ultimate goal' balances the course objectives and leads to developing in the student both linguistic and communicative competence (Yang 1995).

2. As a result of teachers' efforts in implementing the principles, students in tertiary institutions have demonstrated ever-improving language ability, especially in receptive areas of language use. This claim is mostly based on the statistics which show that only 25.6 % of the 1985-students of the whole country passed CET 4 upon graduation in 1989 but just five years later in 1994 the mean percentage of the 1990-students who passed this test was raised to 66 % (Feng 1994).

3. Textbooks are regarded as the major means to implement the syllabus. In recent years, a number of high-quality College English textbooks have been compiled and are widely used in tertiary institutions throughout the country. The most representative ones include *College English* Revised Edition (1997, by Dong, chief editor, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press), *New English Course* Second Edition (1995, by Liu et al.,

Qinghua University Press) and *Modern English* Second Edition (1994, Higher Education Press). These textbooks will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4.

4. CET 4 and CET 6 are designed along scientific, objective and standardised lines, as the syllabus stipulates. The synchronic and diachronic comparability of the testing statistics provides education authorities of all ranks and individual institutions with reliable information to assess a region's or an institution's teaching quality and adjust their respective policies accordingly. Moreover, as the syllabus claims, it provides employers with a neat selection parameter. The two tests have played an important role in improving and guiding College English education and in guaranteeing the successful implementation of the syllabus. In fact, some writers have implied in their articles that the tests' contribution to College English education has been greater than the syllabus itself although understandably no explicit statement has been so made by any College English specialists. Two explanations have been provided for the high-praise comment. The accomplishment may well have been achieved, firstly, by the very fact that since the tests are administered nation-wide and are of supreme authority they have drawn great attention from education authorities at all levels, College English teachers and students and officials of local education departments. The other explanation concerns the testing organisation; a system has been well-developed at the national level for designing test items, administering tests, marking and computing scores. Feng (1994) remarked that CET 4 and CET 6 administration has won a good reputation and the tests have proved to be fair, valid and reliable.

5. The national fascination for College English education has greatly helped boost the status of the College English teachers, long regarded as "second-class citizens" in tertiary institutions prior to the syllabus (Zhou, 1986), thus stabilising and enhancing the teacher population. The rise of status is significant considering the large community of College English teachers and students. In reply to the national call to promote College English

education, local education authorities have adopted policies to boost the confidence of the teachers. The most common effective measures include: a) to provide College English teaching and research departments larger quotas of senior academic positions; b) to offer more chances to College English teachers to go abroad for further studies and c) to award those teaching units and teachers whose students' passing rates are high (Yan and Zhao 1991 and Zhou 1986).

6. The facilities and services for College English teaching and learning have greatly improved. Most tertiary institutions, if not all, have increased their investment or have begun investing in setting up language laboratories and increasing AV equipment. Some 'better-off' institutions have started to offer other language enhancement services to students, such as using computers to assist language teaching and learning, internal English radio stations, disk satellite antennas, and regular talks by native speakers of English (cf. Wang and Li, 1995 and English Teaching and Research Group of Daqing Petroleum Institute 1995).

Positive comments like these are dominant in many papers and documents published recently and these comments come from policy makers as well as the general public. Yang (1995), director of the All-China College English Testing Committee, made some official statements in his paper. He declared at a national conference that a) the College English syllabuses are "advanced, scientific and flexible guiding documents for College English education and therefore will stay unchanged for the coming years" and b) CET 4 and CET 6 "are advocated and supported by the majority of tertiary institutions and they will not be abandoned." (author's translation) Assertive his remarks may be, phrases such as 'will remain unchanged' and 'will not be abandoned' indicated that there existed some problems in the implementation process and some different views about the tests and the syllabus. However, these problems were seen by Yang as 'natural hurdles in the process of

progression'. In his view, most of these problems have resulted from the incomplete understanding or misunderstanding of the syllabus. Thus, more comprehensive study and vigorous propaganda of the spirits and principles of the document remained a primary task for the education authorities and teachers in the years ahead (ibid.).

2.8.2. What Do the Critics Say?

It is commonplace observation that in China all policies evident in official documents of ministerial level or above are implemented with faith and enthusiasm. When such policies meet the needs or spell out the wishes of the public the faith and enthusiasm to implement them will find no bounds. Not surprisingly, when the syllabus was formally promulgated by the then State Education Commission, tertiary institutions all over the country were mobilised to study it and to implement the 'spirit' of the document. Even so, College English could not become so unprecedentedly prevalent today without the introduction of CET 4 and CET 6. The tests were most readily accepted as they were justified by the nation's traditional value concept for unified tests. To many students with motive to study abroad, TOEFL-like tests are particularly welcomed as they could serve as preparatory tests for the TOEFL. To the administration of individual institutions, the tests provide comparable results that can 'measure' not only the faith and enthusiasm in implementing a 'justified' ministerial level document but also the administrative and academic competence of an institution. This might be an even more important driving force for the strong competition between tertiary institutions for high test passing rates. In other words, the driving force of the campaign has derived not only from educational but also political needs. This could also help explain why there are some articles written by local education administrations which are 'pure' reports providing comparable statistics and effective local

policies they have implemented to improve College English education, which means passing rates[9].

In recent publications, there are some critical comments on the syllabus itself but most predicaments reported so far have been related to the negative impact of the two tests, especially CET 4, on students and teachers. As both tests yield convenient statistics for 'measuring' teaching standards and subsequently the standards of higher education of a tertiary institution or region, to 'improve' its higher education standard would simply mean to raise the passing rate of CET 4 for the region or the institution. To this end, in many regions and tertiary institutions, the administrations have implemented various effective local policies (Feng 1995). Some extreme cases are recorded in Wang's (1991) article. According to his knowledge, a large number of tertiary institutions have made it plain that no degree will be granted to an undergraduate unless he/she passes CET 4 and some institutions even link up a student's CET 4 result with his/her right for studentships or other benefits. These cases are reconfirmed in Feng's (1995) survey study. Because of the psychological pressure put on students by local policies, she reported, nearly half of her informants admit that their motivation to study College English was to pass CET 4.

The most frequently reported dilemma is the neglect of the course objectives for higher passing rate. The programme becomes overwhelmingly text-oriented in many institutions. This has been exhibited in four ways. Firstly, the tactic of increasing classroom contact hours is a common practice in many institutions. For CE 1-4, Wang (1991) reports that according to his 'estimate', on the average, a tertiary institution adds 1-2 hours per week on students' listening training, thus increasing the total contact hours to about 300. Feng (1994), a member of the CET 4 and CET 6 Examination Committee, reported that there are some institutions which even allocated ten hours per week for preparation in the

semester before CET 4 and some added two to three afternoons or weekends for tutorials which were nothing short of ordinary classroom teaching. He asserted that this would endanger the real value of the test as the purpose of testing is to stimulate teaching and learning standards but not to force tertiary institutions to shuffle their normal curricula. Having said so, he diplomatically remarks, without statistics, that most institutions follow the timetable set out in the syllabus.

Shuffling the normal teaching schedule to give way to CET 4 preparation is, according to most papers such as Zha (1995) and Wang (1991), very common practice. During this period teachers normally 'drill' students with large amounts of mock test papers which 'lack systematicality and scienticity'. This 'sea of mock tests' strategy, called intensive training by some as a euphemism, has become increasingly popular even though it has been constantly denounced by some College English specialists cum policy makers as transposing the relationship between tests and language learning. Wang (1991) reports a case in which nearly 20 mock tests were once used to prepare their students for CET 4 by an unnamed university. The strategy was said to have worked in this case and in some other cases. The 'short-term effect', he says, lured and is still luring away some tertiary institutions throughout China from normal teaching practice. Mock test booklets which have been supplied in large quantities in foreign language bookstores throughout the country in recent years provide indirect evidence for the popularity of this strategy.

The third most stigmatised phenomenon is the increasing number of CET 4 takers who do not meet the 'basic requirements' when taking the test. In Feng's (1994) report, in many tertiary institutions of some provinces over half of their students who had just finished their first year at university registered for the June CET 4 in 1994. His remark does not seem to be based on investigation but on logical reasoning as he says that it did not seem

possible for those institutions to have such a large proportion of their student population who were advanced enough to start from CE 3. The low passing rates of these regions showed that there must be a large number of test takers who had not finished the required courses when taking CET 4. According to Feng, there are more and more students who have just finished in their second or third band courses but are connived by institution authorities, or at their own will, to take CET 4 ahead of schedule. This would in his view have severe consequence on College English education. Surprisingly, apart from blaming the individual institutions, no one has ever questioned the ambiguity on the eligibility of test takers evident in the policy document. As a student, according to the syllabus, is allowed to attempt a higher band test even if he has not taken the band course, the test, as mentioned in 2.5.2, is not strictly an achievement test and, thus, there should not be any restrictions to prevent any student from taking the test.

In this national campaign in tertiary institutions, the pressure put on teachers and students is undoubtedly enormous. As the comparable CET 4 result is to a certain extent linked with immediate benefits such as awards and promotion, College English teaching programmes in many institutions are oriented towards raising the passing rate and the objectives set out in the syllabus are ignored (Wang, 1991). Under the pressure of the tests, Feng (1994) makes known the cheating problem to the public. According to his paper, some organised as well as individual cases of cheating and abnormal incidents had been recorded. They report that the parties involved had been severely punished and that it was necessary to take extra precautions to prevent cheating from spreading. On the part of students, Feng (1995) finds in her survey into the students' psychological repercussions to CET 4 that more than 40% of her informants felt very depressed and another 10% felt pressure for CET 4. About 80% of her informants reported that they spent an average of 2

hours on English every day. One fifth of the informants expressed their lack of interest in, even abhorrence of the College English programme.

While most criticisms are related to the negative impacts of CET 4 as presented above, some critical comments are made on the commonly-observed incomplete implementation of the syllabus. In many tertiary institutions including some key universities the so-called 'compulsory' speciality reading stage is totally ignored either because of limitations of resources or lack of interest. Those institutions that manage to offer this course often find it an unsatisfactory endeavour. Zheng (1995) lists some difficulties for the speciality reading stage such as lack of clear stipulations, lack of research, lack of resources, lack of textbooks and lack of assessment measures.

2.8.3. Different Views on Communicative Competence

While there does seem to be disagreement on the negative impact of the tests, critical views on communicative competence development are not readily accepted by College English specialists cum decision makers. In summarising the 1990 College English Co-ordinating Group Meeting of the Machine and Electricity Ministry, Wang (1991) writes that a 1988 report showed that many students scored high CET 4 marks but demonstrated weak competence in language use. This report was further proved by data collected after two years by the Coordinating Group. Similarly, Huang (1993) commented that in cases of long absence of a real communicative approach in language teaching, learners have no chance to practise using the target language appropriately in contexts. When they discover that linguistic skills cannot transform themselves automatically into communicative competence they may feel communicatively incompetent and in some cases students may

even refuse or avoid communication. Naturally, these scholars call for more efforts in developing student communicative competence in College English education.

In response to these comments, influential figures such as Han, Lu and Dong (1995) and Yang (1995) counter-argue that because of over-emphasis on communicative teaching at the discourse level the development of students' linguistic competence has been largely neglected in recent years. This problem, according to Yang, is most evident in the writing part of the band tests in which students have demonstrated weak linguistic competence in such basic 'common core' elements as grammar and spelling. Han, Lu and Dong call this 'a pendulum phenomenon' in foreign language education. They indicate that in College English teaching close attention should still be paid to the training of a student's language skills and only on such basis can communicative competence be generally developed.

In reviewing all the criticisms, it is clear that the most fierce and also agreed ones are the negative impact of CET 4 on College English education. Apart from the needs analysis as presented in 2.4.2, the theories and principles behind the policy document have never been seriously challenged. Papers on cultural studies teaching such as the ones reviewed in Chapter 1 suggest a general awareness in College English teachers of this dimension but they clearly show an attitude to treating cultural studies as of secondary importance. The author would argue here that the lack of discussions on cultural studies teaching might be primarily attributable to the communicative language teaching model interpreted by College English specialists cum policy makers such as Han, Lu and Dong (1995) which does not include socio-cultural dimension in foreign language teaching. Clearly, no one could possibly critically question the lack of this dimension without questioning the 'communicative language teaching model' itself.

2.9. Latest Developments

Despite the 'breakthroughs in College English education', as 2.8.1 represents, the College English programme has to be reformed as foreign language teaching in China faces the dilemma of 'taking too much time but achieving too little' (Vice Premier Li, Nanqin cited in Cen, 1997). In response to this 'tall order', both foreign language specialists and policy makers are focusing their attention to critically reviewing foreign language programmes. In his recent comments on English teaching, Cen (1998), Director of Foreign Language Education Section in Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education, asserts that the language contents for foreign language teaching are often out of date and the teaching methodology is too conventional and rigid. Cramming by teachers and rote learning by students still prevail in tertiary institutions. Huang and Shao (1998) also state that the requirements stipulated in the syllabus are not in accord with the future needs of the students as they report that students' productive abilities such as writing and speaking skills do not meet the demands of contemporary employers.

The College English programme is under the process of transformation. The syllabus is under revision and its teaching approach is under discussion. However, evidence has shown that the programme is not to be reformed in a substantial manner. According to the 'News in brief' (1997b) and the 'Work summary' (1998), changes to be made to the syllabus include: 1) stratifying requirements for different tertiary institutions according to their conditions and characteristics; 2) allowing eight key universities to break away from the testing system of the programme; 3) reducing three levels of skills ranking to two levels; and 4) taking measures to ensure four-year continuation of the programme. The

first change attempts to set up realistic requirements for those tertiary institutions with less privileged conditions so as to reduce the pressure inserted by CET 4 and the fourth is to adopt new measures to insure the 'compulsory' speciality reading. The 'documents' gives no more explanation to the launching of the 'pilot project' to be conducted in the eight key universities than to reiterate the broad objective of course 'reforms'. These key universities designated for the project include all the top universities like Beida, Qinghua, and Fudan. As a matter of fact, some of the top universities such as Qinghua had already set up their own standards for their students (He and Chen, 1996). The pilot project seems to give official green lights to their 'reforms', that is, to run their own programmes to suit their students' needs.

The ranking of the language skills was not explained in these semi-official 'documents'. A paper by Zen and Zhang (1999) reveals that a 'draft of the new syllabus' accompanied by a 'revision explanation' reached the 'teaching staff above certain ranks' for comments. In their paper, they made some critical comments on the 'revision explanation' intended to justify the ranking of the language skills. As their comments are more of a political issue unique in the Chinese context they will be presented in the next chapter in which the ideological dimension is examined.

There seem to be good reasons for the lack of 'drastic' measures as both policy makers and College English specialists argue that foreign language learning is a long process and reformation should start from primary, to secondary schools and up to tertiary institutions (Cen, 1998 and Huang and Shao, 1998). They base the argument primarily on calculating the vocabulary required for each stage of foreign language education. Cen (1998) even quotes the findings of a recent survey conducted by Qinghua University which are shown

in Table 2.9.1 and concludes that there is too much repetition in vocabulary learning at the

three stages of the whole process. Therefore, he states that he fundamentally agrees to

Table 2.9.1. — English vocabulary accumulation in the Chinese education system.

Items	Primary	Junior secondary	Senior secondary	Tertiary	Notes
Weekly contact hours	3	4	5	4	
Vocabulary stipulated in syllabus	633	649	1953	5046	
% of repeated vocab.		59%	39%	35%	
New vocab. at each stage	633	262	1184	3296	5375 words in 13 years
% of vocab. listed individually due to multiple meanings	13%	7%	14.4%	37.6%	
Real number of Vocab. learned	550	244	1013	2056	3863 words in 13 years

Source: Cen (1998, author's translation)

the suggestion made by foreign language specialists that a national administrative body be

formed to exercise macro-level reformation for all stages of the education system.

Educational researchers such as Gipps (1994) and Byram (1997) may not agree to their

view of measuring progress in foreign language learning by calculating vocabulary like this

as they argue that learning is not necessarily a linear and step-by-step process. Many

words covered in a certain context need to be revisited and studied in other contexts and

from other perspectives. None the less, the suggestion made by Cen (1998) and Huang and

Shao (1998) to review the foreign language teaching programmes at tertiary level by

including primary and secondary schools makes sense in that the links of the programmes

could be studied and better established and more systematic programmes may come into

existence. Here the question is how much such an administrative body can do if it is set up

only on the basis of vocabulary computation.

In recent discussions, the classroom teaching approach is reviewed and new ideas are presented in publications (for examples, Huang, et al., 1998; Wu, 1998; Xia and Kong, 1998 and Huang and Shao, 1998). A determination to reform the programme has been clearly demonstrated. However, the contents and teaching methodology do not seem to be altered in any significant way as the most widely-used textbook *College English* (see Chapter 4 for detailed analysis) has just been revised with only minor changes and it is claimed to be the textbook aiming at the new syllabus for the new century (An, 1997 and Wang and Xia, 1997).

Interestingly, in a most recent 'work summary' (1999), the English Group of the Advisory Committee of FLT in College presents a new version of explanation on the 'new features' of the revised syllabus. The most important feature, according to the summary, is that the revised syllabus:

> sets up an even higher standard for College English education. The ranking of the linguistic skills is changed from three levels to two levels: reading ability still remains as the first-level requirement but all the other skills, listening, speaking, writing and translation are listed as the second-level requirement. The phrase "(The English which is learned should be regarded not as an end in itself but) as a means of enabling the students to acquire information in their fields of specialisation" is changed to "using English to exchange information". The task of developing students' cultural attainment is added into the syllabus. (p. 4, author's translation)

Although the word 'cultural attainment' is not quoted in the summary, the word 'culture' seems to have finally made its way, in whatever form, into the syllabus.

Despite the possible inclusion of the term 'culture attainment' in the revised syllabus, evidence strongly suggests that culture in the revised syllabus may well be symbolically

touched upon with a phrase ambiguous enough for a wide range of interpretations. This is due to the fact that the supporting documents accompanying the 'work summary' suggest no change of position in cultural studies teaching among College English policy makers and specialists. Yang (1999), for example, takes no cultural issues into his discussion of testing. As far as classroom teaching is concerned, Xie (1999) and Wang (1999) show very enthusiastic and positive attitudes towards the inclusion of cultural studies into the syllabus but both warn that the secondary (culture studies teaching) should not supersedes the primary (language teaching) in classrooms. These accompanying papers seem to set the 'tone' of culture studies teaching before the revised syllabus comes into being. In line with this 'tone', Wang (ibid.) suggests that cultural studies teaching could be conducted on the basis of the present curriculum arrangements, i.e. to supplement the programme with cultural information relevant to the text under study without any change in textbooks and teaching approach. This 'culture aside' suggestion is nothing new and it is in fact a common practice among many College English teachers (see 6.3. for more discussion). The usual consequence of this approach for the College English teaching classroom is that the additional task of transmitting cultural knowledge related to the text under study to students may be simply ignored as was indicated by Lin (1996) because the teachers' timetable for classroom teaching hours is already too crowded with language points.

The possible inclusion of cultural studies in the national syllabus should be regarded as a step forward in foreign language education in China. The difficulties in teaching cultural studies faced by the College English educators, however, are not to be solved by only symbolic inclusion of culture into its syllabus. Many other socio-cultural factors play crucial roles in determining the objectives and processes of the teaching programme. The dynamics of politics in China and complexity of students' attitudes and perceptions about

the target culture(s) are all relevant and determining factors for cultural studies teaching. These issues will be examined one by one in the coming chapters.

Notes:

1. In these six to seven years, under the so-called '*Tuijie zhi*' (recommendation system) the colleges and universities had to enrol adult students from factories, countryside and army units. These students were generally born in revolutionary families, such as poor peasant and worker families under the Nationalist regime, and were considered good performers in political campaigns. They were recommended by local revolutionary authorities to enter tertiary institutions directly.

2. In the pilot study conducted in December 1995, an informant described how his department of a well-known university employed an uneducated and crippled old man who could speak English because he used to work as a caretaker at a missionary school decades ago. His fluency in spoken English was greatly admired for quite a few years.

3. As the country was always eager to introduce Western science and technology priority was equally always given to natural science subjects rather than to social science subjects. This issue has been extensively discussed by many education scholars such as those in Hayhoe (1992).

4. A 'key' university is one of a number of tertiary institutions which are designated by the State Education Commission as those that "are expected to maintain higher standards than other universities and colleges and to make a greater contribution to the development of their region or of the whole country." (p. 15, CES 1985)

5. In that article, Han, Lu and Dong refer to Canale and Swain's definition of communicative competence. They also associate Krashen's effectiveness and efficiency theory for communication with the accuracy and fluency requirements stipulated in the syllabus and

recommend Harmer's presentation → practice → production model for balanced activities in classroom.

6. Shao is Chairman of the Second Advisory Committee of the Foreign Language Teaching at Colleges while Huang is General Secretary of the Committee. The committee, as the name suggests, is the main body responsible for syllabus revision and foreign language teaching at tertiary level in the country.

7. Both papers could be considered semi-official policy documents as they were presented as key-note speeches at the national conference on College English education. Yang Huizhong (1995) was Chairman of the National CET Committee. Han, Lu and Dong were all senior members of the Advisory Committee of the Foreign Language Teaching at Colleges.

8. Yang Huizhong estimated that there are more than two million CET takers each year at a lecture on CET in China at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology on 13th February 1998.

9. Yan and Zhao's (1991) article is a typical example of this type of 'reports'. Apparently, as government employees for the higher education administration at provincial level, they described how they used various measures to stabilise the College English teaching population, to improve the facilities for College English teaching and to raise the CET 4 results year by year.

Chapter 3

From *Ti-yong* to *Shuangyong*

— A Centennial Debate in Education

Introduction

Many education researchers agree that China's educational pendulum has, in the last century, swung between ideological models for political control and transformed ones for economic development (Ross 1993 and Chen 1981). The swings have reflected the dynamics of politics and the socio-economic situation of the country. The political environment and economic situation have been even more determining factors in foreign language education in China. Hence, education researchers, understandably, represent foreign language education as a 'thermometer' or 'a barometer' of the country's effort for modernization, indicating the extent to which foreign influences are tolerated (Ross 1992 and Gui 1990). Most education researchers realise the dynamic properties of foreign language education in China. Many (for example, Ross, 1993) are also aware that the inherited assumption embodied in the slogan – *Yangwei zhongyong* (Making foreign things serve China) – which suggests that foreign expertise and foreign language proficiency are valuable for utilitarian reasons has in fact

117

provided a strong thread of continuity in foreign language teaching. Yet, not so many seem to realise the implications of this assumption in foreign language education beyond this level of awareness.

Yangwei zhongyong is the second half of the well-known <u>*Shuangyong*</u> (Two uses) policy, which is the abbreviated form of the dualism — *Guwei jin<u>yong</u>, yangwei zhong<u>yong</u>* (Making the ancient serve the present and foreign things serve China). The *Shuangyong* policy was developed by Mao Ze-dong, former paramount leader of China before Deng Xiao-ping. It was primarily based on a literally similar dualism put forward by Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) after the Opium War (cf. Ayers 1971). In his *Quan Xue Pian* (Exhortation to Study) published in instalment in 1898 and 1899 Zhang made known his <u>*Ti-yong*</u> dichotomy (sometimes called *Ti-yong* formula), *Zhongxue weiti, Xixue weiyong* (traditional Chinese learning for fundamental principles (*ti*) and Western civilization for practical applications (*yong*)). Many educational researchers such as Zhang (1993) and Ross (1993) agree that, though implemented in bizarre ways from time to time, the *Shuangyong* policy has been one of the most important guiding doctrines in education and has played a guardian's role in foreign language education in China since 1949. Unlike other ideologically-oriented aphorisms or dualisms in education which have gradually lost their appeal in the post-Mao era, this policy has been continuously viewed as the principal ideology of China's education system and frequently referred to by Chinese education researchers and foreign language educators as an ideological support for their arguments. Evidence to be presented below will show that the policy has been in fact an ideological concept long-embedded into the Chinese culture. This could be the very reason why the policy, its applications and implications in contemporary foreign language education in China, has not received adequate discussion and examination from education researchers.

The plain statement, "*Yangwei zhongyong* is our guiding principle in studying all foreign cultures", made by Fu (1989: 210), an important official responsible for foreign language education in the then State Education Commission, provides the clearest evidence for the relevancy of the policy to studying the cultural dimensions in foreign language education in China. The pages that follow attempt to examine this policy, to be more precise, the ideological dimension of Chinese education in general and foreign language education in particular. This chapter will, as its title suggests, look into the development of this policy from a historical perspective. The ideological impact of this policy on foreign language education and on people's attitude towards foreign expertise and foreign technology is to be examined with documented figures, facts and examples. The chapter then explores the implications of the policy in foreign language education, by relating it to the College English programme with a focus on its objectives, teaching methodology and materials writing. Finally, the chapter will show how the policy will continue to be the dominating ideology in foreign language education and be further implemented, by reviewing some official and 'semi-official' documents, a term coined by the author to refer to commercial publications authored by or bearing names of senior government officials.

3.1. "*Shuangyong*" from a Historical Perspective

Since perhaps the very beginning of diplomatic relationships with Western countries Chinese statesmen and educationists have had strong consciousness of the political and social risks of introducing Western socio-economic and education systems. The earliest insurgency against Western influence was probably the prohibition of Western missionary practice. As early as the seventeenth century when the Jesuits were permitted to enter

China they were allowed to put their scientific and technical expertise at the service of the Emperor. Their knowledge in scientific domains was respected but religious doctrines were totally rejected (Bastid, 1987). These early Jesuits, having no access to the diverse currents of Chinese thoughts and being banned by the imperial court to do missionary work, failed to achieve their original aim of evangelism. As most Jesuits had posts within the court, they gradually became part of the elite in the Chinese society. Some of them, however, were arrested and eventually expelled for spying in name but for their religious attempts in reality (ibid.). As few statesmen and literati had ever doubted the supremacy of Confucianism[1] up until the mid-nineteenth century, neither the education system nor religions practiced in China had undergone considerable change. On the contrary, when the Jesuits returned to their home countries, their 'objective descriptions' about China in fact "served to create a Chinese utopia on which those who questioned their own age and searched for new points of reference could draw" (Llasera, 1987: 32).

The Opium War in the early 1840s and the subsequent wars between China and the Western powers devastated China and shattered the country's tightly-closed door to the Western countries. As a result of the increasing contact with the Western countries after the wars and the Self-Strengthening Movement[2], Chinese education, particularly foreign language education developed at a speedy pace with the establishment of many foreign language institutions and military-technical schools in many major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Wuhan (cf. Mao and Shen, 1988 and Wang and Yan, 1994). As the schools and the movement posed an obvious threat to the two-millennium-old Confucian teachings the attacks from Confucian scholars became increasingly malignant in the second half of the nineteenth century. The attacks were most evident after China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 which literally crushed the Self-Strengtheners' efforts for nearly half a century. In 1898 Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909), governor general of

the Hubei and Hunan region, published his influential *Quan Xue Pian* (Exhortation to Study). His book consisted of *Nei Pian* (Internal Book) with nine chapters which details ways to educate people to follow the Way of Confucius and Mencius and *Wai Pian* (External Book) of fifteen chapters which encouraged promotion of Western systems and arts and depicted ways of promoting them under the premises of Confucianism. In this book, Zhang justified the aphorism of *zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong* (Chinese learning for fundamental principles, Western learning for practical applications), stating that the substance (*Ti*) of Chinese civilization (referring to the essence of Confucianism) and the practical means (*Yong*) of the West (referring to Western languages and military-technical knowledge) were two separable entities. When the Chinese *Ti* and the Western *Yong* were combined, he argued, they could serve the purpose of strengthening the country (Ross, 1993). Zhang's *Ti-yong* dichotomy appeared to strike a balance in the conflict between the reformers and the Confucian literati (cf. Ayers, 1971) and it was greatly appreciated by the rulers of the late Qing dynasty as it could be used as an important theoretical basis for safeguarding the ethics of the feudal society and the traditional *Kejuzhi*[3] (the civil service examination system). Although Zhang's *Ti-yong* dichotomy underwent immediate fierce attacks from leading reformers such as Yan Fu and Kang Youwei at the turn of the century (cf. Mao and Shen, 1988), it was thoroughly reflected in the School Regulations formally promulgated by the late Qing government at the turn of the century (Abe, 1987). In actual fact, since the turn of the century, despite the final abolishment[4] of the civil service examination system in 1905, the *Ti-yong* dichotomy has had continuous impact on Chinese education in general and its foreign language education in particular.

During the early Republican era, there were attempts made by Yuan Shi-k'ai (1859-1916), first president of the Republic of China (1912-1916), to restore the civil service examination system and the *Ti-yong* approach in education and, above all, the monarchy

with himself as the emperor (Li, et al., 1988). His regime turned out to be short-lived as the resistance led by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1926) and other political activists was extremely vigorous and effective. In the era of Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) from 1927 to 1949, education policies were primarily represented by *Bade siwei* (the Eight Morals and Four Thoughts) which were interpreted by Chiang as the essence of *Sanmin zhuyi* (the Three Principles of the People)[5], the prime ideology in the Nationalist regime. The fundamental ideals of *Bade siwei*, however, were the traditional Confucian values which stressed the development in students of patriotism and loyalty to the regime (Shen, 1994). Although the Nationalist government tried to make education overtly political the whole Republican period was seen by many education researchers as being characterized by considerable maturity and independence of educational ideology and practice (Cleverley, 1985 and Hayhoe, 1996). These scholars argue that, though severe educational dearth was evident, an attitudinal change towards modern schooling was perceptible within the Republican period. Foreign influences such as John Dewey's (1859-1952) educational philosophy and the American system of education could be seen to be integrated within the patterns that were to serve the Nationalist political goals under their regime (Brown, 1987). In higher education, many influential educationists, represented by Cai Yuanpei[6], first as Minister of Education and then as President of the prestigious Peking University, made tremendous efforts in reforming China's tertiary education. Chinese universities gradually "achieved a balance between its Chinese identity and its ability to link up to a world community of universities" (Hayhoe, 1996: 53). Among Cai Yuanpei's many educational theories, the most marked and highly honoured was his *Jianrong binbao* (all-embracing) policy which was intended to fuse the ancient with the present and the Chinese with the Foreign (cf. Mao and Shen, 1988 and Zhang, et al., 1993). This policy addressed the basic principle of academic freedom in higher education and suggested a positive attitude to traditional learning and foreign philosophy and technology. This was widely taken as a significant

development of Chinese educational policies and had a fairly strong implication in foreign language education.

Mao Zedong's *Shuangyong* policy was developed through his long career as a politician. Though traces of the *Shuangyong* policy could be found in Mao Zedong's earlier works (Zhang et al., 1993), the most explicit discussion about the relationships between the 'new democratic culture', the foreign culture and the ancient culture was represented by his statements made in his article – On New Democracy (written in 1940 in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* Vol. II, 1968: 623-70). In this article Mao remarked that "To nourish her own culture China should assimilate a great deal of progressive foreign culture. ... we must assimilate whatever is useful to us" (p. 667, author's translation). On the same page after this statement, Mao warned against the "wholesale Westernisation" by asserting that foreign cultures contain nutriment, which can be selected for absorption, as well as dross which should be discarded. He made similar remarks in the same article about absorbing the democratic essentials from traditional Chinese culture after removing the dross from it. In a few other policy documents and articles Mao made consistent statements and in 1956 he overtly advocated the slogan to learn from foreign countries especially in areas of natural science in his On ten major relationships (Mao Zedong, Vol. V, 1968, pp. 267-288). The *Shuangyong* policy finally came into being in 1964 when Mao Zedong put the eight characters, *Gu wei jun yong, yang wei zhong yong* (Making the ancient serve the present and the foreign things serve China) as an annotation on a letter written to him by some students of the Central Music Conservatory in Beijing (Mao Zedong, 1983). The evidence shown in the articles and letters cited above indicates that the paramount leader strongly believed that when appropriately treated ancient cultural traditions of China and foreign expertise could be made useful in socialist construction and education.

Although there are clear differences between Zhang Zhidong's *Ti-yong* dichotomy and Mao Zedong's *Shuangyong* policy, they had at least one important belief in common, i.e. foreign expertise could be tailored for use in China. The mere survival of this assumption for over a century strongly suggests that the presupposition has been deeply implanted in the Chinese political culture. Today, the *Shuangyong* policy is regarded as an important part of Mao Zedong Thought and is proclaimed to "reflect the deep-going philosophy of materialist dialectics of Marxism" (Zhang, et al., 1993: 221). Mao's *Shuangyong* policy significantly influenced Chinese education during his 27 years as the paramount leader of China. His educational policies, as well as many other political doctrines and ideals, have been inherited, at least theoretically by Deng Xiaoping and the present administration led by Jiang Zemin although some of Mao's policies and quotations in his late years have been cautiously criticized since his death in 1976.

3.2. Applications of *Shuangyong* Policy in Education

Compared with Zhang Zhidong's *Ti-yong* formula, what is apparently lacking in Mao's *Shuangyong* policy is the elaboration of exactly what 'nutriments' are for absorbing and what 'dross' is for discarding. As a result, arbitrary and bizarre interpretations could be seen in the political campaigns which have been launched by the Communist Party in its continual search for a socialist model since 1949. The interpretations fabricated in these campaigns reflected unerringly the dynamics of Chinese politics, foreign policies and economic needs in different periods.

3.2.1. From 1949 to 1976

In retrospect, the first attempt of *Yangwei zhongyong* (making foreign things serve China) was in fact the *wholesale* importation of Marxism and Leninism. This had started well before 1949 when the October Russian Socialist Revolution broke out in 1917. Marxism and Leninism were soon introduced into the country and became the political canon of the Communist Party. Since the People's Republic was founded in 1949, the native Mao Zedong Thoughts and the imported Marxism and Leninism have been constitutionalised as the guiding ideology of socialist China.

In the early 1950s the country vigorously launched a campaign "to learn from the Soviet Union" as the government identified itself closely with the Soviet Union model due to both political and economic reasons (cf. Price, 1987 and Li, 1987). The campaign significantly transformed China's education system, especially the infra-structure of Chinese tertiary institutions (Li, 1987). During this period, according to Liu, Funien (cited in Li, et al., 1988: 234), the country "indiscriminately copied the education theories imported from the Soviet Union and the book *Pedagogika* (written in 1956 by I. A. Kairov (1893-1978), Russian educational theorist) almost became the Bible in the educational arena" (author's translation). In foreign language teaching, Russian was the absolutely dominant foreign language, and in many cases the only foreign language, taught in schools and universities (cf. Fu, 1986 and Li, et al., 1988). English teaching was practically stamped out for about six to seven years. According to an article published in *People's Education* July, 1953 (quoted in Li et al., 1988) teachers and students learning English were demoralized in this situation. Some teachers declared disheartenedly that they were teaching "the language of decadent imperialism" (p.333). Most students showed no interest in English stating that

the language was of no use because "the political systems and the culture(s) of British and American imperialisms are not as developed as ours" (p. 332, author's translation). This remarks mirrored the political atmosphere in the early 1950s when the propaganda against American imperialism for the Korean War reached its peak and the door of the country was wide-open to the Soviet Union while tightly shut to the Western world.

In the first decade of the communist rule, even natural science subjects were arbitrarily classified by some radical ideologues into political categories. Zhang, et al. (1993: 239) gave a few interesting examples. The pedology developed by V. R. Vilyams (1863-1939), a Russian agronomist, was prefixed the 'socialist pedology' while the studies of mineral fertilizers in improving soil quality by German organic chemist, J. F. von Liebig (1803-1873), was labelled the 'capitalist fertilizer science'. Likewise, genetics developed by I. V. Michurin (1855-1935) and later promoted by T. D. Lysenko (1898-1976) was named 'socialist genetics' whereas its counter-part established by Morgan, T. H. (1866 - 1945), American zoologist and geneticist, was crowned with an 'imperialist hat'. The criterion used for the bizarre classification was obvious: branches of science developed by Russian scientists were socialist sciences and were thus worth introducing while those established in Western countries were imperialist in nature and should be rejected. The classification as such undoubtedly sounds peculiar to anyone who is not acquainted with the history of the beginning decade of communist China. However, it manifests the strong impact of the anti-rightist campaign launched in the late 1950s which drastically affected the academic and technical field. An academician could be easily capped with a 'rightist' hat, which would make him an enemy of the people, if any trace of worshipping capitalism was found in his remarks or behaviour.

Starting from 1956 the 'wholesale Sovietisation' policy began to shudder as the conflict between China and the Soviet Union became open and gradually intensified (cf. Li 1987). As a result, English began to resume its place as one of the major foreign languages taught in schools and tertiary institutions. However, as the country kept on launching political campaigns one after another in the second half of the 50s such as the Movement to Rectify the Working Styles of the Party Members (in 1956), followed by the Anti-Rightist Movement (in 1957) and the "Great Leap Forward" which started in 1958, the implementation of the policy of making use of foreign languages and foreign expertise became more and more politicised. In some official educational documents promulgated in those years 'politics and reality' were strongly emphasized and foreign language textbooks were filled mainly with texts reflecting Chinese political reality (Fu, 1986). The contents for a foreign language programme, therefore, were basically selected to serve the political needs of the country.

The abandoning of the Great Leap Forward and the famine in the early 1960s seems to have cooled down the radical faction of the party. In the period that followed there was an obvious reassertion of pragmatic politics and the educational pendulum swung slightly towards the academic side (cf. Chen, 1981). In foreign language education, both politics and language skills training were emphasized and the *Shuangyong* policy seemed to have entered its new stage. Fu (1986) reported that 'an important conference' organized by the Ministry of Education in 1965 came up with three clauses for teaching materials selection. Firstly, there should be an increase of revolutionary contents in formal foreign language teaching textbooks. In the mean time, both texts revealing the dark side of capitalism and texts showing capitalist countries in the ascendant should be selected for use. Some 'negative' materials showing the social development and political systems of the target culture(s) could also be chosen as informal reading materials for the purpose of enhancing

students' critical competence. Secondly, for the same reason textbooks should contain more texts of contemporary culture than classic ones. Thirdly, textbook materials should reflect the revolutionary experience and the achievement of socialist construction but, at the same time, in order to enable students to learn idiomatic language, they should also contain enough genuine information about the lifestyles, ways of thinking, geographic conditions, national characteristics, history, customs and traditions of the culture(s) of the target language. Implicitly, the second stipulation addressed the relationship between the traditional culture and the contemporary culture (*Gu yu jin*) while the first and the third attempted to deal with the issue of the Chinese context in relation to the foreign context (*Zhong yu wai*). Though the wording was quite obscure, the three clauses were apparently intended to use the *Shuangyong* policy to strike a balance in foreign language materials writing. In the mid 1960s, according to Fu (1989), Zhou Enlai, former Premier of China, emphasised several times that to learn a foreign language one had to develop himself in three areas: ideological orientation, linguistic competence (including good pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and the five skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating) and above all socio-cultural knowledge. All these demonstrated a strong wish of these policy makers to apply the *Shuangyong* policy in a constructive manner to foreign language education.

3.2.2. The Great Cultural Revolution

Unfortunately, however, the clauses thus stipulated at this conference did not get a chance to be further implemented. In the following year, the Great Cultural Revolution broke out and it turned the global view of the country upside down. As students, workers, peasants and soldiers of the country were more than successfully mobilized by Mao Zedong to take

part in the revolution the whole country was shouting "To rebel is justified" (Chen, 1981). In terms of foreign language education, the radical ideologues denounced the slogan of learning from foreign countries and designated anything foreign as counter-revolutionary. For the first few years foreign books, journals, newspapers, radio stations, and films were taken as the forbidden zone; "worshipping things foreign" and "having illicit relations with a foreign country" were common 'caps' put on heads of foreign language educators (Fu, 1986, p. 84). Nevertheless, foreign languages reappeared in most school classrooms when the great majority of schools reopened after two years of disruption and when most universities restarted functioning after about four years. The *Shuangyong* policy seemed to be a deciding factor for this resumption as few would make bold to directly challenge the aphorism developed by the paramount leader. Zhou Enlai, the former premier and leader of the party's moderate faction, made tremendous efforts in minimizing the damage done to foreign language education (cf. ibid.). A case reported in Li, et al. (1988) could represent such efforts made in preventing foreign language courses from disappearing in these years. When some people at a secondary school suggested cutting off the English language course due to lack of motivation from both the students and teachers, the school authority replied, "He who cuts the course off has to take the full consequences" (p. 354). It could be rightfully reasoned that it was the efforts made by the party's moderate faction armed with the *Shuangyong* policy that enabled foreign language education to continue in China during the Cultural Revolution.

Under the chaotic circumstances, however, the learning of a foreign language could hardly be foreign language learning in its proper sense but a kind of symbolic learning of political slogans, quotations of Mao Zedong and 'Western culture free' articles selected entirely from Chinese periodicals such as *Beijing Review* and *China Reconstructs* (Dong, 1986). It was a fact that many students were taught to shout in a foreign language slogans such as

"Long live Chairman Mao!", "Down with American imperialism!", "We must be both red and expert!" and "Never forget classes and class struggle!" before they might have a chance to learn the English alphabet. Dong (ibid.) commented that the teaching curriculum simply ignored the basic principles of foreign language education. If a text concerning a Western country was selected for use in an English language course it would be one that revealed the negative side of the country in question. Genuine text materials of the target culture were said to contain "feudal, capitalist and revisionist" poisons (Fu, 1986: 85). The ideological components of a foreign language course were the ultimate concern for textbook writers as they may decide the fate of the textbooks or even of the writers in this period more than in any other period of the Chinese history of education.

3.2.3. The Post-Mao Era

During Deng's era, the "four modernisations[7]" rubric and "reform and open-door" policy were the main themes for all fronts. Under these themes, the slogan of "Education should be geared in the direction of modernization, and of the world and of the future" (an inscription for the Beijing Jinshan School by Deng Xiaoping in 1983), later abbreviated as *Sange mianxiang* (the three directions), was interpreted as an important part of Deng's overall 'open-door' policy and his development of Mao's education policies in the new historical era (Zhang, et al., 1993). *Sange mianxiang* was apparently a bolder and more liberal slogan than the *Shuangyong* policy in its attempt to make use of foreign expertise. The first of *Sange mianxiang* (the three directions), direction to modernisation, suggests that the ultimate objective of education is to achieve "four modernisations", the country's holy goal. The second direction clearly addresses the needs to absorb foreign expertise while the third is forward looking, but abstract enough for different interpretations.

The impact of *Sange mianxiang* could be seen at all levels of the education system but the most important changes seemed to have taken place in the higher education sector. The ever-increasing communications between China and the outside world significantly stimulated foreign language education (particularly English teaching). There exist many insightful analyses of the higher education sector in the post-Mao decade by both Chinese and Western scholars (for examples, Hayhoe, 1996; 1992 and 1989; Little, et al. 1994; Du, 1992; Rai, 1991 and Mao and Sheng, 1988). All these scholars agree that this period saw a firm swing of the education pendulum from the revolutionary model of the Cultural Revolution to the academic direction.

Higher education was speedily expanding with a drastic increase in the total number of tertiary institutions and in student enrolment. The number of tertiary institutions grew from 598 in 1978 to 1,075 in 1989. In the post-Mao decade, undergraduate enrolment was more than doubled and the postgraduate intake increased by nearly twelve times in 1987 compared with that ten years ago. The rapid expansion of higher education resulted in a dramatic rise in the percentage of secondary school leavers entering tertiary institutions, from less than 6% in 1978 to nearly 28% in 1991 (Little, et al., 1994: 117), which had a real stimulating effect on secondary schooling. In addition to the rapid development in the formal sector, adult education institutions such as open universities, evening colleges and radio and television universities also grew rapidly, especially during the first half of the 1980s. These institutions provided a significant avenue of educational opportunities for adults of all walks of life.

3.2.4. FL Education in the Last Two Decades

The most stimulating factor for the fervour of learning foreign languages, predominantly English, was perhaps the ever-increasing opportunities to go abroad for further studies, research or other purposes and to communicate directly with people of the outside world, primarily Western countries. The practice of 'inviting-in and sending-out' approach was considered the key part of the "open door" policy made for the purpose of modernizing the country's science and technology and its educational system. In stark contrast to the long, self-imposed isolation from the Western countries in the Mao era, as Table 3.2.3.1. shows, the number of students sent abroad by the government increased sharply year by year and it reached a historical apex in mid-1980s. Of the total number of students sent abroad, nearly 60 % went to English speaking countries such as the United States, Canada

Table 3.2.3.1. — The number of students sent by the government to study abroad and the number of foreign students studying in China

Year	Number of students dispatched abroad	Number of foreign students admitted into Chinese Us.
1978	860	432
1979	1777	440
1980	2124	576
1981	2922	744
1982	2326	865
1983	2633	1038
1984	3073	1293
1985	4885	1585
1986	4676	2009
1987	4703	2044
1988	3786	1854
1989	3329	1393
Total	37,094	14,273

*Source: *The Chinese Educational Statistics Yearbook,* 1989

and the United Kingdom (Huang, 1987). The actual number of students allowed to these countries was much larger as the majority of 'self-sponsored' students went to English speaking countries (Hayhoe, 1987).

A significant number of professionals and teachers, as well as students, primarily at the tertiary level, were also involved in the national campaign of 'going abroad'. Scholars of different disciplines and professionals from government departments and industries were officially sent away to Western countries for exchange programmes, further studies or other purposes. At the same time, more than four thousand foreign teachers and technical professionals (this number excludes those for short visits or with contracts of less than one year) were invited into the country from more than fifty countries, again mainly from developed Western countries, to teach in tertiary institutions or help conduct research projects (Shen, 1993). The majority of these people spoke English as their native/second language. In addition to all the above activities, communications between China and the English speaking countries were greatly extended through other kinds of cross-cultural activities such as international conferences, joint projects, and exchange visits between organisations (Huang, 1987). As distinct from the Cultural Revolution, this reform decade was characterized by a redirection of China's vision outward and the ever-increasing opportunities for international communications provided, and still provide the most immediate incentive to learners of foreign languages.

The perception that English proficiency could facilitate economic mobility made English extremely popular all over the country, not only in educational institutions but also in other professional organisations. By Feng's (1988) analysis, there were three important stimulators behind learners' motivation in English language learning: 1) their ever-increasing awareness of the importance of the language in trade, science and technology;

2) ever-increasing opportunities to pursue further studies abroad; and 3) one of the essential criteria for promotions of professionals and academics being to pass a foreign language test. Moreover, it could seen that in Deng's reform decade, people of literally all walks of life seemed to be interested in learning a foreign language, particularly English. Educational TV programmes from Western countries such as *"Follow Me"* and *"Walter and Connie"* played a significant role in arousing this interest (Hu and Guo, 1997). The prime time TV show on CCTV, *"Follow Me"*, for example, was the longest-running BBC English teaching programme of the 1980s, with an estimated audience of over 20,000,000 and a successful spin-off, *"Follow Me to Science"* (Ross, 1992). The English language programmes did not only teach the language in a way refreshing to millions of Chinese but stimulated their curiosity about the Western lifestyles and other cultural aspects. It was commonplace observation that many factory workers and others without receiving a high education were among learners of English. Most of them attended various courses and programmes offered by colleges or evening schools and some studied on their own. When asked about their motivation of learning the foreign language, some of them might talk about the potential possibilities for promotion or future development, but many would simply say that as English became so important they wished to learn some basics in order to offer some help to their children (common responses elicited by the author in the early 1980s).

This national passion to learn foreign languages has continued till today in the country, particularly in those coastal cities where communications with the outside world have been ever-increasing. In Shanghai, Yang (1998) reports that the Project of Training the Most-Needed Talents for the 1990s started in 1994 has offered a variety of foreign language (again primarily English) courses to 149,000 citizens of the city and the project has been running with increasing popularity. In comparison with Russian in the 1950s, the English

language clearly attracts a much larger enthusiastic learner population and exerts a much more profound influence on Chinese learners.

In higher education, foreign language courses, particularly English programmes, became students' favourite subjects. First of all, it could be seen that specialized foreign language institutions quickly expanded in terms of student enrolment (Fu, 1986 and Li, et al., 1988 for comparative statistics). The most noticeable and significant change took place in all tertiary institutions throughout the country. The College English programme as described in detail in Chapter 2 has developed from "an auxiliary course of hardly any significance" (Dong, 1993) to "a decisive programme in the course of reforming the Chinese education" (Zhou, 1994; cited in Han, Lu and Dong, 1995).

Although the most notable impact of the reform was made on foreign language teaching in higher education, the reform decade experienced severe challenges on the ideological front. As was discussed above, overall, the ten-year Cultural Revolution could be seen as an overwhelming tragedy in China's modern history and the society ended up close to nihilism. The spiritual pillars built up with "false bricks" inside the young generation over a decade suddenly collapsed with the ending of the revolution (Yang, 1991). For some years the students felt bewildered and lost and the early 1980s was commonly known as a period of 'ideological crisis'. With the promulgation of the "open door" policy and the mass fervour of English language learning in the reform decade, Western ideologies, values and thoughts swiftly made their way into the country. Western notions like freedom, democracy and human rights were readily embraced by the students as keys to their ideological puzzles. Consequently, the ideological theories followed faithfully by the Communist Party were frequently questioned and challenged by both students and liberal intellectuals. Marxism, the political canon of the party for decades, for example, was

denounced by some outspoken liberal intellectuals as obsolete and it was held responsible for China's backwardness. Some of these liberal intellectuals explicitly advocated whole-sale Westernisation (Zhang, 1996). Yang (1991) also noted that some students compared Marxism unfavourably with the economic theories developed by the British economist, J. M. Keynes (1883-1946).

As a result of students' exposure to Western ideologies, the post Mao decade was featured with student unrest. The most representative activities included the Democracy Wall Movement in Beijing from 1978 to 1980, 'salon' activities in the early 1980s, a series of students' demonstrations mid-1980s and eventually the Tiananmen Square Event (1989) (cf. Rai, 1991). In response to these activities, various campaigns were launched in the 1980s by the Party to fight against "bourgeois liberalization" and "spiritual pollution" (cf. Zhang, 1996) while the "Four Cardinal Principles[8]" were again and again emphasized as the principal line of the country. All these campaigns launched and the measures taken by the government after Tiananmen inserted both short-term and long-term effects on the country's politics and education in general (cf. Hayhoe, 1996; Zhang, 1996 and Rai, 1991). The after-effects of the Tiananmen event on higher education were most apparently reflected by compulsory military training programmes for freshmen students and in the modification of the contents for social science subjects offered in tertiary institutions (cf. Little, et al., 1994).

