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David Ernest Clawson MEd, PG Dip

Effects of Text Materials on Cultural Learning among Taiwanese Students in South-East

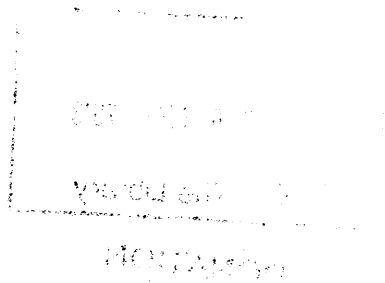
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Abstract

This research investigates Taiwanese students' reactions to textbooks in EFL classes in South-East England; specifically in Brighton and Hove, and how the use of such textbooks influences students' adaptation to the host culture. To investigate this area of study I have formulated three research questions based on my experience of research at Masters Level, an initial study and a review of the relevant literature.

Research Questions:

1. What influence do textbooks used in EFL classes in the South-East of England have on Taiwanese students' experience and understanding of the culture in Britain?

This question is further broken down into the following headings:

- 1.1 In what ways do the textbooks relate to the contemporary culture in Britain as experienced by the students in South-East England? How important is this for students' learning?
- 1.2 Are the cultural practices represented in the textbook aligned with what the students require?
2. Which factors, other than the core textbook, may also be important in determining the degree to which and the rate at which the Taiwanese students come to terms with the culture in Britain? Specifically, the influence of the following:
 - 2.1 multinational classroom environment.
 - 2.2 students' experiences outside the classroom.

3. Are there any significant barriers, specifically related to cultural factors, in Britain that are particularly troublesome for Taiwanese students? Does the information available to the students in the textbooks raise or lower these barriers?

I chose to conduct a qualitative study using grounded theory within a case study approach. The methods of data collection chosen were: questionnaires, classroom observations, small-group interviews and students' diaries. The main findings suggest that Taiwanese students are influenced by the visual images and the language in their textbooks, and that the importance many students attach to the textbook is largely based on their Confucian background. The findings from this research may be of value to language schools in Taiwan and the South-East of England, and may also contribute to the field of English language teaching and learning and cultural preparation for study abroad, and specifically to teachers, teacher educators, study abroad administration and textbook writers and publishers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis focuses on how the core textbooks used in multinational English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes in the South-East of England, and in Brighton and Hove in particular where the research was carried out, influence the intercultural competence of Taiwanese students. My interest in this subject developed as a consequence of using textbooks in Taiwan and Britain that revolved mostly around the Western nuclear family and the consequent lifestyles and preoccupations of the family members – all set in a peaceful, multi-ethnic community; or as Gray (2010, p. 103) puts it, ‘people whose lifestyle choices are unaffected by personal, financial or social constraints of any kind’ – combined with activities that are often centred on well-known international landmarks and public figures. In addition, my experience of twenty years teaching in the classrooms of Taipei has made me aware of the cultural content in the EFL textbook and the influence it has on Taiwanese students. I became concerned about how such resources influenced and facilitated Taiwanese students’ process of cultural learning about Britain, and how the visual images and the language in the books compared with the culture and the language the students had to deal with outside of the classroom when studying in Britain.

There is a substantial amount of research in the area of English Language Teaching (ELT) and Chinese speakers, but the vast majority of these studies focus on the Chinese mainland (Li, 2005; Wighting, et al., 2005) rather than Taiwan. Although classroom research is commonly conducted in Taiwan (Chen, 2006), I am not aware of any research that has been directed at Taiwanese students and their process of cultural learning when visiting to improve their English in Britain, nor how they react to textbooks in this environment. With this research I hope to bring a greater awareness of Taiwanese

students' reactions to EFL textbooks in Britain, and the process of cultural learning to the field of language studies. Information gained in this research may be of value to language schools in Taiwan and EFL schools throughout the South-East of England, and may also contribute to the field of English language teaching and learning and cultural preparation for study abroad. As noted in Coleman (1997, p. 1) study, or 'residence,' abroad 'is a field which draws potentially on virtually every aspect of Second Language Acquisition.'

The current study has been shaped by two previous studies carried out by myself: the one carried out as part of a Master of Education, which aimed to discover the viability of Taiwanese students textbook use in a multinational EFL class, and the Initial Study for the EdD conducted in an English school in Hove; which aimed to establish the influence of culture as presented to the Taiwanese students through the textbook. In these two studies I was able to draw conclusions about textbook use among the Taiwanese students in the observed classes and as a result of data gained from questionnaires and small-group interviews. For example, student interviews carried out during MEd research indicated a high level of frustration and unresponsiveness among students, and classroom observations in the same research demonstrated a reluctance to become involved with textbooks that bore little relevance to the students' lives. This frustration was related to the apparent ambiguity of the information presented in the textbook – a safe world of perennially smiling people inhabiting a clean, harmonious environment, and according to interview data gained during my MEd investigation, the reality the students had to contend with outside the classroom – an environment perhaps not as harmonious as the visual images in the textbook suggested, a view confirmed by Wallace (2002) who points out the difference between the world created in the textbooks, and the one the students have to contend with in their daily lives.

The reason for choosing the South-East of England to carry out my research was related to the high numbers of EFL students studying in this area and in Brighton and Hove in particular, especially in the summertime. A considerable percentage of the students are from the Far East: for example, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, and mainland Chinese students, and the area itself is very popular with Taiwanese students as it is a busy city with a considerable number of overseas visitors with easy access to London; a popular destination for cultural experiences such as visits to museums and sightseeing of significant national landmarks. An additional reason for situating the research in this location is that I have been resident in Brighton and Hove for the past thirteen years, and I have taught at several of the language institutes in Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings, and I continue to keep in contact with staff at a number of the schools.

Following informal conversations with the directors of twelve EFL schools in the Brighton and Hove area, I chose two schools in which to carry out the research. The schools were chosen firstly because of their intake of Taiwanese students and secondly because of the teachers' use of 'global' textbooks (Gray, 2002) – as opposed to a syllabus written specifically for the school, although such a syllabus is not a common practice in EFL schools in Brighton and Hove. Both schools offer English courses ranging from one to six months, and although many of the students are European, there are a significant number of students from the Far East and North Africa.

The students investigated in the main study were aged between 20 and 35. The majority came from Taipei, the capital of Taiwan; two of the students came from south Taiwan. The majority of the students were in Britain to improve their career prospects. For detailed information regarding reasons for students' study abroad see Appendix F.

During my MEd research, my position as a researcher was made complicated by the fact that I had been a teacher at the language institute where the study was being carried out, but in the research reported in this thesis I had no teaching input at either school so my position as a researcher with no direct connection to the school involved no conflict of interest.

1.1 The EdD Initial Study

Through the initial study I attempted to determine the general cultural and linguistic requirements of Taiwanese students in Britain. In order to achieve this I identified six students studying at the ABC Language School¹ in Hove. The study was conducted over a four day period in June, 2008. The students were aged between 22 and 26. Four of the students came from Taipei, while two came from south Taiwan. Students were given a questionnaire (See Appendix A) and then invited to take part in a small-group interview (See Appendix B). I also undertook a single classroom observation. Four of the students were present for the observation and the small-group interview; all six were given the questionnaire. The aims of the Initial Study were to check the feasibility of conducting classroom observations to collect data from Taiwanese students engaging with EFL textbooks, and to determine, through a small-group interview, students' views and needs regarding their EFL textbooks. The Initial Study also enabled me to try out methods of gathering data.

Responses to the questionnaire suggested the textbooks were interesting and easy to use and follow. But only three of the students felt the information in the textbooks was in some ways beneficial to them outside the classroom in terms of allowing them to communicate with the local people effectively based on language learned in the

¹ Fictitious name used for reasons of anonymity.

textbook; they also did not feel that the language in the textbooks contributed substantially to their understanding of culture in Britain.

Key points emerging from the Initial Study were the establishment of students' needs for successful cultural learning in Britain; the issue of identity and its complexity and the difficulties of incorporating it into this research, as it would detract from the focus of the textbook; the value of combining audio recordings with field-notes in classroom observations; and the importance of 'face' as a means to ease discomfort during language classes. In addition to the above points the current main study was shaped by the Initial Study in two important ways: amending aspects of the research questions, and establishing what students expected from their textbooks and their studies in Britain, which helped to focus the analysis of textbooks. The data was gained through the questionnaire, classroom observation, and the small-group interview.

1.2 Students' Needs

Responses from the Initial Study questionnaire indicated that students had certain expectations and opinions of the textbooks they were using, and these views allowed me to establish a set of students' needs which were used in the textbook analysis and student data analysis carried out in the main study. The needs which students expected to be met by their textbooks, as identified in the Initial Study, are as follows.

Something New

Although most of the students who answered the questionnaire were content with the textbooks, a minority seemed to prefer a different approach to the one used in the global EFL textbooks they were familiar with.

The overall impression given by the responses is that the activities in the textbooks were interesting and anticipated by the Taiwanese students, yet follow up comments suggested many topics were quite dated. The textbook suitability for all nationalities received a unanimous negative reaction from the students. The small-group interview confirmed that students believed some nationalities found the textbook easier to use than others. The main reason for this appears to be familiarity with the format, although the Taiwanese students expressed a need for a more novel format and activities different from the ones they used in language institutes in Taiwan.

A Sense of Community

This was an issue that came to light in the Initial Study small-group interview and also relates closely to the concept of the collectivist culture examined in the Literature Review in Chapter 2. Students wanted to see the community in Britain at work in the textbook characterisation, and as will be made apparent in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis, isolated characters in the textbook were considered 'lonely' by the students. When answering interview questions 1 to 5 students suggested that prior to arrival they felt that culture in Britain was similar to their own culture in many ways; a brief time spent in Hove tended to change this view.

Characters they Can Relate to

This was largely made salient by students' reactions to the expressions and gestures the characters portrayed in the textbooks during the classroom observation in the Initial Study. Students attempted to 'read' the character's face in order to gain a fuller understanding of the context. These ideas will be explored in more detail in the Textbook Analysis in Chapter 4 and in Section 5.3 Politeness and Non-Verbal Communication in Chapter 5.

Cultural Symbols Students Can Relate to

Initial Study small-group interview data showed that status symbols, such as a house to denote a sense of family, wealth to denote a sense of financial success, and reference to prestigious universities to denote a sense of educational accomplishment were all seen as important cultural symbols the students could relate to.