None the less, unlike these social science subjects, a great majority, if not all, of foreign language programmes remained intact and the effects on most English language teaching programmes were apparently minimal. Even though Western influences were officially denounced by the government as an important factor of the student unrest, there seemed to be no documented attempt from any ideological faction to question the value of foreign

language education or challenge the significance of *Yangwei zhongyong* (making foreign things serve China). On the contrary, at the meeting with some graduating students in Beijing in 1992, Jiang Zemin, the then General Secretary of the Communist Party, made the following remarks as summarized in Zhang (1993),

> In order to speed up our economic development and to implement our 'reform and open-door' policies, we must learn all the advanced things from foreign, including capitalist countries and make use of them. (p. 256, author's translation)

These remarks clearly served to re-iterate *Yangwei zhongyong*, the second half of the *Shuangyong* policy. In the same year, according to Zhang (ibid.), Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader, made the reiteration even more concrete and comprehensive. During his inspecting tour to the southern part of China, he suggested to the country to learn from Asia's 'four little dragons' (South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong). He made particular reference to Singapore as a country which does not only attach importance to economic advancement but pays its attention to the education of the youth of Chinese origin with traditional Chinese culture. Deng clearly suggested that while learning their experience of economic development ideological education was not to be neglected. The attitudes shown in the remarks by the top leaders unmistakably indicate that there is what Zhang calls a very favourable 'ecological environment' for implementing the *Shuangyong* policy in China.

3.3. *Shuangyong* and College English

While policy makers realized that foreign language expertise could serve as a channel to modern technology they were equally aware that that it would also become a passageway

to "bourgeois liberalization" or cultural conversion. How to enable a learner to master a foreign language without his/her being contaminated by its cultural 'dross' has remained a serious dilemma for policy makers and educationists in the last century, particularly since the ending of the Cultural Revolution when Western ideological theories and Westerners started to enter university campuses and students began to re-evaluate Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought (see Yang, 1991). Is it possible to minimize, if impossible to completely eliminate, the influence of Western ideologies on learners in the learning process of a foreign language? Could a policy statement be made in a 'convincing' way so as to guide practitioners and learners in achieving such a goal?

In Mao's era, divergent replies to these questions reflected competing perceptions of a modern socialist country that complicated the practice of foreign language education. During the last two decades, policy makers and educational ideologues have turned more and more towards a comprehensive interpretation of the *Shuangyong* policy. This is most evidently manifested in "semi-official documents" – commercial publications authored by or bearing names of senior government officials. Having as consultants Li Tieying, former Minister of Education and Zhang Chenxian, President of the Chinese Education Association, Zhang (1993, p. 249) stresses the importance of this policy,

> In this "reform and open-door" era, whether or not we can effectively implement the *Shuangyong* policy determines the nature and speed of constructing our country's material and spiritual civilizations. This strategically important policy should be highly valued, particularly in the cultural and educational domains (author's translation).

In specific terms, Zhang asserts that the policy should be thoroughly implemented in the areas of philosophy, social sciences and various natural science subjects. Having stressed the importance of *Yangwei zhongyong* (Making foreign things serve China) and called for enhancing international communications, he goes further to discuss the implications of

Guwei jinyong (Making the ancient serve the present) and suggests the study of classics

such as the *Lungyu* (Analects) and other classical literature. All in all, Zhang emphasizes

the significance of *Shuangyong* as a policy in contemporary China and suggests practical

measures for comprehensively implementing it.

In interpreting one of Deng's *Sange mianxiang* (the Three Directions), Teng and Zhang

(1992), under the consultancy of such senior political figures in the central government as

Lu Zhengcao, Wu Xiuquan and Yuan Baohua, list five qualities and characteristics a

qualified foreign language 'talent' should possess: 1) strong linguistic competence; 2) a

commendable understanding of the culture of the target language (note that they are aware

of the necessity of cultural studies in foreign language education); 3) strong capability in

communicating with the speakers of the target language; 4) ability in strictly safeguarding

state secrets and complying with state policies and a good understanding of international

laws, regulations and courtesies; and, most importantly 5) clear "reform and open-door"

attitude, which, in their interpretation, is the *Yangwei zhongyong* (making foreign things

serve China) attitude (p. 124). Of these qualities, the first three address the universally-

accepted needs of linguistic and communicative competence while the last two suggest

ideological requirements for foreign language graduates. The five qualities thus stipulated

seem to indicate a resurgence of the holy goal of training 'red experts' (a term coined in

the Mao era to refer to professionals and academics with strong political consciousness) in

education in the Mao era. But how does ideology reveal itself in a foreign language

programme since the holy goal of training 'red-experts' has remained unchanged? What

role does the *Shuangyong* policy play in the College English programme?

3.3.1. Influence on Teaching Methodology

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, in the Mao era, ideological orientation was always stipulated as the primary concern for English programmes. Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thoughts were specified in all syllabuses and documents for the then Public English programme as the guiding principles. Even in the 1980 *Service English Syllabus*, these political philosophies were still claimed as the ideological basis for all teaching constituents. Up till then, politics was in supreme command for this program as well as for most other subjects taught at the university. From then on, however, the "open-door" policy seemed to gradually lower the tone of policy makers in emphasising ideological orientation in foreign language teaching. This 'lessening' sense of ideological concerns became apparent in the two College English syllabuses issued respectively in 1985 and 1986. As noted in Chapter 2, in neither of these two syllabuses can one find explicit specifications for ideological orientation for course instruction and materials writing. The contents of syllabuses resonate to a certain extent the 'reform and open-door' spirits in the post-Mao era in China.

However lessening the ideological sense of College English educators seemed to be, *Shuangyong* was not neglected, neither in the document nor in College English materials development. In the syllabuses the policy manifests itself in a new phrase which concerns the choice of teaching methodology. In order to develop a methodology germane to the Chinese context, the syllabuses use a phrase '*Bocai zhongchang*' which could be literally translated into 'adapting strengths of various teaching approaches to own applications'. By the interpretation of Dong (1986), general editor of *College English*[10], the phrase *Bocai zhongchang* suggests "diachronic inheritance, synchronic exchange in determining our

teaching methodology" and thus, "trying to cherish the outmoded approaches or copying Western models indiscriminately" is to be rejected (p. 23, author's translation). Many other well-known College English specialists, such as Li (1995) and Han, Lu and Dong (1995), have made similar interpretations to this phrase.

The inference of 'diachronic inheritance' is clear to Chinese foreign language educators. In terms of teaching methodology, there seems to be no other model but the traditional 'intensive reading' approach that is meant to be 'inherited'. The term 'intensive reading' per se needs defining as it is culture-specific. 'Intensive reading' in the Chinese context refers to a highly teacher-centred course in which the teacher takes students through a text on a-word-by-word and then sentence-by-sentence basis, defining meaning of vocabulary, explaining 'language points' and grammar and translating the whole or part of the text before letting students answer comprehension questions for the discourse or embark on pattern drills. The students are not actual readers but passive listeners because the focus of teacher-centred activities put learners into a passive role of listening and memorizing, and language as communication is largely neglected (Cotton, 1990). Because of this, the teaching approach has been the target of criticism from foreign language educators for years. Yet, 'intensive reading' has been regarded by many as the backbone of foreign language courses. Li, G. (1995) argues that the intensive reading course should work in the Chinese context today because all foreign language talents in China were taught in the past through this approach. Despite its weaknesses such as cramming, teacher-centredness and passive learning on the part of the students, the proponents of the approach maintain that intensive reading develops in students basic language skills, sound knowledge of the target language, correct methods of study and eventually it enables learners to study and work independently. Therefore, 'intensive reading' as the essence of Chinese traditional teaching methods will continue to be an essential course in English language teaching (cf.

Wu, 1990). As shown in 2.7, the course 'intensive reading' for College English indeed maintains essential features of the approach, such as teacher-centeredness and cramming.

Nowadays, in many specialised tertiary institutions of foreign language studies, the course title 'intensive reading' has been changed (rectified in Li's words) into 'comprehensive skills course' or 'integrated English course'. In Wang (1996) two full chapters are used to elaborate (or prescribe) the features of the 'integrated English course', suggesting a multi-dimensional integrated approach. While defending the course, scholars such as Li and Wang refute teacher-centeredness and promote classroom teaching with students' active involvement. This might be seen as true attempts to integrate the approach with current models (a kind of "Synchronic exchange" in Dong's terms) and to develop it into a teaching approach with 'Chinese characteristics'.

It could be seen that *Bocai zhongchang* (adapting the strengths of various approaches of teaching to Chinese context) is the actual application of *Yangwei zhongyong* (making foreign things serve China) to teaching methodology development. On the one hand, this stipulation gives methodologists such as Li and Wang some freedom to study and develop effective teaching methods 'with Chinese characteristics'. This is a desired aim difficult to achieve but has clear pedagogical implications. On the other hand, *Bocai zhongchangt* provides 'traditionalists' with a 'fortress' to safeguard the conventional approaches that are controversial in terms of teaching theories. This phrase could be interpreted in the case of College English as a free approach, either sticking to the traditional or adopting any teaching approach deemed practical and appropriate. The survey findings reported in Zheng, Wei and Cheng's (1997) and Zhao's (1998) given in 2.7 clearly suggest that in College English, the traditional model prevails as classroom teaching according to their observation followed the traditional intensive reading approach.

3.3.2. Reflections on Contents

Teaching methodology is certainly a crucial part of foreign language education, but what is more important is the contents for teaching, i.e. the textbook materials, particularly in terms of ideological orientation the *Shuangyong* policy suggests. A close examination of the most widely-used College English textbook series (see the next chapter for detailed analysis) reveals that textbook writers never ignore the ideological dimension in materials development even though ideological orientation is 'missing' from the syllabus. In the "Preface to the First Edition" of *New English Course*, edited by Liu, et al. (1994), the ideological orientation is listed as a criterion for text selection together with two other criteria[11] stipulated in the syllabus. In the same manner, Dong (1986), chief editor of the textbook *College English*, states that, in addition to such common criteria as to make a text interesting, enlightening and informative, its ideological dimension was taken care of in text-selection for her textbook series. Her interpretation for *Sixiang xing* (ideological orientation) in material development was, however, noticeably more sophisticated than traditional ones. She contends that the ideological contents in a textbook should not be "empty preaching". Instead, they should be naturally integrated with the other criteria so as to achieve the purpose of educating the young. She presents two examples to illustrate how the integration could be achieved: the two stories chosen for Unit 10 of Book II and the three articles for the last unit of *Extensive Reading*, Book II. The former has a theme of teaching students how to deal with criticisms and praises from others and the latter tells the readers that North America is not a land of Peach Blossoms, i.e. a haven of peace, but it is full of turmoil and trouble. Interestingly, the first example is used by Zhai (1986), head editor of *Intensive Reading* booklets in Dong's own series, to exemplify the principle of

Kesi xing (enlightening or provoking thinking) rather than *Sixiang xing* (ideological orientation).

Indeed, the ideological components the editors of College English textbook series have in mind may not equate Marxist-Leninist-Maoist politics and philosophies, which were the norm of materials writing before the Deng era, but the ideological consciousness does not seem to differ as *Jiaoshu Yuren* (to educate people while imparting knowledge) remains as the goal of foreign language education (Dong, 1986). In examining the contents of the *Intensive Reading* booklets in Dong's *College English*[12] series one may notice that the editors selected a great variety of materials from genuine British or American sources. The texts cover topics on popular science and technology, social values, lifestyles, education, history, social problems, and many sensational or interesting fiction stories embodying various cultural aspects of mainly British and American societies. The editors made clear efforts to touch upon as many knowledge areas of these two countries as they could. This is clearly indicated by Dong (1992) when she claims that in selecting cultural background information the editors attempted to strike a balance of a variety of topics (cultural representation at the macro-social level[13] in Byram and Esarte-Sarries's (1991) terms). She admits that, because of the lack of clear criteria, the text materials are found unbalanced as some topics are extensively covered while some others are rarely touched upon. However, she does not elaborate in what way the text materials are unbalanced (this will be examined in detail by 'criteria of realism' in Chapter 4).

A careful look at the contents of the first four *Intensive Reading* booklets[14] reveals that the unbalancing aspects clearly manifest the ideological concerns of the editors in textbook development. First and foremost, the self-imposed criterion of *Sixiang xing* (ideological orientation) lead to the selection of texts which embody values and morals of the learners'

own culture. For example, the chosen texts include more texts on those values such as patriotism, self-esteem, bravery, interpersonal relationship and attitudes towards work which could strike a sympathetic chord in Chinese learners, but less on those topics such as privacy and individualism, not to speak of human rights and democracy, which show differences in value and political concepts. Secondly, the editors apparently selected more texts which depict the negative side than those about the positive side of the British and American societies (see Chapter 4 for detailed analysis). There are many representations of social problems such as crimes, racism, sexism, social stratification, the city poor and disrespect for the aged, but the number of texts representing positive images of the two countries, even though they exist, is not as large. Some other aspects such as the lack of intercultural representations[15] also reflect ideological concerns in textbook writing. This will be taken up in Chapter 4.

Like the textbook writers, teachers also express their ideological viewpoints in classroom teaching. In teaching *New English Course*, Huang (1994) finds that many texts could be used to educate the students ideologically. One of the examples in his account details his way of handling in class the articles "Patients needed" and "The interview" which, in his words, disclose various social evils of Western capitalist systems from various angles. He reports that through his teaching of the articles, his students "obtained an in-depth understanding of the decadent nature of capitalist societies and of the superiority of socialism. Their love of the socialist motherland was further distilled." (p. 12, author's translation). In association with the text "The Global Brain Drain" (Unit 6, Book II, *New English Course*), he guided his students to discuss the issue of patriotism and encouraged them to learn from those staff members who came back from the rich Western countries to make contributions to the motherland. In teaching the text "Letter from New York" in which the unemployed and the city poor queuing up for charity meals are pictured, Huang

took the chance to explain the superiority of socialism over capitalism. He concludes that in a foreign language course ideological education is not only necessary but also feasible. The students showed less resentment to the teaching. This is a situation that can hardly be achieved with other courses. By other courses, Huang refers to those that teach political studies and morals. Huang explicitly suggests the integration of foreign language teaching with ideological education.

3.3.3. Influences from Officials

The College English programme, like many other academic subjects especially those of social science, is determined by many socio-political factors in its development. It is the culture in Chinese education that remarks made by a high-rank official on a formal or informal occasion such as a meeting or a talk can be taken as guidelines for an education programme. Two decades ago, all principles of education programmes indiscriminately came from those remarks made by high-rank officials which were often published in the form of official documents. Li, Zhong and Liu (1988) provide sufficient evidence for this observation in their account of the history of English language teaching in China. Today, the influence of high-rank officials seems to be reduced but clearly persists, on education in general. Many academic essays published by educationists contain phrases typically used during the Cultural Revolution. These phrases include 'Recently our 'so and so (official)' points out ...' and 'President Jiang Zeming said ...'. Cen's (1997) speech given at a conference on College English, clearly indicates the central role of the Ministry of Education. He reports that one of the new measures taken was that the Ministry will edit a newsletter of foreign language education and issue it to all tertiary institutions free of

charge. This is done "to ensure the transmission of the Ministry's spirits to the general public." (p. 2).

In another published speech given by Cen (1998), as director of the Foreign Language Office of the High Education Division of the Ministry of Education, examinations such as CET 4 and CET 6 were stated as 'pertinent to the country's sovereignty'. He drew an analogy between the testing system of a country and its custom offices and argued that the national testing systems should be protected under the enormous impacts from foreign testing systems and organisations. The argument seems to imply that that there is a threat to the testing system from abroad (though only critical comments made at home (see 2.8) have been reported) and the statement seems to serve as a kind of official manifesto to prevent foreign influence on the national testing system. The national testing system is thus raised to the level of political significance. Will this quiet down the voices of directly challenging CET 4 and CET 6 as they are called the "national essence" in his speech?

The most obvious influence inserted by officials is revealed in a recent article by Zeng and Zhang (1999). They "felt lucky" to read the first draft of the revised version and the Revision Explanation issued to tertiary institutions by the Revision Team of the College English Syllabus. In their article, they first indicate that they are in general agreement with the documents. On the other hand, they explicitly point out that the justification for ranking reading as the first teaching objective (refer to 2.4. for detailed debate) in the up-coming syllabus is poorly grounded and thus unconvincing. Below is a paragraph they quote from the Revision Explanation,

> Of course, reading is still ranked as the first teaching objective. In (our) survey, we found that reading is considered one of the most important skills though a very keen interest in (teaching) listening and speaking skills is shown. Of the five skills, the ranking (in view of

importance to students) by *officials* is Listening (71.4%), Reading (64.3%) and Speaking (61%). Teachers present a ranking of Reading (80.6%), Listening (49.4%) and Speaking (32.1%). (p. 53, author's translation)

The ranking of the five skills as course objectives is, in their view, one of the core issues in designing or revising a syllabus. They strongly argue that the survey conducted solely among these two groups of people was inadequate and, thus, the ranking lacks validity, reliability, and practicability. Above all, they challenge the 'ranking by officials' and question the ambiguity of the term 'official'. However, they emphatically express their stance of fully supporting the ranking of reading. They suggest that a survey be carried out on a larger scale and in a more scientific manner, implying including at least students and graduates in the survey among other things.

The inclusion of students and graduates is clearly well-justified in view of needs analysis. However, many such surveys have already been carried out and reported (for examples, Ying, 1996; Zheng and Wei, 1996; Xia, 1997 and Han, 1998) and the ranking of reading as the most-needed skill has been negated by the findings. Zeng and Zhang (1999) clearly made a justifiable suggestion that is unlikely to be taken into consideration. The exclusion of students and graduates from the sampling population in the survey indicates that the decisive influences on a foreign language programme like College English often come from authorities or policy makers who are not necessarily specialists in the programme. At this point, the author wishes to point out that influences on foreign language education inserted by political authorities are inevitable and indispensable in many places of the world simply because foreign language programmes have to fit into the educational aims and general educational framework of the country. In many circumstances, this influence is essential for the successful operation of the programme. On the other hand, it seems universally true that for any foreign language programme, just as for an entire educational system, a

balance has to be struck between the learners' needs and interests and the structural features of the education system and the socio-political needs of the country.

3.4. Summary

Semi-official documents indicate a strong resurgence of the *Shuangyong* policy as a guiding doctrine in education, as other ideologically-oriented aphorisms or dualisms in education have turned out either too political or hypothetical to maintain their appeals. *Shuangyong* has indeed gone far beyond the normal jurisdiction of a policy by Chinese definition. As was shown above, it could be taken as a norm, an attitude as well as a policy in different circumstances. As an educational creed it effectively safeguards the traditional culture in China's search for national identity and provides a strong thread of continuity in foreign language education, especially in times of political turmoil such as the Cultural Revolution. As a deeply-embedded cultural concept it ensures ideological solicitude in many, if not all foreign language educators – teachers and textbook writers alike – in materials writing and classroom teaching. Sufficient evidence shows that the ideological dimension has never been overlooked by educators no matter whether or not it is specified in official documents like the national syllabus. Furthermore, *Yangwei zhongyong* (making foreign things serve China) is listed as a required attitude – a personal attribute 'a talent of the country' should possess. This attitude, when vigorously promoted in China, seems to provide a solution to a century-old *Ti-yong* dilemma.

A representative *Yangwei zhongyong* attitude is perhaps shown in the Preamble of Huang's (1997) book on English language education. On the one hand, he states that foreign language

education could widen the learner's horizon for it does not only have its practical (economic) value but also its cognitive and aesthetic significance. In this context, however, he makes the following remarks,

> The aim of our large-scaled English language education in this open door era is to take stones from others' hills in order to build our motherland into an original country of civilization for the new generations. Hopefully, our future generations will not have to spend so much time on foreign language learning as we do now so that they can devote themselves to other activities more creative. (p. 2, author's translation)

Huang seems to make two points here: 1) the significance of the other "hills" no longer exists when the needed "stones" are taken from these "hills" because they have lost their utilitarian values; and 2) foreign language learning is not a very creative activity, if it is creative at all. The second point need not be discussed as it seems to be an idiosyncratic view that very few education researchers would share. But his first point needs commenting on. By making this statement Huang has apparently forgotten the people on these 'hills' and the everlasting and increasing necessity of communications with the people on different 'hills' throughout the world. This statement shows an ethnocentric attitude and fails to address the supreme goal of foreign language education.

Fu (1986), a former policy maker at the then State Education Commission, airs his view on a foreign language and foreign language teaching as he comments on the missionary schools run by some Western countries after the Opium War in China,

> The aims and policies pursued and measures taken by Western imperialist countries in running their schools should be thoroughly criticized. Their attempts to use foreign languages as tools of enslaving education should also be ferreted out to the fullest extent. But a (foreign) language is a tool, and a weapon. It does not itself possess a class character; the enemies could use it to achieve their purposes yet we can apply it to our own revolutionary and construction causes. As

for the enemies' library materials, reference books, teaching methodology and experience (such as the 'Direct Method' and creating a foreign language environment in foreign language teaching), if we throw off the contents which are counter-revolutionary, religious and idealistic, and discard those against educational science and principles, we can still make use of them by integrating these materials and experience into our practice and by injecting into them revolutionary and scientific contents. (p. 44, author's translation)

This assertion shows a policy maker's concern about the ideological dimensions in foreign language education and his clear position against indiscriminate copying of foreign teaching methodology. On the other hand, his remarks seem to suggest the separation of a foreign language from its socio-political contexts during the teaching process in modern China. When this separation takes place, however, the teaching of a foreign language could hardly be said to be foreign language teaching in its proper sense but the teaching of a codified version of the country's own socio-political culture.

Byram (1989) points out that "foreign language teaching is, both in my experience as learner and teacher and in my pedagogic philosophy, as education, an emancipation from the confines of one's own habitat and culture; the current emphasis on language teaching as skill training is apt to lose that from sight." (p. vii) It is absolutely true that the reform in foreign language education has been vigorous during the 'open door' era in China. None the less, it seems clear that it will be too daunting a task for foreign language teachers and students to engage in cultural studies in a more comprehensive and systematic manner if teaching and learning of a foreign language are not perceived as educational enrichment or "an emancipation from the confines of one's own habitat and culture" but as a potential pathway towards ideological conversion and thus an ideological threat, or, in more constructive words, if the policy is not further developed.

Notes

1. Confucianism - the philosophical system founded on the teaching of Confucius (551-479 BC). Confucianism combines a political theory and a theory of human nature to yield a "Dao" — a prescriptive doctrine or way. The doctrine supported political authority using the theory of the mandate of heaven and sought to help the rulers who derived authority from heaven's command to maintain order and preserve tradition. It also trained its adherents in benevolence, traditional rituals, filial piety, loyalty, respects for superiors and for the aged and so forth. Confucianism dominated Chinese education system and her socio-political life for most of Chinese history. (see Zhu, 1992 for more detailed presentation of Confucianism).

2. The Self-Strengthening Movement took place from early 1860s to late 1890s. Believing that new thoughts and Western techniques were needed to strengthen the country, in this movement, the Self-Strengtheners in the Qing government set up factories to manufacture firearms and machines and promoted technical schools and Western expertise for the purpose of maintaining the feudal rule in the country.

3. Confucian teachings began to dominate the educational arena from the time of Han Wudi, the fifth Empire of Han Dynasty, in the second century BC. Han Wudi literally prohibited all other schools of thought by stipulating Confucianism as the only state orthodoxy. But as Confucianism suffered a severe setback with the fall of the Han regime the teaching remained dormant for a few centuries. It became fully institutionalised in the Tang Dynasty (618-906) as the basis for the civil service examination system (*Keju zhi*). This examination system functioned as a recruiting ground, for filling government positions with scholars scoring highest in an examination of Confucian classics. Very successful candidates could even be received into the imperial family (ibid.). The system functioned for more than thirteen centuries.

4. Under the strong influence from several powerful governor-generals such as Yuan Shikai and Zhang Zhidong, the Qin government issued a decree, which finally abolished the thirteen-century-old imperial examination system. (for more information, see Mao and Shen, 1988, pp. 221-224).

5 *Badesiwei* — loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, love, faith, righteousness, harmony and fairness (the Eight Morals (*Bade*)); rites, righteousness, honesty and a good sense of shame, (the Four Thoughts (*Siwei*)) and *Sanmin Zhuyi* — Nationalism, People's Rights and the People's Livelihood.

6. Cai Yuanpei (1869-1940) is widely known as a celebrated forerunner of modern education in China. He was the first minister of education in the Republican era and later became the president of the prestigious Peking University.

7. The "Four Modernizations" — Modernization of industries, modernization of agriculture, modernization of national defence and modernization of science and technology.

8. The "Four Cardinal Principles" — Upholding Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, Party leadership, socialism and the proletarian dictatorship. These principles came into existence after a speech by Deng Xiaoping in 1979.

9. Both syllabuses are for the same program (College English) and are similar in contents with the 1985 syllabus claiming to apply to undergraduates of science and engineering and the 1986 version applicable to undergraduates of humanities and science (see Feng 1997 for further detail).

10. It should be noted that College English, the English programme, should NOT be mixed up in this paper with *College English*, one of the textbooks most widely used for this program in tertiary institutions throughout the country.

11. In *College English Syllabus* (1985), it is stipulated that texts selected for College English textbooks should be interesting and informative. In textbook writing, *Sixian xing* (ideological orientation) is always a self-imposed criterion. These three criteria are usually called the basic principles in text selection.

12. *College English*, edited by Dong et al., is believed to be the most widely used textbook series and claimed to have users (undergraduate students) in more than 800 tertiary institutions in China. For this reason, this series is usually the focus of discussion by textbook analysers. In the next chapter where the textbooks are reviewed this series will be the focus for cultural studies analysis. In this chapter, only a few points are highlighted.

13. Byram, M. S. and Esarte-Sarries, V. consider three dimensions in analysing a text the cultural contents of a textbook. At the macro-social level they look at broad social facts such as geographical, economic, political dimensions of societal life. (See Note 15 for micro-social level).

14. As the first four band courses are the core courses of the foundation stage (cf. *College English Syllabus*, 1985), the four corresponding intensive reading booklets are always the focus of attention for both textbook writers and textbook analysers.

15. As Chapter 4 will review in detail, intercultural-level representations are one of the 4 dimensions in textbook analysis (Risager, 1991 and Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991).

16. The popularity of VOA (Voice of America) and BBC (British Broadcast Corporation) among students is commonplace observation. For a representative account, please see Yan, Jingnan's survey (1994) among a number of English majors in her university in "American craze" and American Culture. When asked why listening textbooks do not include a larger number of VOA and BBC programs, a textbook writer replied during an interview, "How can we? Obviously, the contents of many are not suitable for our students. They (VOA and BBC) often talk about human rights and democracy."

17. The author conducted quite a few interviews in this couple of years with about five College English textbook writers. Among the five, only one would consider using texts on Chinese cultural aspects in his textbook on the premises that they are written by native speakers of English. The main reason given by the other four for not using this type of texts is that they **feel** learners would not be interested in reading them.

Chapter 4

Analysis of College English Textbooks

Introduction

There seems to be a universal agreement on the significance of the impact of foreign language textbooks on teaching and learning among foreign language researchers and educationists. In reporting the research project conducted in the north of England, Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991) make the following remarks about textbooks,

> One of the most important influences on pupils' views of France is their French textbook. Pupils refer to it explicitly or implicitly when talking in interviews about French life; Some compare the expectations it raises with the reality they have experienced. Teachers use the textbook as their syllabus guidelines in the day-to-day planning of lessons, most evidently with respect to which language to introduce but also by extension with respect to what information to give pupils. (p. 173)

In a speech given at a recent national symposium on College English teaching, An (1997: 3), deputy director of the Advisory Committee for College Foreign Language Teaching,

makes a strong statement about textbooks, saying that "textbook writing is the most crucial part in foreign language education reforms". This statement might be taken as too strong by many College English educators, though true to a great extent, because the programme is formally claimed to be directed by the syllabus (critically said to be guided by the tests), not by the textbooks. Many College English specialists were, of course, more cautious than An when speaking of the importance of textbooks. While declaring textbooks as the means to ensure the implementation of the College English syllabus Han, Lu and Dong (1995), for example, strategically remark that they tend to manipulate teaching and learning to a certain extent. Their remark comes to terms with both political needs and Chinese modesty as all of them are themselves important figures in writing different textbook series for College English teaching[1].

To many College English practitioners, foreign language textbooks are edited by learned scholars and the texts are selected directly from genuine sources and therefore, they do not only provide scientific and systematic materials for language teaching but also present a great deal of truthful source materials for culture teaching. This belief is exemplified in Zhang (1991) who assumes that College English textbooks published recently contain the most reliable and the richest information for cultural studies teaching. Zhang bases his assumption on the fact that the texts in these textbooks are all claimed to be selected from genuine British or American sources. In his view, as long as the teacher makes proper use of the authentic materials, the students would be able to acquire the necessary cultural knowledge and to increase their cultural awareness. These views, let alone other factors which will be represented below, on textbooks as a source book for cultural studies teaching would make the analysis of College English textbooks exceedingly relevant to the study of the cultural dimension of the programme.

There are many other outstanding factors which can further justify thorough analysis of College English textbooks for the study. As mentioned in Introduction to the thesis, the first among them is the enormous number of potential users. As the programme involves millions of students each year, popular textbooks are used all over the country in equally large numbers. The influence of these textbooks on learners is presumably beyond doubt. Adding to this influence is the long 'service life' of the widely-used textbooks most of which, as will be shown below, may be used for more than a decade without any revision. Furthermore, the relevancy of textbook analysis also lies in the students' faith (see 6.3 for evidence) in the cultural information represented in textbooks. Unlike students in many Western countries who have opportunities to experience the target culture when studying it, College English students in normal circumstances have little access to direct exposure to the target culture during their college years. Without such exposure, they are more likely than Western counterparts to accept as true the incoming information contained in their foreign language textbooks, as long as this information is not incompatible in itself or with that obtained from other sources such as films and mass media they are exposed to. In other words, the textbook College English students use is a more important source of cultural information than that in Western countries. All these factors make the task of analysing a College English textbook as significant as, if not more than, the analysis of the syllabus and the ideological dimension.

An analysis of a foreign language textbook with a focus on the cultural dimension is truly a daunting task as language and culture are intertwined and the examination of one requires the consideration of the other. In such an analysis a number of principal factors must be taken into consideration. These include course objectives, text selection criteria, learners' needs and the teaching approach. Prior to analysing a College English textbook, the analyser faces two extra problems. Firstly, the analyser has to take into account the

representativeness of the textbooks in question as he/she has to select them from a dozen of College English textbooks currently used in tertiary institutions in China. Secondly, the focus of analysis has to be sensibly identified because a typical College English textbook is in fact a series of course books which in turn consist of more than one booklet each. Such a College English textbook was usually written over quite a few years by a group of textbook writers from different tertiary institutions. The enormous amount of materials and the variety of course books make the analysing task even more onerous. This chapter faces this challenge. It will first briefly review the recent approaches to foreign language textbook analysis. The process of selecting a typical textbook series will be depicted and the representativeness of the series for analysis will be justified with evidence from publications and a pilot study. The presentation and the contents of the textbook series will then be outlined before they are evaluated in terms of course objectives, authenticity and criteria of realism.

4.1. An Overview of Textbook Analysis Models

In reviewing different models developed in the past few decades to describe, select or evaluate foreign language textbooks, one would notice a rapid evolution of criteria and theories in textbook analysis operation. During the 1940s, one simple but influential model for foreign language textbook analysis was the "score card" model developed by Clement (1942). In his model, discrete items that could be rated independently of each other were listed and qualitative rating scales (poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent) were provided. Individual texts or parts were given a score, and the score were summed to make a conclusion of the value of the whole book. This methodology was criticised by

some textbook researchers such as Spalding (1955) as failing to take into account the effects that the texts have upon learning.

Before long, some textbook analysers evolved Clement's model to addressing learning or learner characteristics in foreign language textbooks. In Cronbach's (1955) text-in-use theory, an inquiry into the pupil's use of the text was considered essential in determining the text's success or failure and he stated that this inquiry should focus on how the pupil operates on his/her printed materials and his/her concept of text use. In fact many recent studies also place their central concern on learner's needs. Steiner (1973) remarked that texts should be adaptable to different levels of students' ability and to varied pacing depending upon students' needs, motivations, interests and abilities. In his textbook analysis model, Chastain (1976) also put emphasis on the relationships between learner characteristics and curriculum characteristics.

In more recent years, many textbook researchers have attached a growing importance to the socio-cultural dimension in foreign language textbooks although this dimension is still deemed by some as of secondary importance. Huhn (1978, cited in Byram, 1989) developed seven criteria dealing with the treatment of content. They could be simplified as: 1) keeping cultural information contemporary; 2) avoiding or making learners aware of stereotypes; 3) presenting a realistic picture; 4) freeing from ideological tendencies; 5) contextualising cultural phenomena: 6) explicating relevancy of historical information represented in the book to the understanding of modern society; and 7) making clear that historical personalities are products of their age. On stressing the importance of learners' motivation in foreign language learning, Cunningsworth (1984) also made a list of such broad social and cultural factors as geographical setting, age range and class, advantages and limitations of culture-specific textbooks, teaching cultural background with the

language, English as a second language, anthropological aspects of language, etc. He stated that the cultural standpoint should match as far as possible the objectives and the needs of the learner.

In China, there does not seem to exist a great many publications attempting to develop theories or models of evaluating foreign language textbooks. In a recent paper, Zhou (1996) makes a tentative list of criteria with which he hopes to provoke further discussion to eventually form a set of textbook evaluation maxims to accommodate the Chinese contexts. His criteria, without elaboration, include 1) pairing textbook materials with language teaching theories; 2) matching contents with the syllabus; 3) taking into real account learners' needs; 4) selecting appropriate material (in this he specified a number of aspects of material selection such as authenticity, level of interest, usefulness for real communication and a variety of cultural source material); 5) designing exercise items in accord with the controlled - less controlled - uncontrolled principle; and 6) affiliating the major materials with adequate supplementary materials. Within the confine of his short essay, he hardly gives further explanation as to how these criteria could be used in evaluating textbooks. A few other essays such as Gu (1994) and Li (1993) offer very short comments on a few aspects of some individual booklets of a textbook series (to be analysed below) and they make no attempts to establish criteria for textbook analysis.

An influential development, particularly for the analysis of foreign language textbooks, is a descriptive and evaluative approach elaborated by Risager (1991). She represents her criteria for analysis in terms of realism that is "based on the analysis of realistic prose, but adapted to the actual appearance of textbooks and the actual pedagogical needs." (p. 182). Her criteria for realism refer, as Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991, p. 303) review, "not simply to accuracy and comprehensive coverage on the depiction of the foreign

culture in textbooks but, more importantly, to the degree to which the reader may perceive and accept the image presented – no matter how complete or partial – as being realistic."

On the strengths of her criteria, Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor developed an integrated approach to their analysis of *Action* – a French textbook used in many British schools. A descriptive account, based on a systematic study of the contents of the textbook being analysed, enabled them to identify dominant themes and characters, formulate categories of interests and depict and quantify indicators of the categories shown in the textbook. Following that was the evaluating process that helped them to firstly consider the image presented in *Action* against the writer's implicitly or explicitly stated aims and then took into account the criteria of realism. Such an approach to textbook analysis has an obvious pedagogical implication in foreign language teaching. When both the presented image and the real image are revealed analysers gain insight into the values and purposes of language and culture teaching and they are provided with the opportunity to interpret the current practice of cultural teaching and to adapt the methodology to the circumstances of general education.

Based on their reflections of different kinds of knowledge, Byram, Morgan, et al. (1994: 48-52) formulated four guidelines to the general nature of a language and culture course and proposed nine areas as the 'minimum content' of cultural studies. The guidelines are suggested with a degree of progression: from intercultural comparisons and contrasts of world phenomena, confrontation in early stages with stereotypes, exposure to unconscious and conscious knowledge up to engagement with the complex cultural phenomena of literature and other artefacts. As for the content they proposed the following analytical categories: social identity and social groups, social interactions, social institutions, belief and behaviour, socialisation and the life-cycle, national history, stereotypes and national

identity, national geography, and national cultural heritage. Byram and Morgan el al. state that these nine categories are underpinned by two basic principles: 1) both the knowledge of the target culture and learners' own culture are parts of the content; and 2) knowledge and perceptions of insiders about their own culture frame the selection and the perspective of content presentation. These guidelines and proposals are clearly another step towards the model of intercultural communicative competence which will be elaborated in the last chapter.

Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor's (1991) approach is adopted for the analysis of content in this chapter as the dimensions to be analysed in this approach (with the exception of intercultural representations) correspond, to a larger extent than the analytical categories proposed by Byram, Morgan et al. (1994), with stipulated or covert objectives of textbook writing by College English textbook editors. This approach is, however, slightly modified to address major background factors of College English textbook writing. The process of analysis, thus, comprises three stages: 1) a systematic depiction of the contents by themes; 2) content analysis in line with criteria of text selection stipulated in the syllabus and the notion of authenticity; and 3) content evaluation in accordance with the criteria of realism. The slight modification is the adding of the second stage. The 'common core' elements and the text selection criteria explicated in the syllabus play a significant role in College English textbook writing and the notion of authenticity represents a trend of text selection in material development. It is unlikely that a feasible model of analysing College English textbooks could possibly be constructed without taking these factors into account.

4.2. College English Textbooks in Focus

As College English is a programme involving millions of students in tertiary institutions all over the country, not surprisingly, quite a number of different textbooks have been published to meet the needs of this huge market, and more are forthcoming. It is neither possible nor necessary to evaluate such a great number of materials. Of these textbooks, some have been produced by teams of specialists from key universities with defined objectives and are recognised as of high quality while others have been written by some individuals or teams of specialists from less privileged universities and thus are used only by a small number of tertiary institutions. Among these College English textbooks, three are commonly acknowledged as of prominent quality and are used most-widely in China. They are *College English*, the third edition (1997, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press), *New English Course*, the second edition (1995, the Qinghua University Press), and *Modern English*, the second edition (1994, the Higher Education Press). Each of these textbooks is a series which consists of three major types of course booklets: student's booklets for training reading skills (some include exercise items for writing and translating skills), for listening skills (some integrate listening skills with speaking skills) and for grammar exercises. All these student's books are matched with teacher's books.

College English, the most popular of them all, is a pile of 54 booklets accompanied with 30 audio cassettes for the listening booklets. The thickest of the 54 are the six *Intensive Reading* booklets with each being 250 to 300 A4-sized page thick while the six thinnest booklets, *Fast Reading,* have about 40 A4-sized pages each. It is this series that has to be chosen as the focus of analysis owing to its extreme popularity and influences which are more often acclaimed than those of the other two by College English specialists and

practitioners (for examples, see Han, Lu and Dong, 1995; Gu, 1994 and Li, 1993). Apart from the wide acknowledgement, four other factors can be listed here for the selection: 1) this series is intended to be applicable to students of all subjects; 2) it is the product of collective efforts of textbook writers from six leading comprehensive universities; 3) so far the revised edition is the most complete among the three series; and 4) it has won two prestigious awards at the national level[2]. Today, *College English* is claimed to be used by the majority of tertiary institutions in China (Dong, 1997). However, in an analytic study as such the other two series should not be ignored. *New English Course*, particularly its reading booklets, is still the first-choice textbook for most of the science and engineering institutions[3]. *Modern English* is unique in that it is the product of collective efforts of a group of College English specialists and British TESOL specialists. Compared with the other two, it is modest in terms of physical appearance and complexity in presentation but, thanks to its seemingly less 'frightening' appearance than the other two, it suits the needs of smaller institutions, many of which have in fact been involved in the writing and trial process (see Preamble of *Modern English*, 1994). Although all the three series have a lot in common, as they have been written in accordance with the 'same' objectives and by following the 'same' selection criteria stipulated in the two syllabuses, each has its own style and adopts its own approach to text presentation and arrangement. Hence, while *College English* is focused upon for analysis, some aspects of *New English Course* and *Modern English* are to be touched upon in order to find out how these two series diverge from *College English*.

4.3. The Approach to Content Description

College English is the product of a grand project which was initially carried out before 1986 by six groups of EFL specialists from six leading universities. The first edition, nicknamed the *"Trial Copy"*, was published in 1986 by the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press (Dong 1986). According to the Preface of this edition, it was a textbook series compiled in accordance with the *College English Syllabus* (the 1986 version meant for Undergraduates of Humanities and Sciences), specifically in line with the ranked requirements for different degrees of the language competence (see 2.4.2 for details). The textbook series was originally used in comprehensive and normal universities. Its popularity spread, presumably owing both to its quality and explicitly stated applicability to students of all subjects as it assimilated different language forms for various social and natural science subjects. When its second edition, called the "Formal Copy", came into existence after six years of use, still more institutions including those of science and technology began to use the series as their College English textbook. According to Dong's (1997) statistics, *College English* claims users at approximately 800 tertiary institutions.

Its slightly revised third edition (1997 version) renders materials for eight band courses: 6 booklets for the two pre-foundation stage courses and 48 booklets for the six foundation stage band courses. Table 4.3.1 and Table 4.3.2. give such details as the titles, functions and compilers of this textbook series. To examine the content of such a long textbook series, it is important for the analyser to take a number of crucial factors into account so as to determine the focus and the approach appropriate for content analysis. These factors include the course objectives the textbook pursues, the users and the approach adopted by the textbook writers in selecting the materials. A book-by-book, text-by-text or unit-by-

unit description of the contents, without deliberating these relevant conditions, would not

yield useful results for the study.

Table 4.3.1. -- Component parts of *College English* for the pre-foundation stage

Part	Title	No. of Books	Function	Compiler
1.	*Intensive Reading*	2	Used for the two pre-foundation stage courses	Wuhan University, Wuhan
	Intensive Reading (Teacher's Book)	2	Used for the two pre-foundation stage courses	Wuhan University, Wuhan
2.	*Extensive Reading*	2	Used for the two pre-foundation stage courses	Nanjing University, Nanjing

Table 4.3.2. -- Component parts of *College English* for the foundation stage

Part	Title	No. of Books	Function	Compiler
1.	*Intensive Reading*	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Fudan University, Shanghai
	Intensive Reading (Teacher's Book)	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Fudan University, Shanghai
2.	*Extensive Reading*	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Beijing University, Beijing
	Extensive Reading (Teacher's Book)	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Beijing University, Beijing
3.	*Focus Listening* (with audio tapes)	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Huadong Normal University, Shanghai
	Focus Listening (Teacher's Book)	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Huadong Normal University, Shanghai
4.	*Fast Reading*	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Chinese Peoples' University, Beijing
5.	*Grammar and Exercises*	6	Each used for one of the six band courses	Beijing University, Beijing

The most significant factor which may help determine the scope of the content and, thus,

the approach to content analysis is the primary objectives stipulated in the syllabus. Both

syllabuses make it plain that the first four foundation stage courses, Band 1 to Band 4, are the required courses for the majority of students. In fact, as was explicated in Chapter 2, the basic required achievement level, that is, Band 1 to Band 4, has become a 'nickname' for College English education. To a great majority of students, to complete the College English programme means to pass CET 4. The two pre-foundation stage courses are taken by a small percentage of students with weak English background usually in those non-key colleges, while the two higher courses, Band 5 and Band 6, are only taken by high-fliers. Naturally, the overwhelming majority of textbook writers would focus their attention on producing materials for the four required foundation stage courses. Some textbook writers may even ignore the other courses because they are considered much less important than Band 1 to Band 4 in a holistic sense. For example, the second edition of *New English Course* comprises 27 textbooks only for Band 1 to Band 4, leaving unrevised those for Band 5 and Band 6 and the pre-foundation courses. Nowhere in the second edition of the series have the writers promised to revise them. The second edition of the comparatively modest *Modern English*, as well as its first, is a series of only 16 books which were solely intended for the first four foundation stage courses.

The 'chief aim' of a typical College English course is another important factor which has a significant effect on material production and thus helps further narrow down the scope of analysis. As is stipulated in the syllabus, the 'chief aim' of College English education is to develop in the student a relatively high degree of competence in reading, followed by a secondary objective for a medium degree of ability in listening and translating. The productive encoding skills, writing and speaking, are ranked third – the least required in the syllabus. Accordingly, a typical band course follows a simple timetable of 6 contact hours for each unit. Out of the six, four are allocated to 'intensive reading' (see 3.3.1 for definition), one to listening skill practice and the remaining one to dealing with booklets on

grammar exercises, extensive reading, fast reading and other activities (Zhai, 1986). Reading as the 'chief aim' is not only evident in documents but a fact in College English education. Intensive reading, in its relation to other components in a band course, can be illustrated in Figure 4.3.1.
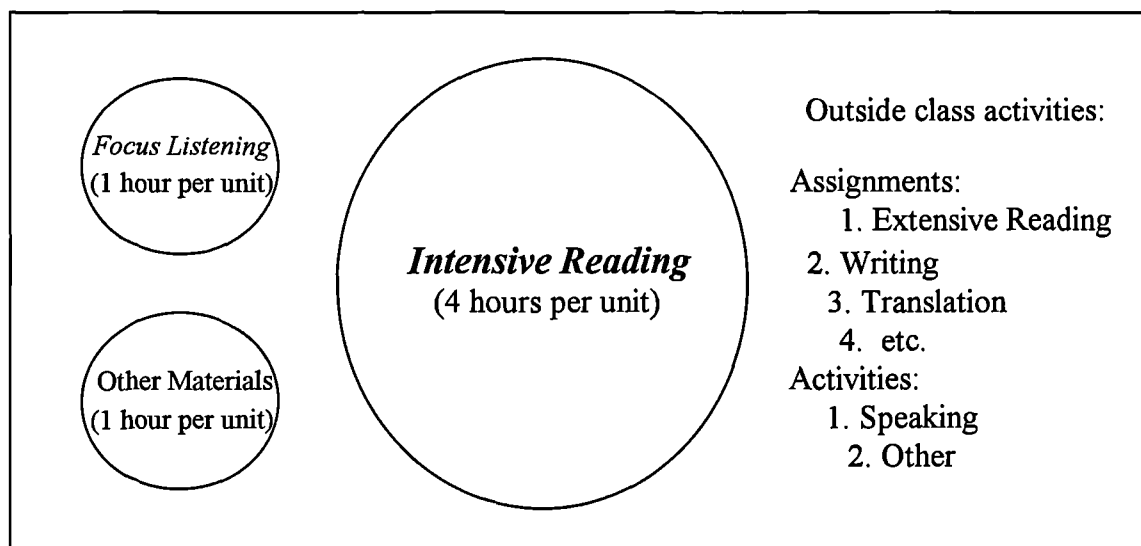
Figure 4.3.1. — Relationship between different components of a typical band course (College English bands 1-4).

In view of these two important factors, the focus for content analysis in this study would be the booklets for the first four courses of the foundation stage (Band 1 to Band 4), thus excluding those for the two pre-foundation stage courses and the two higher foundation stage courses. This focus could be further narrowed down to the reading and listening booklets, excluding the four for grammar exercises, in line of the nature of this study. As a result of excluding four courses and grammar exercises, 26 of the 54 books would be totally ignored for the content analysis below. The exclusion of these booklets for the four course will not do a disservice to the analysis of the whole series owing not only to the two factors listed above but also to the fact that the four inventories, i.e., the 'core elements' listed in the syllabus, are exclusively reflected in the textbooks for Band 1 to Band 4.

Like most College English textbook series published, *College English* does not adopt a systematically thematic approach[4]. The content is primarily unit-based. This approach seems to have resulted from the text selection 'guidelines' stipulated in the syllabus, the most important of which is to cover the 'common core' elements, that is, inventories of vocabulary, grammatical structures, functions/notions and micro-skills. Apparently, the unit-based approach enabled textbook writers to incorporate the compulsory elements conveniently into the materials. The guidelines themselves, especially the coverage of the core vocabulary, are parameters often used by some textbook analysers to assess College English textbooks. Gu (1994), for example, evaluates the *College English* series simply by calculating the vocabulary incorporated in the intensive reading booklets against the vocabulary inventory. As a matter of fact, it is this inventory that many practitioners, like Gu, use to determine if the textbook is successfully written.

Though Gu seems to treat the College English programme as if its objective were solely for vocabulary development, the sensible part in his study is that he focuses his analysis on the four *Intensive Reading* booklets for the first four foundation stage courses (Band 1 to Band 4). Intensive reading as a course, as defined in 3.3.1 and graphically illustrated in Figure 4.3.1 above, is the focal point of the entire College English programme. Hence, like Gu, among the 28 distilled before, the focus of analysis is further narrowed to the four *Intensive Reading* booklets. Unlike Gu's assessment, the analysis that follows will take the cultural dimension as its focal point and it will also examine the textbook series in line with all the 'guidelines' stipulated in the syllabus.

An inspection of the overall content of the four *Intensive Reading* booklets in question brings to light that though the contents are unit-based there exist certain broad themes.

The broad themes could have been instigated by three factors. First, as the textbook series was intended to be applicable to undergraduates of both social and natural sciences it was bound to include materials that suit the interests of students of different subjects such as popular science, education and history. Second, to prepare students for the unified examination in which many texts are popular science related, a large number of such texts had to be incorporated in the textbook series. The third factor was associated with the criteria commonly used by textbook editors for text selection. Two of the criteria rule that the texts selected be highly interesting and enlightening. Interesting texts often derive from humorous or touching fiction stories and enlightening texts may include those that convey value concepts and have the quality of educating the young (Dong, 1986 and Zai, 1986). The latter reflect the ideological viewpoints of the writers, as discussed in the preceding chapter. The broad themes forged by these factors interweave texts of all the reading textbooks although some topics collect more texts than others. Hence, as the first step, to categorise texts by broad theme is clearly an appropriate approach to presenting the content for evaluation. The categorisation is not only able to provide necessary details for content analysis but also helps gain a better insight into the criteria the writers have used in editing this series and will continue to use in revising existing College English textbooks or writing future ones.

4.4. Presentation of the Textbook Series

The 28 booklets in question consists of 4 intensive reading booklets accompanied by 4 teacher's books, 4 listening course booklets matched by 4 teacher's books, 4 extensive

reading booklets paired with 4 teacher's books and 4 fast reading books. The presentation of one type of booklets is different from that of another as can be shown below.

1. The four *Intensive Reading* course booklets contain ten units each. For each unit of Book 1 and Book 2 it has the following in sequence:

    — a short paragraph introducing the text

    — a simple drawing or sketch of people relevant to the content of the text in mostly Western settings

    — a text of one to two pages long for 'intensive reading'

    — a long vocabulary and expression list with much Chinese translation

    — a list of notes to present background information of the text

    — a long 'study and practice' section with exercises for 'drilling words'[5], reading comprehension, vocabulary practice, structure, translation, and guided writing

    — another text on the same topic for practice of a particular reading skill.