Responses to question 11 to 15 of the questionnaire (Appendix A) concerning the cultural content of the textbooks suggested that the suitability of the culture portrayed in the textbook was largely irrelevant. In terms of using the language learned in the textbook in the outside world answers were mixed. The difference between the two was either negative or irrelevant, and three students found the textbook assisted in their communicative skills, while two did not. Responses to Question 15 implied that language ability was far more important to the students than cultural considerations.

Genuine Conversations

Students expressed an urge to practise true to life dialogues that could be used effectively outside the classroom. This need arose out of students' interview responses. For example, responses to Question 9 - How much interaction do you have with native English speakers on a daily basis? demonstrated a minimum of contact with native speakers outside of the language school they attended. Furthermore, it appears that dialogues learnt in the textbooks did not transfer effectively into the students' daily lives. For example, when students attempted to strike up conversations, particularly in pubs, the responses they received often did not accord with their expectations.

More Subtle Linguistic Elements

Humour was a subject that students wanted to understand in more depth, and this is closely related to the previous need in terms of students' misinterpretation of responses. In particular, the way in which language is manipulated to create a humorous statement caused considerable misunderstanding. This need arose initially out of Interview question 20 when students expressed a need to take a fuller understanding of 'British humour' back to Taiwan with them.

Politeness and the UK Concept of 'Manners'

Students interviewed found it difficult to understand why it seemed to be necessary to say 'please' and 'thank you' with such frequency as the English people. Students implied a sense of the automatic use of these words, rather than a sincere desire to be thankful or pleased. This is something the students experienced outside the classroom that did not accord with the nature of manners in the textbooks they had used in Taiwan.

In three cases, students had arrived in Britain with specific views about the 'English gentlemen' that they had been told to expect prior to departure, and had been surprised when they were sometimes treated harshly for, what they considered to be, trivial errors: not queuing up, speaking loudly or out of turn, and 'manners' at the dinner table.

Getting to Know other People and other Cultures

This need was derived from interviews carried out as part of the earlier study at MEd and reinforced during the Initial Study small-group interview that indicated an interest in other students, local people and the host culture.

The students expressed a need to understand the people through the textbooks. For example, 4 out of 6 of the students questioned included 'the need to meet new people' in

answer to the interview questions shown, as one of the most important reasons for coming to Britain. These needs helped me to shape the main investigation by demonstrating the things students were looking for in a textbook.

Additional Points Arising from the Initial Study

The Initial Study also demonstrated the effects of the strong community ethic at work in the classroom which influenced the main study. This means that the Taiwanese students tended to work more actively when working with a mono-national group, yet when the students were separated and put into multinational groups they had a good deal of difficulty communicating. Follow up small-group interviews confirmed that this was largely due to discomfort when working with (especially) more outgoing classmates (possibly due to different cultural beliefs and backgrounds), and fear of losing 'face.' This information allowed me to be far more aware of students' reactions to the textbook based on cultural factors. I decided to use classroom observations in the main study based on the Initial Study as they might allow me to determine if Taiwanese students encounter difficulties using EFL textbooks in a multinational classroom. The Initial Study also helped me to identify changes in the Research Questions.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. What influence do textbooks used in EFL classes in the South-East of England have on Taiwanese students' experience and understanding of the culture in Britain?

This question is further broken down under the following sub-headings:

- 1.1 In what ways do the textbooks relate to the contemporary culture in Britain as experienced by the students in South-East England? How important is this for students' learning?

1.2 Are the cultural practises represented in the textbook aligned with what the students require?

In order to answer this question, I needed to gain access to students actually using the textbooks, and to closely analyse the students in the classroom environment. In addition, I needed to determine students' views regarding use of the textbook, whether it meets their needs and learning objectives (are their views realistic, are they aligned with their cultural learning needs?), I needed to establish their opinions on the culture in Britain, and indeed, how they define the said culture.

2. Which factors, other than the core textbook, may also be important in determining the degree to which and the rate at which the Taiwanese students come to terms with the culture in Britain? Specifically, the influence of the following:

2.1 multinational classroom environment.

2.2 students' experiences outside the classroom.

The latter is a vast area and although the impact of external factors became more obvious as the research developed the principal research environment was the EFL classroom in Brighton and Hove and any findings about external influences were used in relation to the classroom findings.

3. Are there any significant barriers, specifically related to cultural factors, in Britain that are particularly troublesome for Taiwanese students? Does the information available to the students in the textbooks raise or lower these barriers?

Experience of observing Taiwanese students in a multinational environment, particularly in the Initial Study, demonstrated potential problem areas that I had to address at this level of analysis, specifically, the issue of saving 'face.' From a methodological standpoint,

the concept of face did cloud the validity of findings somewhat, and made the triangulation of methods of paramount importance.

When formulating Research Question 1, part 3, at the outset of the Initial Study, I had considered the feasibility of introducing a cultural component into the classroom materials:

1.3 Can cultural education be integrated into the classroom materials, or is there a requirement for a separate cultural component? How might the multinational nature of the classes affect the process?

However, the Initial Study demonstrated that the inclusion of a separate cultural component would not be feasible in a multinational EFL class in Britain due to students' requirements being more directed at language than culture, although cultural learning is an intrinsic part of language learning. This was confirmed during informal conversations with the teachers. I had initially formulated this question based on successful application of the inclusion of a separate cultural component in Taiwanese classrooms in the 1980s; however its adaptation to an EFL environment now seemed to be limited, although the intrinsic nature of cultural learning through language learning should not be overlooked.

Research Question 2, part 3, was initially an attempt to probe changes in students' individual and group identity.

2.3 influence of students' cultural identity.

The Initial Study pointed out tendencies for change in students' identities. This manifested itself especially in the longer-term students – six months to one year. The questionnaire used provided indicators of students' identity change; however, it was the small group interviews that allowed me to probe somewhat deeper into this issue,

although such factors as ‘face,’ embarrassment, and maintaining credibility in the group identity influenced the validity of the findings. As I started getting deeper into the area of identity, I found it necessary to pull back and redirect the focus of the study. This, combined with the lack of long-term students available in the main study, forced me to omit this part of the research question. Background reading in the Literature Review confirmed the depth and complexity of identity, and this was supported by students’ responses from the small-group interviews during the Initial Study, which confirmed my decision to cut out this part of the research question and to maintain my focus on the textbooks.

1.4 The Structure of the Thesis

The main study reported in this thesis comprised two data collection phases which took place in Brighton and Hove. I have analysed the experiences and behaviour of short-term students only. Such students would be defined as those studying from between one month and six months. The lack of long-term students – in Britain for more than six months – made it impractical to study them. In addition, working with a smaller group of students offered me a greater advantage as I could focus on them as part of a qualitative study, as will be fully explained in Chapter 3: Methodology.

Table 1.1 gives details of the Data Collection Phases.

Table 1.1

Data Collection Phases

<u>Data Collection Phase</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1	06 to 09 June 2009	UK (Hove)	8
2	19/20 April 2010	UK (Hove)	9

I have organized the present work around six chapters, including this introduction, Chapter 1. The following information gives details of each chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The review is organised into the literature related to culture and to textbooks. The literature related to cultural matters covers: The main theoretical perspectives; Intercultural Communication, Multiculture and Study Abroad; background information on individualism, collectivism, Confucianism and identity; background information on education in Taiwan and cultural preparation; research into the concept of 'Britishness;' and Culture and the English Language. The literature related to textbooks covers: EFL Textbooks, The Global Textbook, Cultural Components in EFL Textbooks and EFL Textbooks in Taiwan.

I have explored these areas of literature because they relate directly to the issues of culture and EFL textbooks. I originally explored the literature concerning the advantages and disadvantages of textbooks; however, I abandoned this because this generic view of textbooks told me little about the books the Taiwanese students would be using. The range of ideas emerging from the Literature Review provided substantial background knowledge that supports my research, particularly in regard to the importance of students' societal and educational background as a factor in students' classroom behaviour, and the complex nature of the global textbook.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The research follows a case study approach utilising qualitative methods. The chapter sets out the reasons for choosing this approach and continues with a description of the methods of data collection and the reasons for their selection. I have adopted:

questionnaires, classroom observations, small-group interviews and student' diaries in order to gather the maximum data. Data analysis techniques are integrated into the descriptions of the methods, and following this are details of the Taiwanese student sample, and the location of the research. Finally, ethical issues are considered.

Chapter 4: Textbook Analysis

This chapter focuses on the analysis of three contemporary EFL textbooks normally used in the South-East of England. The purpose of the analysis is to determine the cultural and linguistic value of the textbooks to the students, and I have conducted an assessment based on the visual images and language in the textbooks. Firstly, there is a Rationale for the Selection of Textbooks, followed by the Framework for the Analysis of Textbooks. Then, there is the analysis of the three selected textbooks commonly used in EFL classes in the South-East. The key findings arising from this analysis are then outlined.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Student Data

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the data gained from the questionnaires, the classroom observations, the small-group interviews and the diaries. The chapter is organised around themes that emerged from the data. Specifically: Textbook Views and Development of Cultural and Linguistic Needs (this introductory theme examines if the needs of the students changed or developed during their stay in Britain); The Safety of the Family and Relationship Discussion Inhibitions (this theme examines the effects of safe topics chosen by the students for discussion or conversation in the classroom, and the problems encountered when discussing personal relationships in depth); Politeness and Non-Verbal Communication (this theme developed out of students' needs to learn more about politeness in Britain and the nature of coming to terms with the concept in the classroom and in the local area. It also examines the tendency of students to revert to the

culturally safe strategies of silence and certain gestures and facial expressions when dealing with troublesome situations in the classroom). Humour Across Cultures (this theme isolates linguistic elements that proved problematic for the students; it examines students' difficulties in interpreting the Western concept of humour); The Community: Connecting with the Outside. This final theme brings the analysis together in looking at how the information gained in the classroom, particularly through the use and study of textbooks, allowed students to communicate effectively in the South-East of England.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter contains the thesis key findings in relation to the research questions. It sets out the limitations of the study and the contribution it makes to the understanding of the role of textbooks in cultural learning. Implications for practice are suggested and recommendations for further research are made.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter is organised into two separate parts, firstly, issues of culture; secondly, issues concerning textbooks. Each part begins with a general view of culture or textbooks, and then develops the theme with more specific sections directly related to this research. When the title of the section is self-explanatory, a detailed description is not given.