After the fifth and tenth unit, there are two 'Test Yourself' papers each of which is about ten pages long which include five parts: vocabulary, structure, cloze, reading comprehension and translation. At the end of each booklet, there are five texts of popular science and appendices such as glossary and keys to the test papers.

The presentation of each unit in Book 3 and Book 4 is basically the same as Book 1 and Book 2 with only a few minor differences. No drawings or sketches are provided for texts and the meaning of new vocabulary is given mostly in English rather than in Chinese in the "New Words" section. The difference in language level is obvious, of course, with longer texts and longer lists of "New Words". One abridged play and quite a few simple poems have also made their appearance in these two booklets.

2. The corresponding teacher's books of *Intensive Reading* are simple and uniform in terms of presentation and approach. Each corresponding unit contains:

— background information related to the text in the student's book (in addition to the notes in the student's book which also provide background information)

— suggested introductory activities to the text

— a long list of 'language points'[7] (basically it gives explanations to words and expressions with isolated sentences as examples)

— suggesting more activities for reading and listening comprehension.

— keys to the exercises and Chinese translation of the texts at the end of each book.

3. *Focus Listening* is designed to cover the functions/notions and micro-skills listed in two of the four inventories of the syllabus. There are 20 lessons in each book. In each lesson there is a micro-listening section which deals with individual sounds or sound clusters ('for accuracy') and a macro-listening section that makes use of either dialogues or passages for practising listening skills ('for fluency'). The presentation of the booklets takes the following forms:

— sketches and simple caricatures for comprehension facilitation throughout the four booklets

— simple dialogues or conversations reflecting life and work in English speaking countries

— simple passages describing lifestyle, education, science, sports and numerous other cultural topics in English speaking countries

— some 'learning points', such as new words, basic structures and useful expressions, are given before a listening text as pre-listening activity for facilitating comprehension

— numerous tables and blanks for students to fill in and numerous questions for them to answer while listening to the texts.

4. The four teacher's books of *Focus Listening* give answers and transcripts to the listening materials for the student booklets. The only two things extra are some simple cultural notes related to the texts and dialogues and some suggestions for oral practice.

5. The presentation of *Extensive Reading* is simpler than that of its 'elder brother' *Intensive Reading*. Each booklet contains ten units which correspond loosely in topic with the ten units in those in *Intensive Reading* and each individual unit consists neatly of three texts. Each text in each unit is presented as the following:

— a text of 550 - 2600 words in length. Most of the texts are narratives or expository proses and some are in the form of plays, letters and interviews

— notes, some of which provide background information for the text and others are in fact explanations of difficult phrases and words in the text

— comprehension questions, either in the form of multiple choice or true or false statement, and some discussion questions for oral practice

— a glossary and keys to the comprehension questions given at the end of each booklet.

6. *Fast Reading* is the simplest, neatest and most uniform in terms of presentation. As a matter of fact, the *Fast Reading* booklets are not in the form of books, as the others are, but of loose sheets of paper packed in four paper bags. In each of the four paper bags there are equally 46 sheets of paper which consist of 20 short texts on 20 sheets of paper, 20 worksheets (all worksheets contain without any exception ten multiple-

choice comprehension questions) and 6 sheets of notes and keys, etc. The teacher is supposed to keep the 'booklets' and distribute the loose sheets lesson by lesson to students for fast reading practice. Most of the texts are simple stories and a few of them are in the form of a play. The texts in *Fast Reading* are about 250 - 550 words in length and, in each booklet, the majority of texts are sequenced according to the number of words each text contains.

The 12 students' reading booklets of *College English* comprise a total of 280 texts of various lengths, styles and different topics. In addition, there are a number of other short texts used in the eight test papers in the four *Intensive Reading* books and a few poems in the exercises part of Book 4. While it is convenient to count the number of reading texts it is rather difficult to do so in the case of *Focus Listening*. In each 'lesson' there are two parts: the micro-listening part with mini-dialogues or mini-texts as well as isolated words or sentences and the macro-listening part with two short dialogues or texts. Text counting for the micro-listening part is a useless effort if it is at all possible. None the less, if only the texts and dialogues in the macro-listening part are taken into account, with 20 lessons in each book, there will be a total number of 160 texts.

Though the reading books of *New English Course* present themselves in a similar form, its text arrangement differs from that of *College English*. The reading texts are heavily concentrated in four of the eight reading booklets of *New English Course* which are entitled *Reading*. They are supposed to be the counterparts to the four *Intensive Reading* booklets of *College English*. In each of the four *Reading* booklets there are approximately forty texts, twice as many as those contained in *Intensive Reading*. This explains why the *New English Course* series has only four auxiliary reading booklets (two *Supplementary Reading* books for Band 1 and Band 2 and two *Fast Reading* books for Band 3 and Band

4). This arrangement of texts, i.e., the high concentration of texts in the *Reading* books could further help prove the fact that intensive reading is the focal point of the College English programme.

The modest *Modern English* takes a different form of presentation and has a different text arrangement. In the four *Reading/Writing* booklets, its core reading textbooks, in addition to sketches and caricature one can also find quite a number of photographs (black and white) of people, places and items of mainly English speaking countries. Many cartoon drawings and some photographs are likewise found along with texts in its four *Extensive Reading* books. The arrangement of reading texts is different from that in *New English Course* and *College English* series, each of the four Reading/Writing booklets contains only 12 texts (one text for one unit) while its *Extensive Reading* booklets have three times as many reading passages as this number.

A simple count of the number of texts in the 'core' reading textbooks of the three textbook series may lead to the conclusion that users of *Modern English* read much less in class than those using the other two series. By a closer examination, however, one can notice a different approach adopted in this series to associating reading texts by unit topics in its 'core' reading booklets with those in its supplementary booklets. Table 4.4.1. represents a summary of a comparison of text arrangements and shows the relationship in topic between texts in the 'core' reading material and the corresponding supplementary booklets in the three series.

The total number of reading texts in *Modern English* is smaller than those in the other two. For class use, however, users could adopt a thematic reading approach as the 'core' reading textbook is related in topic to the three texts in *Extensive Reading*. This approach

to arranging texts, together with the text selection criteria which will be further discussed in 4.7, is intended to reflect a transformation of perspectives in reading instruction, from usage to use or from Text as Linguistic Object (TALO) to Text as Vehicle of Information (TAVI), as is stated in the Preface of its second edition (*Modern English*, 1990).

Table 4.4.1. — A comparison of text arrangements of the three series

Textbook	'Core' reading textbooks	Supplementary reading textbooks		Relationship
College English	*Intensive Reading* (2 texts on 1 topic in 1 unit)	*Extensive Reading* (3 texts on different topics in 1 unit)	*Fast Reading* (2 texts in 1 unit)	Texts not related by topic
Modern English	*Reading/Writing* (1 text in 1 unit)	*Extensive Reading* (3 texts on the same topic in 1 unit)		Closely related by topic
New English Course	*Reading* (4 texts on 1 topic in 1 unit)	*Supplementary Reading* (for CE 1 - 2)	*Fast Reading* (for CE 3 - 4)	Texts not related by topic

The new approach adopted by *Reading/Writing* of *Modern English* is not incompatible with the principles set out in the two syllabuses. Like the other two series, great efforts were made in *Modern English* to integrate into the texts the 'common core' elements. As it was aimed at the TALO-TAVI transformation more attention was given than the other two to breaking with conventions of taking grammar as the guiding principle, associating themes in the 'core' reading textbooks with those in the auxiliary booklets[6] and devising exercises which could serve to stimulate learner's interests and to activate his schemata during reading (c.f. the Preface, *Modern English*, 1990).

The title difference for the 'core' reading books of the three series is worth mentioning from a pedagogical point of view. While *College English* has *Intensive Reading* as its title of the four main reading textbooks, *New English Course* has *Reading* on the cover page

and *Modern English* chooses *Reading/Writing* as its title, clearly to emphasise the close relationship of these two areas of language use. The titles of the reading books in the latter two series reflects to a certain extent the textbook writers' increasing awareness of the controversial 'intensive reading' practice which has long been followed in Chinese foreign language education. The writers of *College English*, however, insist on using 'Intensive Reading' as the reading book title and the course title. Though this does not necessarily indicate that they favour the teacher-centred pedagogy their insistence may to a certain degree suggest their covert intention to strive for a teaching approach with 'Chinese characteristics', an ideological aim as depicted in Chapter 3.

4.5. Categorisation of Contents

Many texts in *Intensive Reading* can be conveniently categorised by broad themes such as scientific essays, history and education, as briefly mentioned in 4.3. Yet, clear-cut cases are rare because even broad themes are not always mutually exclusive in *College English*. For example, by its overall content a text could perhaps be put under the broad category of 'medical doctors', but it may also be grouped into 'morals and value concepts' as the doctor(s) involved exercised their values in decision making. Likewise, a text on sports might have a real aim of revealing social problems such as violence and racism and a text on education could involve social norms and conventions. In such cases, categorisation is made by arbitrarily deciding the text by its 'deep value'. If a text, for example, tells the story of a doctor with a 'deep value' for dealing with ethical problems, it is classified as 'value concepts'. Categorisation as such is assumed to be more purposeful for evaluation

as the cultural issues stand at the fore. Accordingly, the 'core' texts (about 80) in the four

Intensive Reading booklets are categorised as shown in Table 4.5.1.

Table 4.5.1. — Categorisation of texts by broad themes

	Broad Themes	Number	Notes
1.	Popular science	9 + 16 = 25	Including 'pure' and less 'pure' science related texts and supplementary texts
2.	Value concepts	9	
3.	Lifestyles	8	
4.	History and biography	10	
5.	Education	8	
6.	Social problems	7	
7.	Fiction stories	13	Including two on tourism

4.5.1. Contents in *Intensive Reading*

The description that follows attempts to highlight the contents of the *Intensive Reading* booklets with a focus on those aspects which are likely to reveal the textbook editors' point of view in cultural representations. For this reason, some texts presented receive a slightly more detailed description than some others. However, the description is intended to be as brief as possible because, while a clear account is necessary, attempts to provide an exhaustive description would unnecessarily lengthen the presentation and result in a loss of focus.

1. Popular Science and Technology

Popular science and technology should be the largest category in any College English textbooks which are intended for students of all subjects. This is partly due to frequent use

of science-related texts in CET 4 and partly due to the huge population of students in science and engineering. In browsing through the texts in *Intensive Reading,* one can notice quite a number of texts of popular science and technology although some of such texts are not 'pure' but quasi-science texts which contain personal experience of the scientists involved or in the form of a story. In addition, attached at the end of each *Intensive Reading* booklet are five supplementary readings of popular science and technology. The science-related texts in *Intensive Reading* can be subcategorised into the three major groups:

a) Pure scientific essays:

This category collects texts presenting *bona fide* information, i.e. scientific facts with little 'literary coating'. Examples include two texts in Book 1 on 'human brain' and 'psychology' and two in Book 4 on the 'energy cycle' and the 'life cycle'. Most of the 20 texts attached as supplementary readings at the end of the four booklets also belong to this category.

b) Futurist's science and technology:

In Book 3 two texts are taken from A. Tofler's *Future Shock* (1970) and 'The New Caves' and '2001 Space Shuttle' in Book 4 could also be put under this category.

c) Quasi-scientific writings:

These are slightly different from pure scientific essays in that the writings do not represent scientific facts or technological aspects but are about personal experience of scientists or professionals in typical situations or specific cases. They include "Sam Adams, Industrial Engineer" and its affiliate in the same unit in Book 1, "Is There Life on Earth?" and its affiliate in Book 2 and "The Man Who Wrote His Own Obituary" in Book 4. Some texts such as "The Making of a Surgeon" and "A Doctor on Night Call" in Book 2 could be grouped into subcategory.

2. Texts Focusing on Value Concepts

Quite a number of texts fall into this category by broad-theme categorisation. Most of these texts are selected from American textbooks, journals or other publications with a setting of an English-speaking country and some of them are pretty old stories. Two texts in Book 1 are worth elaborating (see 6.3 for justification) "The Present" in Unit 3 is a famous fiction story which describes how disappointed an old lady felt on her eightieth birthday when she received a cheque from her only daughter, instead of a desired visit or at least a parcel containing a present she would like. The text represents expectations in celebrating a birthday in Britain and some typical rituals. In a later unit, " The Sampler" tells about an American old man who was forced into purchasing a Christmas pudding which he could not afford to save his honour and dignity. The affiliates of both texts also depict value concepts in the form of stories.

Book 2 has three short texts under "A Question of Honour" that explore the concept of patriotism, honour, and other social value concepts. In the last unit, the main text, "Profit of Praise", illustrates the dialectical logic of praise and criticism in modern society and its affiliate "My Wonderful Lousy Poem" depicts the value of a mother's encouragement and a father's harsh judgement in a child's growing years. In Book 3 there are two other texts. One is in the form of a play, the only one in these four booklets, and it narrates behaviours which reveal the innermost human evils when competing for life in case of crisis, leaving behind friendship or neighbourliness. The other is story about a secretary who used any means to gain status, money and love. Moral reasoning faced by doctors is discussed in essay form in "To Lie or Not to Lie – The Doctor's Dilemma" in Book 4. The last two texts of Book 4 are theoretical essays about the value of work. In "Why People Work" the

writer presents the changing attitudes towards work and in "Work" the writer explores philosophically the happiness and sense of achievement work brings to men. The two are both positive in tone and very similar in content.

3. Texts focusing on lifestyle

This category could include the largest number of texts as many represent ways of life though in an ad hoc manner. Clear-cut cases include "Turning Off TV: A Quiet Hour" in Book 1 which compares traditional and contemporary pastimes, a text Zai (1986) editor in charge felt specially proud of because he claimed that it has a profound potential to provoke thinking. There are two other texts in Book 1 which depict Christmas traditions; one describes a child's anxiety in expecting a special present, a pony (in an apparently middle-class-family setting) and the other is an encyclopaedic essay depicting a typical English Christmas. Book 2 has two fiction-story texts about job hunting. Sexism and racism are slightly touched upon at the end of both stories.

In Book 3, there is a text, used for scanning practice, that consists of a table of a week's highlights of a U.S. channel TV programmes, two charts listing the numbers of calories burned in different sports and a U.S. bus-line timetable. The first text of Book 4 presents a funny story about how two American college-age youngsters make pocket money. In this story the American concept of independence is also manifested. The second is about the experience of an ice-cream retailer selling ice creams in winter. The setting is not given but the money used to buy ice creams reveals a background of a British town. A third text, "Soccer's Wild World Cup Scramble", depicts the strong impacts of this sport on people in many Western and South American countries.

4. History and Biography

"Sailing round the World" in Book 1, is a chronological account of how the British adventurer, Francis Chichester at sixty-five, sailed round the world alone in a 53-foot yacht in 226 days. In Book 3 there are two texts focusing on the American Civil War. "The Woman Who Would Not Tell" is a sentimental story about how the wife of a Confederate officer saved the life of a wounded Union soldier. It should be a true story because it is full of names of real places and real people though the source is not given in its full form. The second one is an encyclopaedic text about the Civil War with an end list of commendable novels and poems by famous people, such as W. Churchill's *Crisis* and M. Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind.*

Some other texts account for historically famous people and their lives and deeds. The tone of these biographies in the four books is either complimentary or derogatory as the people in them were either renowned scientists, politicians and sportsmen, or notorious war criminals. Book 2 contains four such biographic texts. Two of them give an account of not only the lives but also their philosophy of life and political ideas of two American presidents, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. The other two texts tell about the personalities of Albert Einstein and the life history of Alfred Nobel. The tone of all four accounts are notably respectful. A text in Book 3, "The Death of Hitler", describes the final days of the ill-famed war criminal and its affiliate, "The Fall of Mussolini", gives a biographic depiction of the equally notorious Italian dictator. Finally, a few anecdotes representing the personalities of the American writer, Ernest Hemingway, can be seen in a text written by his youngest son. The text, entitled "To Make Papa Proud" in Book 3, contains some interesting philosophical ideas of the great writer and his humorous way to

answer in public a question about his little son's plagiarised story in a school writing competition.

5. Education

Texts on education can be sub-classified into three types: 1) describing the American education system; 2) evaluating the system; and 3) introducing study skills for learners. The first collects only one unit in Book 3 which consists of a table listing students enrolments and numbers of instructional staff in United States Education Institutions, fall 1979 and fall 1980. Its affiliate passage interprets the figures by comparing them with recent figures and presenting total expenditures for education of that year and the year before and estimating the increase for the following year. The second category consists of five texts: two of them are expository and the other three are in the form of fiction stories. "Why I Teach" in Book 3 is a condensed text expressing a very positive personal view on teaching as a career. The text in Book 2, "Honesty: Is It Going Out of Style?", evaluates the traditional value of honesty by examining the cheating phenomenon in examinations in American high schools and colleges. In Book 1, "Learning to read – in College", and in Book 2 "What Is Intelligence, Anyway?" and "Angels on a Pin" are all fiction stories which sarcastically challenge the value of education in the United States. Finally, three texts belong to the third category. They include "How to Improve Study Habits", the first text in Book 1, and "How to Mark a Book" and "Take It Easy to Learn Better" in Book 4. The first and the third offer learning tips to students while the second deals with reading strategies specifically.

6. Social Problems

This collects texts on street crimes, injustice, racism and the city poor. Four units in the *Intensive Reading* booklets clearly fall into this category. Two texts in Unit 6, Book 2, are stories about people's reactions to crimes committed in broad daylight in American cities. A crime could happen to anyone, anywhere and at anytime, but people are scared and they do not want to get involved even when a robbery is committed by two men or a murder by a lone attacker in front of large groups of witnesses. The first two passages in Book 3 tell stories about legal systems, with a focus on the conflicts between justice and socially-stereotyped views on different classes of people. "A Brush with the Law" talks about a lawsuit filed by police against a young man. The police in a London district arrested the young man with long untidy hair because he looked as if he was going to steal things in a wealthy neighbourhood. The young man turned out to be from a right-accented and respectable middle-class family and with a good academic record. Because of this, the magistrate dismissed the case after only fifteen minutes. The second text is about how a poor policeman, disabled by a gunman, could not win the case of damage compensation against the gunman who also asked for damage compensation for a broken finger. During the course of the proceedings, the poor policeman lost everything including his marriage, and they ended in divorce. In the same book, "Lady Hermits Who Are Down But Not Out" gives an account of the life of a growing number of lonely and homeless women in the streets of New York, a negative aspect unique of this large city. The text also includes a short paragraph describing how some people in the community sometimes try to do something to improve the life of these 'shopping-bag lady hermits'. In Book 4, the glorious but sad history of an American Indian athlete, Jim Thorpe, is elucidated in a passage in which racism in American sports is deeply lashed.

7. Fiction Stories

In the four intensive reading books, the focus of quite a number of texts does not seem to fit clearly into any of the categories listed above. On the one hand, since they are stories characterising people in English-speaking countries, mostly the United States, they are loaded with cultural information such as traditions, value, geographical locations, food and way of life. It seems justifiable to put them into value and lifestyle categories. On the other hand, these texts place much emphasis on the dramatic development and/or the humorous or impulsive ending of the fiction stories primarily for the purpose of fascinating the audience and the cultural aspects represented in context are blurred in most cases. From the standpoint of foreign language learning these cultural aspects may have an imperceptible effect on the learners. None the less, as they are often too sketchy, peculiar or 'universally true', they become barely marked to readers. Therefore, they are separately categorised as fiction stories which were mainly selected for arousing the students' interest.

Unit Ten in Book 1 consists of two stories. "Going Home" describes the mixed feelings of a former convict on his way home after serving a prison sentence for three and a half years and "The Hitchhiker" tells how a man who stopped to pick up a young hitchhiker on his way back home from a business trip on a rainy night. Both stories contain quite a number of place names in the United States and are embellished with some common American ways of life, food items and means of transport. Both stories end dramatically. There are, in the other three books, quite a few fiction stories about women – some were courageous and strong while some others were shrewd and greedy. Two texts in Book 2 make some efforts in sneering at traditional views against women yet both seem to be keen on creating the dramatic ending. In Book 3 two texts touch on the courage of two great mothers. "The

Luncheon" in Book 4 is a famous old story which tells how a shrewd woman tricked a young writer to spend his living expenses for a whole month on a lunch with her at an expensive restaurant in Paris. Its affiliate, "John Rossiter's Wife", is about how a miserable-looking woman swindled a large amount of money out of the owner of a casino in Palm Beach, Florida. The main text of Unit Six in Book 3, "A Day's Wait", is an Ernest Hemingway's story which tells how a nine-year-old boy got to believe that he was going to die. When he heard the doctor say his body temperature was one hundred and two he mistook it as degrees Celsius and waited to die afterwards.

There are two texts in Book 4 which seem to belong to adventure or travelling. The first one, with the help of a map of the United States, narrates a modern-day family journey from Wisconsin to the West, an unusual way for a family to celebrate America's 200th birthday and the other is a narrative of a trip to a cultural centre in Nepal by a Western tourist. As there is only one unit, too small a number to set up a new category, they are roughly listed as fiction stories, as indicated in Table 4.5.1.

4.5.2. The Other Student's Booklets

It is not a difficult task to categorise the contents of the 200 texts contained in the two subordinate reading course booklets as most of them, if not all, fall into the above-listed categories. This is attributed to the fact that the same criteria as stated in the 'Preface' of the booklets were used for selecting texts from similar sources. None the less, the content of some in the *Extensive Reading* booklets needs to be highlighted with a view to better understanding the overall textual components. In Book 1, for example, there is a text

entitled *"Economics"*, in which "capitalistic and communistic systems" (p.92) are defined and even compared. American and British economies are based on private enterprises and are essentially 'capitalistic', while the Russian system is 'communistic' and based on the principles of Karl Marx, the 19th century political economist. In this article, simple definitions and drawbacks are given to the former whereas only positive remarks are made to the latter. As this article deals with a sensitive issue, it is not likely to be chosen as a text in the *Intensive Reading* booklets.

In another article in Book 4, an Italian student expresses an outsider's view about the American tertiary education. After spending one year at an American university, the student remarked positively that although his appraisal of American education was not fundamentally different from that of one year back he regarded his one year in the States as one of the most rewarding and meaningful experiences of his life. The description of his personal experience, together with this statement, is in contrast to the representations of the American education system depicted in a few texts in *Intensive Reading.*

There are quite a number of texts in the *Extensive Reading* and *Fast Reading* booklets which directly present history, lifestyle and other cultural aspects of the United States and Britain with a somewhat 'authentic' view. Encyclopaedic accounts of people and places are seen throughout the booklets. Examples include texts entitled "The Beginning of the American Revolution", "Cambridge – A University Town", "Flags of the United States", "The First Thanksgiving", "The Louisiana Purchase", "Cowboys", "Washington D.C.", "Henry VIII", "Chinese Americans", and "National Holiday". Texts about the lifestyle of the two English-speaking countries are exemplified by "Mind Your Manner", "Garage Sale", "Leisure", "How to Be an Employee", "Local Newspapers in Britain" and "The High Cost of Living". In addition, "Are All Men Equal?" and "College Students Today"

are two examples of explicit discussions on values in these two types of supplementary reading material.

Focus Listening is written by following a different approach; it covers all the functions / notions listed in the third inventory of the College English syllabus, such as greeting, thanking, apologising, asking the way, shopping, offering help, seeing a doctor, giving advice, telephoning, talking about the weather, going out for dinner, going on holiday, complaining, transportation, announcements and pets. The functional/notional approach adopted in *Focus Listening* is considered an effective means to develop in the student communicative competence (Li, 1993) even though no speaking activity is supposed to be carried out. The topics of texts in the first booklets are predominantly concerned with daily life of English-speaking countries and move gradually to other varieties of authentic material. The texts, especially in Book 3 and Book 4, vary in styles and the covered range of cultural aspects is wide, from customs, traditions, daily activities, holidays, shopping, travelling, transportation, reservations, railway or airport announcements, pets, parties, entertainment, supermarkets, news, sports, family, social problems, to popular science, education, history, and, above all, fiction stories. The listening booklets expose learners to a certain variety and details about the target culture. Li (ibid.) commented that the listening booklets are practical and they make up for the weaknesses of the other course booklets of the series but he did not elaborate what weaknesses the other course booklets contain.

4.5.3. The Teacher's Books

As was mentioned in 4.4, each *Intensive Reading* booklet is matched with a *Teacher's Book* which provides a teacher with background information to introduce to students,

tailor-made teaching tips, language points[7], additional exercises and answer keys for each unit (including the translation of the main text). Typically, the background information provided in the teacher's books for intensive reading is a brief account of the author's life and a few major cultural points for the text concerned. The range of the cultural aspects given is so wide that literally anything cultural, from simple ideas such as a place name, an organisation and a ritual to historical events, background of the story, value concepts and ways of thinking, contained in an *Intensive Reading* text could be presented in detail. It would be a real job for the teacher to introduce all the background information as some are rather complex ideas such as the American 'youth culture' in the 1960s (Book 3) and the Consolidated Edison Belt (Book 2). Of course, this information is clearly intended as 'back-up' data. Whether to introduce the information in the classroom depends entirely on individual teachers[8].

4.6. Content Analysis by the Syllabus

A simple way to examine if the contents of a textbook match the syllabus is to check them against two principal parameters stipulated in the syllabus: the course objectives and the guidelines for text selection. The former are reflected, among other things, by the quantity of materials for books of different language skills while the latter determine what kinds of materials to be included in the textbook. The 'chief aim' of the programme is to develop in the students high level of reading ability and this is clearly honoured in *College English* with the great amount of reading materials and reading centred activities. The second-ranked listening skill requirements are to a great extent satisfied by both the large quantity and quality of materials in *Focus Listening*. The content for translating ability training is

not as substantial as that for listening though both are listed side-by-side in the syllabus because no special booklets were written for training translating skills. However, there are some sentence translation exercise items (primarily from Chinese to English) in the four *Intensive Reading* booklets and the teacher could easily come up with English-Chinese translation assignments by pinpointing certain paragraphs or sentences in any core text for translation as the translation of all texts is available at the back the teacher's books.

The third-ranked writing skills objectives are fulfilled through sentence writing or guided paragraph writing tasks in the practice part of each unit. Most of the paragraph writing tasks are designed in accordance with the themes of the core texts for reading and many tasks are suggested to be carried out in the classroom. The speaking requirement is also matched with suggested oral activities after each lesson of the *Focus Listening* booklets, though for years before the revision in 1997 the speaking element was largely ignored by *College English*. Judging from the contents of the complete series, one can claim at least in global terms that the series was revised strictly in line with the objectives stipulated in the syllabus, especially in quantitative terms.

The other parameter refers to the guidelines for text selection stipulated in the syllabus. There are four basic guidelines, also called principles in the syllabus, for the selection of materials. They demand that texts selected should: 1) incorporate the four 'common core' elements; 2) be highly interesting and informative; 3) cover a variety of topics; and 4) facilitate the teaching process. All these principles are the sacred goals the editors strived for in compiling their College English textbooks (cf. Dong, 1992; 1997 and Liu and Zhao, 1997). Although evaluating the contents of the textbook by these four principles seems fairly straightforward the process in fact entails much subjective judgement in view of the

fact that some principles such as the second and the fourth are difficult to be assessed in impartial terms.

These principles for text selection were apparently graded by College English textbook commentators, with the first being the most important and the last least emphasised. The first principle is neat and lends itself conveniently to textbook evaluation (cf. Li, 1993; Gu, 1994; Ying, 1996 and Zhou, 1996). By Gu's counting, the vocabulary included in the four *Intensive Reading* booklets covers 87.55% of the common inventory of vocabulary. There are, however, 27 % of the words that go beyond the inventory. Despite an overall positive tone in his review article, he suggests revision of the four *Intensive Reading* course books mainly for the purpose of matching the inventory. In another article, Dong (1992) defends that, by computation, *Intensive Reading* booklets cover more than 90% of the common core vocabulary inventory, which basically satisfies the syllabus requirement. The second inventory on grammatical structures offers little difficulty to Chinese textbook writers as the grammar-translation methodology has been dominant for years in foreign language education in the country. The inventory is not only 'progressively' reflected in the four *Grammar Exercises* booklets but also incorporated into *Intensive Reading*. There is a special part in the 'Study and Practice' section in each unit for grammatical exercises. The third 'common core' inventory seems to be the most difficult to cope with among the four. In *College English* it is the *Focus Listening* that is intended to incorporate all the functions and notions. Li (1993) offers high praise to this listening course book and her compliments are mainly based on its sound recognition exercises, effort in developing learner's practical skills, 'lively' sketches and caricature and above all its coverage of the functions and notions. Ying (1996), however, points out that without clear objectives of oral ability development the functional and notional approach is quite doubtful in terms of pedagogical appropriateness and effectiveness. She apparently indicates the lack of clear orientation in

191

oral English skills training. The last 'common core' element is the inventory of micro-skills which spread across the *Intensive Reading* booklets and the *Focus Listening* booklets since the micro-skills refer to sub-skills of reading, listening, writing and speaking. The coverage of this element is obviously linked with the course objectives as an examination shows that, while efforts are most evident in incorporating the micro-skills for reading and listening areas, those for speaking and writing abilities are not as evident in these booklets.

The second principle consists of two sub-criteria: texts selected being highly interesting and informative. As 4.5 shows, the *Intensive Reading* booklets contain quite a number of interesting texts as many are fascinating, moving and amazing stories. Most texts in the booklets are said to be informative as, by textbook editors' definition (Dong, 1986 and Liu, 1987), they contain different types of cultural information as well as information in science and technology. Thus, the *Intensive Reading* booklets are often claimed to be very successful in meeting these two stipulated demands. Attached to these two sub-criteria are two other considerations: the consideration for the degree of enlightenment and a concern for ideological content. The adding of these considerations is not explained anywhere in any documented sources, yet this patently reflects the editors' concern for the ideological standpoints to be exhibited in their textbooks, a deeply-rooted ideological consciousness (see Chapter 3) upheld by most senior foreign language educators. These issues will be taken up again in 4.8 when the criteria of realism are applied for analysis.

With regard to the third and fourth principles, of the three series, *College English* stands out as its three reading course books contain the greatest variety of materials and provide the most complete aids (teacher's books) for facilitating the teaching of the programme. The large variety is clearly attributed to the unit-based approach by which topics of texts between units in *Intensive Reading* (even within unit in the supplementary course books)

jump freely from one to another. *New English Course* and *Modern English* also adopted a unit-based approach, but in comparison, their unit-based approach is a modified one, as was briefly mentioned in Chapter above. *Modern English* associates in topic a unit text in *Reading and Writing* with two texts in a unit of its *Extensive Reading* course book and, in a similar manner, the *Reading* course book of *New English Course* contains three to four texts on the same topic in each unit. *College English* satisfies the third principle by freely including texts on a variety of topics, but at the expense of associating texts by topics to facilitate reading comprehension.

4.7. Authenticity of Texts

In the last two decades, the idea of using authentic texts in foreign language education has attracted considerable attention in China. Many foreign language educators and materials writers (for examples, Zhai 1986, Dong 1992, Zhang 1994 and Zhou 1996) maintain that authentic texts provide not only rich linguistic know-how but also sufficient background cultural information for learners to acquire. While efforts of using authentic texts have been evident in textbook writing, there seems to be no serious discussion on the complex nature of authenticity and its implications in textbook writing and language teaching. This has resulted in an over-simplified perspective in defining 'authentic language data' and arbitrary handling of genuine texts in textbook writing. The narrow perspective in turn may defeat the purpose of using authentic texts. Apparently, an analysis of authenticity issues pertaining to text-book writing has become necessary and such an analysis would have implications not only for textbook writing but also for the development of communicative teaching methodology which is claimed to be adopted in College English education.

4.7.1. Definition of Authenticity in FLT

There seems to be a widely accepted definition in discussions of authentic language at the macro level in language teaching that authentic texts in a particular language refer to all language data created in that language in pursuit of communicative outcomes (Little, Devitt, & Singleton, 1989–1994) as against the prefabricated artificial materials created in many foreign language textbooks (traditional or contemporary) for eliciting language-like behaviour of learners of the language. Authentic texts, to list some typical ones which could be used in language textbooks, could be drawn from such written sources as newspapers, magazines, books, fiction stories, advertisements, encyclopaedias, instruction manuals, labels, application forms, notices, telephone directories, restaurant menus, recipes, traffic signals etc. and from AV sources such as films, TV programmes, radio broadcasts, natural conversations, computer programmes and multimedia, etc.. Many EFL/ESL practitioners have faith in authentic materials as they believe that the stamp of using authentic texts ensures a relationship to ultimate educational objectives in English language teaching. There have been vigorous studies into the methodology and the effects of using authentic texts on EFL/ESL learners. Proponents of using authentic texts in EFL/ESL teaching such as Peacock (1997), Morrison (1989), Swaffar (1985) and Zhu (1984) have experimented with practical models to teach English courses with authentic texts of various types and levels. Their studies have shown overall positive outcome both in view of motivating learners in learning the target language and in terms of developing in them communicative and socio-cultural competence. In the mean time, these studies seem to prove that authentic texts have the capacity of enhancing the quality of interaction in the target language if they are carefully selected to address learners' pre-occupations, to activate their knowledge of the world and to stimulate their interests.

In discussions about authentic materials in foreign language teaching, some researchers also take other dimensions of authenticity into consideration. Widdowson (1979) made a distinction between two types of instances of language use: genuine and authentic. While genuineness of a text is defined as the quality of the text itself authenticity refers to the correspondence between the intentions of the text producer and the reader's or hearer's interpretation. Without a high degree of relating the text to the reader/hearer, authenticity of a text can not be said to have been realised. Many texts used in EFL/ESL textbooks, for instance, are genuine instances of discourse. However, the aim of making genuineness of discourse correspond with authenticity is not achieved if these texts are solely exploited linguistically through, for example, grammar exercises, word study, translation exercises, reading aloud, and comprehension questions for the purpose of identifying vocabulary. Since Widdowson reviewed the notion of authenticity in relation to language teaching the discussion has passed beyond the first phase of assuming that authentic texts ensures teaching objectives to a concern about what is called the cultural authenticity (Nostrand 1989). In this new phase, the relationship of authentic texts to educational objectives is re-examined, resulting in a consideration of the authentic context for an authentic text. An English recipe, for example, is an authentic text and the cultural authenticity of the recipe is embedded in a whole set of social and symbolic relations in the culture. These may include system of weighing, ingredients, cooking utensils, habitual cooking methods and favoured taste, all of which may be different from their counterparts in the learners' native culture. If this background information is not clearly presented learners' response to the authentic text tends to be inappropriate and thus cultural authenticity will not be realised. For pedagogical purposes, Kramsch (1993) examined four aspects which are relevant to cultural authenticity in foreign language teaching: namely representative usage, cultural competence, critical understanding, and authentic language learning. By taking cultural

contexts as a point of departure, she suggests "to include the creation of a 'sphere of interculturality', through the use of culturally authentic texts" (p. 13).

In writing foreign language textbooks, teachers and materials writers consider other issues such as the contemporaneity of genuine language data and adaptation of genuine texts for pedagogical reasons (see the following section for more detailed discussion). Though the discussions on authenticity have been vigorous, there does not seem to be a practicable definition which could be used to generate a realistic model for evaluating and writing foreign language textbooks. A clear definition which takes essential issues of authenticity into account is necessary, particularly for cases such as College English textbook writing in which authenticity is taken as one of the important criteria in text selection but an oversimplified definition by textbook writers is noticeable.

4.7.2. Authentic Texts in College English Textbooks

College English textbook writers have great faith in authentic texts in materials writing. A general look at the principles and the criteria of text selection given by the writers of the three most widely used College English textbooks in China shows that all of them used authentic texts as source materials of their products. Zhai (1986), chief editor of the *Intensive Reading* booklets for band 1 to band 4 of the *College English* series, states that all texts of his booklets were selected from authentic sources and some of them were slightly adapted according to pedagogical needs. In her review article, Dong (1992), general editor of the entire *College English* series, furthers Zhai's claim by commenting that these authentic texts provide not only adequate amount of linguistic knowledge but also ample background information about the culture(s) of the target language for learners

to acquire. Liu (1987), chief editor of the *Reading* booklets (counterparts of the *Intensive Reading* booklets of the *College English* series) of the *New English Course* series, also declares that "the texts of the series mainly come from books, magazines and audio materials published in the United Kingdom and the United States in recent years. Therefore, these (texts) reflect the features of contemporary British and American English." (p.21) The third series, *Modern English*, makes similar statement in its preface. In recent years, in fact, one can hardly find a foreign language materials writer who claims that texts in his/her textbook are specifically written to suit the purposes, linguistic or non-linguistic, of the individual units.

According to the given references (many of them are incompletely documented[9]) of the *Intensive Reading* booklets of the *College English* series, one can easily see that the great majority of texts originate from sources such as newspapers, journals, magazines, encyclopaedias, novels and short story books, written by native speakers of English and published in the United States and the United Kingdom. A closer look at these booklets reveals that many of the texts come directly from ESL/EFL textbooks dominantly compiled by American or British textbook writers. These ESL/ EFL textbooks include *Progressive Reading Series* (1976) edited by Virginia. F. Allen, Washington D.C.; *Reading Skill Builder* (1973) by Reader's Digest Services, Inc.; *BBC Modern English* (1981) Hugh Corrigan (publisher not given); *Perspectives -- An Intermediate Reader* edited by L. Fox (year of publishing and publisher not given) and *New Horizon in English* edited by L. Mellgren and M. Walker (year of publishing and publisher not given).

There seems to be no different criterion in selecting texts for *Extensive Reading* booklets of the same series. The only noticeable dissimilarity is that even less attempt was made to choose texts from sources other than published EFL/ESL materials such as those listed

above. According to the limited sources given, a great number of texts in the *Extensive Reading* booklets are direct selections from *Faces and Places* (1966) edited by A. Eyre, Longman; *A Background to English* (1962) edited by P. S. Tregidgo, Longman; *Travel* (1981) edited by T. Gross, New York; *Oxford Progressive English Course* (1969) edited by G. Hornby, OUP; *English Teaching Forum*; *American English Reader* (1959) edited by W. Morrow New York; *A Book of Short Stories* Longman Series; *Progressive Reading Series* (1976) edited by V. F. Allen, Washington D.C. and some others, mostly published in the 1960s and 1970s in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the cases of *Fast Reading* and *Focus Listening*, no sources whatsoever are provided for any selected text throughout the booklets. The latter contain a small amount of prefabricated materials produced, apparently by the editors themselves, especially for the beginning stage, as well as numerous texts from other sources.

As the analysis above shows, most of its selected texts derive exclusively from sources of those countries, mainly U. K. and U. S. A. where English is spoken as a native language. From a historical point of view, this is seen as a great advancement in textbook writing in China. In sharp contrast, according to Dong (1986), the texts of the textbooks written in 1950s were mainly selected from *Beijing Review* and *China's Reconstruction* (both of them are Chinese magazines in English). During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) texts were primarily political essays taking 'class struggle' as a point of departure. In the 1980s, the freedom to use 'genuine' language date written by native speakers of English in textbooks was greatly valued and the textbooks thus produced were said to be the third generation of EFL teaching materials (Dong 1986) or the textbooks at their mature stage (Feng, 1988). The historical development in textbook writing gives sound explanation to the fervent enthusiasm of most writers in using genuine texts by native speakers as source materials of their textbooks. The enthusiasm in turn helps explain why textbook writers or

commentators have never questioned the issues of authenticity in selecting and adapting genuine texts.

4.7.3. An Evaluation of Authenticity

The definition given to authentic materials by these textbook writers is oversimplified or, to be more precise, incomplete as they apparently overlook some essential dimensions of authenticity in foreign language education. It is true that by widely accepted definitions, most texts selected for the *College English* series are authentic as they were originally created in the target language in pursuit of a communicative outcome. However, with insights gained from recent discussions of authenticity, the author argues that authentic texts defined in these broad terms are not enough to ensure a relationship to educational objectives in view of developing learners' socio-cultural and linguistic competence. For maximising authenticity, four essential features need to be taken into consideration when a textbook writer tries to incorporate genuine texts into foreign language textbooks like *College English*. These four features are: contemporaneity of genuine texts, degree of originality, heterogeneity of cultural representations[10], and contextualisation at discourse level in exercise designing. Without these essential features established, authentic texts as those selected in *College English* would be unlikely to enable learners to ultimately deal with communicative tasks in authentic situations.

4.7.3.1. Contemporaneity of Genuine Texts

Many language education researchers agree that one of the important aims in language teaching is to expose the learner to the up-to-date culture(s) of the target language. As

was mentioned in 4.1, Huhn (1978, cited in Byram, 1989), for example, puts 'keeping cultural information contemporary' as his first criterion in evaluating contents for cultural studies teaching. The selection of texts mainly from outdated sources, according to Kane (1991), may cause a reduction of authenticity and projects an inaccurate picture of the modern society. An examination of the references given in the four *Intensive Reading* booklets suggests that the writers made very little effort in representing the contemporary social dimensions of the societies in question. Many 'core' texts, as was mentioned in the previous section, were direct selections from ESL/EFL textbooks published in the 1960s and 1970s[11]. The latest selection found in the four *Intensive Reading* booklets is the adapted article titled "Lady hermits who are down but not out" published in 1983. In this respect, the writers of *New English Course* made some clear efforts. Liu (1987) claims that they focused their attention on those that would give learners latest information and avoided texts that were out-of-date. Though her *Reading* booklets do not contain source references at all, the texts show some evidence of relatively higher contemporaneity.

There are, however, some popular-science texts in *Intensive Reading* which appear quite contemporary in view of the topics though years of publication are not given. In Book 4, the text entitled "Little lamb, who made thee" is an essay about the latest scientific issue of cloning. The text is very interesting and informative and it also conveys much cultural information. The classic style used in the title and 'forbidden fruit' mentioned in the text could be convenient points for cultural studies teaching. The moral and value concepts reflected in the text could also lend themselves easily for discussions in the classroom. Furthermore, as two bible stories – 'The Garden of Eden' in Book 1 and 'The Boat of Noah' in Book 2 – are selected for *Extensive Reading*, they could be easily associated for thematic reading. However, this text is treated as one of supplementary texts which could

be ignored in the intensive course because the core texts are already too substantial for teachers to cope with in the traditional intensive teaching mode.

The lack of contemporaneity of genuine texts in *Intensive Reading* of *College English* might stem from one of the considerations Dong (1992) takes in selecting materials, "the chosen texts should be smooth and elegant in language and styles and should be worth reading a hundred times" (24, author's translation). In another review report, Dong (1986) even quotes a former official as saying that "the nineteenth century literary works could be inherited critically" (20, author's translation). Though she showed an awareness of contemporaneity in text selection in a recent speech (Dong 1997), she only replaced some texts in the former version of the *Extensive Reading* booklets with contemporary source materials. For this she explains that according to some surveys 'most teachers' prefer keeping the texts for *Intensive Reading* as they have gained experience in teaching them in the past several years. She adds that the teachers think that as these texts were written by world famous authors they have strong 'teachability and learnability'. Indeed, the revised edition of *Intensive Reading* keeps all the text materials which were used for more than a decade. In this fast changing world and the 'information explosion' age, however, texts with such 'teachability and learnability' may become less authentic culturally and linguistically as languages are under constant reformation and change in response to socio-political and economic changes. If the content of a textbook remains unchanged for a decade both the content and language would become outmoded from a sociolinguistic point of view and the learners would not be able to get from the textbook the real images of the contemporary culture(s) and the authentic language the people speak.

This is not to say that in selecting materials writers should set eyes only on the dates of the texts as from a point of view of language teaching many of the up-to-date authentic texts

201

are only of ephemeral value and interest. Some encyclopaedic essays, biographies and stories, such as those included in many College English textbooks are interesting and have lasting significance. What textbook writers should be fully aware of is that in text selection priority should be given to those contemporary genuine texts rather than those that are antiquated or of ephemeral value.

4.7.3.2. Degree of Originality

Adaptation of authentic texts would to a lesser or greater extent lessen the authenticity of texts as discourse and would in turn affect the overall quality of learners' language competence at the discourse level. Little, Devitt, and Singleton (1994) point out that precisely because authentic texts keep "all the savour, stench and rough edges of life beyond the school walls, they are likely to be markedly more successful in provoking pupil reaction and interaction than the somewhat anaemic texts" (p. 6). Therefore, every effort should be made to avoid adapting authentic texts and extracting portions from a longer genuine discourse in order to maintain the essence of real life. In College English textbook writing, evidence has shown that some writers such as Zhang (1997) and Li (1997) have become aware of the negative effects of the traditionally common practice of text adaptation in textbook writing. However, according to the footnotes provided at the bottom of each text of the four *Intensive Reading* booklets, many genuine texts were adapted and quite a number were extracted from longer genuine sources. This would undoubtedly affect the true quality of the genuine texts as sources for cultural studies and alter the communicative goal of the discourse intended by the writer.

Admittedly, authentic texts are often adapted for pedagogical reasons, particularly if they are too long to fit into the language teaching curriculum and/or if the textbook is used for learners at lower-levels. In all adaptations, it is important to best maintain the originality of the content, the integrity of the theme and the individuality of style and genre. Some adaptations done in the *Intensive Reading* booklets are not successful in this respect. Cai (1997) identified some unacceptable cases. In the Book 2 the fourth text titled "My first job", Cai noted, the adapted text has the sentence, "The school was a red house with big windows.", as the description of the school, whereas the original text pictures the school as "a dreary, gabled Victorian house of red brick with big staring sashwindows." The adaptation, he commented, was clearly done to avoid the words which are not within the confine of the vocabulary inventory of the College English syllabus. However, the author's original meaning is misrepresented and the 'authentic taste' is lost. Another example shows a case of inappropriate abridgment. The ninth lesson of Book 4 is entitled "Journey West" adapted from a sketch entitled "How the West Won Us" by Jim Doherty in the December-January 1976-77 issue of *National Wildlife* magazine. The last paragraph was completely cut out, perhaps out of concerns of vocabulary and length. However, Cai (ibid.) observed, it is the last paragraph that the writer establishes solid rapport with his readers. That paragraph is the final "touch that brings a work of art to life" (p. 27). The price of this kind of abridgment far exceeds that of keeping it intact.

Most writers would agree that one of the most important objectives of using authentic texts in a foreign language course is to enable learners to use the skills and strategies they have learned or acquired in a language course to eventually read things unfabricated and unabridged and communicate in authentic situations. Before any adaptation is done, a textbook writer should think about its absolute necessity. In the case of College English, careful adaptation is perhaps needed for the texts selected for the first two band courses

but those chosen for Band 3 and Band 4 should not be amended as they are meant for students at higher levels. A high degree of originality should be maintained because the most important objective of most foreign language programmes is to help learners to deal confidently with genuine instances of communication rather than simply exposing them to stipulated vocabulary for the sole purpose of passing the exam.

4.7.3.3. Contextualisation in Exercise Designing

Despite the fact that it is an extremely daunting task to achieve authenticity of language in a classroom situation, some textbook writers have made great efforts to bring as much authenticity as possible to what learners do as both learners and users of a target language. When designing the exercise items many textbook writers take into consideration the learners' responses to the intended meaning of the writer(s) or speaker(s) and experiment possible ways to create authentic or near-authentic contexts for genuine texts. In his *Reading in the Content Areas*, Richard-Amato, (1990) adopted an interactive approach to EFL/ESL reading skills development. Most pre-reading and post-reading questions raised for each text in his textbook are designed for comprehending intended meaning; activating and internalising knowledge; applying knowledge; synthesising experience; relating to cultural background; and finally linguistic skills areas. The pre-reading questions, for instance, are intended to activate learner's knowledge of the world (necessary content schemata) and serve to facilitate reading comprehension. After the reading, the learner, first of all, is required to review his own initial responses to the pre-reading questions. This corresponds to a certain extent with the natural reading behaviour of many readers who have the purpose of increasing their world knowledge by reading some texts. In this book Richard-Amato's attempt to take learners' responses into consideration is even more

evident in the exercise section for understanding intended meaning as the questions in this section give learners opportunities to negotiate meanings with the writer(s). Furthermore, Richard-Amato points out in the same book that making students read aloud "interferes with the normal reading process" as "in most situations reading is a very personal activity and requires uninterrupted time in a quiet, comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere either at home or in the classroom." (p. xii) He suggests that this kind of activity should be carried out after the text is tackled in an interactive manner.

In another textbook, *Reasons for Listening* (Scarbrough, 1984), real life reasons for listening tasks are taken into account and thus the listening tasks are made purposeful. For example, instead of designing general comprehension questions for the purpose of testing understanding of numbers, words or sentences as most textbook writers do, Scarbrough assigns a role or different roles to the listener before or after listening to a text. This significantly increases the authenticity of the language data involved as the listening tasks become similar to the real cases of communicative use of the language. "The mind's eye" in Unit 7, for instance, as a post-listening activity, the listener is given a role of someone who is going to persuade a blind friend to join the Talking Book Scheme by answering questions and worries of his blind friend. This role-play activity serves the same purpose of checking listening comprehension as traditional comprehension questions do but the role assigned to the listener to a great extent authenticates the task of listening to the text. This example suggests that some sophisticated theories could be put into application with very simple but purposeful instruments.

In classroom situations, different texts should be entertained with different exercise types. In order to use authentic texts authentically in the classroom, Little, Devitt, and Singleton (1994) point out that the exploitation of authentic texts "should be shaped by a general

awareness that they were written for a particular communicative purpose" (p. 26). Textbook writers should be aware that when reading professional journals, one is to obtain knowledge of content; when reading a newspaper or listening to news reports he wants to keep in touch with the world; but when reading novels or stories he seeks enjoyment. At the same time, textbook writers should realise that students are learners of the language. As a learner they may read in order to learn how to read in the language and they need to know what kind of reading skills are more efficient than others. To this end, exercise items should also include those that help him to identify organisational patterns, to predict content, to make inferences, to work out meaning of new vocabulary from contexts, etc. In many cases in fact the double role students play could be integrated with strategically designed exercise items. For instance, summary skills exercises in Walter's *Authentic Reading* (see p. 2) are created in such a way that they take into account both the natural reading behaviour of efficient native speakers and learners' reading inclination and language levels. In designing exercise items, textbook writers should entertain the needs of both roles: to lessen the artificiality by contextualising the discourse to enable learners to deal with the text in a real user's manner and to help them deal with genuine texts with necessary language skills.

To well contextualise the reading tasks, the ideas put forward or used by writers of the textbooks described above could serve as a starting point. In accordance with these insights, the following points could be made as ideas to help realise authenticity in reading tasks. In *Intensive Reading* of *College English*, the numerous language points listed in the teacher's book and long lists of vocabulary and expressions[12] and the list of 'words to drill' right after the text in the student's book, as is presented in 4.3., clearly shows a vocabulary-focused methodology to teaching and reading (see 4.7. for further comments) rather than a discourse reading approach desired by the syllabus. The mini-passage for

'reading aloud and memorising' following the 'words to drill' list further delays the tasks for discourse reading. Furthermore, the textbook treatment of pre-reading activities is worth noting here. Although there are some suggested pre-reading activities in the teacher's book, the students' books contain no such questions for activating their background knowledge. The lack of such questions in the students' booklets could indicate that pre-reading activities are not considered essential as they depend on the teacher's judgment of their usefulness.

It should be pointed out that the points made above do not suggest that vocabulary and reading-aloud practice are totally irrelevant in language learning. On the contrary, they are necessary parts in most foreign language programmes and have proved particularly important in the Chinese context. They are learning activities which suit the culture of learning of the Chinese students (cf. Cortazzi and Jin, 1996). However, the vocabulary-centred presentation by the teacher and the listing of isolated vocabulary in large numbers right after the text may significantly affect the learners' natural reading behaviour, i.e., to slow down their reading speed. As there are 20-30 'words to drill' for each unit (Wang and Xia 1997), instead of listing them in isolation, vocabulary-focused exercises such as 'guessing word meaning from the context' could be designed as a pre-reading activity before the reading task. Such an alternative exercise item is likely to make vocabulary learning more meaningful since the activity contextualises the words in question and helps to facilitate the reading process as key words are dealt with before reading. As far as the 'reading aloud and memorising' activity is concerned the author quite agrees with Richard-Amato's (1990) suggestion that activities like this be carried out after the text is dealt with interactively. Interactive reading will clearly help raise authenticity level of reading and improve students' discourse competence.

4.8. Contents by Criteria of Realism

In recent years, though many textbook writers have become aware of the significance of incorporating cultural background information into their textbooks few have tried to establish the criteria in doing so. In Dong's (1992) retrospective essay, she admits that to integrate contents for cultural studies and language learning is by no means an easy task for textbook editors. The only two criteria that the editors tried to apply to the compiling of *College English* were to use authentic texts, as discussed above, and to include texts on topics of an extensive variety and distribute them appropriately over the whole series. The latter criterion was evidently established on the assumption that an extensive coverage of topics by texts would enable learners to acquire the needed socio-cultural knowledge, "as long as teachers could play a good guiding role" (Zhang 1991, 38). In his paper, Zhou (1996) explicates this assumption and makes an extensive coverage of topics by texts as one of his criteria in textbook evaluation. This view of including texts on as many topics as possible coincides with the third principle of text selection stipulated in the syllabus. This criterion, however, is not satisfactorily met as Dong (1992) herself feels that in the four *Intensive Reading* booklets of *College English* some topics are heavily explored while some others are barely touched upon.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Risager (1991) and Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991) have developed a model using four dimensions for content analysis of foreign language teaching textbooks. The first dimension concerns the life and activities of individuals represented at the micro-level, specifically their social and geographical identities, their personalities, situations of communication and pictorial presentations. The

second dimension takes into account such broad matters as historical representations and geographic and socio-economic facts about the contemporary society. The third deals with intercultural representations of a textbook and the fourth could be used to analyse the textbook writer's viewpoint which correlates the concern of the ideological content in the case of *College English*. The four dimensions for textbook analysis are justified by the notion of 'realism' which addresses universal needs in textbook writing to represent the culture "as it is lived and talked about by people who are credible and recognisable as real human beings" (Byram and Esarte-Sarries 1991, p. 180). The universe presented for cultural studies should be, as Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991, 323) summarise Risarge's argument, "a) balanced and comprehensive; 2) at the micro and macro level; and 3) positive and negative". To this end, they point out that the people and events selected for textbooks must be representative to be perceived as real.

4.8.1. Representations at the Macro-Social Level

The four *Intensive Reading* booklets show clear evidence in representing the cultures at the macro-social level as representations at this level do not differ greatly from the third principle of text selection stipulated in the syllabus. The texts cover various areas of the societies, from articles of general science and technology, texts on value concepts and lifestyles, texts revealing social problems, encyclopaedic type of writings of historical events, biographies, texts on education, to fictional and adventurous stories. The efforts made at this level are reported in Dong (1986) when she states that her team tried to choose texts of different topics and genre from different sources in order to provide learners with rich and varied language features and cultural background information. On the other hand, she admits that because of lack of explicit guidelines diversity in topics is

not very satisfactorily achieved as in *College English* some topics are much exploited while some others are barely touched upon.

In representing the target cultures at the macro-social level, the editors made little efforts in making learners aware of the negative effects of stereotypes and over-generalisations. On the one hand, stereotype comparison is a necessary part of cultural studies as far as the representations at the intercultural level are concerned (see 4.8.4 below). On the other hand, given the complexity and multicultural characteristics of human societies, learners should never be encouraged to stop at this level (Byram, 1989 and Hanvey, 1987). Some stereotype representations in *College English* clearly appear too strongly-worded, thus discouraging learners for in-depth studies. For example, in *Focus Listening 4*, there is a text entitled 'What are good manners?' the script of which is quoted in part below,

> People in different countries have different standards for good manners. Before entering a house in some Asian countries it is necessary to take off one's shoes. In European countries, even though shoes sometimes become very muddy, this is not done. A guest in a Chinese house never finishes a drink. He leaves a little to show that he has had enough. In a Malay house, a guest always leaves a little food. In England, a guest always finishes a drink or eats up his food to show that he has enjoyed it. (p.

The strong wording such as 'even though', 'always' and 'never' would prevent learners from exploring the social manners further.

The pictorial presentation in *Intensive Reading* is poor from the point of view of macro-social dimension. As 4.5 shows, pictorial presentation is minimal in *College English*. For each unit in the first two booklets of *Intensive Reading* there is only one simple drawing which is perhaps intended for a better-looking layout. In Book 3 and Book 4 *Intensive Reading* of *College English* totally ignores the material environment. The editors of the

other two series appeared more aware of pictorial presentation and both series contain photographs as well as simple drawings and caricature. *New English Course* does not contain a large number of pictorial presentations either but it has some interesting photos such as those of New York City, the Statue of Liberty and the King's College chapel in Cambridge. The photos are vivid and even the simple drawings appear more realistic than those in *College English. Modern English*, on the other hand, has made great efforts in providing the pictorial environment though still somewhat fragmented. The caricatures and the larger number of photographs such as the ones of a nuclear family, an extended family, the culture of punks in different situations, money and food items are apparently intended to lend credibility or a certain kind of realism to the cultures under study.

4.8.2. Representations at the Micro-Social Level

Much less satisfactory in terms of cultural realism is the writers' treatment of texts at the micro-social level. That is, the social identity, social environment and personality of individuals are less adequately represented. As the texts in *Intensive Reading* is unit-based, there is hardly any individual who can be explored in depth because s/he can not survive in more than one situation (one text). Among hundreds of characters depicted in entirely disconnected situations, many appear extraordinary and thus are in no way representative samples from the population of the target cultures. The *Intensive Reading* booklets include a large number of peculiar characters portrayed in fiction stories, such as (wife sentimentally welcoming home) a newly-released ex-convict, a frightening-looking hitchhiker (on a rainy day) who turned out to be the generous son of a business tycoon, a shrewd woman who tricked a young writer into buying her a dinner in a posh restaurant he could not afford and a courageous Western lady in India who appeared extraordinarily calm when a cobra was crawling over her feet under her dinner table. Fiction stories like

these, of course, embody literary 'realism' or genuineness of the culture and its people to various extents from the point of view of cultural studies. However, overuse of this type of texts in foreign language textbooks may blur the exaggerations and imaginations contained in them with the real images of the ordinary people of the target culture.

Some texts have a theme of presenting personalities of individuals and value concepts in Western societies. Even these texts could show unbalanced treatment at the micro-social level. The texts, "The Present" and "The Sampler", in Book 1 represent individuals flesh and blood in some realistic, though limited, social contexts. Christmas season strategies used by bakeries to attract customers and Western traditions for celebrating birthdays make the setting of both stories natural and credible. The old lady in "The Present" and the old gentleman in "The Sampler" portray a miserable and hopeless old generation in these countries. Dignity and value concepts show the generation gap and the complexity of the human society in depth. However, the *Intensive Reading* booklets exhibit clear lack of orientation towards comprehensiveness and balance in cultural representation. The lack of balanced representation is further reinforced by the corresponding cultural notes given in the *Teacher's Book*, like the street crimes described above,

> Most people retire from work between the ages of 60-65. This has two main consequences, one economic and the other psychological.
>
> Economically: Although retired people receive a pension from the government and / or from their past employers, it is often significantly less than they earned when they were working. Unless people have managed to save money during their years at work, their standard of living may decline dramatically when they retire.
>
> Psychologically: Old people in Western countries are generally considered useless, a burden on their families and on the public purse. They are hardly held in respect. ... (p. 66)

While the 'economic consequence' of being old sounds logical and somewhat universal the 'psychological' effect obviously manifests the editors' subjective evaluation of the situation. The miserable images of the old in the West portrayed in these two core texts and the editors' views expressed in the teacher's book have a profound impact on the learners' perceptions of the target culture(s). The evidence will be given in Chapter 6 when the students' attitudes and perceptions about the people are represented.

4.8.3. Establishment of Viewpoints

The writer's viewpoints are, as pointed out in many places before particularly in Chapter 3, manifested as ideological concerns in College English textbook writing. Out of these concerns textbook writers tend to select materials which reflect morals and values of their own culture and present incomprehensive or unbalanced images of the target cultures. The ideological concerns are most clearly demonstrated in those 'social problems' texts where the gloomy sides of the contemporary American society appear, such as the city poor, the aged, racism, street crimes, and drawbacks of its education system. Implicitly, as the example of the aged people presented above shows, the 'social evils inherent in capitalist countries' (a commonly-used phrase in China to lash capitalism) are exposed to students with the unbalanced images represented.

While Book 1 of the *Intensive Reading* booklets represents the miserable images of the aged in the U.S. with the two core texts, Book 2 comprises two stories of street crimes in American cities. Both stories tell how scared the American citizens look when witnessing crimes committed in front of their eyes. The title of the second story, '*38 who saw murder didn't call the police*', is sufficient in itself to project a terrifying image of the American

streets. Furthermore, instead of presenting the American society from, perhaps, a slightly more positive or less pessimistic angle to show multidimensional features of modern cities, the teacher's book provides further information to enhance this representation. The first paragraph of this information in *Teacher's Book 2* (p. 68) is quoted fully below;

> Street crime has been a constant threat to American society. Street crime and the fear of it are changing the fabric of the society and forcing its citizens to change their traditional living patterns. No one dares to stay away from home at night; no one feels secure even in his or her own neighbourhood. As early as 1970, Richard Nixon, the then President of the United States, said in his State of Union Message, "I doubt if there are many members of the Congress who live more than a few blocks from here who dare to leave their cars in the Capital garage and walk home at night." And since then things have changed for the worse. According to the statistics compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the crime rate more than doubled in the during the 1970s. Violent crime skyrocketed: the number of muggings or robberies increased more than 250%, the number of murders more than 100% and the number of assaults more than 150%.

Moreover, as a supplementary listening comprehension passage to be read to the students, the teacher's book presents another story entitled *Mugging* in which Senator Stennie was shot outside his home in the national capital, most probably because he had no more cash than a quarter in his wallet. It might be a fact that street crimes in the United States are serious and the crime rate is perhaps higher than that in many other countries. But, as far as the whole society is concerned, sentences like "No one dares to stay away from home at night; no one feels secure even in his or her own neighbourhood." are clearly over-generalised.

4.8.4. Intercultural Representations

The last dimension in the list, the intercultural representations, requires textbook writers to compare the target culture(s) and learner's native culture by reciprocally representing them through, for example, stereotypes. Representations at this level is important in that, foreign language learners have to learn how to interpret the world alternatively so that their existing framework of culture-specific references could be expanded. To develop their competence for cross-cultural communication, learners should be made fully aware of auto- and hetero-stereotypes in the target cultural groups and their own national social group before they could engage with complex cultural phenomena (Byram, Morgan et al., 1994). Without keen awareness of this dimension by textbook writers, the presentation of the target cultures and the people tends to be value-laden and the target-cultures-only approach is unlikely to enable learners to make in-depth comparisons.

Many foreign language textbook writers and teachers take an ethnographer's approach, seeking to explain the target cultures while neglecting the equally crucial task of helping learners to explore their own culture and selves. This is exactly the case with the current practice in College English teaching in general and textbook writing in particular. In all the intensive reading booklets of the three series, there exists little evidence of addressing the need of helping learners to explore their own culture and selves. The neglect of inter-cultural representations can be illustrated by the following example. A rare text selected from the *Time* magazine which depicts how Chongqing, one of the largest cities in China, is seen by an American journalist was chosen unadapted for Book 2 in the first edition of *New English Course* published in 1986 but was missing from its second edition published in 1992. The exclusion of such texts might be partly due to ideological reasons (Feng,

1998) and partly due to textbook writers' lack of enthusiasm in adopting this type of texts for intercultural representation. The only comparisons found in these textbooks are a few texts which show contrasts of socio-economical systems (see 4.5.2) and social manners (see 4.8.1). Even these few comparisons are mostly made between foreign countries. No text is selected to show differences between the target foreign groups and the learners' own national social group. Shallow understanding of foreign cultures is inevitable unless textbook writers and teachers are aware of the peril and make extra effort in treating them in a balanced manner.

4.9. Summary

The analysis above shows that the course books of all three College English series are, as they claim themselves to be, consistent in general with the course objectives and the text selection criteria stipulated in the syllabus. None the less, the analysis provides evidence that the current practice of College English textbook editors in cultural representations is inadequate. The definition of authenticity is rather simplistic, resulting in the selection of texts of reduced authenticity and inappropriate handling of authentic discourse. Efforts in representations at the macro-social level in the *College English* series are evident though the images are not always comprehensive and balanced. Representations at the micro-social levels are deficient, as few people presented appear truly representative of the target cultures. Inadequate and unbalanced representations as such were apparently due to two reasons: textbook editors' concerns for ideological implications and their preoccupation in using texts depicting idiosyncratic characters and fascinating events for raising the level of

students' motivation. These concerns seem to be addressed, but at the expense of the credibility of cultural representations.

Almost entirely absent from textbooks is the intercultural dimension which clearly affects the development of competence for cross-cultural communication. Evidence to be given in Chapter 6 shows that very few students seem to be willing to engage with alternative interpretations of the world. Their views towards cultural differences shown by foreign groups tend to be solely based on their own values and ideological concepts. In terms of their knowledge of their own culture some scholars observed that some students seem to know Shakespeare and even some of his works but have no idea who Confucius was as the name in Pingying does not match this exotic-sounding one (Hu and Gao, 1997). Many students could name in English major Western holidays such as 'Christmas', 'Easter', 'Thanksgiving Day' and even 'Valentine's Day' and 'Halloween', but could not name in English such major Chinese holidays as the 'Lantern Festival', 'Dragon-boat Festival' and even 'Mid-Autumn Festival'. This would undoubtedly put the students in an unfavourable position in formal or casual intercultural interactions.

To end this chapter, the comments on *College English* given in an interview by a freshly-graduated student who had taken all the six band courses are quoted below,

Interviewer: How much cultural knowledge does the whole textbook series contain in your estimation?

Graduate: The listening and reading booklets contain a bit more cultural information. But the *formal course books,*

Interviewer: You mean the *Intensive Reading* booklets?

Graduate: Yes, the *Intensive Reading* booklets. They don't have much of this stuff in them. I

wonder if *the texts are written by home* (Chinese) *teachers*, not from authentic sources. They don't

have a Western taste, but seem to *reflect the Chinese way of thinking.*

Interviewer: What makes you think that they are written by home teachers?

Graduate: I read some authentic works and watched a lot of authentic TV programmes[14]. I feel that

they are different from those texts in the textbook. They just don't seem to have the authentic taste.

(FS5A, author's translation and italics by the author)

There are two points worthy of emphasising in her comments. The term 'formal course

books' (*Zhenshi jiaocai*) used by her to refer to the *Intensive Reading* booklets reconfirms

the point made in 4.3 that the focal point of the College English programme is Intensive

Reading. For textbook evaluation, the second point is certainly far more interesting. The

graduate's remarks that the texts were probably written by Chinese teachers and so they

mirrored "the Chinese way of thinking" show the user's overall impression that the content

of texts is value-laden, that is, they reflect to a great extent the Chinese views and value

concepts rather than representing the cultures from intercultural perspectives.

Notes

1. All the three authors hold important positions in the National Committee of College Foreign
   Language Textbook Writing and Editing and all have been involved in writing textbooks. In
   particular, Dong, Y. is chief editor of the *College English* series. It is this series that will be focused
   on for analysis in this chapter.

2. The two awards are the Special Award at the Second Textbook Evaluation Convention of Chinese
   Tertiary Institutions and the First Award of the Second Textbook Evaluation Convention of the
   Tertiary Institutions Affiliated to the State Education Commission.

3. 297 of the 1080 tertiary institutions belong to this category according to the *Educational Statistics
   Yearbook of China* (1994). Most of these institutions are directly affiliated to the State Education

Commission, rather than to local education authorities. Direct affiliates to SEC are regarded as of better quality and thus more influential than those to local education authorities.

4. The thematic association does not exist between the *Intensive Reading* booklets of *College English* and its corresponding unit in the Extensive Reading booklets. However, the two texts in each unit of the Intensive Reading booklets are thematically linked.

5. 'Words to drill' is the first item in the 'study and practice' section which lists words considered by textbook writers as important and 'active' words for a particular unit (Wang and Xia, 1997). These words are supposed to be repeatedly drilled until they are memorised. According to Wang and Xia (ibid.), there are 1345 such words listed within the four *Intensive Reading* booklets. They think that if the students can use them skilfully, their ability to express themselves in spoken and written forms will be greatly improved.

6. To keep a focus in this study, the auxiliary booklets for these two series will not be elaborated though the auxiliary booklets for *College English* are to be briefly touched upon.

7. 'Language points' are basically words and phrases to be explained to the students before they are asked to carry out reading comprehension tasks. The presentation of language points could be taken as the symbol for the 'intensive-reading' method. This may help explain why the classroom is, in most cases, teacher-centred as the presentation leaves students very little time to have other activities.

8. According to responses given by many teacher informants in the survey conducted in 1995, they rarely present the background information in the teacher's book for two reasons: time constraints and enough brief 'notes' in the student's book for the understanding of the language points involved.

9. It is a fact that in China many textbook writers do not often provide sources of the texts selected. Some never do so. Comparatively speaking, *College English* has made some efforts in this and has documented a lot of source references though incomplete.

10. The feature – heterogeneity of cultural representations – is not discussed in this section as it is related to another notion – *representations at the intercultural level*. The two notions are to be discussed together in the section when the criteria of realism are applied to textbook evaluation.

11. It is worth noting that some of these texts might already have been quite 'old' when they were selected two or three decades ago by those textbook writers.

12. The lists of vocabulary and new expressions list about 60-70 words and phrases on the average. Some of such lists could be as long as three pages itemising about 100 words and phrases in isolation.

13. As the focus of the programme is on *Intensive Reading*, the 'supporting' booklets, such as *Focus Listening*, do not seem to lay too much emphasis on the ideological aspects and the degree of enlightenment in its text selection.

14. This graduate is clearly a 'high-flier' with a strong motivation to finish all six band courses. Since she studied at the Shenzhen University she had easy access to authentic materials in English including Western mass media. Interview data with her will be further presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5

Empirical Study of Concepts

— Objectives and Methodology

Introduction

The preceding chapters have provided a detailed analysis of both educational and ideological contexts of the College English programme under study and a critical review of the textbooks used for the programme. These chapters are crucial parts of the research study as the contextual factors determine the course and scope of educational research. The analysis and review often based on what is called secondary research data (Brown, 1988), however, have not brought to light the entire situation as some other important dimensions pertaining to cultural studies in foreign language education are yet to be investigated. For an insight into the entire situation, the author saw the need to find out the evidence, if there is any, of two assumptions held by many foreign language educationists in China (for examples, see Liu, 1987; Zhang, 1991; Dong, 1992 and Hu and Gao, 1997).

First, there is the assumption that foreign language education can broaden learners' horizons. This is an universally-held assumption (cf. Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor, 1991) and it is this assumption that has made or contributed to making foreign language teaching part of compulsory education in many countries in the world, including China. *Second*, the author intended to investigate how justified the widely-held belief is, that ideological conversion, as was discussed in Chapter 3, could be prevented if learners are presented with 'appropriate' sociocultural materials as contents of cultural studies in a foreign language programme. The belief has been evidently manifested in the major textbooks such as the ones analysed in the preceding chapter. In order to find answers to the two research questions, the investigation would focus on: a) learners' perceptions of the people of the target cultures; b) their attitudes towards these people; and c) the sources of their perceptions (including the College English programme) and the influences on their attitudes.

The theoretical significance of studying these concepts is presented in Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991) and Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991). At the beginning of the former book, for instance, empirical investigations into these issues are argued as directly related to four general areas of theoretical work: 'the value of cultural studies within language teaching'; 'the development of an adequate didactic for the teaching of culture'; 'the methodology of cultural studies teaching'; and the area of 'assessment and evaluation' (pp. 3-5). These concepts called 'areas of enquiry' (ibid.), however, have hardly attracted genuine attention from foreign language education researchers in China and thus data relevant to these issues by empirical investigations, as 5.1 will show, are nearly absent in the literature. Empirical investigation was, therefore, necessary and it would bring about original data which help establish the theoretical basis for foreign language education in the Chinese context. The focus of this chapter and the chapter that follows will, as a natural

sequence, be switched to the methodology of the empirical investigation carried out and the findings relevant to the issues under study.

5.1. Research So Far

There does not seem to be much published research in China that aims specifically to find evidence of students' attitudes and perceptions about the target culture(s) and the sources of learning cultural knowledge. No one, to begin with, seems to have really discussed the sources of cultural studies except for a few textbook recommendations by scholars like Bao (1997). Understandably, to these scholars, textbooks are of course the most relevant source of cultural information. The only published discussion which is relevant to the study of perceptions seems to be the essay on 'cultural stereotypes' by Gao (1995) which is repeated in Hu and Gao (1997), as was reviewed in 1.1.3.4. In their discussion, cultural stereotypes are defined as the simple images held by a people about another people. They give quite a number of examples in their discussion in order to argue for the value of stereotypes in foreign language teaching. Although some published research by Western scholars is referred to, their discussion of this concept in the Chinese context is primarily based on commonplace observations and their personal experience. The discussion seems to mainly introduce the notion, cultural stereotypes, and serve as an 'attention-getter' for their call for a model of cultural studies teaching.

A few observations and surveys conducted in recent years by some Chinese scholars, however, reveal some aspects which seem to be relevant to studies of attitudes though most of them use the Chinese word '*Xinchu*' which literally means 'interest' instead of

'attitude' (*Taidu*). The relevancy lies in the Chinese definition of '*Xinchu*' in its relationship to the concept 'attitude'. From the point of view of Chinese psychology, Xiao (1991) defines '*Xinchu*' (interest) as "a person's cognisant desire to gain access to the knowledge of a certain subject or to carry on a certain activity. The interest of this person in this subject or activity is often reflected by his discriminating attitudes or positive responses to the subject or the activity." (p. 294, author's translation). She continues to state that a person's interest in a subject is associated with his/her cognition of and emotions towards it. "The more the person knows (the subject), the more affects he/she feels and the more interest he/she tends to have in it." (ibid.) This definition associates 'interests' directly with 'affects or emotions' and 'cognition' which are defined as reflectors of attitudes by Western psychologists (cf. Jonas, Eagly and Stroebe, 1994).

Indeed, educators or students in China are often found to say that they are interested in a foreign culture and its people but they are seldom heard to say that they 'have a positive attitude' towards them. Yan (1994), for example, observes that many students (English majors in her case) were very 'fond of' American English ('general American English' in her words). She conducted a small-scaled survey and found that 90% of her informants (n = 42) were greatly interested in this variety of English and expressed a wish to imitate it. In the survey questionnaire, some informants wrote that they "greatly admire American English because the male voice is exceptionally strong and vigorous and the female voice sounds particularly elegant and beautiful" (p. 27, author's translation). According to Yan, this 'admiring feeling' seems to have resulted from the students' wide exposure to the VOA radio programme, American movies and music. She goes further to provide some socio-economic explanations for this 'American Heat' among the learners of English in tertiary institutions. Since the World War II, she argues, while the influence of the United Kingdom has been decreasing, the Americans have made rapid achievements in politics,

economy, military affairs and science and technology. The achievements, together with the ever-increasing opportunities for students and graduates to study in America and the ever-increasing communications between the two countries, are clearly the deep socio-cultural explanations for the great popularity of the American English among the students.

Chinese students' keen interest in American culture is observed by other scholars. The 'American Heat' was made evident by an even earlier observation reported in Xu (1990). Like Yan's survey, Xu's observation was made among English majors. He categorised the final year essays written by three cohorts of graduating students[1] in the early 1980s by topics and found that the great majority of these students chose topics concerning literature, history, politics and other cultural aspects of the United States at their own will. The statistics reported in his paper are given in Table 5.1.1. Out of 286 essays, except for 57 on English literature and 23 on linguistics and European history, all the other 206 essays were written on topics related to American culture. Viewing the students' interest in American and European cultures as a whole, Xu comments that this was a clear effort made by the students to achieve a better understanding of the Western world and the students seemed to be "doing something for a culture which after years of seclusion desires to be informed and enriched." (p. 9)

Table 5.1.1. — The statistics of the graduating students' essays by topics between 1981-1983 at BUFS. (no = 286)

Topics	1981	1982	1983	Sub-total
American literature	30	13	26	69
English literature	22	14	21	57
American history	24	9	13	46
Contemporary American politics	14	10	16	40
European history	10	9	7	26
Contemporary American society	8	12	5	25
Linguistics and others	10	5	8	23

Source: Xu (1990)

In another survey to investigate the teachers' and students' preference for the types of texts for the purpose of writing future textbooks, Zheng and Wei (1997) report that both teachers and students were very interested in texts which deal with cultural differences, lifestyles and customs and traditions of target countries. The most preferred three types of texts of the students surveyed are listed in the following table:

Table 5.1.2 — The top three types of texts preferred by year-four students

Topics	Number of students who like it	Total number of students surveyed	%
Social customs	298	462	64.5%
Foreign lifestyles	280	462	60.6%
Biographies of famous (foreign) people	251	462	54.3%

Source: Zheng and Wei (1997)

Zheng and Wei remark that the students' preferences clearly suggest that most of them are highly interested in the target cultures: their lifestyles and social customs and the peoples who speak the language. Unlike Yan's study, the informants in Zheng and Wei's survey were College English students.

Following this study, Feng (1998) did a survey with an aim to study the learning culture of the students (200 in her survey) at a university in the inland city of Changsha. One of her findings she reports was that 57% of her informants indicated that they are most interested in learning 'the cultural knowledge' in this programme. Whereas, 38% chose 'the linguistic knowledge (grammar and vocabulary)' and only 9% went for testing skills as their priority. Considering the great emphasis put on 'the linguistic knowledge' and the impact of the two tests, Feng argues, the 57% figure is significant and it clearly shows that majority of students are truly keen on cultural studies. In the same report, she also reports that when asked what they would do if they had a chance to talk directly to a native English speaker, 27 % of the students replied, "I would talk to him/her" while 65% responded, "I would

226

want to start a conversation but hesitate in doing so owing to lack of confidence." As Feng sensibly comments, even though the students did not show enough confidence for direct interactions with native speakers of English, the responses reflected their interest in the target culture(s) and the people.

There are some exceptions, of course, so far as learners' interests in the target culture and the language are concerned. Yu (1991) observed that students of some departments such as those of Chinese language, Chinese history and Chinese classic philosophy seemed to be less interested in learning the language and the culture. The reason, according to Yu, was apparent: these students reason that it is their native culture that they should study and the learning of the English language and its culture would have no practical value for their future careers. In another discussion, Shu and Zhuang (1996) also suggest that there are such learners and they state that it is difficult to imagine that learners without interest in a foreign language, but with an ethnocentric attitude, could possibly learn a foreign language, not to speak of culture learning. Thus, they argue that one of the important tasks in culture teaching is to activate the motivation of these learners in learning the language and its culture. In these two discussions, neither Yu nor Shu and Zhuang offer empirical evidence for the negative attitudes shown in these students as they apparently base their discussion entirely on personal observations.

Though the surveys carried out by these scholars have focused on the 'interests' of the students, the data, as argued at the beginning of this section, is directly or indirectly relevant to studying attitudes. None the less, the data are clearly inadequate for revealing the attitudes of the College English students towards the culture(s) and the people. Yan's survey was done among a group of English majors and their motivation to acquire a native-like accent was apparently higher than non-English majors. Zheng and Wei's study

was large in scale but limited in scope. As they report, only 15 topics were given to their subjects to choose from. This limited number of options might well have prevented their subjects from listing other knowledge areas as their preferences of cultural studies. Even though Feng's study provides some evidence of students' positive attitudes to the target culture and the people, the questions she raised in the survey were too general and the findings could only serve to confirm a commonplace observation, i.e. students in general are keen on knowing more about the outside world. The literature on 'attitudes' as well as on perceptions and sources clearly suggests that all these areas of enquiry need to be further investigated and discussed.

5.2. Planning the Empirical Research

The brief review above suggests that to obtain data for studying the three areas of enquiry new methods for the research had to be worked out as previous studies were primarily quantitative investigations into students' interests in language and culture learning. In planning the research study with the context of the programme in mind, the author first of all made two general decisions for selecting appropriate research methods. In order to make the data of the empirical study representative for the large population of the programme, efforts had to be made in conducting questionnaire surveys to make possible statistical analysis of the concepts under study. In the mean time, elicitation techniques such as interviews and classroom observation commonly used in educational research should also remain as an essential part of the study as the data obtained through these methods, as studies such as Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991) have shown, could help characterise learners' concepts such as their insights and attitudes about the people of

the target culture(s). In other words, data for both quantitative and qualitative analyses are necessary as they are mutually supportive and complementary.

Secondly, the investigation had to be appropriately carved up into separate sub-studies to accommodate the schedule of the sole researcher and to appear 'informant-friendly' to the student subjects. As the three areas of enquiry were all complex concepts which require careful and intensive investigation, it was unrealistic to conduct a questionnaire survey to cover all aspects or to interview a subject with a complete set of questions relevant to the study. To gain ready cooperation for arranged questionnaire surveys and a high rate of returns in these surveys, for example, the questionnaire had to be so designed that the subjects could complete filling it out in approximately 10 to 15 minutes time. Lengthy questionnaires would make teachers hesitant in agreeing to arranged surveys and students reluctant in responding to the questions.

5.2.1. Principles and Adjustments

Having made the two decisions for the empirical study, the author turned to selection of approaches to operationalising each concept under study. In principle, the author decided that most of the research methods used in the Durham Project (Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor, 1991) were worth pursuing as of empirical investigations of the same nature, the project was apparently the most comprehensive and the most relevant to the study of these complex concepts in relation to foreign language education. The comparative principles adopted by the Durham researchers to investigate the pupils' attitudes towards the French people, for example, did not only enable the pupils to put this people into the global context for easy comparison but more importantly allowed the researchers to have an in-

depth study of the relationships between pupils' attitudes and the selected independent variables (cf. ibid.: Chapter 3). Likewise, the approach to using ethnographic principles of observation for research in the language classroom was also insightful as classroom observations following these principles impose no analytic categories in advance for the study because pre-selected analytic categories could only serve as functional tools to quantify features of classroom teaching (cf. ibid.). The data obtained in such an approach were, therefore, essentially qualitative. The qualitative data thus collected as well as the data obtained from questionnaire surveys were further complemented in the Durham Project with interviews and textbook analysis. Apparently, the principles adopted in the Durham Project make certain that validity and reliability of the research (this two notions will be defined in 5.6 in connection with an evaluation) be assured and the objectives of empirical research be achieved.

The principles used in the Durham Project of obtaining and analysing data indubitably helped formulate a theoretically sound model for my research study. None the less, it was inevitable that some research instruments and techniques adopted in the project would have to be adjusted due to sociocultural and practical reasons. The 'experiential variables' explored in great length in relation to pupils' attitudes in the project (cf. ibid.: Chapter 3), for example, would presumably be insignificant as the great majority of the students had little direct exposure to other peoples[2]. As an example of practical reasons, replication of the Durham Project appeared to be too demanding considering its labour-intensiveness for the sole researcher with full-time teaching commitment. In the first round of the Durham research, according to Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991), their subjects numbering 401 pupils were given more than one hour (seventy minutes) to complete the 'semantic differential' tests which were designed to measure their levels of ethnocentricity and to fill in the questionnaire for sources. These tests were then followed up with another session

for clarifying uncertainties. In addition to the two sessions, the tests were supplemented with interviews with the same groups of pupils. The approach was doubtless thorough as the subjects were systematically studied with both quantitative and qualitative instruments but it required the efforts and devotion of a team of highly committed investigators.

5.2.2. Operationalisation of Concepts

At the planning stage, therefore, it is important to determine how the three concepts are to be operationalised in the specific context. As each concept is a complex area of enquiry, it is necessary to identify what major factors the concept comprises or what indicators the concept is reflected by (the objectives) and how these indicators are to be studied (the methodology). Only when the objectives and the techniques to be used are clearly defined, will the empirical research become purposeful and data collected relevant to the general aim of the study. The sub-sections below, therefore, follow the two general steps – to define the specific objectives for the study and to determine the methodology to be used for the operationalisation of the three concepts. It should be noted, however, that the objectives and techniques presented in the sub-sections were preliminary considerations and were meant to be tested in the pilot study which will be briefly described in 5.2.3.

5.2.2.1. Operationalisation of Perceptions

The first type of data aimed at in this study were the students' perceptions of the people who speak the target language. Frequently-studied indicators of perceptions in education research and in ethnographic accounts of specific cultures include such aspects of culture as food, dress, housing, work, views of others, political structure, history and so forth (cf.

Appendix 1 in Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor, 1991). Accordingly, a list of topics was prepared for interviews of the pilot study and, by referring to the topics exploited in other studies and the author's understanding of the students' insight of the target cultures, the list included public holidays, dress, tourist attractions, and history of the English speaking countries. The author was aware that the final list to be used in the formal fieldwork would have to be determined from the data collected from the pilot study.

In interviews, in addition to the specific aspects as listed above about the target peoples or in case the interviewee(s) could not elaborate on them, the interviewer would raise such broad questions as "The culture of which English speaking country are you interested in most? And why?" and "How much do you know about this country and its people?". To these questions, the interviewee(s) would be encouraged to talk about anything that most impressed him/her or was most familiar to him/her. The questions were to be so broadly raised mainly because, as was just mentioned, it was assumed that the majority of the students to be involved in the pilot study would have very limited direct experience in interacting with other peoples. The information they had acquired through secondary sources would vary greatly, depending on their individual interests, the subjects they majored in and other background factors.

5.2.2.2. Operationalisation of Attitudes

While the operationalisation of perceptions seemed to be relatively straightforward, the empirical study of attitudes appeared to be less so because, as the literature briefly reviewed in 5.1 shows, Chinese scholars studied this concept merely by the notion of 'interest'. The discussions appeared to be unsatisfactory in that many other important

indicators such as cognitions, affects and behaviour argued by psychologists such as Jonas, Eagly and Stroebe (1994; for a more detailed account of their arguments, see 6.1) remained literally untouched. To integrate the widely-discussed theories into the Chinese context, the author intended to study the concept by operationalising all the four notions – interests, cognitions, affects, and behaviour – which were termed 'sub-concepts' in later discussions.

The first sub-concept 'interests' was thought to be the most clear-cut with respect to the Chinese connotation of the term. For statistical data, a questionnaire was designed to elicit responses to the perceived importance of various cultural aspects. The aspects included in the questionnaire were categorised into three types: popular culture, high culture and deep culture (cf. Hu, 1985 for definitions). As this categorisation was accepted by Chinese scholars in their discussions, it was assumed that both students and College English teachers would be more familiar with this categorisation than any others. A large number of cultural aspects listed under each category in the questionnaire were selected from Hu's (1995) dictionary of cultural studies and some were formulated on the basis of the textbook analysis the author had already done. In addition, statements showing students' interests in the target cultures and the people would be elicited in interviews. For the study of the other three sub-concepts, the author would depend solely on interviews in the pilot study as they were totally unexplored concepts in the Chinese literature on foreign language education. Again, broad questions were raised and they included "How do you feel about them (the people(s) the interviewee was interested in knowing)?" and "Do you think the study of foreign cultures would have some effects on the students and their behaviour?" (see Interview 1 in Appendix 3). It was anticipated that students' responses to these questions in the pilot study would provide relevant indicators or descriptors of

'attributes' which could be used in the formal investigation to collect data for measuring attitudes towards 'the attitude object' (see 6.1 for more detail).

The question on the effects on students' ways of thinking and their behaviour would also have implications in further studying the ideological dimension in foreign language education. The responses may shed some new light on how the students reacted to foreign influences and in which ways and to what extent they could have been or might be enriched or 'transformed' through cultural studies learning. As was extensively examined in Chapter 3, ideological 'transformation' is evidently one of the most important concerns of foreign language educationists in China.

5.2.2.3. Operationalisation of Sources

Equally important for the empirical study was the research into the sources of students' perceptions and the influences on their attitudes. The operationalisation of this concept appeared straightforward like that of perceptions but, as possible channels for acquiring cultural information were ever increasing and thus changing, it was apparently important that the list of sources based on the author's observation would have to be carefully tested in the pilot study. For questionnaire data, six main channels were identified as main sources of cultural information for students. They included TV programmes and films, the students' textbooks, their teachers, talks or interactions with native speakers, the Voice of America (VOA) and the BBC broadcast stations, and magazines and books in simple English. Moreover, the questionnaire survey was to be complemented with interviews. Interviewees were asked to state the source(s) of the perceptions they had just revealed and to estimate in broad terms how much they got to know about the target cultures

through the sources. The procedure thus followed helped link the students' perceptions of the people with the sources.

5.2.3. The Pilot Study

As a starting point of the empirical research, the author conducted a pilot study during the last two weeks of 1995 when he was able to take annual leave[3]. For this study, a total of four questionnaires were designed for testing in the pilot study: one for eliciting students' 'interests' by asking them to state their perceived importance of the various cultural aspects (cf. Questionnaire 1 in Appendix 2 for the version revised after the pilot study); one for eliciting responses to the source question (cf. Part 3, Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2 for the version revised after piloting); and one for eliciting teachers' responses to the same cultural aspects (see Questionnaire 3 in Appendix 2). A fourth questionnaire was designed to elicit students' responses to a number of definitions given to the notion 'authentic texts'. As was presented in Chapter 4, selecting authentic texts was found a very important criterion used by textbook writers and the questionnaire was assumed to be able to elicit some interesting definitions of authentic language data from both teachers and students taking College English.

In addition to the questionnaires, as mentioned above, the author prepared a number of 'core questions' for semi-structured interviews. The aim of this pilot study was, therefore, four-fold: a) to elicit indicators of attitudes and perceptions the College English students held about the people of the target cultures; b) to confirm the pre-identified sources the students frequently explored to acquire cultural knowledge; c) to test or refine practicable techniques for operationalising these concepts in interviews; and d) to estimate the scope

of the formal investigation according to the resources and time spent on the pilot study. Although the research study was focused on the students' attitudes, perceptions and sources of the perceptions, the roles of the College English practitioners and the attitudes of policy makers were not ignored; both interviews and questionnaire surveys would be conducted among them as far as possible.

The pilot study was carried out in two tertiary institutions in Wuhan – a city in Central China. The informants included a considerable number of students taking College English and some College English teachers, a department head, and a textbooks writer. The city and the two institutions were selected for the pilot study owing to their representativeness in terms of geographic locations and academic reputation[4]. During the pilot study, surveys by questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations were intended to be conducted simultaneously. As far as the samples of the study were concerned, the author adopted the 'judgemental' approach (Grimm and Wozniak, 1990) in which the representativeness of samples are judged primarily on the basis of informed guesses of the researcher. The student informants for the questionnaire surveys, for example, were students in a teaching group by arrangement with the teacher, randomly selected, and those for interviews were often selected by 'completely random' selection (see 5.2.4 for explanation). The relatively small amount of data collected from this pilot study were analysed by hand against the objectives listed for the pilot study. The concepts operationisable for the study were identified and special attention was paid to the data that indicated the need for changes for the formal fieldwork.

5.3. Instruments for Formal Fieldwork

The pilot study confirmed many research questions and instruments and helped refine or modify some others. The broad questions on perceptions, attitudes and sources proved to be effective in interviews in eliciting relevant questions for the formal fieldwork while the questions on specific cultural aspects were found impractical as few students had enough knowledge about the cultural aspects, fundamental as they may be, for making comments. The interview data from the pilot study also confirmed the assumption that the Americans and the British were the only English speaking peoples the students were most familiar with and willing to talk about. Thus, the core questions used for interviews were basically kept unchanged for formal investigation.

Some changes were made to the questionnaires. The first important change made was to translate the language used in conducting questionnaire surveys. The questionnaire was originally designed in English with the supposition that the students might be interested in reviewing the vocabulary concerning cultural studies in the target language. The language used in the questionnaire had been carefully checked against the vocabulary inventory in the *College English Syllabus* (the 1985 version, see Chapter 2) and the small number of words outside the range of the inventory were provided with Chinese translation. None the less, the questionnaire surveys turned out to be more time-consuming than expected because many students in arranged surveys in the classroom asked for the meaning of many of the words used. Hence, the language was translated from English into Chinese for the formal fieldwork.

In surveys some students expressed their interests in including some texts which show the lives of the Chinese students overseas (cf. PS2A). The interest in text materials of cross-cultural interactions was later confirmed in another interview with a group of university students in Shenzhen (cf. FA7A). As a result, the author made a substantial change to the questionnaire on perceived importance of given cultural aspects. Instead of grouping the cultural aspects into popular culture, deep culture and high culture as mentioned in 5.2.2.2, the categorisation was modified to reflect three dimensions of textbook analysis suggested in Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991: p. 180): "the macro-social level of socio-economic, geographic and historical representations"; "the micro-social level of the social identity of individuals"; and "the intercultural level of mutual representations". Most cultural aspects listed in the original questionnaire fitted themselves easily into the first two categories of the new questionnaire but the aspects at the intercultural level had to be worked out by the author according to his understanding of the notion (see Questionnaires 1 and 3 in Appendix 2). The cultural aspects thus categorised were not only intended to help address the students' interests in intercultural representations (further evidence of their keen interests will be shown in 6.4) but they would also be significant for materials development. The latter issues will be taken up again in the last chapter.

One of the most beneficial outcomes from the pilot study was the formulation of the questionnaire (see Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2) for eliciting statistical data for studying both perceptions and attitudes. This questionnaire went through a very careful process of comparison and deliberation during and after the pilot study. As indicated in 5.2.2.2, one of the important tasks of interviews in the pilot study was to elicit descriptors which clearly demonstrate affective feelings of the students about the target people under study so that a questionnaire could be constructed to elicit statistical data for studying attitudes. Many such descriptors were elicited from the interviews during the pilot study and they

included 'unfriendly towards foreigners', 'hard-working', 'gentleman', 'intelligent', 'time conscious' and 'reliable'. Many student interviewees were found to use these expressions when talking about foreign peoples. With the identification of these descriptors, thoughts were turned to 'semantic differential' tests designed for the Durham Project to measure the degree of ethnocentricity. These tests require that two bipolar items be constructed for each descriptor for the semantic differential scale, e.g. from 'good' to 'bad' and 'strong' to 'weak' (cf. Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor 1991: 400). It was found, however, that bipolar items for some of the descriptors identified in the pilot study were not easy to construct. Descriptors such as 'gentleman', 'intelligent' and 'time-conscious' found used frequently by the students in the pilot study to indicate their appreciation or dislike of a specified group did not seem to have an appropriate negative term unless the negative adverb 'not' was used for the other end of the scale, for example 'not gentleman' and 'not intelligent' (instead of 'barbarian' and 'stupid'?). 'Barbarian' and 'stupid' would sound insulting, of course, and the replacements – 'not gentleman' and 'not intelligent' – for a rating scale also sound unsatisfactory. Furthermore, for a descriptor like 'gentleman', the middle scores in the rating scale seemed difficult to be interpreted.

For statistical data for attitude studies, thoughts were given to Grice's (1934, cited in Seelye, 1984) simple method of measuring attitudes by asking informants to indicate whether they agree or disagree by checking against given statements. The simplicity of such method would suit the availability of time and resources for this study but the most obvious disadvantage was that subjects would be left with no other choice than 'agreeing' or 'disagreeing' to the statements. The difference in degrees or 'extremity' termed by psychologists such as Jonas, Eagly and Stroebe (1994) does not seem to be taken into account. Moreover, given statements themselves may easily give rise to ethical problems or introduce immoral ideas (Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor, 1991). Through these

comparisons, for statistical data of attitudes, the author turned naturally to the idea of designing a questionnaire to measure degrees of agreement or disagreement with the descriptors obtained in the pilot study.

When comparing the descriptors with those 'characteristics' used by Keller (1991: 133-135) to describe people in his surveys in several schools in Germany and Great Britain on heterostereotypes, a person's perceptions or images of a foreign people, as opposed to autostereotypes, the self-perceptions the nation has of itself, the author determined that the questionnaire could be expanded to include many 'characteristics' in Keller's list. The expanded questionnaire (see Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2) contained three parts. The first two parts were intended to elicit students' responses showing degrees of agreements to twenty-five characteristics given to the British and the Americans. Out of the twenty-five, eight were elicited from the pilot study and seventeen were selected from Keller's list with only a few slight modifications such as 'appearance-conscious' instead of 'clean' and 'good-scientists' instead of 'good-technicians'. These two parts in its full form would elicit data for studying students' perceptions and many of the 'affective' descriptors could be used to measure students' attitudes. Added to these two major parts were the seven simple questions for the sources of cultural information. One more source – from relatives and friends – was added to the original 'sources' questionnaire (see 5.2.2.3) because on seeing the original a colleague at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) suggested that there were some students who had relatives working or studying abroad.

For statistical data on attitudes, variables of informants were crucial for meaningful comparison. The following independent variables were determined as essentials for questionnaire surveys among students: geographical location, specialty, sex, the textbook being used and years of College English learning experience. Other variables such as the

240

student's home location, secondary school attended, and socio-economic background were originally included in the 'Personal Particulars' section of all questionnaire forms. After the pilot study, the author noticed that quite a number of returns left the section empty or incomplete. The returns were rendered null and void as comparisons became impossible. Assuming that a shorter 'Personal Particulars' section would encourage the students to provide essential personal information, the author decided to exclude from the revised questionnaire for the formal fieldwork the less important variables such as home location, secondary school attended and socio-economic background.

The analysis of the data obtained from the pilot study showed that one type of data which had been thought to be operationalisable proved to be too abstract to student informants. As authenticity was claimed to be one of the most important criteria in materials writing (see 4.7) a questionnaire was designed to elicit definitions of authentic texts used for College English courses from both teachers and students. However, many informants in the pilot study left the forms blank. One response to the open-ended question for 'free comments' in Chinese was "Authentic texts are authentic. I don't see the point of these questions." (QSHUST06, author's translation). Since this type of data was only intended for textbook analysis, not directly relevant to the major concerns of the empirical study, the author decided to ignore the questionnaire in the formal investigation.

During the research study, however, another type of data was later found necessary and added to the list for collection. According to official statistics, each year, more than ten thousand scholars and graduates (Cen, 1998) go abroad for further studies or exchange programmes. The language needs for these people abroad are absent in the literature but apparently significant for syllabus designing. Thus, a questionnaire (Questionnaire 4 in Appendix 2) was designed for eliciting their perceived importance of the five language

skills (including translation) from Chinese postgraduates and scholars in foreign tertiary institutions. This questionnaire survey was piloted in one university in Hong Kong by the author himself and the formal survey was carried out in two universities in the United States with the generous help of two former colleagues cum friends. It should be noted that the findings of the survey will not be fully reported in this thesis[5] as needs analysis is not the focus of this study but they are of value in supporting the 'goal statement' which the author makes in the last chapter.

As indicated in some places in this chapter, three major modes were intended to be used in collecting information: interviews, questionnaire surveys and classroom observation. There were no obvious difficulties in utilising the first two modes of investigation during the study. Classroom observation, on the other hand, turned out to be more unwelcomed than expected during the pilot study. Some teachers contacted through official channels strategically declined the request, either saying that their students were in the middle of mock tests or half jokingly declaring that they felt it uncomfortable to have their lessons observed by the researcher with many years of teaching experience both in China and in foreign institutions. This seemed to justify Liu's (1997) strong statement that classroom observation is at all times viewed negatively by teachers as it was always seen as a means to assess teaching. No matter what other purposes observation may have, the professional reputation of the observed (the 'face', in another word) is at stake. Of several attempts, there was only one teacher, a coordinator of a band 2 course, who agreed to the request for classroom observation on condition that it would take place when the content of the lesson required more interactions between him and the students. He explained that he had to cover a relatively long unit in the textbook quickly and there would be much 'teacher talk' in the on-going lessons he did not wish to be observed. The researcher had to give it

up as the pilot study did not allow much time flexibility. It was hoped that in the formal investigation full cooperation would be obtained.

On the other hand, another important data eliciting instrument used in the pilot study turned out to be of great use with respect to both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The open-ended questions attached to the questionnaires helped elicit written responses from a considerable number of student informants. Attached to the second questionnaire of the second appendix were two open-ended questions for eliciting responses showing attitudes and perceptions about the Americans and the British and one question for major sources of cultural acquisition perceived by the informants. Though, as expected, not all students surveyed responded to the questions in writing, as will be shown in the next chapter, those who did offered statements made with more deliberation than those made in interviews. This type of statements, as the next chapter will show, were found to be of value not only for qualitative analysis of the concepts under study but also for revealing the influence of ideological education on the student informants.