Culture:

- 2.1 Main Theoretical Perspectives. This section looks at culture firstly from an essentialist perspective and then from a more contemporary non-essentialist perspective.
- 2.2 Intercultural Communication, Multiculture and Study Abroad. This section, related to Research Questions 1, 1.1 and 1.2, analyses recent research into intercultural communication and looks at various perspectives on multiculture, and current research into study abroad.
- 2.3 Individualism and Collectivism. This section, related to Research Question 3, analyses the distinction between the two from essentialist and non-essentialist perspectives and as it relates to this research.
- 2.4 Confucianism and Identity. This section, which provides background information related to Research Question 3, looks at the importance of the Confucian education system to the Taiwanese student, and also examines the role of identity in the overseas experience.
- 2.5 Education in Taiwan and Cultural Preparation. This section, which provides background information related to Research Questions 2, 2.1 and 2.2, looks at the nature of education in Taiwan and at the cultural perspectives specifically related

to Taiwanese students studying in Taiwan with a view to study abroad – especially in Britain.

- 2.6 Concepts of 'Britishness.' This section, which provides background information to Research Questions 1.1 and 1.2, deals with the literature related to what Britain is as a nation in the 21st century, and the Taiwanese students potential for learning the 'British culture.'
- 2.7 Culture and the English Language. This section, related to Research Questions 1, 1.1 and 1.2, links the areas of language and culture together.

Textbooks:

- 2.8 EFL Textbooks. This section traces the evolution of the EFL textbook from a simple language guide to the complex tool it has become. It is related to Research Question 1.
- 2.9 The Global Textbook. This section looks specifically at the impact of the global textbook and its potential among Taiwanese students. It is related to Research Question 1.
- 2.10 Cultural Components in Textbooks and Frameworks for Analysis. This section looks at the case for inclusion of cultural activities in EFL textbooks. It is related to Research Question 1.1.
- 2.11 EFL Textbooks in Taiwan. This section looks at the history of EFL textbooks in Taiwan and traces their use to the present day. It gives background information related to Research Question 1.

- 2.12 Key Issues Arising in Relation to my Research. This sub-section is a summary of the key points raised in the chapter.

2.1 Culture: Main Theoretical Perspectives

This section aims to locate the literature review within the context of the broader debate on the concept of culture. Firstly, I will look at essentialist research, starting with Hofstede, et al., (2010) and continuing with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2004, 2003, 2000, 1998, and 1993), as their work is critical in understanding essentialist beliefs.

Essentialist Views

Hofstede's et al.'s considerable research in the concept of culture, spanning from the 1960s and into this century, is significant in understanding essentialism. Hofstede et al. used the analogy of computer programming, coining the term 'mental software,' (2010, p. 5) and described culture as corresponding to a 'broader use of the word (culture) that is common among sociologists and especially anthropologists' (ibid, p. 5), as opposed to the definition of culture (according to Hofstede) in most 'Western languages' (ibid, p. 5): 'culture commonly means "civilization" or "refinement of the mind" and in particular the results of such refinement, such as education, art and literature' (p. 5). Hofstede et al. originally developed four dimensions of national culture – or 'orientations,' later extended to five – as a result of extensive questionnaires among IBM employees in 66 countries.

The dimensions most relevant to my research are the second and fifth ones, individualism vs. collectivism, and long-term vs. short-term orientation. The former is defined by Hofstede et al. as pertaining to '*societies in which the ties between individuals are loose.*' The latter as pertaining to '*societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups*' (2010, p. 92, author's italics).

The fifth dimension, long-term vs. short-term orientation, added as a result of a Chinese Values Survey in 1985, but adopted by Hofstede in the early 1990s, is based on some elements of Confucian teachings, but Hofstede et al. point out that this dimension 'is not "Confucianism" per se' (2010, p. 238) and they define the former as standing for virtues that are '*oriented towards future rewards.*' The latter standing for '*respect for tradition, preservation of "face," and fulfilling social obligations*' (p. 239, author's italics). The importance of face and social obligations will become important in Sections 2.4 and 2.5 of this Literature Review.

Trompenaars' and Hampden-Turner's significant cross-cultural research is mainly geared towards greater cross-cultural awareness among and between international companies. The view of 'culture' taken by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner is based on its impact on the business world and is apparently viewed as something to be used: '*culture is the way in which a group of people solves problems and reconciles dilemmas*' (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 6). They have done considerable research in the area of intercultural communication (1993, 1998, 2000, 2003 and 2004) and subsequently developed seven dimensions, five of them dealing with human relationships. The dimensions related to my research are the second and third. The former, closely aligned with Hofstede et al.'s view, Individualism vs. Collectivism, contrasts the importance of the individual as opposed to the group. They claim that 'Individuals are either self- or community-oriented' (1998, p. 54) and they allude to the fact that people may exhibit behaviour consistent with either an individualist or a collectivist culture and the separation of a group of people into one or the other is rarely smooth; a point which will be further explained in Section 2.3 Individualism and Collectivism in this Literature Review.

In the third dimension, Neutral vs. Emotional, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner contrast the importance of showing or expressing emotions as opposed to concealing or suppressing them. They discuss the concept of humour, understatement and irony as a way of releasing, and sometimes concealing, emotions; particularly when used by British people. They identify that certain kinds of jokes are almost always lost on foreigners even if they speak the language well enough for normal discourse. This is an area that is likely to be of significance in relation to the Taiwanese students' expressed need for understanding humour.