5.4. The Fieldwork

The first task for the formal investigation was to determine the geographical locations and tertiary institutions for study. As the programme is run throughout the country, literally any city with a tertiary institution could be chosen as the site for conducting the research study. None the less, questionnaires filled in by a group of students in the non-key college showed some evidence that they held fairly different views towards cultural studies from their counterparts in key institutions. The wording they used to describe the images of the

peoples, for example, tended to show more affective feelings and their attitudes tended to be more polarised (see 6.1 and 6.2 for detail). This implied that, for studies of attitudinal and perceptive issues, the academic reputation of the tertiary institution ought to be taken into account together with other variables, such as the geographical factor. To choose only one tertiary institution in one city would certainly limit the representativeness of the target subjects and in turn affect the validity and reliability of research data. On the other hand, the chosen sites should be realistic in view of the availability of time, financial sources and manpower. Thus, a pragmatic decision was made. Intensive investigations would be carried out at the Shenzhen University (SU) in Shenzhen, a city of convenient access for the author from his workplace, with other less intensive surveys to be conducted on an *ad hoc* basis in three other cities along the Beijing-Guangzhou Railway which the author would be able to visit for the coming few years. The tertiary institutions to be visited ought to contain non-key colleges as well as key universities. Apart from Shenzhen, some other tertiary institutions in the cities marked on the map in Figure 5.4.1 were visited and these institutions included the Zhongnan University of Finance and Economy (ZUFE) in Wuhan, the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (BUAA) in Beijing; non-key tertiary institutions such as the Zhongnan Forestry College (ZFC) and the Zhuzhou Polytechnic (ZP) in Zhuzhou. Beijing and Wuhan surveys were carried out by taking advantage of presenting papers at two conferences while Zhuzhou was specially visited to ensure data from non-key colleges in a relatively small inland city.

Questionnaire data were mainly collected from student informants in common teaching groups through pre-arrangements with their teachers. Questionnaire data by pre-arranged surveys were preferred primarily due to consideration of easy and valid comparisons. Interview data, on the other hand, were obtained by the 'completely random sampling' approach which was assumed to help enhance the reliability of the research data. In this

Figure 5.4.1. — Locations of the four cities visited during the research study: Beijing, Wuhan, Zhuzhou and Shenzhen.

approach, with the author's understanding of the campus culture, the author went directly into classrooms usually in the afternoon when few tutorials or lectures took place. In most of these classrooms there were usually a few students (sometimes one and sometimes more than one) doing self-study. A friendly smile and a brief but persuasive explanation of the study in most cases gained their agreement to receive an informal interview.

The formal investigation was conducted, in general, as planned. However, certain minor adjustments in strategies often had to be made whenever the need arose. Most of these adjustments made were culture-specific. In order to conduct arranged surveys and even random interviews, the status of a sole researcher, for example, needed to be announced appropriately. Most people in academic institutions were cooperative for research studies. In this relatively dynamic age in China some people were clearly more 'business-minded' than others and some still remained 'politically vigilant'. These two kinds of people in different places at different positions had their own norms and expectations in offering

'services' to others. On one occasion, for example, a contact asked explicitly how much he could benefit from getting in touch with a colleague of his for an arranged survey. In another situation, the Party branch secretary of a foreign language department required the researcher to produce a formally stamped 'reference letter' from a higher authority before investigation could be carried out. In cases like these, the status of the researcher as a student researcher rather than a teacher from a foreign institution[6] would be more likely to gain access to subjects and to obtain cooperation. Hence, after obtaining a letter from the overseas university where the author was a part-time PhD student he identified himself as a student in most cases during the fieldwork. This proved of great help.

Classroom observation which had been unsuccessful in the pilot study turned out again to be futile, not owing to the same reason though. At the Shenzhen University, on a few occasions, time slots were suggested by the teachers contacted but they were inconvenient for the author either because of timetable clash or the long travelling hours (minimum two-hour trip to SU from the author's workplace). It was clear that it was this research mode that seemed to require greater time investment than the author could afford. It was unfortunate that the research design was forced to be altered due to timing factors as classroom observation was without doubt a most direct means of gaining insights into cultural studies teaching as well as classroom methodology.

The formal investigation was mostly carried out in 1997 and 1998. It involved six tertiary institutions which consisted of two key universities, three non-key tertiary institutions and one university in Shenzhen, the Special Economic Zone where students have the greatest exposure to foreign culture(s) due to its geographic location and economic importance. In addition to these tertiary institutions, as mentioned in 5.2.3, a questionnaire survey was also conducted among postgraduate students and scholars from China in the Hong Kong

University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and in the University of New Mexico (UNM) and the State University of Ohio (SUO), with the help of two former colleagues. The general design of the research is represented in Table 5.4.2. Furthermore, the author made short visits to a few other tertiary institutions such as the Nanjing University and the prestigious Qinghua University in Beijing. As the data collected from these universities

Table 5.4.2. — General research design

Tertiary institution	Methods used	Notes
SU	1. Questionnaires 1, 2 and 3 (for year-one and year-three students) 2. Informal interviews (with 8 teachers and 19 students)	5 one-day visits to SU
ZP and ZFC	1. Questionnaires 1 and 2 (for mixed level of students) 2. Interviews (with 1 Dept. chair, 5 teachers and 7 students)	A three-day visit to the two colleges
HUST and ZUFC	1. Questionnaires 1, 2 and 3 (for mixed levels of students) 2. Informal interviews (with 2 textbook writers, 7 teachers and 3 students)	a) One-week pilot study b) a three-day conference visit
BUAA	1. Questionnaire 1 (for mixed level of students) 2. Interview (with a textbook writer)	A four-day conference visit
UNM	Questionnaire 4 (for PG students and visiting scholars)	By sending question. forms to former colleague
SUO	Questionnaire 4 (for PG students and visiting scholars)	By sending question. forms to former colleague

were rather unsystematic, they were not included in data analysis but were of value as information for enhancing the author's holistic understanding of the students taking the College English programme.

During the fieldwork in these six tertiary institutions, 29 students, 20 teachers and 3 text-book writers were interviewed and questionnaires were collected from more than 270 student informants. The interviews were mostly recorded but on a few occasions when no permission was given to taping (this happened to a few teacher interviewees and one student) notes were taken with the date and time noted for the interviews. Most interviews

with individual students and teachers lasted about half an hour but the arranged interviews with more than one individual lasted longer depending on the interviewees' interest and the time arrangements of both the interviewer and interviewees. Sometimes, as many teacher and student interviewees were interested in finding out what their Hong Kong counterparts do, the interviews could be long and interesting two-way conversations. In fact, in many other interviews where single interviewees were involved, similar questions were also raised, often without encouragement. When this happened the author would turn off the recorder. On a few occasions, he regretted having done so as some interesting remarks cropped up during the casual talk. The author felt particularly encouraged to note that rather than acting only as informants some interviewees felt that they gained some useful information from the interview and the interviews themselves might have become a channel for mutual enrichment.

5.5. Approaches to Data Analysis

The fieldwork resulted in a considerable amount of quantitative and qualitative data, 274 valid returns of four different questionnaires (Including 42 from the United States) and more than 110 pages of interview transcripts in Chinese. In addition, 16 pages of notes were taken mostly in those cases when permission was not given for taping interviews. To analyse the different types of data, the author selected different methods mainly on the basis of standard practices for social science research. The transcripts of interviews were analysed, by hand, first by coding the transcripts chronologically, inserting key words (in English) into the transcripts and then rating the data according to degrees of relevancy to the concepts under study. Since the interview data collected in this study were reasonably

small, the measures taken were helpful in bringing different aspects of the data together to enable the author to make a holistic examination.

Data from questionnaire surveys were analysed with a combination of modes of analysis. For the data which show degrees of agreement or disagreement or degrees of importance, the Likert Scaling procedure was used because the Likert procedure is standard practice of constructing indexes which measure attitudes (cf. Grimm and Wozniak, 1990). The group means obtained from this procedure were then analysed using a computer program called SPSS 9.0.1 (a latest version of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The purpose of using the computer program was of course to calculate group means and to find out if the differences between the group means are statistically significant. Likert scaling and the computer program were also used for ranking the perceptions and the sources by the mean value assigned to each. As will be shown in 6.2.1 and 6.3.1, sources and perceptions so ranked greatly facilitate the representation of information. The major modes used for data analysis are given in Table 5.5.1.

Table 5.5.1. — Modes of analyse data

Modes	Components for analysis
Quantitative Analysis (Likert scaling and SPSS 9.01)	Questionnaire on attitudes (statistical significance tested)
	Questionnaire on perceptions (mean scores calculation only)
	Questionnaire on sources (statistical significance tested)
Quantitative Analysis	Perceived importance of given cultural knowledge areas (mean scores calculation only)
Qualitative Analysis	Attitudes towards the Americans and the British (oral and written responses)
	Perceptions of the Americans and the British (oral and written responses)
	Sources of perceptions and influence on attitudes (oral and written responses)

It could be seen in this table that the components analysed did not include all the data collected. The data collected from the foreign institutions, as mentioned before, could be used to provide evidence for needs analysis which was not one of the focuses according to the research plan. The data however will support the 'goal statement' proposed in the final chapter. It should also be noted that the data collected from College English teachers and textbook writers will not be covered in detail in the next chapter but will only be used selectively to support or validate the data collected from the students. For this research study, it was of course the data collected from the students that received detailed analysis.

5.6. An Assessment of methodology

During the course of the empirical study, the author made efforts in justifying research planning, research techniques and adjustments by taking into consideration two common notions of research study: validity and reliability. Cohen and Manion (1994) argue that to achieve a high degree of validity in educational research every effort should be made to minimise bias as much as possible. These scholars, first of all, attach great importance to formulation of questions for empirical studies. The question formulation was indeed one of the major concerns throughout this empirical study. The 'characteristics' chosen for the important questionnaire on attitudes and perceptions, for example, were formulated not only on the basis of Keller's (1991) investigation into the auto- and hetero-stereotypes of the target peoples but also on the data collected from the pilot study. The questions thus formed would help elicit valid responses from the informants as the 'characteristics' they used to depict the target peoples were taken into account. The use of the informants' native language in interviews and questionnaire surveys was a simple adjustment but an

effective measure to increase validity as the meaning of questions became crystal clear to the informants, another point emphasised in Cohen and Manion (1994).

The second argument made by Cohen and Manion (ibid.) is that race, religion, social class and age could be potent sources of bias particularly for interviews. They suggest that real measures be taken by researchers to reduce bias caused by these factors. For this study, it is apparent that race, religion and age may not be significant causes of bias in general because the Chinese students involved in the research study were homogeneous in these aspects. The minority groups in remote areas and Muslim dominated provinces were not included in the investigation. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, given favourable conditions, the investigation into the three concepts could be further extended demographically and geographically. As the programme involves millions of students throughout the country, data collected from a relatively small number of institutions may not represent the entire student population. With respect to geography, the author was also aware that, ideally with sufficient funds and time available, the number of cities and regions selected for the empirical investigation could be extended to cover some other areas, for example, northern provinces bordering Russia where the students may differ in some significant ways from their southern counterparts in terms of attitudes and sources of perceptions and the so-called 'remote areas' such as Xingjian, Qinghai and Yuennan where the minorities of the country dominate.

None the less, this study did generate representative data in documenting the students' general attitudes and perceptions about the people and the culture(s), and the sources of these perceptions. The representativeness of the samples could be justified with the notion of 'majority' because areas dominated by the minority groups and Muslims are much less developed and higher education for them is still a privilege for the uppermost elite (cf.

Hayhoe, 1996). Very few studies seem to have been carried out in these areas. The six tertiary institutions in the four cities serve as good samples because a vast number of the tertiary institutions in China are located in metropolitan cities such as Wuhan and Beijing along the Beijing-Guangzhou Railway, the long-called 'lifeline of the country's economy', in flourishing coastal cities such as Shenzhen and in middle-sized cities like Zhuzhou. In addition to geographical location, academic reputation was the second factor in selecting these tertiary institutions in their representation of colleges and universities. Although the Shenzhen University representing tertiary institutions in coastal cities where students' exposure to foreign cultures is greater than that elsewhere was used as the base for practical reasons, the availability of data from the other institutions made it possible to compare situations in different areas synchronically.

While efforts were made to reduce bias as much as possible so as to increase the validity of research methodology, reliability of the empirical study was harboured with constant comparisons of data collected. Reliability, according to many language learning scholars such as Johnson (1992) and Brown (1988), refers to the extent to which the results can be considered consistent. For this study, the author decided that it could be very difficult to conduct test-retest, equivalent form, and internal consistency checks (see Brown, 1998: 99) because of constraints in time and manpower. Assuming that the mean scores of data obtained from different teaching groups of the same institution should be consistent to a certain extent, during the empirical study, comparisons of mean scores were constantly made between groups of each tertiary institution for consistency analysis. As all major questionnaire surveys conducted in Shenzhen University involved two parallel teaching groups pre-arranged with the teachers, such comparisons were made possible. Moreover, as the next chapter will show, the data collected in general reflected background features such as the economical conditions of the geographical location and other features of the

tertiary institutions involved. This apparently provides more evidence for the consistency of the research data.

Most importantly, as the next chapter will show, statistical data by questionnaire studies were constantly triangulated with interview data analysed qualitatively. For all concepts under study, as Appendix 3 shows, questions were raised in interviews to elicit responses which were more likely to reveal feelings, values and thoughts of student informants than in questionnaire surveys. Further to data obtained from interviews, as most questionnaires contained open-ended questions, statistical data were additionally supplemented with characterisations of the concepts in question.

With respect to qualitative research, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, it would be ideal to incorporate long-term classroom observation into the empirical study, given favourable conditions and sufficient time and research funds, and this could further enhance the validity and reliability of the research.

Notes:

1. Xu did not specify in which tertiary institution he did the counting in his article but according to the context, it was most probably the Beijing University of Foreign Studies where Xu was teaching.

2. Students' opportunities of directly interacting with foreign people, except for English majors, were obviously quite limited. The WCC, one of the two tertiary institutions where the pilot

study was conducted, had no foreign employee at all at the time of the pilot study. In the other pilot study site – HUST – a key university, there were nine foreign employees according to the figure given by the chair of the foreign languages department in an interview. Two of them were teaching in the foreign language department and the others were working as subject teachers in other departments. For a university with a student enrolment of more than 12,000, the chances of non-English majors to interact with the teachers would be minimal.

3. There are no official holidays during the Christmas season in China whereas the students in the Chinese University of Hong Kong where the author was teaching have their winter recess for two weeks.

4. Wuhan is an inland city with an average economic image, as compared to those coastal cities, particularly the 'special economical zones', and prestigious metropolitan areas like Beijing and those whose economy is notoriously weak. The economic situation, as will be shown in Chapter 6, is relevant to the study of the concepts. The two institutions consists of one key university (Huazhong University of Science and Technology, HUST) with a high academic reputation and one non-key college (Wuhan Chemistry College, WCC) with a smaller student population.

5. The author did not do the statistical analysis of the data with the computer program (SPSS 9.0.1) as he did with the data for perceptions, attitudes and sources. But a simple addition of the values (using the Likert Scaling procedure (see 6.1 for details)) given by the informants in valid returns numbered 57 in total showed that productive skills such as writing and speaking were regarded as the most important; reading and listening of the second and translation last. However, the differences between the total values given to the language skills (except for translation) were found to be small. Quite a few informants wrote in reply to the open-ended question at the end that they regarded all language skills as equally important considering their needs abroad.

6. Though Hong Kong is part of China since 1997, most people still consider it a foreign land. One of the most obvious reasons might be that a visa is needed for a visit and the procedure to apply for it is still the same as it was under the British mandate. Another reason could be that people in Hong Kong are perceived as much richer and life for them much more Westernised. Thus, a research project carried out by a scholar from such a 'foreign' university is often perceived as generously funded and thus rich enough to pay for the help offered. Whereas, a student researcher is usually rightly regarded as a scholar-to-be who does his studies with a small budget of his own.

Chapter 6

Attitudes, Perceptions and Their Sources

Introduction

Many social scientists such as Davidson (1996) and Bryman and Cramer (1990) agree that data from empirical studies should be handled with great care as data, particularly statistics, can be misinterpreted or distorted during analysis. Foreign language educational scholars such as Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1991) also warn that findings from empirical studies are subject to different interpretations, depending on the reader's philosophical start point, which may lead to different conclusions. In their data presentation, therefore, they in principle give a descriptive account of the phenomena as they exist so as to allow readers to consider their own philosophy first. Their cautionary approach is fundamental to data presentation in this chapter. The major part of the sections that follow attempts to present data without evaluative comments or interpretations, even though the author is aware that clear-cut distinctions between description and interpretation could not be made because, as Byram and Esarte-Sarries point out, the writer's viewpoints may be betrayed during data presentation. On the other hand, some general comments or analyses are taken

as necessary for this study because general evaluations of data would help detect areas for further research and set up theoretical foundations for the model to be proposed for the programme in the last chapter. These general comments on the data are offered as interim summaries at the end of each section.

The presentation of the chapter follows the outline as indicated in the title, that is, moving in sequence of the three areas of enquiry: 1) the attitudes of the students taking College English towards peoples speaking English as a native language, primarily the Americans and the British; 2) their perceptions of the peoples and the cultures; and 3) the sources for cultural acquisition. Though a distinction is drawn between attitudes and perceptions, the link of these two concepts is not to be ignored. As 6.1 will show, as some questions in questionnaire surveys and in interviews were designed in such a way as to elicit written or oral responses for both attitude and perception analysis, the description in this chapter will follow what could be termed 'a contextualised approach' in which some data are to be discussed in two different contexts. The advantage of this approach is apparent: it allows readers to establish links between these two inter-related areas of enquiry. Furthermore, it facilitates the presentation of the third area of enquiry, sources, because the presentation of sources does not have to distinguish whether the identified sources would bring about changes in learners' perceptions or influence their attitudes, which is obviously a difficult, if not an entirely impossible task. In addition to the discussion of these three concepts, the chapter contains a fourth section presenting data of students' 'interests' – one of the four indicators of attitudes. The rationale of discussing this concept independently is given in 6.1 below.

6.1. Attitudes

Many psychologists seem to agree that attitude could be seen as a psychological tendency to evaluate a discriminable entity called an attitude object with certain degree of favour or disfavour (Jonas, Eagly and Stroebe, 1994 and Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). 'Attitude objects' as denoted by the word 'discriminable' are thus infinite in number. Examples for attitudinal studies include complicated and abstract 'objects' such as people, ideologies, institutions, events, and concrete 'objects' such as food and clothes as all of these objects could be favoured or disfavoured. In a study into the attitudes held by a certain group of foreign language learners towards the target culture and its people, therefore, selection has to be made because many cultural traits and features could be chosen for investigation. All these attitude objects, when studied, are challenging in terms of research methodology and require careful planning for their operationalisation. In the Durham project, Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991) focused their study on the pupils' attitudes towards the French people and came up with a 'semantic differential test' to measure the degrees of their ethnocentricity after careful comparison of different survey techniques and a pilot study. To establish the basis for comparison, they included Germans and Americans, and even the English in the test. Furthermore, they conducted interviews with the pupils and checked the validity of the test against their statements. In their study, attitudes towards a people were put into the broad context for comparison.

In studies of such a complex concept, the approach adopted should be based on sound theoretical grounds. As stated in 5.2.1, the principle used in the Durham project was to be pursued as the comparative methodology proved to be effective in measuring attitudes. However, the techniques had to be modified for practical reasons such as the limitation of

resources. The pilot study conducted by the author in Wuhan provided useful data for the modification of the comparative approach to attitude study. For example, the selection of only the Americans and the British as the focus of studying attitudes instead of selecting more peoples of foreign cultures for comparison was determined with data from the pilot study and research focus analysis. It was found that when responding to the question 'The culture of which country(ies) do you know most?" in the pilot study questionnaire (see the first Questionnaire in Appendix 2) the student subjects hardly ticked any other group than the Americans and the English as peoples of other cultures they know most about. In interviews, few of the subjects talked about people of other cultures than these two when 'otherness' was the topic. Two students mentioned the Japanese during an interview, but when asked to compare them with English speaking peoples they found it difficult to do so simply because "as we study English we know more about the British and American cultures but little about the others." (PS2A). Even for those English-speaking peoples such as New Zealanders, Canadians, Australians or South Africans, few student subjects seemed to have knowledge substantial enough to make a comparison with the Americans or the British. Therefore, a comparative approach to studying their attitudes to peoples of the English-speaking countries with those of other cultures, or to peoples of exclusively English-speaking countries may not yield useful data for valid or meaningful comparison, particularly if the comparison was to be made in statistical terms.

The most relevant comparison of this study, in the author's opinion as indicated by the selected independent variables listed in Chapter 5, was to relate students' attitudes to variables such as the College English learning experience and the geographic location of their college or university in order to assess whether these variables are significant factors in influencing their attitudes towards people of other cultures. Such comparison had clear implications for foreign language education. Consequently, in this study only the British

and the Americans were used as the target peoples for studying this concept. While a comparison of the students' attitudes to the Americans and the British could still be made, great importance was given to the relationships between the essential variables of the students as identified in 5.3 and the overall means of students' attitude scores.

People's attitudes, according to psychologists like Jonas, Eagly and Stroebe (1994), are normally expressed through their beliefs, affects and behaviours. In other words, their beliefs, affects and behaviours could be used as the indicators of their attitudes towards others. As beliefs are defined by these psychologists as the 'perceived links' between an attitude object (for example, the Americans) and an attribute (for example, hard-working – a positively evaluated attribute) an association is apparently established between the perceptions of a people and the attitudes towards them. By this definition, a person should be seen as holding positive attitudes towards another people who have attributes he/she perceives favourably. The second indicator, affects, is defined by these psychologists as the feelings or moods that a person experiences in relation to an attitude object, and the third, behaviours, refers to a person's overt actions with respect to the attitude object. The definitions so given to indicators of attitudes by psychologists form the basis of the discussion that follows and are used to provide a structure for this section.

In addition to the three major indicators, 'interest' was thought to be a fourth one as it is defined by Chinese psychologists like Xiao (1991) as a person's "discriminating attitudes or positive responses" to a certain subject or activity (see also 5.1). In data analysis, it was found, however, that this definition may not be generalisable even in the Chinese context. It was surprising to note that though, as will be shown in Tables 6.1.1.8 – 6.1.1.10, the SU (Shenzhen University) group means for the two attitude objects were the highest in terms of geographic locations, the SU students showed the least interest in describing the two

peoples as the rate of responses given to open-ended questions in survey questionnaires was conspicuously the lowest. Only about a third of the returns contain written responses. On the other hand, the great majority of the students of the other two geographic locations (the Zhuzhou Polytechnics in Zhuzhou (ZP) and the Zhongnan University of Finance and Economics in Wuhan (ZUFE)) demonstrated clear interest by giving enthusiastic written responses (see 6.1.2 for examples). Their responses did not uniformly exhibit a positive attitude but their interests in or willingness to talk about the two specific groups of people were undeniable. In interviews, few students from ZP and ZUFE seemed to show any less interest in knowing more about the two peoples in question than those demonstrated by the SU students (cf. FS4B, FS8A and FS7B).

This fact raised a clear question about the direct relationship of 'Xinchu' (interest) with 'Taidu' (attitude) defined by Xiao. It might be true that a person's 'Xinchu' in an attitude object in most cases indicates his/her positive responses towards it. This may not only be true in the Chinese context but perhaps in many other cultures. However, the data analysis suggests that there could be exceptions, i.e. people who are interested in an attitude object may not necessarily hold a positive attitude towards it (see FS4A presented in 6.1.2.3, for example). For this reason, the author decided not to use 'interest' as a fourth indicator of positive attitudes in data analysis although both statistical and interview data for 'interest' were collected in the investigation. None the less, the data are clearly of value as students' interests are without doubt a crucial factor with respect to classroom teaching and texts selection in materials production. These data are to be presented independently in 6.4.

6.1.1. Exploring Beliefs and Affects Statistically

For statistical study of attitudes in terms of beliefs, twenty-five 'characteristics' were determined as possible attributes for measuring students' attitudes towards the British and the Americans, as well as stereotypical descriptions for the perception study of the two peoples (see Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2). Many of these 'characteristics' were clearly affective or 'evaluative adjectives' (Hu and Guo 1997) and they were put into a rating scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' for eliciting attitudes from the students. Although most of the affective characteristics could be used as attributes for measuring attitudes, the affective connotation of the adjective or phrase ought to be free of cultural ambiguity. For example, if a subject 'strongly agrees' that the British are, 'appearance-conscious' this subject might be said to hold a positive attitude towards the British in this respect as most, if not all young people appreciate decently-attired people. However, as Chinese have long valued simple and natural dressing, there could be some subjects who do not regard this attribute as positive. 'Romantic' is another attribute that may be viewed differently by different people, though most young subjects would take this as something desirable but people with traditional views to dating and mating might think differently. The same can be true with 'bound by tradition', 'adventurous', 'comfort-loving', 'sports-loving', and so forth.

On the basis of both the author's understanding of the connotations of the attributes and the students' responses to the two open-ended questions prior to the rating questions (see Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2), twelve were selected from the 25 'characteristics' in the questionnaire as the least controversial attributes of students' beliefs and affects through which they express their attitudes. It was found that many student subjects in fact used

them to represent the two peoples with clearly affective tones (see 6.1.2. for examples).

Table 6.1.1.1 below lists the twelve adjectives and phrases:

Table 6.1.1.1. — 'Characteristics' used as indicators of attitudes

1.	hard-working?	7.	time-conscious?
2.	reliable?	8.	gentleman?
3.	good-scientists?	9.	emotionally unstable?
4.	full of sense of humour?	10.	unfriendly towards foreigners?
5.	easy-going?	11.	snobbish?
6.	intelligent?	12.	violent?

In data analysis, according to the Likert Scaling procedure (Grimm and Wozniak, 1990: 181-182), each of the twelve attributes was assigned with five values, from 5 to 1, as the responses given in questionnaire were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'no opinion', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. The response, 'no opinion', for all attributes was given a value of 3 whereas the numerical values the other responses received depended upon whether the attribute was positively or negatively phrased. The first eight attributes in the table above were positively phrased and thus 'strongly agree' and 'agree' receives a value of 5 and 4 respectively and 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' a value of 2 and 1. Reversed were the numerical values assigned to the responses to the last four negatively-phrased attributes. After entering all values from the valid returns into the SPSS program, the overall mean scores for the twelve attributes in relation to the two attitude subjects were calculated[1] and were used to compare attitudes of the students towards these two peoples.

A total number of 137 returns were counted as a result of four questionnaire surveys administered in SU in Shenzhen, ZUFE in Wuhan, and ZP in Zhuzhou. In analysing data, it was found that 17 of them were either too incomplete to be calculated or with essential variables missing. Thus, only 120 returns were entered into the SPSS computer program.

Table 6.1.1.2 gives the aggregative mean scores for the two peoples under study. The distribution of the mean scores for the two variables was found only slightly different in favour of the British. The difference in standard deviation seems to suggest that while the mean scores indicating attitudes towards the British were relatively evenly distributed, those towards the Americans appeared to be somewhat polarised.

Table 6.1.1.2 — Mean scores for the two dependent variables

	People	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
1.	English	3.2146	.3399
2.	Americans	3.1208	.5745

When the mean scores were related to independent variables, however, it became apparent that some differences in the mean scores appeared greater than others depending on the independent variable. The distribution of gender by the three geographic locations is given in Table 6.1.1.3.

Table 6.1.1.3 — Distribution of gender by geographic locations

	Male	Female	Total
SU	27	34	61
ZP	14	6	20
ZUFE	19	20	39
Total	60	60	120

To test the statistical significance of the difference between the group means by gender, the T-test was used as it is usually regarded as appropriate for small samples and for data of polarised distribution. The relationships between gender and the attitudes towards the British and the Americans are shown in Tables 6.1.1.3 - 6.1.1.4. It can be seen in these tables that gender is significantly associated with students' attitudes to the British. Although the T-test shows that the difference between the two groups in mean scores for the Americans does not reach a significant level, it is noticeable that the female students

obviously scored higher than their male counterparts. The group means for the female students were found higher in general for both the target peoples.

Table 6.1.1.4 — Gender and attitudes towards the British

	No. of students	Percentage	Group means of scores for the British	Std. Deviation
Male	60	50%	3.1375	.2974
Female	60	50%	3.2917	.3639

T = -2.541   p = 0.012

Table 6.1.1.5 — Gender and attitudes towards the Americans

	No. of students	Percentage	Group means of scores for the British	Std. Deviation
Male	60	50%	3.0319	.5865
Female	60	50%	3.2097	.5529

T = -1.709   n.s.

One of the most important types of data the study aimed at obtaining was to find out whether the College English learning experience of a student has significant effects on him/her. In order to measure the full effect of the programme on a student, it would be ideal to choose one group of students taking a Band-1 course and another group taking a Band-6 course for comparative study and the two groups should be selected from the same geographical location, or the same university, as it was assumed that geographic locations are significant in terms of attitude measurement. During the investigation, however, the author found it difficult to do so because it was common practice for a tertiary institution to offer only two band courses, either Bands 1 and 3 in the first semester or Bands 2 and 4 in the second. 'High-flyers' doing higher courses such as Band 6 in fact had to learn independently[2]. Hence, it was very difficult to gather a reasonable number of Band-6 students for the survey. Collecting statistical data by the completely-random sampling method might be extremely time-consuming since the number of subjects should be

reasonably balanced in this case. Eventually, the author selected one Band-1teaching group

(33) and one Band-3 group (28) at SU for this comparative study. The group means of

scores for the British and the Americans by College English learning experience are given

in Tables 6.1.1.6 and 6.1.1.7. The data showed that neither difference reached a level of

significance though Band-3 students in the SU exhibited a slightly more negative attitude

towards both groups than their counter-parts taking Band 1.

Table 6.1.1.6 — Learning experience and attitudes towards the British

	No. of Students	Percentage	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
	Band 1: 33	54.1%	3.2449	.3560
The British	Band 3: 28	45.9%	3.2381	.3316

T= 0.78   n.s.

Table 6.1.1.7 — Learning experience and attitudes towards the Americans

	No. of Students	Percentage	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
	Band 1: 33	54.1%	3.2626	.4593
The Americans	Band 3: 28	45.9%	3.2143	.4797

T = 0.4   n.s.

Geographic locations were found to be one of the variables most frequently associated

with the differences in means of attitudinal scores. As the comparison of mean scores

involved more than two locations, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to do the

computation. The group mean scores for the Americans by geographical locations are

given in Table 6.1.1.8.

Table 6.1.1.8 — Geographical locations and attitudes towards the Americans

	No. of Students	Percentage	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
	Shenzhen: 61	50.8%	3.2404	.4655
The Americans	Zhuzhou : 20	16.7%	3.0375	.6508
	Wuhan : 39	32.5%	2.9765	.6570

$F_{2,117} = 2.849$ $P = 0,062$ n.s.

The test showed no significant difference in its comparison between groups. However, it was noticeable that the means scored by the students from Zhuzhou and Wuhan for the Americans was obviously lower than that of the Shenzhen group. T-tests showed that in fact the difference of means between the Shenzhen group and the Wuhan group reached a level of significance (see Table 6.1.1.9), though no other differences reached that level.

Table 6.1.1.9 — Geographical locations and attitudes towards the Americans

	No. of Students	Percentage	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
	Shenzhen: 61	50.8%	3.2404	.4655
The Americans	Wuhan : 39	32.5%	2.9765	.6570

T = 2.235   p = 0.021

The differences in mean scores for the British by geographic locations were found to be smaller but again Shenzhen students showed an obviously more positive attitude than their counter-parts in Zhuzhou and slightly more than those in Wuhan as shown in Table 6.1.1.10.

Table 6.1.1.10 — Geographical locations and attitudes towards the British

	No. of Students	Percentage	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
	Shenzhen: 61	50.8%	3.2418	.3421
The British	Zhuzhou : 20	16.7%	3.1000	.3383
	Wuhan : 39	32.5%	3.2308	.3336

$F_{2,117} = 1.385$ $P = 0,254$ n.s.

The statistical data presented above suggest that certain factors may indeed help shape the attitudes of students towards people of other cultures, even though statistical tests seem to indicate that truly significant factors may not be large in number. Among the variables investigated in this study, the length of College English learning experience was clearly the least significant factor in determining the attitudes of the students.

6.1.2. Affects and Beliefs as Shown in Interviews, etc.

As mentioned in the proceeding chapter, two techniques were applied to complement and validate the statistical findings. The first technique for gathering such statements was to elicit oral responses through interviews and the other was to collect written responses to requests made in questionnaire surveys for descriptions in Chinese on what the students perceive a typical person of that culture to be like (see Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2). This was done before they began to rate the people in question against the given attributes in the questionnaire. The request for written responses to an open-ended question was intended to provide an opportunity to the students to show their overall feelings about the attitude objects. It was anticipated that the descriptions would contain statements which could be analysed for attitudes and perceptions study. In the account of the methodology in Chapter 5, it was indicated that both the interview transcripts and the written responses to the open-ended questions were analysed by hand and statements showing attitudes and perceptions were marked with key words.

The written responses to the open-ended questions and the interview data were found to fall into three broad categories according to the degree of affects identifiable: namely the appreciative category, the neutral category and the critical category. The first category, as the name suggests, collects statements which show appreciation to the attitude objects both in terms of overt expressions and less explicit but unambiguously appreciative tones whereas the third includes those of the other extreme: the statements and expressions that are overtly and covertly disapproving or negative. The second category, of course, brings together the statements or expressions which do not seem to explicitly display identifiable

affects and which show simple beliefs in point form in many cases, particularly in those written responses.

For the analysis of the interview data, the three independent variables – the geographic location, gender and the learning experience – remained the same as those for the analysis of statistical data for the purpose of comparison. One more variable, the specialised area of the students interviewed, was added to the list as it was apparently relevant to the study of attitudes. It was worth noting that this variable had also been considered necessary for the questionnaire study. However, the questionnaire returns showed that even the students in the same teaching group may specialise in totally different areas. When the variable was entered into the computer it was found that the data became non-comparable as only one area claimed a relatively large population (25 ZUFE students majored in trading economics) while all the others claimed very small number of students. Thus, the author gave up this variable in statistical data analysis. For interview data analysed qualitatively, statistical comparability became less important and, therefore, the variable was taken into account. In the following presentation of the students' responses and the interviews, some comments made by teacher interviewees were also looked into with a view to establishing an association between students' beliefs and teachers' observation.

6.1.2.1. Appreciative Category

In interviews, many students were found to use strongly affective or emotional terms such as '*Xianmu*' (admire) and '*Congbai*' (worship) which were doubtless markers of positive attitudes. Two HUST (the Huazhong University of Science and technology) automation students taking a Band 3 course showed typical responses of this type

FS. In many cases, We admire foreign things. Admittedly, our minds are often in a state of imbalance ... (in this context, *Bupingheng* (a state of imbalance) implies that students often feel disheartened when they compare things at home with those in Western countries).

MS. I saw on TV that the atmosphere of an American classroom is very active. We admire that very much. (PS1B, author's translation and explanation)

In another interview in Zhuzhou, two other year-2 students at ZFC (Zhongnan Forestry College) majoring in tourism also used quite affective terms to demonstrate a positive attitude towards Westerners, particularly Americans:

FS. Americans are easy-going, active, intimate and relatively open-minded. Though they are well-developed economically, the clothes they wear are very casual. Unlike some rich Chinese who always look up to famous-brand clothes, many foreign tourists I saw in Hangzhou were wearing casual clothes. This left me a very deep impression.

I. How do you feel about them in general?

FS. Very positively. Not only towards the Americans but also Westerners in general. They are very clean people. I have been to a Russian city bordering China. That city is quite clean.

I. How about you? How do you feel about them?

MS. My background is different from hers. She comes from a big city but I am from Changde, Hunan. My impression of foreign peoples mainly come from books and magazines. My general impression over the British and American peoples is that they are full of sense of humour. The British are very serious and gentleman-like and the French are romantic. The Americans are free and easy-going. We students admire the cowboys of the American West. In short, we have a good impression of the Westerners. We also worship the American individualism and their national characteristics. Well, perhaps, I can't say 'worship'. I should say 'appreciate' instead. When we make comments on them

270

we should always bear in mind that we grew up in two different cultures. When we think about their culture we base our evaluation on our own cultural concepts. It's in fact difficult to make objective comments. (FS8B, author's translation)

In addition to the positive attitudes evident in both responses, two other observations were made. In both comments, the two students kept comparing their native culture with those of the West. They seemed to prefer making comparisons using own culture as a base. The second observable feature was that the male student apparently became aware of the terms he used. Words such as 'worship' and 'admire' in conjunction with foreign cultures had long been taboos ideologically in Chinese educational culture. Though it is commonplace observation that students are much more open-minded and freer to express their views, many students are still very conscious of the ideological connotations of these words and the male student's self-modification of the term he used provided some evidence for this consciousness.

The consciousness of the ideological implication in using the strongly affective words was demonstrated further in another interview by a female majoring in accounting at ZP when her accompanying classmate expressed appreciation about Western cultures:

FS. I think we can't say worshiping or having blind faith in people and things foreign, nor can we say we appreciate them. But I think it is a barrier for our development if we as Chinese could only tolerate our own culture and bias against foreign cultures or if we are ethnocentric. I think, no matter what Western countries do, they must have their own strengths since they are so developed. I want to learn about their values, their outlooks on the world and moral concepts and hope to 'extract the essence and discard the dross' (This is another popular slogan which is part and parcel of the *Shuangyong* policy extensively discussed in Chapter 4. It literally means to learn good things from foreign countries but reject their bad ideas and values.). (FS8A, author's translation and explanation)

271

This female student was apparently conscious of her classmate's use of too explicitly affective terms for Western countries, thus she used commonly-used diplomatic language to rationalise their appreciative attitudes, perhaps out of her ideological alertness or as a defensive precaution.

This observation may help explain why in written responses strongly affective terms such as '*Xianmu*' and '*Congbai*' were not found to exist in written responses to the open-ended questions. When the students had more time to think of the wording, they would avoid using these terms. Without such words, however, the strong modifiers they wrote in front of their mental images to describe the attitude objects equally revealed their appreciative feelings about them. This could be represented by the following two responses written by a year-one student at SU and a year-three ZUFE student respectively:

FS. Englishmen have very gentle personality and very high qualities.

The Americans are open-minded and highly-devoted workers and they also know how to fully enjoy life. (QSSU18, author's translation)

MS. I think a typical Englishman is a gentleman in a black suit and a bowler hat holding a walking stick and a typical English woman is a pretty lady who is dressed beautifully with a lovely little parasol in hand. English people are extremely gentle, cultivated and civilised. They are very kind to others and have very good education. They are caring and helpful.

The Americans are tall and strong. They handle things decisively and are bold enough to do something and accept responsibility for it. They know how to work and how to enjoy life. They also know how to arrange time efficiently and how to make life full of delight. (QSZUFE5, author's translation)

Thought the statements differed considerably in tone and language used when compared with oral statements made in interview, responses given by the students still evidently

manifest appreciative feelings about the two peoples.. The female showed a somewhat positive attitude, though brief, by those modifiers such as 'very' and 'highly' while the latter demonstrated clear admiring attitudes with extremely affirmative language and use of stereotypes.

In addition to using their own culture as a base to make comparisons, it was noted through qualitative analysis of the interview data and the written responses that the students also seemed to determine whether they liked or disliked a foreign people through comparing them with another foreign group. A SU year-two female majoring in civil engineering compared the British men with their American counter-parts this way:

> FS. The British men are conservative and firm. They are full of virility and vigour. Most of them are handsome. They are ideal lovers.
>
> American men are smart, humorous and easy-going. But they are also adventurous, unconventional and unrestrained. They could be preoccupied with their personal gains and losses as well. They look OK at a distance but can't stand close examination. (QSSU3, author's translation)

Her description contained mainly stereotypical images of the two peoples but her positive appreciation for the British was beyond doubt because her remarks about the British men as ideal lovers revealed her strong admiring feelings about the British males, particularly in view of the Chinese value of *Hanxu* (reservedness or implicitness) for women towards the opposite sex. Her admiring attitude towards the British men apparently derived from her comparison of them with the American counterparts for she described the latter as a group who she would not wish to establish a close relationship. In her response, there was another point worth noticing. She seemed to use the term 'conservative' with a positive meaning, considering the fact that it was used in contrast with the word 'unconventional' used negatively to describe American men in this context.

The positive attitudes of the students were sometimes clearly shown by their 'interest' in a foreign culture and its people, as argued by Xiao (1991), particularly when this interest was expressed with affective words. When asked if he was interested in cultures of the English speaking countries, a male student majoring in electric automation at ZP replied:

> MS. Very interested. Things like food, clothes, houses, transport means, literature, arts, values, etc. are all appealing to me. ... I'm very fed up with the language points the teacher presents. But whenever, he talks about other things cultural, I always prick up my ears. (PS8C, author's translation)

Another male majoring in hydraulic engineering at HUST said:

> MS. We listen to the cultural information with keen pleasure. (FS4B, author's translation)

The 'pricking-up-ears' and 'with-keen-pleasure' interests expressed by these students in culture teaching were found to match the overall positive attitudes they demonstrated in their interviews. In written responses, some students showed their individual interests in the people with affective expressions of this kind. A year-3 male student at ZP majoring in chemical engineering wrote:

> MS. In my eyes, typical English men are gentlemen. They behave in a gentle and cultivated manner and dress decently. I got to know their culture from the 'Beatles' which was extremely popular in the 1930s. Today, a lot of people are still very fond of the 'Beatles'. The former American cowboys were really famous all over the world. Even today many young people like wearing cowboy clothes. The NBA has become a symbol of the top basketball. (QSZP18, author's translation)

His own interest in the 'Beatles' band, cowboy clothes and the NBA was also obvious though he talked only about the popularity of these cultural representations. These cases show that in many cases personal interests did seem to reflect positive attitudes. However,

there were some cases in which interests were not matched with positive attitudes. An example will be given in 6.1.2.3.

There were quite a number of students who used only positively-phrased attributes as listed in Table 6.1.1.1 above to describe a foreign people in their written responses to the open-ended questions. Without affective terms or strong modifiers these responses could also be taken as an implicit way to express positive attitudes. The justification of this lies of course in the assumption made in 6.1.1 that agreement with positive-phrased attributes indicates appreciation for the attitude object.

> MS. A typical British man is a well-dressed and appearance-conscious gentleman. He behaves in a conservative, serious and thoughtful manner. He is full of sense of humour and has a strong body and a pair of deep eyes.
>
> Americans are sports-loving and full of sense of humour. They like originality, dare to think and dare to act, and stand hardships. They are adventurous and dare to do things others dare not do. (QSZUFE20, author's translation)

This description was given by a year-2 male majoring in trading economics at the ZUFE in Wuhan. Here again the word 'conservative' seemed to be used with a positive meaning.

6.1.2.2 Neutral Category

This category, as the name suggests, collects those responses that showed neither too positive nor negative feelings about the attitude objects. Some of these responses, as was mentioned in the brief introduction to this section, were very brief statements that were sometimes in point forms. Many of such responses were found in the written descriptions in questionnaires. A female (majoring in Japanese Language) who was in a Band-3 course at SU gave such a response:

FS. English men are gentle and conservative. They are sober-minded. English women are

gentle and cultivated. They are introverted.

American men are warm and unconstrained. They are easy-going and humorous.

American women are extroverted but not easy-going. (QSSU19, author's translation)

The description seemed to reveal a matter-of-fact attitude towards both peoples. It was

difficult to interpret words such as 'conservative', 'introverted' and 'extroverted' in

specific terms.

In addition to this type of matter-of-fact statements, in response to direct questions on

their feelings about the attitude objects, some students showed mixed or unsure views

towards them and these responses could also be placed under this category. Two year-one

students majoring in civil engineering at the SU offered such replies:

I. What do you feel about the people in English speaking countries? For example, the British

and the Americans?

MS. I have different feelings ...

FS. I don't have fixed feelings about them. ... (FS5B, author's translation)

In data analysis, the author became aware that this category may collect the largest number

of responses in both written and spoken forms. Many statements in fact were found to

contain a mixed feeling about the two peoples in question. This seemed to be particularly

true with the SU data as apparently more students demonstrated a neutral or mixed view

of the two peoples both in interviews and in written responses.

6.1.2.3. Critical Category

In data analysed qualitatively, it was found that negative attitudes were displayed by the students more towards the Americans than towards the British. In most cases, their critical attitudes towards the people were expressed with negatively-phrased attributes as used in the questionnaire surveys. A year-two male foreign trading student who had finished the first three band courses wrote a paragraph to express his feelings against the Americans:

> MS. They (Americans) are self-centred and too liberalised. There seems to be a lack of better cultural traditions to restrict them from being too liberalised and carefree. They are very exaggerating and seeking power politics. They are indifferent to others' feelings. They have neither clear cultural characteristics, nor sense of justice nor national features of their own. What they obviously have is a strong sense of racism, expelling foreigners. (QSZUFE8, author's translation)

His responses to the rating questions (see Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2) matched the description he wrote in general. Strangely, this student showed strong disagreement to the negatively-phrased attribute 'unfriendly to foreigners', which was much contradictory to what he wrote. His tick in the box 'strongly disagree' for that rating question might be simply due to an erroneous tick or "chance temporal" as called by Byram, Esarte-Sarries, and Taylor (1991: 191), a very transient state of mind that made him decide to tick in that box. Whatever the reason was, this case seemed to show that exclusive quantitative data do not always tell the truth, particularly if the data are intended to reveal an aspect that is related to complex processes of human thinking.

Quite a number of negative feeling or comments on the two peoples, again the Americans in particular, were related to their 'discrimination' against others, particularly Asians:

FS. ... But, they (Americans) are very proud of themselves because of their race. They feel superior over others and discriminate against others, particularly Asians. (QSZUFE7A, author's translation)

FS. The Americans are well-educated but poorly-cultured. They look down upon Asians and Africans. They shown strong racial discrimination against other peoples. (QSZUFE7B, author's translation)

Some other critical comments were made on human relationships:

FS. American men are unconventional and dissolute. ... American girls are pretty but they are also self-indulgent. The relationship between men and women is terribly messy. (QSSU6, author's translation)

MS. Americans interfere with others' internal affairs everywhere. They are domineering and self-centred. They lack moral concepts and nationalism. They show little human sympathy and attachment to family members. (QSZP, author's translation)

As far as the British are concerned, 'old-fashionedness' and 'conservativeness' used in a negative sense were common critical comments. Some mentioned the colonial history of the Britain. In one written response, a year-3 male majoring in computer science made the following remarks:

MS. I think the British look like gentlemen by appearance. But judging from many incidents such as the football violence and a man who gunned down many children, we can deduct that many of them are in fact hypocrites who pose as people of high morals. Many of the British are very conservative and they preserve a lot of colonialist spirits. They possess the selfish attitudes and behave like 'if I can not get benefits you can not expect anything either.' (QSZP16, author's translation)

Unlike the students holding appreciative attitudes, those who made critical statements were rarely found to use strongly affective terms to show negative attitudes. There were, however, a few students who were found using 'hate' to express their negative feelings

against the government of the country in question. A written response by an economics male at ZUFE read:

> MS. I think Americans are typically very arrogant and conceited simply because they think their country is rich and powerful. This is good for ordinary people (Americans). But these ordinary people still have to struggle and work hard for their life and survival. In fact, out of my national sentiments, I hate the country (the United States) but I don't think I hate its people. (QSZUFE11, author's translation)

Another year-3 accounting student at ZP made similar comments:

> MS. Americans regard themselves as infallible. They always interfere with the internal affairs of other countries and prevent the other countries from developing. They put their own benefits in the first place and attach much importance to money. Perhaps, the ordinary Americans may have many virtues. But I feel an extreme aversion to the White House. (QSZP4, author's translation)

The negative feelings held by both students against the government were apparent. None the less, it should be noted that neither of them really hated the people of the country.

There were a few cases in which the student interviewees demonstrated general negative attitudes towards foreign people and foreign cultures but showed interests in learning about them. In an interview with a physical chemistry male at HUST who held both CET 4 and CET 6 certificates, an negative feeling to foreign people was explicitly expressed when the effects of Western culture on students were discussed:

> MS. ... I am a conservative person. I do not care too much about foreign people as I think that the Chinese culture is broad and profound. As for the foreign cultures, I think it will not be too late to learn about them when I got a chance to go abroad. I have some biases and prejudices against foreigners and I will never imitate them and their way of life. (FS4A, author's translation)

However, this same student showed in an earlier time during the interview that he was "of course" interested in the American culture:

   I.   Are you interested in learning about the cultures of the English speaking countries?

   FS. and MS. Yes, of course.

   I. The culture of which English speaking countries are you most interested in?

   MS. Of course, the American culture. ...

   I.   Why do you prefer the American culture then?

   MS. Most people go to the United States to pursue their studies. It is more useful to learn their culture. The United Kingdom? There doesn't seem to be any opportunity for me to go. ...

   (FS4A, author's translation)

Both the interest in the American culture and the negative attitude towards the people were explicitly expressed by this student in the interview. In a few other interviews, some students expressed their negative views about certain Western value concepts and some varieties of the English language. A year-2 female majoring in tourism at the ZFC, for example, commented that the American value of independence could lead to cold and detached human relationships (FS8B). A male student majoring in Chinese studies at SU remarked that the Australia accent was "disgusting" and the American accent "non-standard" (FS7A). In his view, only the British English was the real English. All these students, however, like the physical chemistry male at HUST, replied with an affirmative 'Yes' to the question on whether they were interested in the target cultures and the people. All these seem to suggest that as opposed to Xiao's (1991) definition even in the Chinese context there might be exceptions that a student's interest in an attitude object may not necessarily reflect his positive attitudes towards it.

There was an odd phenomenon that requires explanation. As the cases presented above show, critical comments or negative attitudes were mostly found in written responses in

questionnaires. This could be attributable to a 'chance factor' that the majority of students interviewed happened to hold positive or neutral attitudes towards the attitude objects. As the number of students who wrote their responses in the questionnaire was much larger than the number interviewed (see Table 5.4.1 for statistics), the students holding negative attitudes towards these peoples had the opportunity to express them in written responses elicited in questionnaire surveys.

6.1.3. Behaviour

The attitude-behaviour correlations have been a subject of study among psychologists. According to a well-tested theory called *the aggregation principle* initially proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), a single instance of behaviour is an unreliable indicator of an attitude. However, when a number of such unreliable behavioural indicators are aggregated, a high correlation of behaviour with attitude is achieved. On the basis of the aggregation theory, as stated in the proceeding chapter, long-term influences which the target culture(s) exert on learners were determined as the most relevant because long-term influences are obviously aggregated behavioural indicators of attitudes as they exclude unreliable single instances of behaviour. Some of the long-term influences were assumed to be elicitable in interviews

The elicitation of long-term influences of the target culture(s) on students was not only intended to assess in which ways learners are influenced by foreign cultures but also to gain insight into the extent to which these influences were welcomed and tolerated by both students and educators. To achieve these two aims, the data obtained from interviews with both students and teachers were analysed. It was found that the data concerning the

influences or behaviours could be put fairly neatly into two main categories according to these aims. The first includes changing behaviours that were considered too extreme to be accepted or tolerated while the second collects those that were gradually taken for granted among students and accepted by educators. In both cases, of course, the behaviour change indicates positive attitudes.

6.1.3.1. "Gone-Too-Far" Behaviour

In interviews with both students and teachers, 'extreme cases' were frequently mentioned and they were usually criticised by interviewees. The 'extreme cases' were in most cases 'blind imitations' of foreigner's behaviours and their ways of thinking. According to most interviewees, some students, although not in a very large number, were often found to imitate the body language of Westerners and to use their value concepts to make personal decisions. A year-3 physics female student with a CET 4 certificate and her companion, a year-4 male who had taken all the six band courses at HUST gave the following response in the interview:

I. Do you think that cultural studies has exerted some influences on students?

FS. There are some individual cases which show extreme influences ...

MS. I have a classmate who is extremely interested in Western cultures. He always imitates Westerners. He has been doing this since secondary school. This did not seem to be of help to his College English study. ... Imitators of foreigners would be mocked these days. There was a short play ridiculing this type of people at the Spring Festival Gala[3]. ... (FS4A, author's translation)

Another graduating student who had taken four band courses mentioned a similar case and stated that he "could not stand such imitations" (FS4B).

Some teachers also reported such cases through their observations. A College English department chairman with one-year experience in the United Kingdom talked about a case of his own:

> MT. ... I know one of my students is especially worshipping Western cultures. He once made a special appointment with me for a cultural talk. His way of talking and his behaviour are imitations of Westerners. This type of students, by my observation, are normally very interested in learning the language as well. Those who have no interest in the language do not imitate. Last year, I ran an oral English course that contained a lot of cultural contents such as ways of greetings and lady first. I noticed that some students did imitate these consciously or unconsciously. They showed gentleman's manners. Most students, however, were not influenced that way. They took cultural information as pepper in the ingredients. (FT2, author's translation)

Apparently, the department Chairman was aware of these 'extreme cases' but took an optimistic view of these.

It was noted that though the interview data obtained from the SU were the largest as it was the base for the empirical study 'extreme cases' were not reported. When the question on Western influences was raised, two students majoring in civil engineering replied:

> FS. There must be some influences imperceptibly exerted on us.
>
> MS. But not very great at SU. No political influences at all as the SU students do not care about politics. The students in inland areas are more likely to be influenced.
>
> FS. The students in inland areas are more likely to go too far as they are more active (political) thinkers but more blind imitators. They are more likely to go against the traditions. (FS5B, author's translation)

It was interesting to notice that the question was interpreted as one on political influences by the students. This interpretation was also evident in interviews with some teachers at SU (e.g. FT3). Neither the students nor the teachers seemed to care about other influences

283

on the students' behaviours. The fact that the SU students and teachers are more exposed to foreign people and cultures than their counterparts in inland cities is perhaps the very reason why they appeared less sensitive to 'extreme' behaviour changes.

6.1.3.2. "Subtle and Acceptable" Changes in Behaviour

Except for the small number of 'extreme cases' observed by students and teachers in tertiary institutions in inland areas, by the interview data, all the other influences on the students' behaviours seemed to be accepted and even taken for granted by both students and educators. Talking about Western traditional festivals, a year-3 female mechanical engineering student and a graduating male majoring in hydraulic pressure with a CET 4 certificate remarked in an HUST interview:

> FS.   I notice that my school mates are more interested in celebrating Christmas than the New Year's Day. The New Year's Day is our traditional festival, but if we haven't received a greeting card from a friend by Christmas we would feel uneasy. On Christmas day we would gather to go out for a dinner but we would not on New Year's Day. I remember that this past Christmas happened to be a Monday. We had planned to celebrate it with our teachers, but since we had to take an exam on that day we couldn't arrange for it. So we went out ourselves. Christmas looks more interesting than our traditional festivals. Father's Day and Mother's Day are both good, but we don't have them. The Valentine's Day on 14 February is also meaningful to us students but we don't have it. They are all foreign festivals.

> MS. The Valentine's Day is running rampant on campus.

> FS. If the students at a serious place like the HUST behave like this, those at the other universities would be more liberal.

MS. Celebrating the foreign festivals can be accepted. But I can not tolerate seeing some

students imitate Westerners' gestures. (FS4B, author's translation)

Westerner values such as privacy, independence and individual values were found to exert

great influences on students' behaviours. One HUST female student who had completed

all four band courses told her story of changing perspectives through her comparison of

different values attached to individuals by Chinese and Westerners:

FS. I think my way of thinking has changed to a certain degree since I entered the university.

For example, we believe in collectivism while Westerners talk about individuality. The

value attached to individuals has obviously caused a shock wave. I remember when I was

in senior high school, in a writing lesson, my teacher gave us some reference materials

which included a story like this: In an acrobatic competition, a little boy in the Chinese

team dropped while performing at a height. The boy's body was covered with some blood

but he intended to continue the performance. There were different opinions between the

Chinese referees and the Western referees. Western referees were opposed to allowing the

boy to continue the performance while the Chinese referees were saying that this kind of

dedication and fighting spirits should be encouraged and praised highly. Now I think it was

perhaps due to the large population of China that individuals are devalued in the country. I

have become more and more aware that individual values should be given more importance

in China. (FS4A, author's translation)

At a later stage she talked about cohabitation:

FS. There are some cohabitation cases around us. Initially, I thought this was unimaginable.

Now I sometimes think it is very natural and acceptable. All personal decisions have their

individual rationales behind them. I suppose my way of thinking is in some way

influenced by Western cultures. (FS4A, author's translation)

The special significance of this case was that the female student was aware that her value

concepts were changing in a subtle way and she was willing to suspend the beliefs of her

own culture to mediate conflicts in values.

Many teachers seemed to be tolerant with and even welcomed some subtle changes in students' behaviours. A female teacher at HUST with eight years of College English teaching experience responded to the question on students' changing behaviour this way:

> FT.   The teaching of culture has resulted in some subtle effects on our students. The observable difference is that our students look more open-minded now than ever before. But this change of attitudes and behaviour does not only result from cultural studies teaching; it reflects the change of the entire society. For example, the idea of 'privacy' seems to be readily accepted by our students. I noticed that during the class break time some freshman students would have a look at the things on the teacher's desk. When they learned the lesson about 'privacy' they gradually changed their habit. Cohabitation cases are also increasing but I personally think that the change in value concepts is not always a bad thing. It should be OK as long as students do not do things against the law. (PT1A, author's translation)

In this dynamic age, it was interesting to note that teachers' ideological and moral ideals, like students, also seemed to be in the changing process. This female teacher's view could possibly represent the changing attitudes among teachers.

6.1.4. Interim Summary

The author would re-emphasise two important features the research data reveal. The word 're-emphasise' is used to imply that in fact such emphasis has already been made in some places in the data presentation before. In view of research methodology, it is well worth noting that the three instruments used in operationalising the concept – attitude – were clearly shown in many aspects to be complementary to each other. The interviews, for instance, elicited statements which helped validate the statistical data. The complementary

value of eliciting written responses to open-ended questions in questionnaires to interview data was also evident; the former provided the subjects with more time than the latter to contemplate for refined statements, thus enabling researchers to compare 'hastily' made statements with the refined ones. The former may reveal some truly affective feelings of the interviewees to other peoples while the latter could show their ideological awareness. The absence of strongly affective words in written responses used to describe Americans frequently found in interview responses gave clear evidence to this complementary value.

The second feature is clearly more significant with respect to foreign language teaching. Evidence presented in this section consistently shows that the students constantly made comparisons in expressing their feelings and beliefs about the peoples and cultures in question. The comparison was not only made between the culture of a foreign country and that of their own but also between foreign cultures and foreign peoples themselves. This finding suggests that for image presentations in classroom teaching and textbook writing an intercultural comparative approach would be most effective as it fits into the natural learning behaviour of learners.

6.2. Perceptions

The attention of this section is shifted to the students' perceptions of the people of the English speaking countries, again with a focus on the two peoples discussed above, particularly their mental images acquired from various sources (to be examined in the next section) about the peoples, their social environments and value concepts. The presentation follows a similar pattern as the preceding section: data obtained from questionnaire

surveys are offered as a starting point of discussion and are validated and complemented with an analysis of oral and written responses elicited in the interviews and questionnaire surveys.

6.2.1. The 'Characteristics' Ranked

As pointed out in the preceding section, the surveys using the second questionnaire in Appendix 2 were aimed to collect data for both attitude and perception analysis. In attitudinal study, only part of the data – those relevant to the twelve 'characteristics' – was chosen for analysis because the other 'characteristics' were somewhat ambiguous in connotation and thus were not employed as attributes for measuring students' attitudes. For statistical study of perceptions, all the twenty-five characteristics were used as they are 'heterostereotypes' normally used for describing people of a foreign culture (Keller, 1991). By using the same Likert scaling procedure and the SPSS program as for attitude study, the data collected from among the 120 students were computed and group means for the Americans and the British were obtained. For easy comparison, group means for both peoples are put side by side in descending order in Table 6.2.1.1. In view of score distribution, the figures in this table were found to be consistent with the group means for the study of attitudes and the range of the group means for all twenty-five characteristics for the Americans appeared more polarised than that for the British.

'

One of the most arresting findings by a close look at this table was obviously some of the sharp contrasting images the students held about the Americans and the British, despite the fact that the Americans and the British are often described, critiqued or simply talked about together by the media or the people in China. The statistical data presented in the

Table 6.2.1.1 — Perceptions of the two peoples in statistical terms (n = 120)

	Perceptions of the Americans	Group means	Perceptions of the British	Group means
1.	Sports-loving	4.32	Appearance-conscious	4.25
2.	Adventurous	4.04	Class-conscious	4.18
3.	Proud of self	4.00	Bound by tradition	4.13
4.	Humorous	4.00	Gentlemen	4.07
5.	Comfort-loving	3.98	Religious	3.83
6.	Nature-loving	3.93	Proud of self	3.82
7.	Good-scientists	3.91	Conservative	3.78
8.	Animal-loving	3.86	Comfort-loving	3.72
9.	Violent	3.78	Nature-loving	3.71
10.	Romantic	3.67	Animal-loving	3.67
11.	Time-conscious	3.63	Time-conscious	3.56
12.	Hard-working	3.58	Romantic	3.43
13.	Easy-going	3.57	Sports-loving	3.39
14.	Thrifty	3.27	Humorous	3.29
15.	Religious	3.26	Thrifty	3.29
16.	Class-conscious	3.18	Good-scientists	3.27
17.	Friendly to foreigners	3.08	Friendly to foreigners	3.21
18.	Snobbish	2.98	Reliable	3.08
19.	Intelligent	2.96	Emotionally stable	3.05
20.	Gentlemen	2.73	Easy-going	2.98
21.	Appearance-conscious	2.58	Snobbish	2.91
22.	Reliable	2.49	Hard-working	2.97
23.	Emotionally stable	2.27	Adventurous	2.61
24.	Bound by tradition	1.90	Intelligent	2.59
25.	Conservative	1.78	Violent	2.56

table show that while the characteristics such as 'appearance-conscious', 'conservative', 'gentlemen', and 'bound by tradition' were perceived as the most typical features for the British they were placed at the bottom for the Americans. Even the characteristic of 'class-conscious' put at the second place for the former was found at the 16th place for the latter. The comparison or contrast made by the students clearly further justify the brief comments made in 6.1.4 above. The images of these two peoples that matched well could be found in the middle of the table; both peoples were perceived as having somewhat the same attitudes towards time, money (thrifty) and foreign people and as similarly romantic.

6.2.2. 'Traditional' vs. 'Open-Minded' Images

The 'open-topic approach' adopted in interviews (see 5.2.3) gave rise, not surprisingly, to a variety of responses. The data show that the perceptions acquired by students range from very rough and sketchy ideas to quite sophisticated observations. Typical simple responses given to the broad question "The culture of which English speaking country are you interested in most? And why?" include:

FS. I'm more interested in the USA.

MS. To me, the United Kingdom. Because I've read more about this country. (PS1B, author's translation)

and

FS. I'm interested in the cultures of all the English speaking countries. ... (FS5B, author's translation)

In response to the question "How much do you know about these countries and the peoples?", a ZP male student majoring in electric automation said,

MS. It seems to me that the British are a bit conservative and the Americans are more open-minded. (FS9A, author's translation)

This simple response like this was found representative not only in interviews but also in written responses in questionnaires. These two 'characteristics' – conservative British vs. open-minded Americans – proved to be the most succinct summaries of the two peoples.

Some students were willing to elaborate slightly further the perceptions they held of these two peoples. A year-2 female majoring in accounting at ZP offered the description below:

FS1. I've seen some British and American people though I never talked to them. I think it is not difficult to distinguish the British from the Americans as their appearances are quite contrastive. The British in general appeared slimmer as gentlemen are more conscious of

the appearance and courtesy. The United States is a free country so the people look freer

and easier. Their figures looked heavier. (FS8A, author's translation)

It was interesting to note that the student made mental guesses about the British and the

Americans but she never talked to the people directly to confirm her guesses. To relate this

to a previous study by Feng Mei (1998), this female seemed to exemplify those who were

very curious about native speakers of English but would feel hesitant to interact with them

owing to lack of confidence, even though the chances were rare.

Another year-3 female majoring in physics at the HUST portrayed the culture of the

United States in a slightly different way,

> FS. But I'm more interested in the British culture because this country has a long history and
>
> the cultural traditions are more profound. The American culture is something like fast
>
> food. The first taste is quite delicious but if you try it for a number of times you feel that
>
> there is no aftertaste. The American culture is relatively shallow. (FS4A, author's
>
> translation)

In both interview and written responses, the two peoples were found to be contrasted in

similar ways. The data collected was clearly dominated perceptions of 'traditional British

and open-minded Americans'. Other characteristics listed for the two peoples include:

1. Too self-confident (Americans)

> MS. Americans give you an easy-going feeling in the way they dress themselves and talk. But
>
> they are very individualistic and always feel self-confident. They are stubborn. (a year-3
>
> male majoring in organic chemistry at ZP (QSZP19), author's translation)

2. Independent (Americans)

> MS. In my eyes, Americans love freedom. They are in casual clothes and are open-minded,
>
> humorous but also radical. They've got strong egotism and independent capability. ... (a
>
> year-2 male student majoring in trading economics at ZUFE (QSZUFE6), author's
>
> translation)

3. Violent (Americans)

FS. Not long ago, I learned a text about robberies or crimes. This can be called the 'dross' (of the Western culture). It made us feel that their society is very unsafe. In fact, we read quite a few texts like this. (a year-one SU student taking a band-2 course. The texts she referred to are most probably the two texts about street crimes in Book 2 of *College English*, (FS8A), author's translation).

4. Unfriendly (Americans)

FS. ... Americans are very racist. They discriminate against Chinese. (a year-one female majoring in international economic law (QSZUFE7), author's translation)

5. Indifferent to other's feelings (Americans)

MS. The Americans like interfering with internal affairs in other countries. They are self-centred and arrogant. Their moral standards are low and they lack nationalism. They are insensitive to other people's feelings and have weak sense of family relationships. (a year-3 male majoring in accounting at ZP (QSZP3), author's translation)

6. Inflexible (British)

MS. From the sources I have access to, typical British men are gentlemen, conservative and considerate. They don't seek the limelight and they go about things steadily. They follow traditions and virtues such as 'Lady first'. But they are too old-fashioned and inflexible. They don't know how to adapt themselves to new things. (a year-2 male majoring in trading economics at ZUFE (QSZUFE2), author's translation)

It should be stated that none of the characteristics is the perceived image given by a single student. This fact makes worthy of noticing the fourth characteristic 'unfriendly' given to Americans. According to the ranking of the mean scores presented in Table 6.2.1.1, this characteristic for the Americans is placed at the same position (17th place) as that for the British. While the data collected from interviews and written responses do not reveal any negative comments on the friendliness of the British quite a few student informants were found to be negative on the Americans in this respect, particularly those at ZP and ZUFE.

As the perceptions about the Americans such as the first five characteristics listed right above clearly demonstrate certain degrees of affective feelings, more often negative than positive, they seem to offer an explanation to the trends shown in 6.1.1 and Table 6.2.1.1 that the students' attitudes towards and perceptions of the Americans tended to be slightly more negative and more polarised than those about the British.

Some students seemed to be able to portray the target culture(s) and the people from more angles than describing them in simple, stereotypical terms. The interview data show that these students were capable of doing so usually because they had had some direct exposure to the people of the target culture(s) or because they were particularly interested in cultural studies, or both. A year-1 female student majoring in civil engineering at SU presented the following description,

> FS. ... I feel that for the British I know a bit more about their history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries than of the contemporary but for the Americans just the opposite. ... The United States is a country with multi-cultures and plural dimensions. So the people are varied, from gentlemen with superiority complex to poorly-cultured people. Regarding the British, all the politicians in the 18th and 19th century seemed to have demonstrated a quality which was elegant, refined and cultivated. Take Blair and Clinton for example, the latter appears brimming with vigour and the former seems to stick to the old ways in running the country. He (Blair) doesn't show much 'leaping spirit' (*Cuanjin*) but he seems to be only willing to 'push the boat along with the current'. England is a peaceful country and the people seem to enjoy an idyllic lifestyle. (FS5B, author's translation)

This student was apparently aware of the multi-dimensional nature of the people of a society and the remarks she made on the lifestyle of the British people were also unique among most stereotypical images given in the data. Her use of the two leaders to compare the two peoples, however, was paralleled by quite a few written responses (QSZUFE5 in

which Margaret Thatcher and Bill Clinton were contrasted and QSZUFE12 in which Blair and Clinton were compared).

Another female freshly graduated from the SU who had taken all the six-band courses and had a short experience working in a joint-venture company in Shenzhen described the two peoples this way,

> FG. The British and the Americans are different. They differ in pronunciation first of all. A typical British has grey hair and is middle-aged. His skin is fair but with speckles. His working style is firm and steady and he talks composedly. The Americans on the other hand are more active. They don't look like pure white people. They look more friendly. The British do not look so easy to get along but once you get to know them the relationship could be further developed. It is easy to get to know an American but not easy to further develop the relationship. Americans were born enthusiastic and friendly. This is why they are often misunderstood by Chinese. (FS5A, author's translation)

With her experience with foreign peoples she was in a position to talk about the inter-personal relationships in a cross-cultural context.

6.2.3. Interim Summary

The data presented in this section seem to be significant in three respects. Firstly, the data further support the brief comments made in 6.1.4 that students consistently make simple comparisons of stereotypes when airing their beliefs or opinions about the foreign peoples and their cultures. The comparative approach adopted by students was particularly evident in statistical data as sharp contrasts are clearly shown in Table 6.2.1.1. The data analysed qualitatively provide further evidence of this comparative approach. Particularly typical

was the way the students made comparison of the leaders of the two countries. Secondly, qualitative data offer very indicative evidence that the perceptions held by the majority of students are extremely simplistic and stereotypical. Only a very small number of students could offer further descriptions than 'the gentleman British and open-minded Americans' and a few other 'characteristics' (see pp. 289-290) about the Americans.

Thirdly, a comparison of the data analysed qualitatively with the statistical data presented in this section suggests that the characteristics which were used as attributes to measure students' attitudes towards the attitude objects as presented in the previous section were the major concerns of the students in formulating their perceptions of a foreign people. 'Neutral' characteristics such as 'comfort-loving', 'religious', 'sports-loving' and 'nature-loving' were hardly touched upon in students' written responses and interviews though most of them were listed high in the table of statistical data. The comparison, in other words, apparently makes stand out the perceptions that could be used as attributes to measure attitudes so that the perceptions with attitudes attached to them become the strongest. The implication of this interpretation in cultural studies teaching is apparent; representations of the people of the target cultures in a language programme of course help establish the images of the group of people under study but more importantly in the mean time they influence learners' attitudes towards this group.

6.3. Sources of Perceptions and Influence on Attitudes

The study of the sources of perceptions about foreign peoples and their cultures was significant for two obvious reasons. The study would lead to a better understanding of

students' natural learning behaviour. In turn, this understanding of influential factors on students would result in a more objective evaluation of a language programme and shed light on the methodology of cultural studies teaching. The Durham investigation (Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor, 1991) clearly suggested that pupils' sources of cultural knowledge were not confined to the classroom. This finding was also strongly supported by the data from the pilot study, the formal questionnaire survey and the interviews. In this section, as in the preceding sections, data analysed qualitatively are preceded with statistical data on sources from questionnaire surveys. For interview data, the sources will not be explored in isolation but in association with perceptions and attitudes represented in the two preceding sections. This association is no doubt significant as the links between the sources and students' perceptions and attitudes could be established.

6.3.1. Sources Ranked

The last part of the questionnaire survey (Questionnaire 2 in Appendix 2) was aimed at eliciting data on sources of perceptions. Therefore, the number of questionnaire returns from the surveys would, of course, remain the same as that for the perception and attitude analyses as presented above. In data analysis, however, nine more returns only partially completed were found valid on this part and thus were included for computerisation. This raised the number of returns for analysis from 120 to 129. In calculation, the author made another minor adjustment to the numerical values assigned to the five choices according to the syntax of the responses for the part for sources. The usual 5-1 values as those given to the responses for the attitude and perception measurement were modified to 3-0 with the response phrased 'learned a lot' receiving a value of 3, 'learned some' a value of 2, 'learned a little' 1 and both 'learned nothing' and 'difficult to say'[4] a value of 0. The mean

296

values of sources calculated from the questionnaire data are given in Table 6.3.1.1. As predicted on the basis of the author's observation and the pilot study data, foreign films and foreign TV programmes were found at the top of the table while relatives and friends were at the bottom. But quite surprisingly, the College English teachers and textbooks were thought to be more important sources than the remaining three sources. This did not seem to be in accord with the general impression the author received in interviews with the students in the pilot study and the formal investigation (see interview data below). At a later stage of the fieldwork the author realised that magazines, newspapers and books the students often mentioned as sources of cultural information were in fact those popular publications written in Chinese. In addition, many students suggested Internet and some Chinese TV programmes such as *"Zhenda zhongyi"* or *"Fenghuang weishi"*[5] specifically made to introduce foreign cultures and foreign people as important sources of cultural information. As an attempt to relate these sources to the original seven, the author added three more sources (see 2, 7 and 10 in the table below) to the part in the questionnaire for sources and experimented it among 32 SU students. The ranking of the mean values were calculated in Table 6.3.1.2 .

Table 6.3.1.1. — 7 major sources ranked (n = 129)

	Sources of cultural information	Mean values	Std. Deviation
1.	Foreign films or foreign TV programs	1.9070	0.8700
2.	Your teacher(s)	1.5039	0.7302
3.	College English textbooks	1.4341	0.6104
4.	Books, newspapers or magazines in English	1.2326	0.9058
5.	Talks by or interactions with native speakers of English	1.2016	0.9951
6.	VOA or BBC broadcasts	1.1395	0.8992
7.	Friends or relatives who are or have been abroad	0.7209	0.9998

Table 6.3.1.2 — 10 major sources ranked (n = 32)

	Sources of cultural information	Mean values	Std. Deviation
1.	Foreign films or TV series produced in western countries	2.1563	0.9197
2.	Chinese TV programmes such as "Zhenda zhongyi" or "Fenghuang weishi"	1.8125	0.8958
3.	Your teacher(s)	1.8125	0.6927
4.	College English textbooks	1.5625	0.6690
5.	Books, newspapers or magazines in English	1.5313	0.9499
6.	Talks by or interactions with native speakers of English	1.4375	1.0140
7.	Chinese magazines, newspapers and other publications	1.3437	1.0659
8.	Friends or relatives who are or have been abroad	1.0625	1.0453
9.	VOA or BBC broadcasts	0.9688	0.9995
10.	Internet	0.8438	0.9197

Films and TV programmes about foreign cultures, whether they are made at home or abroad, remained at the top while the textbooks and teachers were still taken as important sources of information. The other two additions, Chinese magazines, etc. and Internet, were also considered by students as possible sources even though they were ranked low. With today's technology and fast spreading accessibility, it would not be unreasonable to predict that Internet may soon become an important source of cultural studies.

In Table 6.3.1.2, it was found that the source, interactions with English native speakers, were ranked higher than that in Table 6.3.1.1, above VOA and BBC and even Chinese magazines and other publications. This was clearly due to the fact that SU students had more opportunities to interact with people from other cultures than their counter-parts in the other geographic locations. To verify this, the mean score for 'interactions with native

speakers of English' presented in Table 6.3.1.1 was further analysed by the independent variable, geographical locations, with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) as the comparison involved more than two locations. The differences of the mean scores between the three geographic locations are given in Table 6.3.1.3.

Table 6.3.1.3. — Mean differences of interactions with native speakers of English between the students at three geographic locations

Geographic locations	Number of students	Mean values	Std. Deviation
SU	65	1.6000	0.9321
ZP	25	1.0400	0.7895
ZUFE	39	0.6410	0.9315

$F_{2, 126} = 14.132$ $P < 0.001$

The mean value differences of 'interactions with native speakers of English' between the three groups in the three geographical locations were found to be the most significant of all differences in terms of sources. There could also be significant differences between the three groups in their use of Internet as a source of cultural studies. However, as was mentioned before, comparison was not possible for this source was only included in the revised questionnaire experimented among 32 students at the SU.

6.3.2. "From a Variety of Sources"

Not surprisingly, when asked about the sources of the perceptions they had just described many students in interviews replied that they probably learned about them from a variety of sources. This seemed to be particularly true with SU students. When the female student majoring in civil engineering at SU finished presenting the idyllic lifestyle of England (see 6.2.2 above) She was asked,

I. Interesting! Can you tell me where you have got these perceptions?

FS. From comprehensive sources, such as films, TV programmes, books, magazines, etc. I

can't remember the details. Some time ago, I used to watch English films but now I

watch American films. ... (FS5B, author's translation).

A very similar answer came from the female freshly graduated from the SU who had taken

all the six-band courses and had a short experience working in a joint-venture company in

Shenzhen (see 6.2.2 for her perceptions),

I. Can you tell me how these images (about the British and the Americans) were formulated in

your mind?

FS. I think I got these impressions from books, photos and pictures in magazines, TV

programmes and other publications. Teacher's presentations in the classroom also helped

formulate these images. But I remember I got to know the personalities of these people

from textbooks. (FS5A, author's translation)

Both students mentioned a variety of sources. The year-1 female seemed to stress the

powerful influence of TV programmes and films. The graduated female with six band

experience behind her could, note-worthily, still recall the information she received from

textbooks and teachers.

In data analysis, it was found that sources for cultural information could be broadly put

into three categories according to the degree of consistency of the statements made by

students. The first category collects the sources which were consistently referred to as

important in students' responses while the second includes those that the students were

usually aware of but were viewed differently in terms of their importance in helping

cultural acquisition. The third category, as a natural sequence, consists of all the other

sources which were discussed only by some individuals. The categorisation of sources in

this way instead of the normal sequential presentation was intended to reveal the hidden

meanings behind the statistical data, thus exhibiting more clearly the complementary value of the data analysed qualitatively.

6.3.2.1. Commonly-Agreed Influential Sources

Films and TV programmes did show themselves as the most prominent sources of cultural information. In fact, the first sources that would come to most students' minds when asked in interviews were films and TV programmes. The statement made by the female majoring in civil engineering at SU (FS5B, see right above) represented this trend. Another female majoring in computer science at HUST compared these sources with 'teacher talks' in the classroom,

> FS. I watch more (of these TV programmes) than he does. I think TV programmes and films are the most effective way to gain an insight into foreign cultures. They are vivid and dramatic. It is relaxing to watch them. Sometimes teachers also talk about these but their talks are boring because they always talk about the same thing. We know them already. (PS2A, author's translation)

In written responses to the open-ended question (In which ways or from what sources do you think you can learn cultural knowledge most effectively so that you can communicate successfully with people of the English speaking countries in the future?) put at the end of the questionnaire, about half of the SU and ZP students who responded regarded TV programmes and films as most effective sources for cultural information. They stated that to learn the culture of a people one should watch "movies on TV and interesting films" (QSSU11X), "Western films and TV programmes" (QSZP10), and "TVB Pearl (a Hong Kong TV channel), VOA and BBC" (QSSU2X).

Data analysed qualitatively showed that magazines, newspapers, popular books and other publications were found to be nearly as important sources as films and TV programmes. Before he expressed his appreciative attitudes towards the Americans, the year-2 male majoring in tourism at ZFC said his "impression of the foreign people all come form books and magazines" (see 6.1.2.1). Another male majoring in urban planning at ZFC gave more details of the things he read,

MS. ... I got a lot of ideas by reading books.

I. What kind of books?

MS. It's hard to say. But they include some magazines.

I. What magazines? Are they in Chinese?

MS. Yes. They include *'Duzhe'* (The Reader), *'Haiwaiwenzhai'* (Overseas Reader's Digest), and *'Haiwaixinyuen'* (Stars and Clouds Overseas). They all focus on foreign things. I also read some famous works of the world such as 'The three musketeers', 'My beautiful friend', etc. in Chinese. (FS8C, author's translation)

The female majoring in civil engineering at SU who clearly showed particular interest in cultural studies (see 6.2.2 above) also talked about the importance of magazines and newspapers as sources of cultural information, but with care,

FS. I also read a lot of popular publications such as *'Duzhe'* (The Reader) and *'Qingnianwenzhai'* (Youth Reader's Digest). Some of them contain a lot of translations from the originals and they (the translations) still carry strong sense to me. But some newspapers publish too much of their (foreign countries') violence and socio-political problems. On the one hand they (Westerners?) are portrayed as violent and bogus civilised. On the other hand, in some articles, they are described as having some human sympathy and sensibilities. These articles appear more reasonable and are more enlightening. Some articles (in these publications) are clearly one-sided. When reading them you have to be analytical. (FS5B, author's translation)

302

Although she seemed to be more cautious about the popular publications, she clearly took them as a source of cultural studies.

Most statements made by the students showed that they obtain information from a variety of sources: chiefly from TV programmes, films, books, and magazines. The following responses came from two female students majoring in accounting at ZP,

> FS2. I mainly got some ideas from TV programmes, books and magazines. I think Americans are relatively warm. They would hug you like a black bear when they see you. The British are more refined and courteous. Australians, I think, are mostly shepherds because they've got a lot of huge pasturelands.
>
> I. You said you got some ideas from books and magazines. (FS2. Yes.) Can you tell me what kind of books and magazines?
>
> FS2. Like *"Duzhe"* (The Reader). It has lots of information of this kind.
>
> I. Do you think there are many college students who read "The Reader"?
>
> FS1. Yes, there are many. This kind of magazine is quite acceptable to our students. It collects information from many other different magazines.
>
> FS2. And there is quite a lot of such information in Channel 4 of CCTV International. Though I don't quite understand what they say in English, with the help of pictures and photos I can more or less guess what they say. ... (FS8A, author's translation)

The perceived importance of these sources for cultural studies was also reflected in written responses to the open-ended question in the questionnaire on the 'best source' of cultural information. One year-3 male at ZP majoring in decoration arts wrote that the most efficient way is to explore "films, TV programmes and a variety of mass media, books, and magazines" (QSZP6X, author's translation). Many shared this view (QSSU2X, QSZP11X, and QSZP12X).

303

6.3.2.2. Case-Dependent Sources

This category mainly collects statements made on textbooks and teachers as sources of cultural information. The name given to the category – 'case-dependent sources' – implies that the opinions expressed by students in interviews and written responses varied greatly from one case to another, depending on factors that are case-specific.

6.3.2.2.1. Textbooks

The influences of textbooks on students' perceptions and attitudes were strongly evident in quite a few interviews. When the two year-2 students majoring in forest tourism at ZFC expressed their feelings about Westerners, particularly the Americans (see 6.1.2.1 for statements showing attitudes) they were asked about the sources which might have influenced their way of thinking. They replied,

> MS. I've read quite a lot (about the culture of Western countries) and kept thinking about them. I think that Western youths are very independent.

> FS. But some of the Western concepts are not very good. It seems that they are too independent. They have gone too far to another extreme and become indifferent to human feelings. In our textbooks, there is a text about an aged mother whose children never came to see her, even on her birthday. In this respect, our Chinese people are better. (FS8B, author's translation)

The male student did not specify what type of readings had kept him contemplating but the female gave a very specific source of her conclusion that Westerners are indifferent to human feelings. The source mentioned by this female is the core text in Unit 3 of Book 1 of *College English* (Dong, et al. 1997). This text obviously left her a deep impression, for

she still remembered the content after two semesters when she had moved to Book 3 and more significantly she made her conclusion on the basis of the text content.

The influence of this text was apparent as it was singled out by another year-two male student majoring in urban planning at ZFC in another interview in Zhuzhou:

I. Do you think your teacher or the textbook you use introduces to you a lot of cultural knowledge of the English speaking countries?

MS. Not much. My teacher just mentions a bit. For example, she told us what salad looks like and what Thanksgiving Day is. She also talked about the problem for the aged.

I. How did she describe this to you?

MS. I kind of remember that there was a text talking about a daughter whose job was related to the welfare of the aged people. But she didn't care about her own mother. (FS8C, author's translation)

The text also left this student strong impression even though he did not seem to be as much influenced as the female in FS8B and was not impressed by the way his teacher was dealing with cultural studies teaching in the classroom.

Some other texts were also mentioned in interviews. A year-1 accounting female student taking a Band-3 course referred to two texts about crimes in American streets in Book 2 of *College English*,

FS. Not long ago, I learned a text about robberies or crimes. This kind of things can be called the 'dross' (of the American society). It made us feel that their society is very unsafe. In fact, we read quite a few texts like this. (FS8A, author's translation)

Some texts seem to have greater influence on students' perceptions than others. Quite a few students could still remember the content of some texts they learned when they were at secondary school. The HUST female with a CET 4 certificate mentioned a text she read

305

at secondary school which in some way changed her perspective of individual values (see 6.1.3.2 above). Two year-two students majoring in tourism at ZFC also referred to some materials they came across at secondary school:

FS. I think the English people are pretty pathetic.

I. What makes you say that?

FS. Because even the Scottish and Welsh do not want to be called the English. They just want to be called the British, not English.

I. Where did you get to know that?

FS. From a textbook I learned in my senior high school.

MS. Yes, some books say that when you go to Wales you'd better not ask the people there if they are English. This applies to Scotland. You can only ask if they are British.

FS. I really think they are pathetic. They have merged for so long but the people (in Wales and Scotland) still don't want to be called English. This exemplifies a failure of the government. They have failed to strike the root of nationalism into the hearts of the people. (FS8B, author's translation)

Because of their individual interest in reading certain types of cultural materials, some students even suggested in both interviews and written responses that textbooks should contain more texts for cultural studies (cf. FS4A, FS6D and QSSU10X). However, when recollecting the contents of textbooks in an overall view, many students gave a negative response. The most critical comment came from the freshly-graduated female with both CET-4 and CET-6 certificates (see 4.9),

FS. As far as the *formal course books* are concerned,

I. You mean the *Intensive Reading* booklets?

FS. Yes, the *Intensive Reading* booklets. They don't have much of this stuff (cultural information) in them. I wonder if *the texts were written by home* (Chinese) *teachers*, not

from authentic sources. They don't have a Western taste, but *still reflect the Chinese way of thinking*. (FS5A, author's translation and italics by the author)

Clearly, this freshly-graduated student from SU did not take the textbook as a source of cultural studies as the texts did not appear authentic to her. A few other students who had finished the four band courses also replied that the textbooks they covered offered very little 'in-depth' cultural information (cf. FS7B and FS4B).

6.3.2.2.2. Teachers

The teacher's influence was occasionally indicated by some students in interviews. A male student at the SU with a CET-4 certificate remarked,

> MS. ... The main sources are of course mass media and TV. Here the TV channels from Hong Kong are accessible. Whenever we have spare time we would watch them. Sometimes we watch films. Sometimes the teacher gave us some cultural information. Our teacher was very learned. He majored in French at College but shifted to English afterwards. He is a well-known teacher on our campus. (FS7B, author's translation)

This type of comments on the teacher's role in cultural studies learning was, however, not very commonly given. In most cases, students complained about their teachers by saying that their teachers were always rushing through the contents and they felt averse to that (cf. PS1B) and that their teachers only introduced shallow knowledge about the target cultures (cf. FS8B).

Apparently at this point, it is necessary to present some interview responses from teachers in order to have a better understanding of 'teachers as a source of information'. In most interviews, it was found that the teachers generally agreed that cultural studies teaching is important in foreign language teaching and students are highly interested in all things

cultural. Without cultural knowledge transmitted in the classroom, they find it difficult to motivate the students (FT4A). The common response to the question "How do you teach cultural studies in a classroom situation?" was that they usually spent about 3-5 minutes to introduce background information at the beginning of each lesson (cf. FT8 and FT4A) – a typical 'culture aside' approach. A female teacher with less than four years experience at the HUST recalled

> FT. Once, I talked about Western table manners. I was amazed to notice that all my students kept their eyes wide open as if they had never heard about it before." (FT4A, author's translation).

A male teacher with some departmental responsibilities at a Zhuzhou tertiary institution attached much importance to the textbook in use:

> I. In which ways do you think cultural studies teaching could be effectively done in a classroom?

> MT. For the time being, I'm still in the process of experimenting. Cultural studies teaching, in my opinion, depends very much on the textbook you use. If the textbook contains a lot of cultural information, it is easy for the teacher to teach in class and the students are also easily motivated. If the textbook is of low quality, it is difficult for the teaching to use it in class. I mean, if the teacher could transmit some essence of Western culture to the students, the students would also benefit in terms of cultural attainment. (FT10, author's translation)

He seemed to indicate that if a textbook does not contain enough cultural information it would be taken as of low quality.

Different attitudes and approaches to teaching culture in the classroom were identifiable in interviews. These differences seem to be closely related to independent variables such as geographical locations, academic positions and years of experience abroad. A female

teacher at the HUST with six-year experience of teaching all the six band courses made the following remarks:

FT. I always teach cultural points. For example, the Boxing Day. All the students take that as the day for boxing matches or games. I tell them whatever they don't know. I introduce all the cultural points to my students, uh, for example, the (English) holidays such as April Fool's Day, and Christmas.

I. How do you teach the cultural points? Can you give me a more specific example?

FT. I talk about more practical things, for example, the American monetary terms such as dollars, dimes, quarters, cents, etc. These would all show up in exams. More attention is paid to popular culture and deep culture such as values and tempo of work. Less attention is given to literature and arts. This is because the textbook only touches very lightly upon literature and arts. Teaching is mainly geared towards exams. The students wouldn't be interested in literature and arts anyway. (PT1A, author's translation)

Apparently, the way this teacher dealt with cultural studies could be considered a typical case in that even cultural studies teaching had to be oriented towards examinations which contain test items of popular culture.

Two female SU teachers gave responses indicating a different approach to dealing with popular culture in the classroom:

I. Do you use it all (the background information provided in the teacher's book)?

FT1: Not necessarily. If you think the students already know it, you don't have to bother. For example, the Christmas traditions and customs should not be introduced. In Book 1, there is a text that talks about the spread of TV in the 50s and 60s in the US. I would supplement it. Background information is what the students do not know. You don't spend time on things they know.

I. ... How about you, Ms x x ?

FT2. There is background information for each text in the teacher's book, but the language

for the cultural points is difficult. Students would not be able to understand it even if they

read it. So I often choose something easier. For instance, for Christmas, I would

supplement it with some bible stories and explain why there is a star on top of the

Christmas tree and how Santa Claus enters the house through the chimney to put gifts

into the stockings. You can't depend solely on textbooks. I would give students some

handouts if a cultural point is difficult to understand.

I. Do you get the cultural points from the teacher's books?

FT2. Some are selected from the teacher's books but some are prepared by myself. (FT9,

author's translation)

Compared with the Wuhan teacher, the Shenzhen teachers were obviously more selective

in cultural materials as simple facts in an SU classroom would not interest students as

much as that in a classroom in inland cities like Wuhan and Zhuzhou.

Some teachers, however, may not touch upon cultural issues at all in their classrooms.

This might be due to their negative attitude towards cultural studies teaching but, it may

also be due to lack of confidence, according to the observation of a department chair at a

university in Wuhan with one-year experience at a U.K. university.

Chair. The quality of instructors is a dilemma in promoting cultural studies teaching. Some

Chinese teachers dare not do it because they are always afraid of being challenged by

students and of 'losing face'. This is not right. These teachers think that if students raise

any 'challenging' questions and they couldn't answer, they will lose their 'face' and

dignity. I always deem a professor who supervised me when I was in U.K. as a learned

man. But when some students aired different opinions in his classroom, he would often

say, 'You are right.' Or 'You might be right.' He never felt like losing 'face'. If you

really have no answer to a question you can say, 'Sorry, I have no answer to it. But I'll

try to give you the answer next time'. But many of our teachers dare not do so. My

experience abroad really made me realise the importance of this attitude. Now, I feel that

I dare to admit my weaknesses and errors. (FT2, author's translation)

A senior teacher in Zhuzhou also pointed out that many students might know more than

College English teachers about the cultures of the English speaking countries (FT8).

Despite the cases of teachers who may intentionally avoid cultural studies teaching, the interview data showed that most teachers would spend some class time presenting cultural information. Statistical data suggested that this '3-5-minute' approach might have indeed left some influence on the students without their knowing it. None the less, the ranking of teachers before books, magazines, and other popular publications as a source of cultural information still seemed to be questionable as data analysed qualitatively suggested that if popular Chinese publications had been included in all questionnaire surveys the statistical ranking might be different. This will remain as a speculation until evidence is available in future research.

6.3.2.3. Other Case-Dependent Sources

In addition to the main sources for cultural knowledge listed above, there were some other sources which appeared less representative but may well be worth investigating in future research. Take a look at the following account given by a male majoring in urban planning at ZFC,

> MS. I think the American culture is a bit messy. The British are quite OK and their culture is
>
> very traditional. But the Canadians are good at city planning.
>
> I. How did you get to know that?
>
> MS. From my major courses such as city planning and afforestation in urban areas. (FS8C,
>
> author's translation)

311

A single case it may be, the major courses as a source of cultural information should not be neglected for empirical studies of possible influences on students. Particularly in today's tertiary institutions in China, subject teachers are more and more exposed to other cultures and many even have had direct experience in foreign countries. This fact would have profound implications in cultural studies teaching. Students' interest in cultural studies through their subject courses was also evident in a written response by a ZP male majoring in packaging designing,

> MS. We can get to know the target culture through TV programmes and films. But if we want to know their culture of arts, we should study their paintings and photographs. This is because paintings and photographs could penetrate into all levels of the culture. When the artists create every picture they have to think deeply. So an understanding of the pictures of a culture helps us greatly to understand the culture of the country. (QSZP3, author's translation)

In data analysis, it was found that a few students mentioned travelling as a channel of 'studying' foreigners. It could still be true that the absolute majority of the students have never had any experience abroad, and therefore it would be unnecessary to take travelling experience as a variable or a source of information. The trip the female student majoring in tourism at the ZP (FS8B) took to a bordering city in Russia was quite rare. Amazingly, however, some students mentioned travelling experience within China and they seemed to associate their rare encounters with foreign tourists with cultural studies. The accounting female taking the Band 3 course at the ZP who had travelled to some major cities in China recalled that,

> FS. I have travelled to some cities like Changsha and Hanzhou and have seen some foreign tourists there. The British in general appeared slimmer as gentlemen are more conscious

of their appearance and courtesy. The United States is a free country so the people

looked freer and easier. Their figures looked heavier. ((FS8A, author's translation)

Another ZP male who had never had a chance to have a direct encounter with a native

speaker remarked with an admiring tone,

> MS. My classmates went to Loyang (a tourist city in Henan Province) and met some
>
> Australians. It was really good to communicate with them in English. ... (FS9A, author's
>
> translation)

These experiences did not seem to be a significant experiential factor as they were all

extremely short. However, the generalisation made by the ZP female and the tone of the

ZP male suggested that they valued the short encounters. The best ungrounded

explanation the author could give to this fact with his understanding of the situation is: as

the students from small inland cities like Zhuzhou hardly have any chance of interacting

with or even meeting people from other cultures, the impact of these rare encounters with

foreign tourists on their perceptions and attitudes could be much greater than that on the

students living in coastal cities like Shenzhen who, in sharp contrast, have frequent chances

of meeting and even interacting with people of other cultures. In conducting empirical

investigation in areas less advantaged in terms of intercultural communication, this

seemingly insignificant factor may well be worth taking into consideration.

Quite a number of written responses collected from both SU and ZP (even though the

students at the latter may not have easy access to them) showed that interactions with

native speakers of English and Internet were regarded as very important sources. They

were listed together with TV and mass media as the best channels to gain insight into the

target cultures (cf. QSSU2X, QSSU5X, QSSU9X, QSZP13X and QSZP2X). The trend

reflected in these written responses corresponded well with the statistical data.

The interview data also revealed a couple of cases in which the students seemed to be influenced by their relatives. The female freshly-graduated from SU with both CET-4 and CET-6 certificates gave an interesting account,

> FG. Maybe, the competitions in Western countries are not fierce. There could be more chances in life for the youth. So the young people in these countries are relatively carefree. This is not a very good factor for the students here. Because if they know the foreign students are even lazier they might be negatively affected. But the employment situation at home is very serious. The problem of drug abuse among young people in Western countries was also a bad influential factor. It seems that they (Western youth) are getting better now. Perhaps, this won't affect our students.

> I. You said that the competitions are not fierce in Western countries. How did you get to know that?

> FG. For some time, I had difficulty finding an ideal job here. My parents intended to send me abroad. My Daddy said the economy in our country is not very good so job opportunities are limited. He reasoned that the United States is small in population but huge in GNP. Obviously, there are a lot of (job) opportunities there. I think that there must be a lot of options for the people in the States. Their individuality could be more favourably developed.

> I. Has your father ever been abroad?

> FG. No. He figured this out according to the information available. ... (FS5A, author's translation)

The relatives' influence was also evident in the following response by the ZP male who showed admiration to his classmates' chances, and perhaps courage as well, of talking directly to foreigners during their trip to Loyang,

> MS. My brother (a postgraduate student in a medical college) has some books, oral English books and English magazines such as 'Independent English', 'The English World', etc. Whenever I went there he would take them out and ask me to read them. He said the

language and its cultures are very important. My father also asked him to make me read more. (FS9A, author's translation)

It was interesting to notice that even though the relatives of both students had had no overseas experience they still seemed to exert some influence on them. In the first case, the father of the female arrived at the conclusion solely by reasoning but it was apparently accepted. In the second case, the male was to a certain extent forced to read more under his relatives' influence or pressure.

6.3.3. Interim Summary

The empirical study of sources yielded some significant findings. TV programmes and films were confirmed to exert powerful influences on students in shaping their attitudes and establishing their perceptions. The most striking and important finding, however, was the ranking of teachers and textbooks as sources of acquiring cultural information, second only to films and TV programmes. Although many students in interviews did not seem to show as much certainty and confidence in these two sources as they did for magazines and other popular publications, the contents presented in the former seemed to impress the students more than the latter. There might be many different reasons behind the strong impression left on students by these two sources. The 'intensive reading' model (see 3.3.1), for instance, could be a determining factor as every text in the intensive reading books is supposed to be covered sentence by sentence and even word by word. Whatever the reason may be, the influence exerted on students by teachers and textbooks proved more significant than some teachers (for example, FT8) might think in both statistical and qualitative terms.

This finding has particular implications for cultural studies teaching. While all the other sources are basically circumstantial channels of cultural information which the students could explore at their will and pace, depending on their interests, time and accessibility, textbooks and teachers as sources of cultural studies are accessible and compulsory to every single student. More importantly, approaches to textbook writing and to cultural studies teaching could be constantly improved and modified through research studies whereas the other sources are difficult, if not totally impossible, to be manipulated by educational means[6].

6.4. Interests

The study of students' interests in various aspects of the target cultures was believed to be significant from the very start of the research. In addition to gaining empirical data for proving the interpretation given to the term 'interests' by Xiao (1991, refer to 5.1), there was at least another reason assumed relevant for studying this 'sub-concept'. As Simpson (1997) argues, learners' interests should be taken into consideration in determining which cultural knowledge areas ought to be taught in a foreign language classroom. The neglect or improper selection of the cultural aspects – the 'non-linguistic elements' as he calls it – would not only demotivate learners, because of lack of their interest, but lead to "inertia in the cognitive development of those students who persevere" (p. 40). These statements underline the importance of students' interest – a reflection of their motivation – and the relationship between the teaching outcome and cultural aspects a textbook includes.

The first questionnaire (Questionnaire 1 in Appendix 2) was designed for the purpose of investigating the cultural aspects the students wish to be incorporated into the programme. In this questionnaire, the students were required to express their interests in broad cultural knowledge areas (the macro-social level), the people (the micro-social level) and the texts on intercultural representations. They were first asked to indicate how important they feel the cultural aspects are to College English education and then to estimate the amount of the cultural information contained in their textbooks. The author used the phrase "to state the importance of the listed cultural areas for the programme" instead of explicitly asking students to 'tick the interested areas' in the questionnaire because the information elicited by the former was believed to embody evidence of the latter. The advantage of requesting the students to do the former was that the data would also show their priorities of the interested knowledge areas to be incorporated into the programme.

In this part of the research, the statistical data were found more revealing and comparable than the data analysed qualitatively because it was obviously difficult to cover all the cultural knowledge areas perceived important by students in interviews. None the less, as the following pages will show, some comments made by students in interviews were clearly insightful and these comments could be of value in helping develop teaching materials and classroom techniques which address their genuine interests.

6.4.1. Importance of Cultural Aspects Ranked

The questionnaire was mainly administered at three tertiary institutions in three cities: the HUST (Huazhong University of Science and Technology) in Wuhan, the BUAA (Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics) in Beijing and the SU (Shenzhen University)

in Shenzhen. During data analysis, however, the author had to forfeit all the 81 returns collected from the HUST[7] as the categorisation of cultural knowledge areas was revised when the survey at HUST had been carried out (see 5.3 for explanation). Despite the fact that many cultural knowledge areas were the same in both the original questionnaire and the revised version, the lack of the cultural aspects at the intercultural level in the original would make the report of the findings difficult. It is also worth noting that with the data obtained from SU and BUAA no comparison would be made as both Shenzhen and the Capital City Beijing are privileged in terms of economic importance and foreign presence. Such a comparison was assumed to be less significant than a comparison made between Shenzhen or Beijing and an inland city like Wuhan with less foreign presence.

In the same way as the statistical data for sources were computed (see 6.3.1 above), before the statistics were entered into the computer program, four values, from 3 down to 0, were given to the five responses listed in Questionnaire 1 of Appendix 2. The response phrased 'very important' receives a value of 3; 'important ' a value of 2; 'less important' a value of 1; and both 'not wanted' and 'not so sure' a value of 0. The mean scores of the cultural knowledge areas by perceived degrees of importance are ranked in Table 6.4.1.1 and the mean scores of their estimation of the cultural information contained in their textbooks are given in Table 6.4.1.2.