Yet essentialist views of culture are often criticised by contemporary researchers. Critics of Hofstede's work point out inconsistencies in the methodological assumptions and the validity of his ideas concerning relationships between cultures (Schwartz, 1999; Redpath, 1997; S ndergaard, 1994; Dorfman and Howell, 1988). For the purpose of this Literature Review I will focus on McSweeney's (2002) criticism because it has relevance to the focus of my research and it takes a more generic view of Hofstede's work, rather than looking at specific items.

Firstly, McSweeney argues that Hofstede et al.'s conceptualisation of 'national culture' is flawed in assuming that 'national culture is a "common component" of a wider culture which contains both global and sub-national constituents' (2002, p. 92). Importantly, McSweeney points out that national culture is not the only culture but one of many. The reasons that differentiate people within nations from one another are not taken into account by Hofstede who 'claims that despite these divisions every national population somehow shares a unique culture' (p. 92). McSweeney also criticises Hofstede's view of sharing in cultures. For example, the frequent references to 'inhabitants of a nation'

possessing 'common characteristics' (p. 93), which, he claims, leads to the essentialist conclusion that national culture is 'individually carried by everyone in a nation' (p. 92).

McSweeney goes on to discuss the assumptions on which Hofstede's theory of nationality rests, claiming that all the assumptions are flawed. He questions the bi-polar nature of Hofstede et al.'s dimensions and even whether the dimensions identified were accurately determined. He points out that polar opposites – for example, individualist and collectivist behaviour – both relevant to my research – can coexist in the same person.

More recent views on an essentialist understanding of culture include Piller (2011, p. 15), who describes it as 'something people have or to which they belong.' Holliday (2005, p. 17) views it as follows: 'The most common essentialist view of "culture" is that cultures are coincidental with countries, regions, and continents, implying that one can "visit" them while travelling and that they contain "mutually exclusive types of behaviour."' He adopts the term 'culturism' which he defines as relating to the reduction of a person through 'thought or act' that makes them 'something less' than what they are (p. 17).

Agar (1996) also stresses that culture is 'something people "have,"'- again a predominantly essentialist view - but also 'something that happens to *you*' when you come into contact with other people (1996, p. 20, author's emphasis). He also points out the complexity of the word 'culture' during its evolution from its original meaning related to crop cultivation; an issue covered in depth by Gray (2007). Agar suggests that the contact with other people is what makes culture personal, and turns it into an individual attribute rather than a group one: 'it's what *happens to you* when you encounter differences,' and inevitably, notice certain changes within yourself (1996, p. 20, author's emphasis). He concludes with 'Culture changes you into a person who can navigate the modern *multicultural* world' (1996, p. 21, author's emphasis). This may be relevant to me

because the Taiwanese students studying abroad are indeed encountering 'differences,' but the question of whether they can 'navigate' this 'world' may be revealed by this research.

Agar mostly discusses Americans (US) in his look at culture, but his comment that 'they have trouble entering into another world that goes with another language,' or another 'point of view' (1996, p. 22) could well be extended to many other individuals or national groups based on adaptation difficulties on arrival in what Agar refers to as other 'lands' (p. 22). As an extension of his views on culture, Agar includes the effects of experiencing life in other 'lands:' (Culture is) 'something that happens to people when they realize that their way of doing things isn't natural law, that other ways are possible' (p. 27). This is a departure from the essentialist view of culture as a fixed commodity, and is somewhat more consistent with Holliday's views, who comments that the essentialist view is that cultures 'contain "mutually exclusive types of behaviour,"' and people 'from in' different cultures are 'essentially different' from people 'in' other cultures (2005, p. 17).

Holliday suggests that a good deal of such essentialist thinking is the 'default way' of isolating how we are different 'from each other' (2005, p. 18). He believes that the problem with the 'default way' is that 'agency is transferred away from the individual to the culture itself' thus narrowing the gap between this kind of 'essentialist ... thinking' and 'the chauvinistic stereotyping inherent in culturism' (ibid., p. 18); for example, "all" Chinese people live in extended families. However, recent research suggests that this 'default' way of thinking is giving way to more non-essentialist ideas about culture.

Non-essentialist Views

Holliday proposes a new way of thinking about culture – a 'non-essentialist view' (2005, p. 23) where 'culture is not a geographical place which can be visited and to which someone

can belong, but a social force which is evident wherever it emerges as being significant' (p. 23). Holliday points out that he is aware of cultural differences and acknowledges that they must exist, however he stresses that in his non-essentialist paradigm any difference 'is not locked into essentialist cultural blocks' (p. 23).

Holliday classes such things as nationality as 'large cultures,' and correspondingly, such things as 'family, age' and 'occupation' as 'small cultures' (p. 23). And in a rather general view he claims that the 'small culture approach considers any instance of socially cohesive behaviour as culture' (p. 23). In an earlier paper he notes that 'small' (culture) signifies any cohesive social grouping and the "'small culture' approach ... attempts to liberate "culture" from notions of ethnicity and nation' (Holliday, 1999, p. 237), thus separating his understanding from that which gives the central position to nation in Hofstede's and Trompenaars' research.