In these two tables, to facilitate comparison of overall mean scores, all cultural knowledge areas are coded according to the three categories they fall into: namely representations at the macro-social level, at the micro-social level and at the intercultural level. Only key words are given after each code. For details of each coded knowledge area, readers can refer to Questionnaire 1 in Appendix 2.

Table 6.4.1.1 — Informants' evaluation of the importance of the given cultural aspects for College English education. (n = 73 comprising 36 SU and 37 BUAA students)

Rank	Cultural knowledge areas		Mean scores
1.	Macro 14	(Science and technology)	2.45
2.	Intercultural 10	(Intercultural personality)	2.37
3.	Intercultural 1	(People in target culture)	2.33
4.	Intercultural 6	(Comparing target and own)	2.29
5.	Micro 14	(Authentic conversation)	2.26
6.	Micro 17	(Value and moral concepts)	2.26
7.	Intercultural 8	(Relations between countries)	2.15
8.	Intercultural 7	(Cultural similarities)	2.11
9.	Macro 4	(Education)	2.10
10.	Micro 12	(Photos of life)	2.08
11.	Macro 1	(Lifestyles)	2.07
12.	Intercultural 3	(Attitudes to others)	2.07
13.	Micro 16	(Activity at work place)	1.96
14.	Micro 1	(Ordinary people)	1.95
15.	Intercultural 4	(Target people see native)	1.95
16.	Micro 10	(Ordinary families)	1.92
17.	Micro 9	(City people)	1.89
18.	Macro 6	(Literature and arts)	1.86
19.	Macro 7	(History and geography)	1.85
20.	Micro 15	(Activity at home)	1.84
21.	Intercultural 9	(Culture in words)	1.82
22.	Intercultural 5	(Own people see own)	1.82
23.	Micro 13	(Photos of places)	1.81
24.	Macro 17	(Sports and entertainment)	1.79
25.	Macro 2	(Economic systems)	1.79
26.	Macro 3	(Politics)	1.77
27.	Macro 12	(Legal systems)	1.74
28.	Micro 18	(Personalities)	1.73
29.	Macro 8	(Magazines and newspapers)	1.70
30.	Intercultural 2	(Target see target)	1.66
31.	Macro 5	(Social problems)	1.64
32.	Micro 8	(Country people)	1.62
33.	Micro 7	(Unemployed)	1.59
34.	Micro 6	(Politicians)	1.58
35.	Micro 5	(Immigrants)	1.52
36.	Micro 11	(Rich and poor)	1.40
37.	Micro 4	(Blacks)	1.40
38.	Macro 10	(Tourism and immigration)	1.37
39.	Macro 9	(Texts on films and TV)	1.36
40.	Micro 3	(While people)	1.36
41.	Macro 13	(Architecture)	1.30
42.	Micro 2	(Odd people)	1.29
43.	Macro 11	(Medical system)	1.25
44.	Macro 15	(Religion)	1.08
45.	Macro 16	(Weather)	1.03

Table 6.4.1.2 — Students' estimates of the cultural contents in their College English textbooks. (n = 73 comprising 36 SU and 37 BUAA students)

Rank	Cultural knowledge areas		Mean scores
1.	Macro 14	(Science and technology)	1.92
2.	Intercultural 1	(People in target culture)	1.90
3.	Macro 1	(Lifestyles)	1.84
4.	Micro 9	(City people)	1.73
5.	Micro 14	(Authentic conversation)	1.70
6.	Micro 2	(Odd people)	1.68
7.	Macro 5	(Social problems)	1.51
8.	Micro 10	(Ordinary families)	1.49
9.	Micro 16	(Activity at work place)	1.44
10.	Micro 8	(Country people)	1.42
11.	Micro 1	(Ordinary people)	1.42
12.	Micro 17	(Value and moral concepts)	1.33
13.	Macro 17	(Sports and entertainment)	1.33
14.	Micro 15	(Activity at home)	1.33
15.	Micro 11	(Rich and poor)	1.29
16.	Micro 6	(Politicians)	1.27
17.	Macro 7	(History and geography)	1.25
18.	Macro 4	(Education)	1.14
19.	Intercultural 2	(Target see target)	1.03
20.	Micro 3	(While people)	1.01
21.	Macro 6	(Literature and arts)	1.00
22.	Macro 2	(Economic systems)	.96
23.	Micro 13	(Photos of places)	.95
24.	Micro 18	(Personalities)	.95
25.	Micro 12	(Photos of life)	.93
26.	Macro 13	(Architecture)	.93
27.	Micro 4	(Blacks)	.89
28.	Macro 8	(Magazines and newspapers)	.89
29.	Intercultural 5	(Own people see own)	.85
30.	Intercultural 6	(Comparing target and own)	.81
31.	Micro 7	(Unemployed)	.78
32.	Macro 3	(Politics)	.77
33.	Macro 9	(Texts on films and TV)	.68
34.	Macro 16	(Weather)	.68
35.	Intercultural 4	(Target people see native)	.66
36.	Micro 5	(Immigrants)	.55
37.	Intercultural 9	(Culture in words)	.53
38.	Intercultural 7	(Cultural similarities)	.47
39.	Intercultural 10	(Intercultural personality)	.47
40.	Macro 15	(Religion)	.45
41.	Macro 11	(Medical system)	.40
42.	Macro 10	(Tourism and immigration)	.40
43.	Macro 12	(Legal systems)	.38
44.	Intercultural 8	(Relations between countries)	.38
45.	Intercultural 3	(Attitudes to others)	.34

An overall comparison of the mean values presented in the two tables indicates that the cultural knowledge areas perceived by the students as important do not correspond well with the actual cultural content in their textbooks. The difference between the ranges of the mean scores in the two tables, from 1.03 to 2.45 in Table 6.4.1.1and from 0.34 to 1.92 in Table 6.4.1.2, first of all, clearly suggests that many cultural knowledge areas that interest students are either little represented or hardly present in their textbooks. Another striking mismatch could be the contrast between the importance of the cultural knowledge areas at the intercultural level perceived by students and the actual treatment of these areas in College English textbooks. Many of the areas at the intercultural level were found at the top of Table 6.4.1.1 (in fact, five of the top eight are 'intercultural'), while quite a few such areas are ranked at the bottom of Table 6.4.1.2.

In Table 6.4.1.2, it was also found that the students' estimation of the cultural content in their textbooks corresponds with the findings presented in Chapter 4 in which three of the most-widely used textbooks were analysed. 'Micro 2' (strange and odd people presented in textbooks) and 'Macro 5' (social problems) found at the sixth and seventh places in the table indicate that the textbooks contain a relatively large number of such texts, which is exactly the case by the detailed analysis made in Chapter 4. More noteworthy was the fact that the students, as Table 6.4.1.1 suggests, did not take these two areas as their priorities in cultural studies as they ranked 'Micro 2' almost at the bottom and 'Macro 5' at the 31[st] place of the table.

A brief look at the top of the tables also revealed that there are three areas which are well-matched: 'Macro 14' (scientific and technological development); 'Micro 14' (authentic conversations); and 'Intercultural 1' (texts on how the people of the target culture live and talk[8]). The three areas were ranked on the top of both tables despite the difference in their

mean values. The textbook analysis conducted in Chapter 4 also supports the ranking of the first area 'Macro 14', as the *Intensive Reading* booklets in the *College English* series, contain a variety of texts on science and technology (see 4.5 for detail). The second area 'Micro-level 14 was apparently ranked by the students on the basis of the numerous conversations in the listening booklets which Chapter 4 did not deal with in detail.

6.4.2. "Don't Seem to Motivate Us" — Evaluation

The topic on what cultural knowledge areas the students were most interested in knowing was only touched upon in some interviews mainly for avoiding long interviews although many students in the pilot study were found keen on talking about course contents. At the later stage of the fieldwork, the author conducted a few interviews with a focus on this topic for the purpose of complementing the statistical data. It was found in the interview data that quite a few students made comments that show an inclination of dissatisfaction with the textbook content. The following dialogue was carried out between the author and a group of four year-4 and five year-1 students at SU,

> I. First of all, I would like to ask you whether you feel the texts in the Intensive Reading booklets* interesting. Year-1 students first, OK?

> S1(Y1). No. They are not interesting enough.

> I (turning attention to another Y1 student). Do you agree with him?

> S2(Y1). Yes.

> S1(Y1). We have covered five units. None of them motivates us.

> ...

> I. How about the year-4 students? Could you please try to recall the content of the Intensive Reading booklets and make some comments on the text content?

> S1(Y4). I feel that the texts in the booklets are not interesting as a whole.

S2Y4). Sometimes it depends on how the teacher handles the text. I remember that when I was doing Band 3, the teacher was pretty good. We felt that the texts were actually interesting. If the teacher uses an active and vivid way to teach a class it would be much better.

S1(Y4). Some texts were really boring in terms of contents. They only serve as a tool to study grammar. (FS7A, author's translation)

* Four of the booklets in Dong, et al.'s textbook series, *College English*, which was analysed in detail in Chapter 4.

Most students seemed to take a negative view that the texts they had covered were not interesting enough to motivate them. At a later time, some students in this group agreed that the texts in the Extensive Reading booklets were more interesting than those in the Intensive Reading texts. In terms of cultural studies, however, two year-4 students made the following comments,

S3(Y4). Some texts are not too bad in view of their level of interest but I do not think the texts could at all serve as a channel to introduce cultural information. They could not widen our horizon. We are interested in cultural things and have read a lot about the culture of the target countries. We know more than the texts could tell us. I also think that the text materials could only help us to study language points. They contain a very limited amount of cultural knowledge.

I. Mm... (moving attention to a relatively quiet year-4 male) What do you think?

S4(Y4). It seemed to me that many texts are just stories. They couldn't widen our horizons. No, I don't think they motivate us or help us understand the outside world better. (FS7A, author's translation)

As the textbook analysis in Chapter 4 shows, there are indeed quite a lot of fiction stories in reading booklets in *College English*. As indicated by Dong (1997) and Zhang (1997), many fiction stories were chosen for the purpose of increasing the level of interest. Some students taking the course did feel that fiction stories are interesting (cf. FS8A). However,

these two year-4 students were clearly not impressed by the stories when the programme was over. Instead, both of them remarked that the texts could not widen their horizons. These comments seem to suggest that fiction stories might be interesting when being read but it is cultural knowledge contained in a text that has lasting effect on the perception of whether it is interesting.

In another interview with an SU male studying for a CET6 certificate after his CET 4, the issue of contemporaneity of the textbook was mentioned,

I. What is your general feeling of the textbooks you've covered? Are they interesting?

MS. Well ... In the classroom, we have intensive reading. It is mainly the teacher who gives instructions. When we get home we do model exercises. In Intensive Reading booklets, we do feel there are many new words and phrases. To study these words and phrases can help us develop a feeling about the language. But the contents of the texts seem to be a bit out-of-date, nor contemporary enough. Some of them look like old fables. ... (FS7B, author's translation)

At a later stage of an interview, when asked to make supplementary comments, a SU female majoring in Chinese language remarked,

FS. ... Many texts are not practical. We need more authentic conversations to practise our oral English. For reading practice, there should be an increase of contemporary things. At least the texts in the Extensive Reading should be up-dated every year. It's terrible to have the same texts without change for many years. (FS7A, author's translation)

These statements about the contemporaneity of text materials were in accord with the textbook analysis made in Chapter 4 (in particular 4.7.3.1). Lack of contemporaneity also seemed to reduce the motivating strength of the content.

6.4.3. "We'd Like That, But ..." — Interest in Context

In these interviews, some students tended to make suggestions on what types of texts they wished their textbooks to include. A HUST female with a CET-4 certificate made the following remarks,

> FS. College English teaching is basically exam-oriented. Classroom learning becomes doing mock exams. The development of language competence depends only on us individuals. But individual efforts without good guidance are inefficient. I think the programme should be reformed. The primary task is to reform the textbooks. The contents of the textbooks are too grammar and vocabulary centred. There should be more cultural information in them. Students' motivation to learn a foreign language depends on how interesting the contents appear to them. (FS4A, author's translation)

Her view of cultural studies was shared by another female majoring in mechanical engineering at the HUST when she expressed the same general interest. In addition, the latter strongly claimed,

> FS. A lesson without cultural studies is a lesson of no meaning. But I don't think the textbook or the teaching would change (FS4B, author's translation)

When asked about what cultural knowledge areas they were most interested in, most of the interviewees such as the two females gave an anything-cultural-would-do reply. Only a few gave some examples such as clothes, food, housing, transport, arts and literature (cf. FS9A) and some mentioned history, geography, people and the values (cf. FS8B). Very few could go beyond these general cultural areas at the macro-social and micro-social levels as naturally no one would come up with a complete list of all cultural aspects he was interested in knowing. Cultural knowledge areas at the intercultural level could not be elicited with broad questions since these areas were not familiar to the students as they are

neglected in College English teaching. Thus, some specific questions on areas at this level were raised in some interviews to elicit responses. The following conversation with a group of law and Chinese studies students at SU resulted,

I. Specifically, are you interested in reading an article written in English by a Chinese overseas student about his experience and feelings abroad?

SS (in chorus). Yes.

FS2. This type of articles may have a new taste.

MS2. They would be particularly helpful for students who wish to go abroad. The articles can increase their awareness of the culture in advance.

MS1. What this type of articles are aimed at is clear to us. They show how to view others from the Chinese perspectives which are easier for us to accept.

...

I. What do feel if you see in your College English textbook articles written by foreign students or visiting scholars about their experiences and feelings in China?

FS2. I'd like them...

MS3. These would be the things we are familiar with. I don't think we'd like too many...

FS1. It's not necessarily so...

MS4. Yes, they see our things from different angles...

I. OK, ladies and gentlemen, let's talk about it one by one. How about you (to MS3)?

MS3. I think what they write would be partly what they see and partly what they feel. We don't have to read the first half.

I. You mean you'd read their feelings but not their experience, right?

MS3. Yes.

I. What do you think, you two ladies?

FS2. I think they would view Chinese things from their perspectives. Their views would be relatively objective.

I. And you?

MS4. I think this type of articles are similar to those written by Chinese overseas students about their experience abroad. They see the other culture as outsiders. Both types would interest us. For example, if a Westerner, say an American, stay in China for a certain period, they will view us from their Western point of view, from their values. These would manifest cultural clashes and they would certainly interest us.

I. How about you?

MS1. I think this type of articles are very readable. It's like you look at yourself in a mirror. Some foreign students at SU, for instance, look at us with their way of thinking, with a different focus. Their ways and focuses of thinking would enlighten us greatly. (FS7A, author's translation)

The interest in and the eagerness to air their opinions on the two types of texts were apparent among the majority of the students interviewed. Though one student showed his reservation about the second type he also demonstrated interest in reading the feelings of others to his own culture. At a later stage, another male student made an interesting point which was agreed by a few others,

MS5. I think there would not be too many articles of the second type. ... Such articles would certainly show two different attitudes towards us: positive and negative. The positive ones would conform to conventional pattern but the negative ones would be considered unsuitable for textbooks.

FS2. Yes, negative ones would not be selected for our textbooks. ...

MS3. But we would be interested in things like that. (ibid. author's translation)

These students were aware of the ideological concerns of textbook writers and realised that socio-political and other contextual factors determine content selection, particularly the content for intercultural representations.

6.4.4. Interim Summary

Methodologically, this part of the research suggests that, unlike the investigation into the other three concepts presented in preceding sections, questions broadly raised could not elicit data specific enough for analysis as the concept under investigation involved too many areas. For studies of this kind, as mentioned at the start of the section, findings in statistics are essential because they provide data for detailed comparisons between given cultural knowledge areas and the overall trends. In these cases, however, as 6.4.3 shows, the interview data through specific questions are necessary as specific questions could help explore the concept under study even further and they may result in new discoveries that broadly-phrased questions fail to elicit. The views quoted above may or may not be 'representative' in a statistical sense, but as qualitative data they reveal the depth of insight and understanding of their learning which students can achieve, and which is crucial to further development of teaching materials and processes.

The sharp contrast between the students' interests and the representations in the textbooks is clearly a significant finding with a view to improving classroom teaching and textbook production. Success of a foreign language programme, as most educationists would agree, depends upon how the students' interests are addressed in curriculum planning and the content and how the teachers could make use of the students 'curiosity' to learn about the target culture(s) rather than keeping on demotivating them (Simpson, 1997). As Chapter 4 shows, the textbook *College English* was the result of years of efforts made by a team of College English specialists. Yet, the general responses from the users to the textbook were not found very positive as their interests were not considered well-matched by the content as the statistical data indicate. Lack of intercultural representations and lack of

contemporaneity in teaching content could be two important factors, as suggested in both questionnaire data and in interviews, that lead to a diminishing of students' interests.

Notes:

1. The overall mean scores were calculated on the basis of the individual means for each attribute. But, the latter will be presented only in relation to perceptions because the overall mean scores are considered more relevant than the individual means to attitude comparison.

2. This provides some evidence of the practical attitude of the authorities in many tertiary institutions towards the crucial Band-4 examination (CET 4). In these institutions, the teaching aims only at the first four band courses and the authorities seem to assume that 'high-flyers' who have passed CET 4 can take care of themselves.

3. The Spring Festival Gala is a popular annual performance given on the Eve of the Chinese New Year and is televised alive nation-wide. The performance usually lasts for five hours, from 8 pm on the Chinese New Year's Eve till 1 am on the New Year's Day. All the performances are very influential as the gala usually gathers the most popular artists from all over the country.

4. The response 'difficult to say' was originally considered to be worth a value, but since it implied 'maybe a little, maybe nothing' in this context it seemed to be more problematic to give it a value than none. Hence, 'difficult to say' was treated the same as 'learned nothing'. Ambiguous choices like this should be avoided in future research.

5. According to the students, "Zhenda zhongyi" is a CCTV programme shown on Saturdays and repeated on Sundays. "Fenghuang weishi", on the other hand, is a Hong Kong based Chinese programme accessible throughout China. Both offer a lot of information about foreign lifestyles, customs and other cultural aspects.

6. College English departments in some key universities have tried to experiment showing a recommended list of films in their own lecture cum film theatres (cf. FT4A). But even the small

number of students who were interested in such activities could only watch the films on weekly basis. The influence these controlled activities might exert on the students could be minimal.

7. The author did not realise that the statistical data from HUST for this concept were in fact different from those from the other two institutions until he sat down to the data analysis at a later stage. It was difficult to make this up as it meant another trip to the city which he could not afford because of his move into a new country.

8. Strictly speaking, the wording of this area on its own does not sound quite intercultural as it resembles 'Macro-level 1' – lifestyles – or 'Micro-level 1' – Ordinary people of contemporary society –, or the combination of these two.

Chapter 7

Cultural Studies Teaching for College English

Introduction

The overall purpose of this chapter is to stimulate curriculum development. At the start of this chapter the author attempts to evaluate the hypothesis made before the research study (see pp. 13-14 in the Introduction to the whole thesis) by summarising the analyses done in the first few chapters and the major findings of the empirical research presented in the two preceding chapters. This is followed by a brief assessment on the significance of the research study in relation to the present attempts to reform College English education. A theoretical framework for the College English programme is to be proposed on the basis of the summary and a review of an influential model recently developed for foreign language education. In proposing the theoretical framework, syllabus issues are attended to by discussing and suggesting the 'ultimate goal' and the general objectives of cultural studies teaching for the College English programme. In line with the proposed 'goal' and the general objectives, this chapter makes practical recommendations for College English

textbook writing, curriculum planning, and assessment. Areas for further research are to be identified at the end.

7.1. A Summary of Research Findings

The entire research study offers indicative evidence that the hypothesis made before the research study (see pp. 13-14) is valid; the current practice of cultural studies teaching is manifestly inadequate (major evidence represented in Chapter 6) because the objectives are not explicitly defined in policy documents and cultural studies teaching by intuition of individuals does not attend to essential contextual factors identified. The reviews given in Chapters 1 and 2 show that while cultural studies has been discussed fervently among Chinese linguists and language educationists in the last two decades it has attracted little attention from College English policy makers and specialists, as cultural studies teaching is vaguely implied in policy documents and the objectives are only indirectly discussed in publications on College English education. In the few occasional papers in which the importance of cultural studies teaching is discussed they often end up with a 'culture-after-language' conclusion (Lin, 1996 and Xie, 1999). The writers of these papers argue that as the linguistic competence of the students is believed to be weak, priority has to be given to the development of basic language skills, thus making cultural studies teaching optional. In policy documents – the syllabus, while vocabulary, grammar and language skills are 'progressively' stratified and the teaching of these elements is clearly stipulated, the other components of 'communicative competence' (the 'ultimate goal' for the programme) such as sociolinguistic and sociocultural competences are only implied and interpreted by

College English educators like Lin (1996) as skills to be developed at a 'higher stage'. For many learners of College English, however, this higher stage does not exist.

One of the main reasons for the neglect of cultural studies teaching is that sociocultural competence, one of the major components of communicative competence as defined by heavily cited scholars such as Canale and Swain (1980) and van Ek (1986) is omitted by College English specialists cum policy makers from their model of 'communicative language teaching' (cf. Han, Lu and Dong, 1995 and Yang, 1999). The exclusion of this component from their model has to be explained in relation to the broad aims of political education in China. As Chapter 3 shows, for a century, policy makers and educationists have never ceased to bring the *Ti-Yong* relationship (*Ti* – Chinese values and ideological concerns and *Yong* – Western technology through the learning of Western languages) into discussion. When the educational 'pendulum' of the country swung to the political side, culture was a forbidden zone in foreign language teaching as foreign culture was seen as 'fierce floods and savage beasts' (Hu and Gao, 1997: 2). When it moved to the academic side, cultural studies teaching could be taken as necessary but the content would be value laden because in imparting cultural knowledge the task of educating the youth should not be forgotten (Dong, 1992 and Zai, 1986). In practice, as policy makers overtly encourage a *Yangwei zhongyong* (to make foreign things serve China) attitudes towards the target culture in foreign language teaching, policy documents and textbooks for foreign language programmes are explicitly aimed to address the need for the target language as a lingua franca – to equip learners with linguistic competence for acquiring foreign technology so as to help modernise the country. As policy documents do not make the necessity of cultural studies explicit and tests avoid including items cultural (though test designers such as Yang (1998) are aware that they are unavoidable), teachers justifiably (and 'safely' in ideological terms) follow textbooks as guidelines by which culture is treated as of

secondary importance or 'by-product'. Foreign language programmes such as College English are thus centred as ever before on 'language points' – vocabulary and grammar.

Selecting genuine material for use has become a norm in textbook writing in recent years. However, the content in College English textbooks in general, as the analysis in Chapter 4 shows, reflects the value concepts and ideological viewpoints of the textbook writers' own culture. The images of the target cultures presented in core texts are neither balanced nor comprehensive and the students of College English are not encouraged to engage with alternative interpretations of the world as intercultural representations are hardly existent. Selection of genuine texts is generally seen as a great step forward in textbook writing but few seem to realise that it does not guarantee cultural authenticity. Obsession in choosing fascinating materials, arbitrary adaptation and abridgement, and above all ideological concerns has in their combined force resulted in contents laden with values of learners' own culture. In the case of *College English* – the most widely-used textbook for the College English programme – the writers' value concepts and ideological viewpoints are most thoroughly manifested in the *Intensive Reading* booklets which are, as the title suggests, intensively exploited by students taking College English.

Precisely because the materials originated from genuine sources, the impact of the unbalanced portrayal of other cultures exerted on learners could be even greater than that of the texts with a focus on their own culture. Chapter 6 gives evidence that some of the texts in *Intensive Reading* of the *College English* series, such as the ones portraying the aged people and the street crimes in the United States have clear influence on the attitudes of many students towards the people of the culture in question. Through reading these texts, the ideological message that 'the moon is not rounder in Western countries' is covertly but effectively sent to the students as they make generalisations. As most genuine

texts selected are value-laden, learners are seemingly made to believe that the outlooks of the peoples on this planet are similar, if not exactly the same. There does not seem to be a need to learn and understand alternative views of the world. The aim of '*Jiaoshu yuren*' (educating the youth while imparting them knowledge) advocated by Dong (1992), Zai (1986) and Liu (1987) might be achievable to a certain extent if it is interpreted as ideological and moral education with the connotation of indoctrination, but, as 6.4.2. reports, many students felt strongly that the programme did not help 'widen their horizons'. During their years at college, College English learning experience did not seem to be significant in bringing about perceptible changes in students and their attitudes towards otherness remained basically unchanged. On the other hand the data show clear evidence that the less exposure to otherness the students get, the more polarised their perceptions tend to be and the more ethnocentric attitudes they tend to hold.

The data from the empirical research presented in the preceding chapter clearly suggest that learners' perceptions of the people of the target cultures are extremely simplistic and stereotypical and their attitudes towards the people of the target cultures were primarily established on the basis of their constant comparisons of stereotypical images formulated in their exposure to various secondary sources (6.1 and 6.2). Comparisons based solely on simple stereotypes were particularly evident among students in those tertiary institutions where few students have had direct contact with native speakers of the target language. It should be noted that in their comparisons foreign groups were usually evaluated on the basis of values and moral concepts of their own culture though different groups of people might be contrasted among themselves. Very few students seemed to demonstrate their readiness to mediate conflicts in values (the female student in FS4A presented in 6.1.3.2 is an exception).

The empirical research also revealed that despite the powerful influence of films, TV and other sources of information many students regarded textbooks and teachers as important sources for cultural information. Some students were aware of the entertaining nature of foreign films which could be filled with exaggerated presentations of people and events but few seemed to question the cultural representations in their textbooks and by their teachers. In retrospect, many students who had finished the courses would comment on the textbooks they used negatively as they did not feel a perceptible change in their world outlook yet some of these students still referred to the images presented to them during the course when they were dipping into their feelings about the peoples under discussion. The data clearly indicate that the influence of textbooks and teachers exerted on students was noticeably great, but not always in a positive way as cultural representations were often unsystematic or unbalanced in textbooks.

Furthermore, as was pointed out in 6.4.4, the research data showed that there was a clear mismatch of the course contents and the cultural knowledge areas the students perceived as interesting and important. The sharp contrast between their interests and the textbook contents was particularly evident with respect to intercultural representations. On the one hand, intercultural representations seem to undergo a downward change (see 4.8.4) from receiving a slight attention to almost entirely being ignored in some major textbooks. On the other hand, in addition to their interest in observing the target cultures and the people by accessing genuine texts written by native speakers, the students showed keen interests in knowing how the people of their own culture living or studying abroad see the people of other cultures, how their own culture is perceived by others and above all how their competence for intercultural communication can be effectively developed. The mismatch identified has clear implications in cultural studies teaching.

7.2. Significance of the Research

As mentioned in 2.9, the College English programme is under the process of reformation in response to the 'tall-order' comment that the College English programme has to be reformed because foreign language teaching in China faces the dilemma of 'taking too much time but achieving too little' (Vice Premier Li, N. cited in Cen, 1997). The syllabus is under revision and its teaching methodology is under discussion. There is evidence that the reform which is taking place is clearly intended to address a few urgent needs such as to reduce the negative impact of the tests and to raise the importance of speaking skills in College English teaching. Four decisions, as mentioned in 2.9, are made: 1) stratifying requirements for different tertiary institutions according to their specific conditions and characteristics; 2) allowing eight key universities to break away from the existing testing system of the programme; 3) reducing three levels of skills ranking to two levels; and 4) taking measures to ensure four-year continuation of English learning. It is particularly interesting to note that, against all the odds, according to the 'Work Summary' (1999) the word 'culture' seems likely to appear in the new syllabus as the summary announces that 'the task of developing students' cultural attainment is added into the syllabus'.

None the less, evidence shows even more clearly that the programme is not likely to be reformed in a significant manner. Despite the possible mentioning of 'culture' in the syllabus, the content for teaching will apparently remain mostly unaltered as the most widely-used textbook *College English* has recently been slightly revised (as analysed in Chapter 4) and is claimed to aim at the new syllabus for the new century (An, 1997 and Wang and Xia, 1997). Cultural studies teaching will largely remain as it has been before, at

lest for those who use this textbook series. The controversial tests (CET 4 and CET 6) are most likely to stay firm as the political significance and the objectivity and statistical comparability of the tests are explicitly and strongly stated in recent papers by policy makers (cf. Cen, 1998 and Yang, 1999).

The 'reform' thus neglects a number of important issues in view of the educational value of the programme and four such issues have been the focal points of this thesis. The first and the supreme issue is the 'ultimate goal' set for the programme. 'Communicative competence' established in the 1985 syllabus as the 'ultimate goal', as pointed out in some places before, has proved to be a mirage, seemingly within sight but out of reach. The fact that over the years College English teaching has hardly progressed beyond the grammar-and-vocabulary-centred mode may well be due both to the doubtful attainability of such an 'ultimate goal' and the disparity between the goal and the ideological concerns of policy makers and College English educationists (this will be taken up again in 7.3.1.1 and 7.3.1.3). The second area of concern neglected in the present reform is the status of cultural studies teaching. The inclusion of this dimension in the syllabus (which is likely) could be regarded as a step forward but mere mentioning of the concept of culture in the syllabus, as mentioned in 2.9, is far from finding a solution to the problem of cultural studies teaching. The research findings presented in this thesis clearly suggest that there should be a redefintion of the teaching objectives. Without reviewing these two issues, the 'reform' would remain superficial.

The third issue in need of addressing earnestly is the important task of textbook writing which the thesis has so extensively discussed. As analysed in detail in Chapter 4, the most widely-used textbook, *College English*, which was just revised for the coming syllabus, is unsatisfactory, particularly with a view to cultural studies teaching. And the last area of

concern, but not the least, is the need for a re-examination of the existing tests (CET 4 and CET 6). The tests, clearly intended only for testing linguistic skills such as grammar and vocabulary, have to be reviewed because they practically play the ''stick' role in College English teaching.

The reviews and the empirical research findings presented in this thesis provide the most-needed evidence for reforming the programme by addressing these key issues. It has been made apparent in this thesis that a model workable for College English education has to attend to all the key contextual factors identified. On the basis of the research findings, a new policy statement which determines the teaching approach and outcome could be established to meet the basic needs relevant to the programme: attainability of objectives, students' interests and their natural learning behaviour, and perhaps most importantly the ideological concerns. On the basis of a clearly defined 'ultimate goal', the second issue – the teaching of objectives with cultural studies as an essential element – can be addressed with reference to the data which have been presented to manifest the current practice of cultural studies teaching. The third and the fourth areas of concern are both theoretical and practical in nature. With the qualitative analysis and critical examination presented in the thesis, the theoretical framework for textbook writing and testing designing can be established and practical suggestions can be made with a clear view to setting up a model with 'Chinese characteristics'.

7.3. An Ideal Model

The word 'ideal' used here should be interpreted philosophically. In its surface meaning, the word 'ideal' to a Chinese audience indicates either a 'desired goal' set up for directing current practice, just as Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991: 383) define, or a mirage, pleasing eyes but unreachable, or perhaps both. In China, the word is usually associated with personal ambitions or political slogans such as the 'lofty ideal of communism'. The ideal model to be proposed in this thesis embodies a more pragmatic perspective. It takes as a point of departure the theory of eclecticism advocated by language educationists such as Fan (1999) and Yalden (1987). An eclectic model in foreign language teaching, as Fan (1999) defines, is an ideal developed from a selection of well-grounded models taking into consideration major contextual factors such as time, location and type of learners. It is realistic in terms of application as eclecticism is in true accord with the traditional Chinese value of *Zhongyong zhidao* (happy medium), a Confucian philosophy which comprises the concept of eclecticism[1], and the current aim of establishing a model with Chinese characteristics. History (see 2.4.1) has shown that it was Brumfit's (1984) mediation of the relationships between 'accuracy and fluency' and balance of 'usage and use' that the syllabus revising team drew inspirations from in revising the 1985 *College English Syllabus*. Hence, it is justifiable for Fan (1999) to argue that it is eclectic models that tend to enable new discoveries to be integrated into teaching methods and objectives in the Chinese context.

The ideal model to be proposed here for the College English programme is established on the basis of Byram's (1997) model for intercultural communicative competence (ICC)

teaching which embodies basic principles underpinning theoretical discussions of foreign language education and which mediates essential elements of intercultural communicative competence. Having reviewed major models set up for communicative language teaching, Byram argues that the communicative language teaching approach is in essence a model which takes native speakers as models in language education. It fails to address many crucial social factors. Thus, it sets an impossible and distressful aim for foreign language learners. On the basis of this argument, he suggests that an attainable and desirable aim is to develop learners'

> ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural
> beliefs, behaviours and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their
> interlocutors, expressed in the same language – or even a combination of languages –
> which may be the interlocutors' native language, or not. (p. 12)

Rather than attempting to establish a new model by completely refuting the old, Byram makes full use of the values of the communicative approach (but with refined wording of the three major competencies, as defined by scholars such as van Ek (1986) and Canale and Swain (1980), for the purpose of establishing links within his model). As Figure 7.4.1 shows, Byram's (1997) ICC model integrates intercultural competence with linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competences as these competences are undeniably essential to language learners. This model is apparently eclectic, by Fan's (1999) definition, for it combines the strengths of well grounded models in foreign language teaching and stresses contextual factors such as time, location and type of learners.

It is worth noting that, in this model, Byram makes a distinction between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. While the former refers to the abilities of an individual to engage in interactions with people from another culture in his/her native language, the latter is defined as his/her capabilities of doing so in a foreign

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│  ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐   │
│  │  INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE              │   │
│  └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘   │
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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

| linguistic competence | ←→ | sociolinguistic competence | ←→ | discourse competence |

intercultural competence

savoirs

savoir apprendre/faire

savoir comprendre

savoir s'engager

savoir être

LOCATIONS OF LEARNING

| classroom t and I | fieldwork (t) and I | independent learning I |
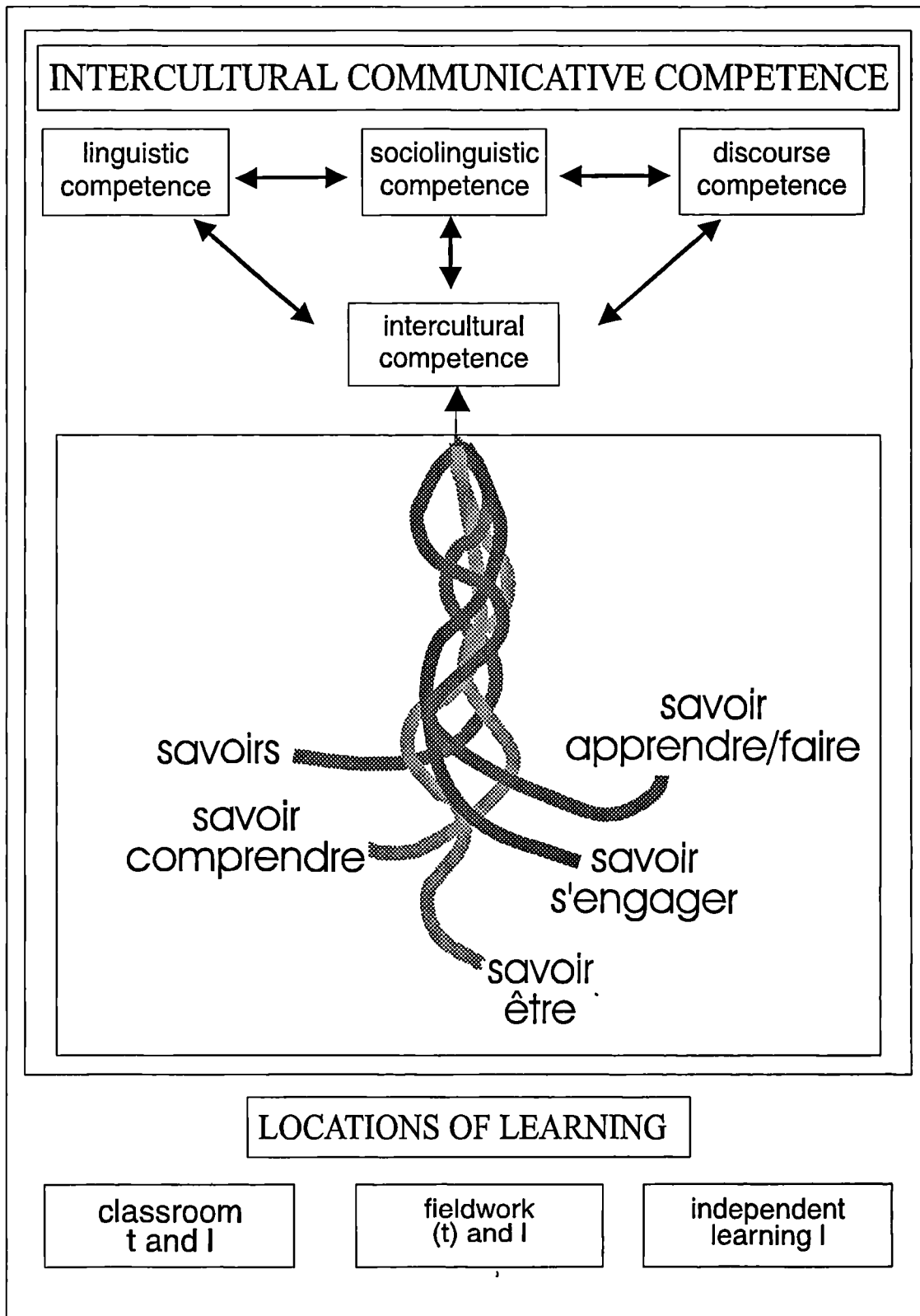
Figure 7.4.1. — Intercultural communicative competence and locations of learning.
Source: Byram (1997: 73)

language. The rationale of this distinction lies in a commonplace observation that learners

acquire intercultural competence through their natural exposure to cultural information in

342

their own language and/or through their personal observations of others and social networks in their own culture. The empirical data presented in 6.3 provide some evidence for this observation. The insight into intercultural competence acquisition has clear implications for curriculum designing, textbook writing and even classroom teaching. In order to make cultural studies teaching relevant and effective, language educationists should take into consideration learners' natural sources of intercultural competence acquisition and their exposure to cultural studies environment.

7.3.1. The 'Goal' for College English Education

In order for the students taking College English to meet their future needs for intercultural communication, the author proposes on the basis of the discussions and the research work presented in this thesis the following 'goal statement' as a replacement of the stipulated 'ultimate goal' in the 1985 syllabus for the programme:

> *The goal of the College English programme is to develop in the students the*
> *competence for effective intercultural communication in both written and spoken forms*
> *of the English language with people who speak it as a native language or use it as a*
> *lingua franca.*

This 'goal statement' is intended to promote the intercultural communicative competence model which significantly expands the communicative teaching approach. Clearly, such a 'goal statement' proposed for a national syllabus needs clear justification and elaboration both in terms of the approach and contents. This basically means that the link between the goal (the competence for effective intercultural communication) thus proposed and the context (the research data) presented in the thesis has to be established.

7.3.1.1. Attainability

College English educators are bound to ask a number of questions when facing a syllabus with the development of intercultural communicative competence as the 'goal'. The first question could possible show a concern about the attainability of the goal that looks even more complex than the existing one stipulated in the syllabus "to develop in the students the ability to communicate in the language via written and/or spoken channels" (CES, p. 20). It does not seem illogical to reason that, since the ICC model is formulated on the basis of the communicative language teaching as defined by scholars like van Ek (1986) and Canale and Swain (1980), the former must be more sophisticated and more difficult to attain than the latter.

Attainability, however, is the very priority taken by proponents of the ICC model. As was discussed in 7.3, most advocators, if not all, for the model of communicative competence implicitly or explicitly take native speakers as models. The awareness of the difficulty of attaining this competence is in fact a hidden reason why many College English specialists like Han, Lu and Dong (1995) and Yang (1995), while showing appreciation of the model of communicative language teaching, insisted on focusing attention to the development of linguistic skills such as grammar and vocabulary. The communicative language teaching model, as Byram (1997: 11-12) argues, sets an unattainable target which in most cases results in failure because it does not take "the conditions under which learners and native speakers learn and acquire a language" into account.

The model of intercultural communicative competence teaching, on the contrary, attaches great importance to these conditions, as two of its primary concerns are the context of the

344

foreign language teaching programme and complete integration of culture and language. The model has its focus on developing in the learner the ability to understand and handle the relationships between the culture of his/her own, as presented in a foreign language, and that of his/her interlocutors who speak the language. Three examples of possible intercultural communication are given in Byram (1997: 22) as a reminder that although there is common ground from one teaching situation to another the nature of intercultural communicative competence required is never context-free:

> between people of different languages and countries where one is a native speaker of the language used; between people of different languages and countries where the language used is a lingual franca; and between people of the same country but different languages, one of whom is a native speaker of the language used.

These possibilities of intercultural communication ought to be taken into consideration in designing foreign language teaching objectives. Thus, for a foreign language programme, the achievement of the objectives of intercultural communicative competence determined according to the 'conditions' (contextual factors) is not a stage on the way to the 'ultimate goal' as defined by proponents of communicative language teaching, but the 'goal' itself. As an example, Byram used a six-step procedure to analyse a French teaching programme in an east coast region in the United States and determined the 'threshold level' of the intercultural communicative competence for the programme participants. The planning procedure started with an examination of the geo-political context, learning context, and developmental factors such as learners' cognitive and affective features and concluded with clearly defined and sequenced objectives for the programme, linguistic and non-linguistic (cf. Byram, 1997: 79-86). It can be seen that the ICC model lays its emphasis on the achievement of a 'goal' which comprises realistic and achievable objectives rather than an 'ultimate goal', a 'lofty ideal' with native speakers as models.

7.3.1.2. Students' Interests and Needs

The policy statement proposed above offers a solution to the long-time controversy of the ranking of the language skills and encourages selecting contents to suit the interests of the students. Firstly, as the empirical data presented in 6.3 demonstrate, representations at the intercultural level are taken by students themselves as very important in College English education. The existing model does not attach importance to this dimension and, thus, the widely-used textbooks and classroom teaching do not provide opportunities for students to explore other ways to interpret the world. A mismatch between learners' interests and the content of the programme, as Simpson (1997) points out, tends to demotivate some learners and slow down the cognitive development of others. It is apparent that, because the proposed 'goal statement' put its focus on the development of students' competence for intercultural communication, the students' interests in intercultural representations are likely to be addressed adequately.

As far as learner's needs are concerned, the 'goal statement' regards all language skills as equally important. Policy makers' insistence[2] in prioritising reading skills solely on the basis of the findings in surveys among 'leaders' and teachers is apparently difficult to be justified as the views of students, graduates and employers are ignored. Their views are clearly as important as, if not more than those of the 'leaders' and teachers in terms of learners' needs. Many surveys conducted by College English specialists, as presented in 2.4.2, evidently suggest that oral skills such as speaking and listening are increasingly regarded as the most-needed skills by graduates and employers. These surveys also show that students are extremely interested in developing their speaking ability. On the other hand, to prioritise oral skills instead of reading skills in College English teaching could be

equally problematic and unacceptable as the 'intensive reading' model is believed to be more efficient in developing students' grammatical competence than any other teaching approach with oral skills as its focus (cf. Li, 1995). The long-time arguments and research studies published suggest that competences in both written and spoken forms are crucial for intercultural communication and all skills should be developed simultaneously. The 'goal statement' proposed above, thus, regards all language skills as of equal status for the College English programme. It seems inevitable that oral skills are to be dealt with more and more vigorously as learners' needs and interests have to be addressed. As the programme is in fact the final stage of English language learning for a majority of students before engaging in cross-cultural communication to various degrees and in different ways, ignorance or inadequate handling of any language skill would have a negative effect on both their motivation during learning and their overall competence for future intercultural communication.

7.3.1.3. Ideological Dimension

The proposed 'goal statement' made on the basis of the ICC model is, as one of its aims, also intended to address the ideological concerns of the College English programme. As Byram (1997: 11-12) points out, the communicative language teaching model advocated by many scholars first of all creates unattainable targets for most learners. Even when this model worked on some learners, it would make these learners 'linguistically schizophrenic', giving up their own cultural and linguistic identities to acquire a new socio-cultural identity. The 'gone-too-far behaviour' and the extremely appreciative attitudes identified in 6.1.3.1 and 6.1.2.1 in some students are obvious symptoms of linguistic schizophrenia. The 'Xianmu' (admiring) and 'Congbai' (worshiping) feelings to foreign people and their

material environment and overt imitation of their behaviour could be considered clear reflections of ideological transformation, a concept mentioned at the end of Chapter 3, an outcome of foreign language education policy makers and educationists in China have worked so hard to circumvent in the past century. Both the *Ti-yong* formula and the *Shuangyong* policy, as examined in detail in Chapter 3, were developed for the purpose of preventing learners from contracting such a 'disease'. Based on the assumption that language and culture were separable, *Ti-yong* and *Shuangyong* were both intended to encourage learners to take the target language and foreign expertise as of only utilitarian value and to cultivate a 'critical attitude' in them towards foreign peoples and cultures. Clearly, the possibility of learners' becoming 'linguistically schizophrenic' as a result of the communicative language teaching approach as defined by advocators of the approach such as Han, Lu and Dong (1995) suggests that this teaching approach is not in accord with the aim of developing such an attitude.

The ICC model, however, encourages a critical approach as it emphasises the acquisition of skills and attitudes as well as knowledge through questioning and discovering (Byram, 1997). Learners with the aim to develop intercultural communicative competence are not expected to give up their own linguistic and cultural identities in order to acquire a new sociocultural identity. Nor are they supposed to merely accept a stereotypical account of a specific culture. Instead, they are encouraged, as was mentioned earlier in this section, to develop a critical attitude in cultural studies and to interpret the transmitted account of a specific group in alternative ways. This is clearly in accord with the ideological concerns of policy makers and educationists. On the other hand, Byram (1997) states that learners' critical attitudes towards other groups and cultures "should be counter-balanced by the openness and the willingness to suspend disbelief in other views and unthinking belief in one's own". This openness and willingness are ignored in the current practice of foreign

language teaching. As the author argues in Chapter 3, particularly towards the end, policy makers and educationists in China should first of all show willingness to further develop the half-a-century-old *Shuangyong* policy. Only on the premise of further development of the policy could learners of foreign languages take a firm step forward in their endeavour to develop intercultural communicative competence.

7.3.2. The Objectives of Cultural Studies

Having justified the 'goal statement', the author would like to propose the objectives for developing students' intercultural communicative competence. Before proceeding to the proposal, there is a need to further argue for the importance of including intercultural skills and attitudes as well as knowledge in the programme. As was reviewed in Chapter 1, one of the main conventions in foreign language teaching in tertiary institutions is that cultural studies, if it is taught, is done solely as imparting knowledge or facts. As long as learners get to know the facts, they are assumed to be equipped with competence for intercultural communications. This view is dominant not only in programmes such as College English but in advanced courses like those for English majors (cf. Cao, 1998).

The relationships of knowledge, intercultural skills and attitudes are discussed at length in Byram, Morgan, et al. (1994) and Byram (1997). In Byram (1997) for example, cultural knowledge and attitudinal factors are both taken as the preconditions for intercultural communication. They are in turn modified by the skills of intercultural interactions. This viewpoint is shown as gradually accepted by Chinese scholars. Shu and Zhuang (1996) assert that "it is simply unthinkable that students with ethnocentric attitudes towards the target cultures and foreign language learning can successfully learn the language and the

cultures" (p. 151, author's translation). In addition to attitudinal issues discussed in Cao (1998) on 'cultural awareness to cultural understanding', the importance of skills training is strongly stressed by the remarks that it is the intercultural skills rather than knowledge that are the lifelong assets for students. In Hu and Guo's (1997) fairly comprehensive discussion, they do not only make statements on the significance of these components but also suggest methods to test them (this will be taken up again in 7.6). They argue strongly that they are acquirable in educational settings and assessable with both conventional and unconventional means. In their proposal of the 'cultural studies syllabus' for English majors as was presented in 1.2.3.4, however, knowledge is clearly taken as the dominant component while intercultural skills and attitudes are only covertly indicated in their inventory of 'cultural behaviour' items.

The inclusion of intercultural skills and attitudes into a syllabus is likely to effectively stop educators from presenting cultural studies as mere knowledge and enable the College English programme to take a great step towards the model of intercultural communicative competence. On the basis of the analyses and the empirical studies of the socio-political and learning contexts of the College English programme presented in preceding chapters, the author proposes that the following objectives be established as the 'ICC threshold' for learners taking College English. Many objectives given in the following proposal are direct selections from Byram's (1997) objective inventory but some, particularly those for acquiring knowledge, are adjusted to fit into the contexts as identified in this thesis and the Chinese culture of learning.

Skills: (abilities to)

1) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins.

2) identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in a communicative event (in either spoken or written forms) and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present.

3) *elicit from informants (e.g. intercultural speakers, native speakers of the language) the concepts and values of documents or events in proper questioning techniques (in either spoken or written forms).*

4) *make good use of sources (e.g. reference books, newspapers, magazines) to explore historical or contemporary political, economic and social relationships between cultures and societies and analyse the different interpretations involved.*

Critical Cultural Awareness (ability to)

1) *interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures in either spoken and written forms.*

2) *make evaluative analysis of a document or an event which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria.*

Attitudes

1) *interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices.*

2) *readiness to mediate conflicts in values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products between one's own and other cultures.*

3) *willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality.*

Knowledge about:

1) *stereotyped images (national identities) of the peoples and lifestyles of one's own and the target cultures and awareness of the complexity of cultures.*

2) *different connotations of culturally-loaded key words and phrases between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries.*

3) *major differences of values and moral concepts between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries and awareness of the conflicts of viewpoints which might be caused by these differences.*

4) *historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries.*

5) *national history, geography, and cultural heritage of one's own and one's interlocutor's countries.*

6) *awareness of social distinctions and their principal markers in one's own and one's interlocutor's languages.*

Most of the objectives in the above list are essential ones of the ICC model and some are specifically relevant to the Chinese context. The objectives for attitudes, for example, are

set up for the purpose of developing students' interest in and openness and willingness for intercultural communication in addition to critical cultural awareness. The aim for developing such attitudes is relevant to foreign language education and apparently it may lead to the achievement of what Byram (1992) calls 'tertiary socialisation' and Kramsch's (1993) 'third perspective' as reviewed in Chapter 1, and eventually result in 'intercultural speakers' (Kramsch, 1998 and Byram, 1997). The objectives for skills are also aimed to promote an intercultural as well as a critical approach to cultural studies. At the same time, some objectives such as the third and fourth skills are intended to stimulate learning of effective strategies for intercultural communication. The proposed objectives for skills and attitudes are intended to direct the current practice of College English education in which such objectives are totally absent.