From Holliday's own personal view his 'approach to culture and to culturism is concerned with how people construct for themselves the realities of others, and how culture is itself socially constructed' (2005, p. 24). Byram et al. (1994, p. vii) refer to the 'contentious nature' of the definitions of 'culture,' and define it themselves as 'the knowledge and practices of people belonging to particular social groups, for example national groups.' Borrelli (1990, p. 83) defines culture, from the standpoint of 'intercultural pedagogy' as not being confined to 'national boundaries;' 'shaped by an historical experience of society;' and 'as a thinking experience.' In my view Borrelli's definition is appealing in terms of the universality of the concept, and its dynamic character, and I feel many of the principles underpinning my own research are based on these more contemporary beliefs about 'culture,' which have allowed me to clearly situate my research in relation to the different understandings of culture.

This research is situated in a non-essentialist view of culture, similar to Holliday's, as a fluid, evolving concept, in keeping with the situation of the Taiwanese students studying abroad who are expected to grow and develop culturally as their overseas experience increases, although some students may find cultural learning easier than others as the often accepted idea of a fixed Chinese identity is no longer taken for granted.

Regarding Chinese identity in contemporary Chinese society, Cao (2007) notes a shift away from the more traditional perspective: 'A non-essentialist representation focuses on differences as well as common or shared characteristics within Chinese society and with other cultures. It questions a "true" or "fixed" Chinese identity and the claim that there are some essential "Chinese" qualities' (Cao, 2007, pp. 109-110). This is all the more relevant in Taiwan due to the rapid increase of Internet use and the continued exposure to foreign influence, giving Chinese people more opportunity to view different ways of behaving and different cultural values, paving the way perhaps for changing their own views. As Piller (2011, p. 70) notes, 'culture is in a state of constant flux and cross-fertilisation,' and it is expected that the students may respond to any changes and shifts in their views while engaging in cultural learning overseas. And it is to cultural learning that I now turn.

In terms of the Taiwanese students' short-term visits to Britain it did not seem appropriate for me to use the term acculturation; defined by Byram et al. (1994, p. 7) as 'learning to function within a new culture, while maintaining your own identity,' based on Schumann's (1978, in Byram, et al., 1994) model, in which he details eight 'dimensions' of social distance, 'acculturation' being one of these dimensions (p. 6). The term 'cultural learning' seemed more appropriate. The term is used liberally in Byram et al. (1994) to refer to the learning of culture per se. I believe this makes the term more fitting than

'acculturation' which presupposes taking on significant aspects of the host culture – in this case, 'British culture' – in order to affect a transition to longer-term residence in the country, and for the Taiwanese students involved in this study this is not the case.

2.2 Intercultural Communication, Multiculture and Study Abroad

The word 'Intercultural' can be applied to people 'whose life experiences have brought them into contact with people of cultures other than their own' (Ryan, 2003, p. 132), and the word may be used to describe the immersion 'temporarily or permanently' of students in 'cultures other than their own' (p. 159). Kramsch (1998, p. 81) defines it as 'the meeting of two cultures or two languages across the political boundaries of nation-states.' This leads us into consideration of the ability to communicate in an intercultural environment.

Intercultural competence is defined in a variety of ways. For example, Alred, et al. (2003, p. 3) describe it in the following way: 'Stepping outside the closed boundaries of one's groups and experiencing the conventions and values by which people in other groups live.' Yet the definition most closely suited to my research because of its flexible approach when dealing with new cultures is expounded by Meyer (1991, p. 137), who defines intercultural competence as identifying 'the ability of a person to behave adequately and in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign culture.' Meyer posits that 'adequacy and flexibility' implies an awareness of differences between cultures, and he suggests the importance of 'self-identity' as a component of such competence. He also determines an important link between the way we behave in an intercultural environment, and the way we understand the process of cross-cultural relationships (p. 141). Meyer asks an important question: 'To what degree does a learner manage to understand ... a foreign culture?' (p. 141). The

Issue of 'degree' or depth of knowledge is important here and Meyer goes on to suggest three levels of performance – Monocultural, Intercultural and Transcultural – that allow students to gain competence in the foreign culture that 'goes beyond simple realisation of differences and' demonstrates 'techniques of intercultural negotiation and mediation'(p.142).

And linked to this, Alred, et al. (2003, p. 159) define intercultural competence as an 'encounter that goes beyond the passive and the observational.' This is perhaps an ideal situation that may only be realised by students who have substantial overseas cultural experience.

Lancaster University's Interculture Project (ICP) regards intercultural competence as 'the ultimate goal of intercultural teaching,' and defines it as 'the ability to interact successfully with others across cultural difference, in a potentially infinite range of situations.' The awareness of the individual's role in the process, and their reflexive ability is again important here (Interculture Project, 2002). The project was important in terms of the teaching of intercultural competence.

The ICP involved several British universities and attempted – between 1997 and 2000 – to determine what hindered students' development on study-abroad programs outside the UK, and how they could be better assisted in preparing for the experience and supported during it. One of the ICP's learning outcomes was Intercultural Awareness, which is defined as 'a non-judgmental awareness of the existence of difference which entails a commitment to an ongoing, reflexive process of discovery and acceptance of these differences' (ibid, 2002). There is stress on the reflection of the self as well as the host culture; a consideration shared by Jackson (2008, p. 227).