The adjustment for the 'knowledge' objectives is made primarily on the basis of the study of the Chinese culture of learning and teaching as briefly reviewed in 2.7. The inclusion of the second objective of knowledge, 'different connotations of culturally-loaded words and phrases', for instance, is intended to incorporate cultural studies teaching into the traditional way of vocabulary teaching, an essential part of the 'intensive reading' model (see 3.3.1). Wholly negating the vocabulary-centred, 'intensive reading' model, as some critics such as Cotton (1990) do, has proved ill-informed as it reflects the teaching culture and values of knowledge transmission in China. This gives a clear explanation to why in discussions by most well-known Chinese scholars of cultural studies teaching such as Hu (1994 and 1995), Hu and Guo (1997) and Deng and Liu (1989), the study of vocabulary is always placed at the foremost position. As an active measure, the author suggests that the 'language points' method in the 'intensive reading' model could be slightly adapted to combine vocabulary teaching with cultural studies. Textbook-like publications such as Deng and Liu's (1989) short essays on language and culture and Hu's (1995) dictionary of

British and American cultures could serve as convenient reference materials for this purpose. The integration of vocabulary learning with cultural studies could be expanded to the teaching of other knowledge. 'Value and moral concepts' and 'social distinctions and their principal markers', for instance, are usually associated with or revealed by the very words and idioms one uses as the variation in the use of vocabulary manifests social status of the users and different world perspectives. Clearly, the cultural exploitation of connotations of words and idioms is both necessary considering the Chinese culture of teaching and feasible in view of reference materials and teaching methodology. The adapted approach may turn out to be an important part of cultural studies with Chinese characteristics, an aim desired in foreign language education in the country.

7.4. Process of Teaching

There are many factors which should be taken into account for the implementation of the 'goal statement' and the fulfilment of the cultural studies teaching objectives proposed in the preceding section. In order to run the programme with the proposed objectives, it is useful first of all to determine the major elements for the programme in terms of process with English as a binding element. Taking as reference the language and culture teaching process presented in Byram (1989), the author decide on four interrelated elements as the most relevant to the process of College English teaching. The whole process of language and cultural studies teaching can be represented by Figure 7.5.1. The obvious difference from Byram's model is the absence of 'cultural experience' in this process as very few students in China have the opportunity to gain experience in a foreign country. The first

element is language learning in the sense of acquiring the five language skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing and translating. This element ought to be enriched by the study
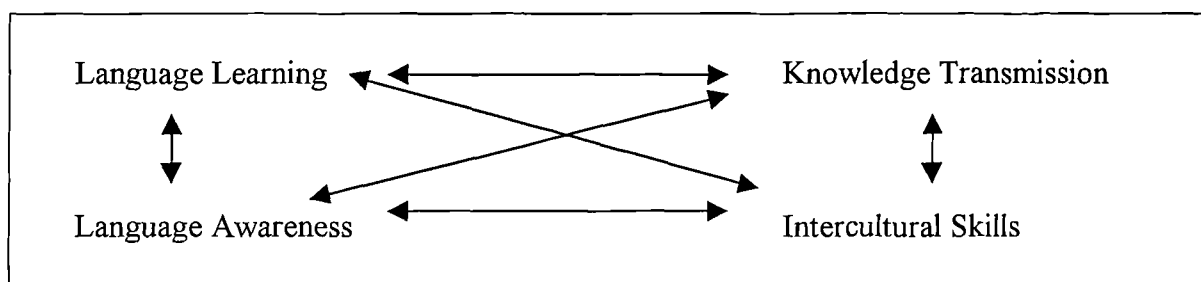
Figure 7.5.1 — The language and culture teaching process

of the nature of the language from a sociolinguistic point of view (language awareness). The third element, knowledge transmission, refers to cultural knowledge teaching which involves viewpoints of both ethnographers and informants (cf. Byram, 1991: 24-25). In teaching this element, comparative techniques should be used, as cultural awareness building and image formulation in learners, as some evidence given in Chapter 6 shows, are usually based on their active and constant comparisons of different cultures. There would be no extra courses needed for the teaching of the second and the third elements as both elements are knowledge-oriented and the knowledge is supposed to be reflected in the content of the programme. This would effectively combine the three elements in College English teaching, rather than separating them into several stages as Lin (1996) does, and help advance the programme to the ICC model integrating language and culture teaching. The last element, intercultural skills training, is in the author's definition, relatively advanced as the training should be based on top of all the other three elements. This element could be conducted in the target language in the form of 'cultural studies tasks' which could include culture capsules, culture permeation, culture clusters, culture assimilators and cultural 'poly-mirrors' as described in Hu and Guo (1997: 172-192). Apparently, to carry out these tasks requires learners to have the basic language skills as well as sociocultural and sociolinguistic knowledge.

To make the teaching process more concrete, the author proposes the following scheme (Table 7.5.2) for the four-band courses of the foundation stage – the core courses of the College English programme. In this scheme, language learning takes half of the time of the four courses because of the need to train the five language skills. As Chapter 2 shows, development of the language skills, particularly reading skills, has been believed the central task since the programme came into existence. In the proposed scheme, however, this element is gradually reduced as the programme continues to benefit the training of

Table 7.5.2. — Teaching scheme for the first four band courses

Band	Language Learning	Language Awareness	Knowledge Transmission	Intercultural Skills
1.	60%	20%	20%	0%
2.	50%	20%	20%	10%
3.	50%	15%	15%	20%
4.	40%	15%	15%	30%

of intercultural skills. Knowledge-oriented elements, language awareness and cultural knowledge transmission, stay almost unchanged throughout the four core courses as learners should remain exposed to socio-cultural and sociolinguistic representations which are systematically incorporated into the programme. This scheme could serve as general guidelines for curriculum planning and textbook writing. In practice, of course, there could be no clear borderlines in between these four elements as they are mutually supportive of the whole process.

7.5. Textbooks

The content of the programme is primarily reflected in textbooks, though some teachers do add or replace materials for classroom teaching. In the textbook analysis in Chapter 4, most College English textbooks were found 'language-points' centred and representations at various social levels in the textbooks were noticeably incomprehensive and unbalanced from a cultural studies point of view. Despite the fact that texts in these textbooks derived mostly from genuine sources, lack of measures to maximise cultural authenticity in the textbooks causes great reduction of authenticity, thus making them inadequate for cultural studies teaching. To facilitate the functioning of the new model, the author believes that it is an urgent task to revise the textbooks currently in use by relating the content to the objectives for intercultural communicative competence, learners' interests and their future needs.

Given the proposed 'goal statement' and the equal status of the five language skills, the revision should begin with a much-needed change of the title of the textbook for the core course, for example, from the traditional 'Intensive Reading' into 'Integrated English Course' as suggested by many scholars such as Wang (1996) and Li (1995) or any other title which reflects the aim for developing intercultural communicative competence. This change is not intended to adjust an 'old-fashioned' title but for a move from a traditional approach to the ICC model. It will first of all enable the textbook writers to select texts more linguistically and culturally appropriate for the core course booklets and to design classroom activities to maximise cultural authenticity at discourse level. It is through this change that an ICC model with 'Chinese characteristics' is likely to come into existence in a Chinese educational setting.

As College English textbook writing is an enormous project[3], it should be carried out in a theoretically grounded fashion. Admittedly, it is a daunting task to satisfactorily address all the proposed objectives in a foreign language textbook, particularly considering the need to meet the various demands of the huge learner population for future intercultural communication. However, as Chapter 4 argues, when the essential dimensions are taken into account in foreign language textbook writing, writers would have general guidelines or criteria to follow rather than depending on their individual consciousness for language materials (cf. Dong, 1997) to integrate language teaching with cultural studies teaching. With these dimensions in mind, writers are more likely to produce textbooks which provide better balanced and more comprehensive representations at all social levels as well as more appropriate 'language points' and exercise items so as to more effectively help learners eventually deal with communication tasks in authentic situations.

The arguments about textbook writing presented in this thesis, particularly in Chapter 4, can be put in a practical fashion by considering what practical measures could be taken by writers to write College English textbooks to suit the ICC model. These measures could include:

1. A College English textbook is written by an interdisciplinary team made up of a group of College English specialists and some native English speakers supported by a sociologist, an anthropologist, a sociolinguist (all three are needed for best presenting the culture(s) of the target language and learners' own culture), a scientist (consultant for best presenting the latest development in science and technology, an area regarded as the most important by the students (see 6.4)) and a photographer (for culturally-appropriate pictorial representations). Ideally, the Chinese members in this team have had substantial overseas experience and the native speakers are from different English speaking countries. In addition, the team should also include some speakers who use

English as a lingua franca (such as people from Germany, France, India, Singapore and Japan) so that more dimensions, linguistic and cultural, are added to the textbook to help learners increase awareness of the multi-contexts in foreign language learning. The collaboration of such a team would be significant for the whole writing process and it will be particularly crucial at the text selection stage as it is more likely for this team than a group of exclusively EFL specialists to gather appropriate texts which are culturally balanced at the macro-social level, truly representative in terms of social identities of individuals at the micro-social level and systematic in representations at the intercultural level.

2. Texts should be selected from not only genuine but also contemporary sources from different countries, mostly from English speaking countries and some other countries where English is used as an official/second/foreign language. As argued in Chapter 4, authentic materials should also include resources (in English) frequently explored by students such as VOA and BBC radio broadcasts, TV programmes and even texts from Chinese magazines and newspapers in English because learners' natural learning behaviour ought to be taken into account. Priority should be given to 'culturally-rich' items which provide adequate information and vocabulary to facilitate discussions in classrooms.

3. In order to achieve the cultural studies objectives as well as the linguistic objectives stipulated in the syllabus, the texts chosen should be graded according to the four inventories (the vocabulary, grammar, functions/notions and micro-skills inventories included in the 1985 syllabus) to avoid unnecessary adaptation and abridgement. In designing exercise items for core course booklets, priority should be given to those that facilitate the training of students at discourse level. Exercise types such as word study, reading aloud and 'language points' revising could be done when the reading and oral tasks at discourse level are completed.

4. One of the arguments presented in Chapter 4 stresses the ever-changing nature of languages and culture(s) in response to sociocultural and economic changes. The changes could be particularly evident in the new century as information technology reshapes the world physically and mentally at an even faster pace. This challenges the illusion of ever-lasting value of genuine texts. As all languages and cultures are in the process of constant change learners should be exposed to the up-to-date language data and information. As Kramsch (1993) points out, the development of multimedia in language education is bound to revolutionise the way authentic texts are exploited. All these suggest that College English textbooks should be revised more frequently than ever before. With the spread of networked computers and the development of the Internet technology, the author also foresees that there could be an updating process by textbook writers through the Internet so that teachers can download new materials to keep the textbook content and language contemporary.

7.6. Testing

Throughout the thesis reasons are given to argue for the necessity of the reform of the two College English tests (CET 4 and CET 6). As clearly shown in 2.8, the negative impact caused by the tests on students, teachers and tertiary institutions as a whole could be the most important reason for the reform. In addition, many scholars such as Wang (1991) observe that many students 'got high marks in the tests but demonstrate low competence' (*Guofen dineng*). Even more indicative was Xia's (1997) large-scaled survey among 999 students who had taken CET 4 and CET 6. One of the questions she asked about their reflections on the tests was "Do you think that having passed CET 4 and CET 6 you can

communicate in English?" More than 80% of the informants replied with a clear "No".

Another question was "Do you think the tests you have taken are irrelevant to societal needs?" Nearly, two thirds of the informants responded with a "Yes". Xia also reports that in another survey among a number of employers none of them thought that the two tests demonstrate the real competence of the students and thus they did not take the certificates seriously but as a reference.

Even more apparently, in order to make possible the functioning of the proposed model in this chapter, new modes would have to be formulated and applied in assessment. In CET 4 and CET 6, as shown in 2.6, culture does not have an explicit place as the tests are designed in accordance with the objectives stipulated in the syllabus in which cultural studies is not explicitly indicated. This undoubtedly discourages cultural studies teaching and learning as scholars such as Wang (1999) observe that many teachers adopt a 'teach-whatever-is-tested' attitude and learners also learn 'whatever is tested'. Wang states that testing of cultural competence is necessary and it would be the major means to attract the attention from teachers and students.

None the less, there does not seem to be any testing model which the programme with the proposed objectives could follow as tests on cultural studies for foreign language majors have been traditionally focused on knowledge or facts (Liu, 1991 and Hu and Guo 1997). The objectives for attitudes never seem to have been taken into account in designing tests. Testing of intercultural skills was experimented on a small scale among English majors but the test seems to focus more on assessing knowledge of cultural differences than on skills[4] and the main instrument used was multiple-choice questions (Wang, 1990 cited in Hu and Guo, 1997). This is only natural since statistical tests have long been considered the objective means to measure educational outcome.

Byram (1997) and Gipps (1994) make a distinction between two models of assessment: a 'psychometric model' and an 'educational model'. While the former puts sole emphasis on the objectivity and the statistics out of assessment, an important aim of the latter is to enhance good quality learning and teaching. Both scholars advocate a 'shift' of testing from the former to the latter as they argue that psychometric objective tests seeking for statistical representations would lead to "simplification of competences" and would have "a detrimental effect" on education (Byram, 1997: 111). In Byram's ICC model, most objectives for intercultural competence are assessed not in the form of 'objective' tests as commonly defined but in the form of portfolios and continuous assessment. Even for the assessment of knowledge when objective tests seem most applicable, he also suggests continuous assessment as well as tests as modes of assessment because 'deep learning' ought to be given credit.

CET 4 and CET 6 for the College English programme are obviously 'psychometric tests' by Gipps's (1994) definition. It seems apparent that a shift from this testing mode to the 'educational model' is needed for the programme because, as shown in 2.8, the negative impact of the tests has proved damaging to English language education in China. None the less, statistical comparability and objectivity are strongly believed to be fundamental principles of testing by policy makers and testing specialists such as Yang (1999) and Cen (1998) who claim the two tests to be scientific in terms of theory and valuable in terms of political importance. Thus, a 'shift' from the psychometric model to the educational one as suggested by Byram and Gipps is unlikely to take place, not in the near future. It is also worth noticing that, even if the shift were allowed to occur, the difficulty in using portfolios and continuous assessment as modes of assessment is foreseeable; a population

of more than 2.4 million test takers (by Yang's (1999) statistics) per year requires simple statistical data for certification purpose.

However, in view of the detrimental effect on foreign language education, a reform of the existing model is clearly necessary and a shift to the educational model should be taken at present as a goal to direct the current practice while considering the difficulty in application. On the ground of all the analyses of the contextual factors, the author is proposing a model, which again could be seen as eclectic, to combine the values of the psychometric model and the educational model as defined by Gipps (1994) and Byram (1997). The model is represented in Table 7.6.1. This model, when compared with the existing testing scheme presented in 2.6, maintains all the major component parts of the

Table 7.6.1. — A model proposed for CET 4 and CET 6.

Language Skills	%	Testing Format	Modes of Testing	Notes
Listening	20%	Multiple choice & compound dictation	Nation-wide test	Content with language and culture integrated
Reading	20%	Multiple choice	Nation-wide test	Content with language and culture integrated
Translation	20%	English to Chinese or Chinese to English	Nation-wide test	Content with language and culture integrated
Writing	20%	Essay writing (ICC-oriented)	Nation-wide test	Content with language and culture integrated
Speaking (New)	20%	Mini-talks, debates, etc. (ICC-oriented)	Continuous assessment	Primary focus on attitudes and skills

tests with suggestions for changes in weighting as all five skills are considered equally important in the proposed ICC model. The test of all skills, except for speaking, is still in the form of nation-wide test. Only the content is suggested to reflect full integration of language and culture – a prerequisite of the ICC approach (Hu and Guo, 1997). It should be further proposed that in the nation-wide tests the focus could be laid on language skills and intercultural knowledge as intercultural skills and attitudes could be concentrated on in the oral tests which are in the form of continuous assessment (to be detailed below). It

is necessary to note that the focus of assessment proposed here is not meant to encourage a separation of the components of intercultural communicative competence in the tests as all the components, as indicated in Figure 7.5, are interrelated and mutually supportive and the assessment of one component may envelop the evidence of others.

The major difference between the proposed model and the existing one is the addition of the oral test proposed to be in the form of continuous assessment. This testing mode has to be justified by a comparison of the conventional oral tests and other possible options of oral assessment. In recent publications, as testing oral skills has become inevitable (see 2.9), College English specialists have begun to discuss ways of oral assessment. Many agree that oral testing in a conventional way, for example, typical face-to-face interview with two examiners interviewing one student in the target language in a given room for about ten minutes, is '*Tianfang yetan*' (the Arabian Nights Entertainments) which is used interestingly in China to mean 'totally impossible or mere imagination' (Zhou and Bao, 1995). It is true that an oral test for the population of more than two million test takers annually in this traditional testing mode may mean mobilising College English teachers all over the country[5] and numerous supporting staff and draining enormous financial resources. More importantly, as testing specialists such as Guo and Cheng (1996) point out, even if it were possible such a testing mode could only cover a narrow range of content areas within the short time span and the reliability of the test could be affected by numerous affective, social, contextual and physical factors on the part of both examiners and examinees.

Some specialists have begun discussing enthusiastically the oral test, a component part of the G-Telp (General Tests of English Language Proficiency) designed by the San Diego State University (cf. Zhou and Bao, 1995 and Ye, 1997). Examinees in this test are

instructed to record their answers to the questions pre-recorded into a cassette player. As the test can be administered in language laboratories in a given period of time for a large number of examinees, it meets the needs of large-scaled standardised tests. Although these scholars argue vigorously for the reliability and feasibility of this test, at the end they admit that the most obvious weakness lies in the lack of authenticity of the testing environment and the disassociation of listening and speaking. Entirely missing from this testing mode are the assessment of interactive skills and non-verbal communicative competence which are crucial elements for oral communication specified in the syllabus. None the less, Zhou and Bao argues that lack of authenticity is a necessary sacrifice for large-scaled tests.

Because of weaknesses identified by these testing specialists themselves about standard oral tests and the oral test of the G-Telp as presented above, the author tentatively suggests continuous assessment as a solution for the programme. This suggestion is not based the author's research study presented in this thesis but it could be justified, again tentatively, in three respects: teachers' awareness of the advantage of the mode, its educational significance and feasibility in application. Continuous assessment is an unfamiliar notion in the Chinese context for there does not seem to be much discussion about continuous assessment. The need for such an assessment mode, however, seems to be felt by many College English teachers. To lessen negative impacts of CET 4 on College English teaching, both Wang (1991) and Guang and Sun (1991) suggest that 'during-course' learning and local tests designed by individual institutions should be in some way taken into account together with the nation-wide test. In a more recent discussion, Han (1998) also argues that speaking and listening skills should be assessed after each clearly defined stage, from beginning to upper levels, during the entire programme and this assessment should be incorporated into the testing system. Although these practitioners do not seem to have advanced their ideas into solid proposals[6], their awareness of the

advantage of this assessment mode gives evidence that College English teachers would take such a testing mode positively.

Continuous assessment normally sets specific standards for performance for the entire programme or course and thus students' motivation of training for assessed tasks is likely to be stimulated. In College English education, this testing mode could suggest students' engagement in oral communicative activities such as role playing, group discussions, oral descriptions, giving explanations or interpretations, making comments, and even debates strongly advocated by many specialists such as Guo and Cheng (1996) and Zhang (1991). At a higher level (Band 5 and Band 6), the author envisages that oral presentation skills (a much needed but wholly neglected area in College English teaching) could be taught and assessed. All these oral activities could have intercultural communication as the central theme and incorporate into the curriculum cultural studies tasks such as culture capsules, culture permeation, culture clusters, culture assimilators and cultural 'poly-mirror' as mentioned in 7.4. Intercultural skills are trained through these tasks and certain activities can be chosen for assessment. With clearly-defined oral tasks for continuous assessment supported by purposefully written textbooks as discussed in 7.5, this mode of assessment is likely to help CET 4 and CET 6 move gradually from a solely psychometric model to an educational assessment model which recognises the complex domains and constructs of education. Equally significant is the probability of developing the College English programme from the traditional teacher-centredness to a 'student-centred' model because the testing mode overtly encourages the task-based learning approach (cf. Xia and Kong, 1998 and Markee, 1997) which stresses 'learning by doing'. Furthermore, as Guang and Sun (1991) and Wang (1991) argue, the detrimental impact of the one-time psychometric tests would be lessened when a learner's competence could be measured by other testing modes.

The keen interest shown among students in learning oral skills and the use of English by teachers as the medium of instruction, as shown in 2.7, are also affirmative prerequisites for conducting continuous assessment. When both teachers and students can see that their efforts in using the target language as a means of communication inside or outside class are recognised (assessed) in the crucial examination, they are both assured in the pursuit of objectives for oral communication. Whereas, if oral abilities after four semesters of training (for an average students taking College English) are tested by a cassette recorder in a few minutes, by replicating the oral test of G-Telp for example, both teachers' and students' attention would be focused upon mechanical drilling to answer mock questions and inventing techniques to get basic marks without making much effort. The negative 'wash-back' effect experienced in conducting the psychometric test, CET 4, would repeat itself in oral skills assessment.

The tasks of assessing oral skills, as implied in the above discussion, could consist of a variety of oral activities ranging from short talks, making comments, dealing with culture capsules to debates. In carrying out well-designed tasks learners would not only display their oral skills but also demonstrate their skills and attitudes. If an assessed task is a mini-presentation on an intercultural communicative issue, for instance, the speaker's knowledge, attitude and skills could be shown in the arguments and data he/she presents and the way s/he used to obtain the data. For the CET 4 oral test, three to four tasks could be assigned for assessment during the last two band courses to ensure that all students are assessed[7]. In this connection, the author would also suggest that individual tertiary institutions be given authority to designate their own oral tasks because, as Chapter 6 made clear, the future needs of the students and the geographical locations which differ from one institution to another are all determining factors for task designing.

7.7. Further Research

In Chapter 1 of Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991), four areas are identified for theoretical and empirical research and development: definition of aims for cultural studies within general education framework; curriculum and learning theories; cultural studies teaching methodology; and assessment. These four areas are clearly the most relevant to any research study into foreign language education. Even though the present study aimed from the very start to focus on these areas further theoretical and empirical research is needed as contextual factors such as learners' needs and interests, and even the general educational framework change in response to sociocultural and economic changes. As Byram (1997: 12) points out,

> The history of language teaching is the history of increasing understanding of the nature of language and the attempts to incorporate new discoveries into methods and objectives. There is no reason to believe that we have reached the end of that development.

The 'ideal model' proposed in this section is an attempt to embody as many as possible theoretical principles recognized in recent discussions of foreign language education and contextual factors identified in published sources and the empirical research. However thorough and systematic the model may be, new discoveries are always necessary to further establish the theoretical ground of the proposed model and improve the model for real application. The proposed procedure for textbook writing, for example, has never been tested in the Chinese context. An experiment on a small writing project might be of value before the procedure is put into practice. Tests, particularly the continuous assessment of oral skills, with intercultural communicative competence as the ultimate

goal do not seem to have ever been developed and pilot studies on small scales could be crucial to test their applicability and validity. The response from policy makers, learners and practitioners to the proposed model is an even more urgent task for its acceptance and implementation. Without further empirical research into these issues the model would remain as theory without practical value. In cultural studies research into foreign language education, none the less, theories should be built upon the basis of applications.

7.8. Final Remarks

Prabhu (1987) notes that education is usually viewed contrastively in terms of procedures: 'equipping' and 'enabling' procedures in education. Educationists holding the 'equipping' view stratify knowledge and skills and envisage transmission of the knowledge and facts as educational ends. They believe that the educated will become productive talents of the society once they are equipped with the adequate amount of knowledge. Those who see education as an 'enabling' procedure on the other hand are conscious of the unpredictable needs of the future society. They concentrate on fundamental abilities and maintain that rather than solely offering ready-made knowledge and facts, the curricular content should be designed to enable learners to understand the learning process and their own potentials in order to extend their 'serviceability' maximally. The proposed model of intercultural communicative competence given in this chapter promises the development of foreign language education in the direction suggested in the latter perspective. It recognises the value of knowledge in the learning process but, more importantly, it stresses the learning process itself and the development of skills and attitudes for intercultural communication.

Notes

1. *Zhongyong zhidao* (happy medium) is one of the well-established Confucian philosophies in China. By Mao and Sheng's (1985: 405) definition, *Zhongyong zhidao* embodies the principles of eclecticism, coordination, and even conservatism and opposes the inclination of going to extremes. This traditional world outlook is highly valued even today.

2. It seems clear that some policy makers cum College English specialists are not in agreement with the ranking of reading as the first priority to be included in the policy document (the new syllabus to be promulgated). Huang and Shao (1998), both of whom are key figures in the Second Advisory Committee of the Foreign Language Teaching at Colleges, for instance, state that the requirements stipulated in the syllabus are not in accord with the future needs of the students as they report that students' productive abilities such as writing and speaking skills do not meet the demands of contemporary employers. However, the opinion of these specialists does not seem to prevail as the new syllabus to be promulgated is likely to rank reading as the most-required skills and all the rest as the second-required.

3. According to the author's rough counting, more than two hundred College English specialists have been involved in compiling and editing the 54 booklets of *College English*, the textbook most widely used in tertiary institutions.

4. Here is a typical test item in Wang's experiment,
   In an English telephone conversation, the receiver usually picks up the receiver and says ___
   a) "Hello, who are you?"
   b) "Hello, this is (your own name or telephone number)."
   c) "Hello, I am (your own name)."
   d) "Hello, who are you looking for?"
   The test is apparently more of knowledge of cultural differences than of skills.

5. Supposing that an equal number of students take the nation-wide CET 4 and CET 6 every January and June (as the tests are biannual events). When the annual population of 2,400,000 is divided by 2, the figure becomes 1.2 million. Supposing that twenty four thousand College English teachers can be mobilised to act as oral examiners (by Huang and Shao's (1998) statistics there are about thirty thousand College English teachers). To interview such a test

taker population individually for ten minutes in one single test statistically means to make the examiners work for approximately 17 hours continuously as each pair of examiners will be responsible for 100 test takers.

6. In Guang and Sun (1991), for example, a suggestion of making the results of mid-term examinations administered locally 25% of the total marks is made but they admit that "this may not sound reasonable, but only a temporary solution" (p. 31) to the negative effects of CET 4 on the programme.

7. As was described in the programme summary in Chapter 2 most students start from Band 1 and Band 2 courses but some may begin with Band 3 course according to their placement test results. The continuous assessment, therefore, should start from Band 3 to guarantee that all students would be assessed in this mode.

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(Note: In this bibliography, articles from journals whose titles are in Chinese pinyin are always written in Chinese, even though the titles of the articles are given here in English.)

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392

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Appendix 1 — Specifications of College English foundation stage courses.

Band	contact hours per course	Vocabulary	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking	Translation
CE 1	60 - 70	480-530 n.w.	Int. 6,000 ws Ext. 24,000 ws	100 wpm 2-3 times	Sentence level	Basic convers. and Q & A	X
CE 2	60 - 70	540-590 n.w.	Int. 7,000 ws Ext. 30,000 ws	100 wpm 2 times	Sentence level	Basic convers. and Q & A	X
CE 3	60 - 70	580-630 n.w.	Int. 8,000 ws Ext. 35,000 ws	120 wpm 2 times	Paragraph	Basic convers. and Q & A	X
CE 4	60 - 70	600-650 n.w.	Int. 9,000 ws Ext. 40,000 ws	120 wpm once	Composition (100 words)	Basic convers. and Q & A	E-C 300 wph
CE 5	60 - 70	600-650 n.w.	Int. 9,500 ws Ext. 39,500 ws	140 wpm 2 times	Composition (120 words)	Giving a talk on given topic	E-C 300 wph
CE 6	60 - 70	600-650 n.w.	Int. 10,000 ws Ext. 49,500 ws	140 wpm once	Composition (120 words)	Giving a talk on given topic	E-C 350 wph
Total	360-420	CE 4 - 4,000 CE 6 - 5,300	Int. 49,500 ws. Ext.225,000ws.				

APPENDIX 2 — Questionnaires Used in Empirical Research

Questionnaire 1 (For College English Students) (original in Chinese)

(Open letter to the students and questions for personal particulars are omitted)

> Which of the following countries do you think you know most about? (Please circle a letter)
>
> a) Australia   b) the United Kingdom   c) the United States of America   d) Canada   e) South
>
> Africa   f) Other. Please specify ....

Part 1 — The tables below consist of a number of cultural knowledge areas which are grouped into three categories. Please *evaluate the importance of these knowledge areas in College English education*. Please put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box to indicate how important you think each area is to you in College English learning.

	Cultural knowledge areas	very import-ant	import-ant	less import-ant	not wanted	not so sure
	At the Macro-social Level					
1.	Lifestyles					
2.	Economic systems of the countries in question					
3.	Social problems such as racism, homosexuality, unemployment, etc.					
4.	Education systems					
5.	Political systems and people's political attitudes					
6.	Arts and literature					
7.	History and geography					
8.	Newspapers and magazines					
9.	Films and TV programmes					
10.	Tourism and immigration					
11.	Medical systems					
12.	Legal systems					
13.	Architecture					
14.	Science and technology					
15.	Religions					
16.	Weather					
17.	Sports and entertainment					

	At the Micro-Social Level	very import-ant	import-ant	a little import-ant	not wanted	not so sure
1.	Ordinary people of contemporary society					
2.	Very odd people					
3.	White middle-class people					
4.	Black people					
5.	Immigrant workers					
6.	Politicians					
7.	Unemployed					
8.	People in the country					
9.	People in the city					
10.	Ordinary families					
11.	Very rich or poor families					
12.	Photographs showing social life					
13.	Photographs showing tourist attractions					
14.	Authentic conversations					
15.	Texts representing activities of ordinary people at work places					
16.	Texts exploring people's attitudes to life and work					
17.	Texts exploring values and moral concepts					
18.	Texts representing personalities of individuals					
	At the Intercultural Level	very import-ant	import-ant	a little import-ant	not wanted	not so sure
1.	Texts on how the people of the target culture live and talk					
2.	Texts on how the people of the target culture see themselves					
3.	Texts on how the people of the target culture see the people of learners' native culture					
4.	Texts showing their attitudes towards foreigners					
5.	Texts on how the people of learners' native country see themselves					
6.	Texts comparing the target culture(s) with the learners' own culture					
7.	Texts showing similarities of the two cultures					
8.	Texts showing the relationship of the two countries					
9.	Texts illustrating the different					

398

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
	meanings of words in different cultures					
10.	Texts attempting to develop learners' intercultural personality					

Part 2 — The tables below consists of the same cultural knowledge areas as the tables do above. This time, you are to *estimate the cultural information contained in the college English course(s) you have taken*. Please tick (✓) in the appropriate space according to your estimate.

(Tables are omitted)

Part 3 — From which channels do you think you can most effectively gain a good understanding of the people and the cultures of the target language.

_____

_____

Please feel free to give any other comments.

_____

_____

Questionnaire 2 (for College English students) (original in Chinese)

(Open letter to the students and questions for personal particulars are omitted)

Part 1 — What mental images have you got about a typical British person?
Please use Chinese to present your mental images below.

....

The following adjective or noun phrases are normally used to describe the people of a country. Please put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box which shows your perceptions of a typical British.

	Do you agree that British people are ...	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1.	appearance-conscious?					
2.	bound by tradition?					
3.	adventurous?					

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
4.	sports-loving?					
5.	time-conscious?					
6.	class-conscious?					
7.	hard-working?					
8.	conservative?					
9.	gentleman?					
10.	comfort-loving?					
11.	nature-loving?					
12.	proud of themselves?					
13.	emotionally unstable?					
14.	religious?					
15.	thrifty (careful with money)?					
16.	romantic?					
17.	animal-loving?					
18.	easy-going?					
19.	reliable?					
20.	good-scientists?					
21.	unfriendly towards foreigners					
22.	intelligent?					
23.	full of sense of humour?					
24.	snobbish?					
25.	violent?					

Part 2 — What mental images have you got about a typical American?
Please use Chinese to present your mental images below.

. . . .

The following are the same group of adjective or noun phrases normally used to describe the people of a country. Please put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box which shows your perceptions of a typical American.

	Do you agree that American people are ...	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1.	appearance-conscious?					
2.	bound by tradition?					
3.	adventurous?					
4.	sports-loving?					
5.	time-conscious?					
6.	class-conscious?					
7.	hard-working?					
8.	conservative?					
9.	gentleman?					
10.	comfort-loving?					
11.	nature-loving?					

12.	proud of themselves?					
13.	emotionally unstable?					
14.	religious?					
15.	thrifty (careful with money)?					
16.	romantic?					
17.	animal-loving?					
18.	easy-going?					
19.	reliable?					
20.	good-scientists?					
21.	unfriendly towards foreigners					
22.	intelligent?					
23.	full of sense of humour?					
24.	snobbish?					
25.	violent?					

Part 3 — *Sources* of your perceptions of the British and American people
and their cultures

A) How much do you think you have got to know about the peoples and the
cultures of the English speaking countries from these sources?

	Channels	Learned a lot from it	learned some from it	learned a little from it	learned nothing from it	difficult to say
1.	College English textbooks					
2.	Your teacher(s)					
3.	Talks by or interactions with native speakers of English					
4.	Friends or relatives who are or have been abroad					
5.	VOA or BBC broadcasts					
6.	Books, newspapers or magazines in English					
7.	Foreign films or foreign TV programs					

B. From which sources do you think you have learned most cultural knowledge?

....

Questionnaire 3 (For College English Teachers) (original in English)

(Open letter to the teachers and questions for personal particulars are omitted)

> Which of the following countries do you think you know most about? (Please circle a letter)
>
> a) Australia   b) the United Kingdom   c) the United States of America   d) Canada
>
> e) Other. Please specify ....

Part 1 — The tables below consist of a number of cultural knowledge areas which are grouped into three categories. Please *evaluate the importance of these knowledge areas in College English education*. Please put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box to indicate how important you think each area is to you in College English learning.

(The tables contain the same cultural knowledge areas as Questionnaire 1. Thus they are omitted here)

Part 2 — (This part is designed to elicit teachers' estimate of cultural information contained in the college English course(s) they have taught. The cultural knowledge areas are also the same as in Questionnaire 1. It is omitted here).

Part 3 — If you think there are some other cultural aspects you would like to include in the College English courses, please list them below.

_____

_____

Please feel free to give any other comments.

_____

_____

Questionnaire 4 (For PG students studying abroad) (original in English)

(Open letter to the students and questions for personal particulars are omitted)

Reminder: If you never took the College English course and CET 4 or CET 6 you can ignore Part I and Part II and answer only the questions in Part III.

Part 1 -- Please circle a number to indicate your evaluation of the College English course you took when you were in China.

1. The College English course I took was successful in view of my present needs, such as the needs for using the language in my study, work and daily life in the states.
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

2. The course provided me with adequate training for adapting to the environment of this English speaking country.
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

3. Individual ability evaluation

Statements	Scale *Strongly disagree ----- Strongly agree*
a) The course enabled me to read competently.	1 2 3 4 5
b) The course developed in me an adequate level of competence in listening and speaking.	1 2 3 4 5
c) The course helped me in developing adequate competence in writing.	1 2 3 4 5
d) The course gave me an adequate training of my communicative competence.	1 2 3 4 5
e) The course provided me with enough true information about the culture of the United States, such as the lifestyle, values and arts.	1 2 3 4 5

4. Any other comments on the College English course

_____

_____

Part 2 -- Please circle the number which shows your opinion about CET 4 and CET 6 still in your memory.

1. CET 4 and CET 6 play the 'baton' () role in College English education. This means that teachers and students are only interested in teaching or memorizing the things that are tested.
Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

403

2. CET 4 puts great pressure on students because local education authorities and teachers pay too much attention to the passing rate of this test.

Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

3. The two tests make students learn by rote () and, as a result, the training of communicative competence is neglected.

Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

4. Speaking ability, which is not tested in CET 4 and CET 6, should be included in both tests.

Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

5. The test result of CET 4 or CET 6 does not really show the English language ability of a test taker.

Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

6. Any other comment on CET 4 and CET 6

_____

_____

Part 3 ---- Please circle a number to indicate your views on the importance of the five language skills and future development of College English education in China.

1. Please indicate your views about how important the following language skills are **in view of your present needs.**

Language skills	(*least important* ---- *most important*)				
Listening skill for your present studying and/or professional needs	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking skill for your present studying and/or professional needs	1	2	3	4	5
Reading skill for your present studying and/or professional needs	1	2	3	4	5
Writing skill for your present studying and/or professional needs	1	2	3	4	5
Translating skill for your present studying and/or professional needs	1	2	3	4	5

2. Do you agree that, if we rank these skills by their level of importance, of the five skills, reading is the most important; listening and translating should be ranked second while speaking and writing are ranked last?

Strongly disagree 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 *Strongly agree*

3. Your view on the following statements about the importance of learning the culture(s) of the English speaking countries.

Statements	Scale Strongly disagree ------ Strongly agree
a) Cultural knowledge about the English speaking countries is very important for communication purposes.	1 2 3 4 5
b) Culture learning should be integrated with language learning in College English course in China.	1 2 3 4 5
c) College English should incorporate sufficient information of the lifestyle of the English speaking countries.	1 2 3 4 5
d) College English should incorporate sufficient information about the values and beliefs of the English speaking countries.	1 2 3 4 5
e) College English needs to incorporate many texts on literature and arts of the English speaking countries.	1 2 3 4 5

4. Any other views on College English education

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX 3 — Interview Questions

Interview 1 (for Students)

I am interested in your views and opinions about College English education. Particularly, I would like to know your views on the link of foreign language learning and cultural studies.

A. Personal details:

1. Sex   a) Male   b) female

2. The tertiary institution you are studying in _____

3. Which year are you in _____

4. Which band course(s) you are taking _____

5. Textbook. _____

B. Core questions

1. Are you interested in learning the cultures and the people of the English speaking countries? Why or why not?

2. The culture of which English speaking country are you interested in most? And why?

3. How do you feel about the Americans and the British?

4. Does your teacher or the textbook offer much cultural information?

5. Do you think the study of culture can negatively or positively influence our way of thinking and way of living? What's your evidence?

6. How do you think the College English programme could be further developed?

C. Sub-questions

1. How much do you know the lifestyles of Americans (or the British or any other people the interviewee seems to know most)?

2. Their holidays?

3. Their education system?

4. History?

5. Tourist attractions?

6. Their governments?

7. Western values such as privacy, independence, etc.?

8. Are you interested in reading an article about China written by an English speaker? Why?

9. Do you want to know more about the varieties of English?

10. Are you interested in reading articles about the relationship between language and society?

11. Through what channels do you get cultural information of the English speaking countries?

12. Can you list a few cultural aspects that fascinate you most in College English learning?

Interview 2 (for CE Teachers)

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for my Ph. D. research study which focuses on the cultural dimensions of College English education. The contents of this interview will be used for educational research purpose only and the identity of the interviewee (you) is confidential and will not be revealed under any circumstances. The interview will be recorded because it is difficult for me to take notes of what you say.

A. Personal details:

1. Sex   a) Male   b) female

2. Age   a) 20 - 30   b) 31 - 40   c) 41 - 50   d) 51 - 60   e) 60 and above

3. The tertiary institution you work for   _____

4. Band courses you have taught   _____

5. Textbooks   _____

6. Have you been abroad? _____ Where and how long? _____

B. Core questions

1. Do you think that teaching a foreign language is to teach another culture?

2. What do your students in general react to the cultural information they come across during the course? Are they interested in knowing it?

3. Do you think that the College English textbook(s) you are teaching or have taught before and other course materials such as audio or video cassettes contain a lot of cultural information of English-speaking countries, such as their way of life, values, and social customs?

4. What effects does the teaching of cultural contents have on students in general? (Negative or positive? What makes you think that?)

5. The aim of cultural studies is to produce native-like sociocultural competent speakers. What do you think about that?

6. How do you think the College English teaching could be further developed?

7. Any other comments?

Interview 3 (for CE Textbook Writers)

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for my Ph. D. research study which focuses on the cultural dimensions of College English education. The contents of this interview will be used for educational research purpose only and the identity of the interviewee (you) is confidential and will not be revealed under any circumstances.

A. Personal details:

1. Name (If you don't mind) _____

2. Sex   a) Male   b) female

3. Age   a) 20 - 30   b) 31 - 40   c) 41 - 50   d) 51 - 60   e) 60 and above

4. The tertiary institution you work for   _____

5. Band courses you have taught   _____

6. Textbooks you have authored _____

7. Have you been abroad? _____ Where and how long? _____

B. Core questions

1. Do you think that teaching a foreign is to teach another culture? Why or why not/

2. If yes, how do you think culture can be integrated into textbooks?

3. What do your students in general react to the cultural information they come across during the course? Are they interested in knowing it?

4. Do you think that the College English textbook(s) you have authored contain a lot of cultural information of English-speaking countries, such as their way of life, values, and social customs?

5. What are the most important criteria in text selection for College English programme?

6. What is your view on 'authenticity'?

7. Could you please comment on the most widely-used CE textbooks such as *College English*?

8. Any other comments?

APPENDIX 4   (A Sample of Interviews)

Code of Transcript: FS8B
Date: 28 October 1998
Venue: A classroom at the Zhongnan Forestry College in Zhuzhou
Interviewees: Two year-2 students (a male and a female) majoring in forestry
**   tourism.**
Level of College English: Taking Band 3 of College English at the time of the
**   interview.**
Textbook: *College English*

I. Thanks for your time. I would like to ask you a few questions about English study.

   First of all, are they interested in studying English?

M. Yes, of course.

F. I'm certainly interested but I study for a certain purpose.

I. What purpose?

F. I think nowadays it is more convenient for someone with good English background to

   find jobs. Furthermore, I would very much like to have a look at the world outside.

   English is an important tool but I don't actually take it as a favourite subject.

I. How about you? Do you also take it that way?

M. Yes, I think the same way. This way of thinking is very common among us students.

I. In learning the language are you interested in learning about the cultures of the English

   speaking countries?

F. I certainly like to learn about the cultures.

I. Why?

F. Because we study English in order to know the outside world better, to widen our

   horizons and at the same time to get to know more about the history and geography of

   foreign countries.

I. Do you think if the cultural knowledge contained in your textbooks and introduced by

   your teacher could satisfy your curiosity and meet your needs?

F. can't depend only on classroom teaching as our teacher does not tell us very much.

I. Can you tell me what kind of things your teacher tells you in classroom?

F. Very simple and superficial knowledge. For example, things like where the country is, and things like this.

M. He also presents some biographical information about famous authors of the articles. But not much about other things.

I. In addition to getting some cultural information in classrooms from textbooks and your teacher, from what other sources do you receive cultural information?

F. Mainly from some magazines.

I. What kind of magazines?

F. Normally from some Chinese magazines with some English such as "English Salon", "Newspaper of the 21st Century" and "Reader's Digest".

I. Do you (turning to the male student) also read these magazines?

M. I used to subscribe some of these magazines. But I couldn't read the English in these magazines quickly so I don't subscribe them any more.

F. We get to know cultural information about foreign countries mainly from Chinese media such as TV programmes, radio broadcasts and Chinese magazines. We only sometimes read English magazines.

I. Do you listen to VOA or BBC?

M. Sometimes we do. I often listen to BBC in the morning.

I. Do you have any opportunities to talk to native speakers of English?

F. Sometimes we do. We have a lady teacher from Australia. She teaches the English majors and the students of tourism.

I. You mentioned before that you are interested in learning about the culture of the English countries. The culture of which English speaking country are you interested in most?

M. Mainly the British and the American culture, I think.

F. Yes, I am also most interested in these two people.

I. Could you briefly describe your feelings about the British and the Americans?

F. Americans are easy-going, active, intimate and relatively open-minded. Though they are well-developed economically, the clothes they wear are very casual. Unlike some rich Chinese who always look up to famous-brand clothes, many foreign tourists I saw in Hangzhou were wearing casual clothes. This left me a very deep impression.

I. How do you feel about them in general?

FS. Very positively. Not only towards the Americans but also Westerners in general. They are very clean people. I have been to a Russian city bordering China. That city is quite clean.

I. How about you? How do you feel about them?

MS. My background is different from hers. She comes from a big city but I am from Changde, Hunan. My impression of foreign peoples mainly come from books and magazines. My general impression over the British and American peoples is that they are full of sense of humour. The British are very serious and gentleman-like and the French are romantic. The Americans are free and easy-going. We students admire the cowboys of the American West. In short, we have a good impression of the Westerners. We also worship the American individualism and their national characteristics. Well, perhaps, I can't say 'worship'. I should say 'appreciate' instead. When we make comments on them we should always bear in mind that we grew up in two different cultures. When we think about their culture we base our evaluation on our own cultural concepts. It's in fact difficult to make objective comments.

I. You got these impressions mainly through reading, didn't you?

M. Yes. But I think Ms Robinson (the Australian lady teaching at the College) has also left me some good impression about Westerners. She is kind and humorous. At the same time she is strict.

I. Do you think films and other mass media have given you some ideas of foreigners and influenced you in some way?

F. I think films are usually very exaggerating, particularly those Hollywood ones. Too much violence and individual heroism. The more you watch them the less interested you become. There are some good things such as "Gone with the wind" and "Jane Eyer". We can also read them in books and magazines.

I. How about this kind of things in College English courses? Are there many texts similar to these?

F. There are some but very superficial.

I. How much do you know about the public holidays in English speaking countries? Could you make a list of the holidays you know?

F. Christmas, this is the most impressive one. They seem to have many holidays such as Easter Holiday, Thanksgiving, Independent Day, ... perhaps that's it.

M. They also have Mother's Day and Valentine's Day.

F. Yes. They've got more holidays than we do.

I. Do you know which country celebrates the Thanksgiving Day?

F. Of course, the United States. I remember that the Americans in early days got some harvest. They wanted to thank the God and the local Indians. So they called the day the Thanksgiving Day. I just read something like this from a magazine.

M. I also kind of remember a little but not much.

I. Do you know the Boxing Day?

M. Is it the day for boxing matches (the sports)? I'm not sure.

F. Maybe not. I don't know.

I. Never mind, let's move to something else. How much do you know about the tourist attractions and the historical places in England?

F. The Buckingham Palace, London Bridge, Shakespeare's Residence, and others.

M. And the Eiffel Tower and the White House. The Pyramids in Egypt as well, ...

I. Are they tourist attractions in England?

F. No.

M. Oh, sorry.

F. Oh. There is a Memorial Hall of Princess Diana, right? I think the coastal areas in England must be very beautiful.

M. I also like the bagpipes popular in Scotland.

F. I think the English people are pretty pathetic.

I. What makes you say that?

F. Because even the Scottish and Welsh do not want themselves to be called the English. They just want to be called the British, but not English.

I. Where did you get to know that?

F. From a textbook I learned in my senior high school.

M. Yes, some books say that when you go to Wales you'd better not ask the people there if they are English. This applies to Scotland. You can only ask if they are British.

F. I really think they are pathetic. They have merged for so long but the people (in Wales and Scotland) still don't want to be called English. This exemplifies a failure of the British government. They have failed to strike the root of nationalism into the hearts of the people.

I. Mm. Right let's move to another point. Do you think getting to know about Western cultures could have some negative effects on students?

F. Yes, such as sex. I think there are some negative effects on us. This kind of things often come from films and Videos, not from magazines.

I. How about those Western value concepts such as individualism and privacy? Do you know these terms?

F. We know these terms. I got to know something like these from magazines and books.

M. I also know something about these values. I've read quite a lot and kept thinking about them. I think that Western youths are very independent.

F. But some of the Western concepts are not very good. It seems that they are too independent. They have gone too far to another extreme and become indifferent to human feelings. In our textbooks, there is a text about an aged mother whose children never came to see her, even on her birthday. In this respect, our Chinese people are better.

M. But we should absorb the good aspects of their cultures while preserving our own good cultural traditions. The reason why I appreciate about their independent attitudes is that some youths here always depend on their relatives and relations whenever they face a problem. I think youths should learn how to face difficulties and hardships ourselves. I quite admire the courage of some foreign students who can handle all sorts of problems themselves at college. They have strong competence of living by themselves. On the contrary, some of our students get high marks at college. But once they enter the society, they become handicapped.

I. Yes, Ok. Could you please say something about our English classrooms. What do you think about our classroom teaching?

F. M. (together) Mm ...

M. Lady first.

F. I think we've got too much grammar in our English courses. I think College English should break away from this convention and offer something new.

I. Such as?

F. For example, we can have more things cultural such as the customs, traditions and lifestyles of foreign countries.

M. And some things practical ...

F. We students should participate more in classroom activities. We have very little chance to participate.

I. Are there about 30-40 students in your group?

F. Yes. We don't have time to participate. Though we have 'English corner' activities[1] they are not very effective.

I. You (the male student) just said you like something practical. What do you mean by that?

M. I study tourism and my goal is to become an international tour guide and interact with people all over the world. I wish to learn more about the customs, traditions, and lifestyles of various cultures. The current practice of classroom teaching cannot meet my demand. Although I can get to know this type of information from various books and magazines in Chinese the information has nothing to do with English. I think it is necessary and would be better to learn about the culture in the target language. The College English textbooks are too unified and they don't consider our needs. Many students wish to know about the cultures of the target language but the textbooks can not meet our needs. We should make a comparison of the essence of our culture with the essence of foreign cultures through our textbooks. This is what we call 'to absorb the nutriments and to discard the dross'[2]. Our textbooks don't help us in this way.

I. What else do you think we should do in order to further develop our College English programme?

M. I think for cultural studies teaching basic requirements should be set for teachers. They should not only know the target language but also have deep knowledge about the culture. It is not easy to be a foreign language teacher. I remember when I was at secondary school, we had an English teacher who was commonly said to be good. But his Chinese was awful. He couldn't even translate some English sentences into proper

415

Chinese and his translation lacked a real Chinese taste. This could be misleading. At the tertiary level, I think the requirement for teachers should be even higher.

F. I think English teachers should be different from teachers of other subjects. They should always be sensitive to contemporary information. If they could express their views on contemporary events such as the sex scandal of Clinton, we would be very interested. But our classroom is very dull.

M. Yes. We should have many topics which are related to contemporary societies. We should perhaps air these opinions to our own teachers. Since you do the survey today, we wish to reflect this common opinion to you on behalf of many students. And we hope that there will be some breakthroughs in the near future.

I. Thanks a lot for you two today. ....

Notes

1. 'English corner' activities are usually organised meetings at a public place such as a quiet open area on campus where a student interested in oral English practice goes and talks to other interested students in English. These activities are not only popular in most colleges and universities but also in many big cities in China.

2. 'To absorb the nutriments and to discard the dross' is a political phrase (see 3.1) long used by social science and language educationists to mean that in learning about the foreign cultures learners need to distinguish what is good from what is bad so that they benefit from the learning process without being influenced 'negatively'.