Byram (1997, p. 4) informs us that in teaching intercultural competence there cannot be a 'generalisable syllabus,' and any dichotomy perceived between what the students learn in the classroom and out of it is false because of the potentially 'integrated' nature of the intercultural learning process (ibid, p. 65). This is interesting in that it suggests implications for teachers in creating language activities that must be seen to 'work' when dealing with people in the host country, rather than in the more tightly controlled classroom environment. Sercu (2000) suggests an approach to teaching intercultural competence that integrates four essential points – explained in full in Section 2.10 Cultural Components in Textbooks and Frameworks for their Analysis in this Literature Review.

Risager (2006) discusses the complexity of teaching intercultural competence when faced with problems such as the 'types of English the learners come into contact with' (p. 10), and whether a first-language speaker is an appropriate model for all students of English. Questions such as these point to the continuing evolution of intercultural competence and the way it is taught, and suggests that it may be necessary to consider specific students' needs – individual and group – in order to allow them to engage in the most appropriate form of cultural learning, and this is something my research will look at in terms of satisfying students' needs: see Chapter 5, Section 5.1. In dealing with groups of people, the term multicultural is often used, and I will now look at the development of the concept from the 1990s to the present day.

Eldering (1996, p. 316) discusses the different 'dimensions' of multicultural. The second dimension she speaks of regards 'the identity of society and how cultural differences between groups are to be dealt with.' Her idea that 'assimilation' concerns the 'merging of ethnic/cultural groups into a dominant group' may be a useful term in examining the

experiences of Taiwanese students at the heart of my research because they and their multinational classmates are attempting this merger into the culture in Britain, although assimilation is often used in a stronger sense, and particularly with regard to immigrants.

Kramersch (1998, p. 82) informs us that the word multicultural is used in two ways. 'In a societal sense, it indicates the coexistence of people from many different backgrounds and ethnicities ... In an individual sense, it characterizes persons who belong to various discourse communities.' Later on, Alred et al. (2003, p. 159) state that the term multicultural 'may be more clearly understood as being descriptive of a group of people,' (the multicultural class) 'or a body of knowledge.' And more recently Piller (2011, p. 24) defines multiculturalism as a 'celebration of cultural diversity,' but warns that in certain contexts it can be used to denote ethnicity or race (p. 25), and she reminds us that 'Multiculturalism per se does not exist; it exists in a specific context' (p. 27), so the study environment, the location, the other students in the EFL classroom, and several other factors; for example, the teacher and the host family, all contribute to create a multicultural context for the Taiwanese student who is coming to terms with study abroad, perhaps for the first time.

Regarding the study abroad experience, Kinginger (2008) and Jackson (2008) both conducted in-depth case studies; the former focusing on US students studying in France, and the latter focusing on Hong Kong Chinese students in England. Kinginger acknowledged that 'study abroad is a productive – if imperfect – environment for the development of communicative competence in foreign languages,' but the cohort in her study 'demonstrated marked, and when demonstrable, statistically significant gains as a group', yet she observed 'considerable variation was documented for individual students' (p. 107). She determined that linguistic improvement in such programs may relate not

only to 'the qualities of student experiences, but also to the personal stances that students adopt in relation to these experiences' (p. 107). Regarding my research, I will be attempting to determine the nature of the 'personal stances' adopted by the Taiwanese students, and their influence on students' English language improvement, when dealing with 'experiences' in Brighton and Hove.

In terms of the implications of Kinginger's (2008) research, she states that a significant contribution to study abroad may be made through 'computer-mediated communication' that could be used for linking students to their peers within the country, and also for 'connecting students to their study abroad destinations' (p. 111). Jackson (2008) concluded that study abroad students find 'comprehensive pre-sojourn preparation' beneficial, as well as supported, encouraged, and programmed study 'during the sojourn.' She adds that 'adequate' de-briefing is important on return (p. 221). It may be important to determine the extent of pre, during, and post sojourn study preparation and briefing among Taiwanese students in this research, and how it may benefit them.

Jackson (2008, p. 9) also comments that 'Context is now understood to play a significant role in language and cultural learning and expansion,' suggesting the importance of study abroad environments. But the students' reactions to the stimulus of the new environment are critical as their perception of the new 'world' around them may differ among the group, and 'Those who are open and receptive to the world around them are apt to take advantage of linguistic affordances and play a more active role in their language and cultural learning.' Kinginger (2008, pp. 20/21) agrees: 'If language is to be learned students must be actively involved and committed to language learning in a profound and durable way, seeking out opportunities to further their abilities and negotiating access to social networks and other resources.' For this reason I examined

Taiwanese students' reactions while in Britain. Jackson (2008, pp. 48 -49) adds that for the students who see only 'obstacles' and 'rejections' opportunities will be limited 'for linguistic and cultural enhancement.' As Roberts (2003, p. 114) reminds us, 'intercultural living' is not necessarily 'intercultural learning,' and students can be tempted to hide away and miss, or in severe cases, block the intercultural experience, as some researchers have observed: 'Travelling abroad does not ensure greater cultural sensitivity' (Anderson et al. 2006, p. 459).

Jin and Cortazzi (2006) formulated a 'multidimensional participation model' for mainland Chinese students studying abroad that takes an holistic approach allowing students to focus on 'participation activities' through the 'dimensions of cognitive, creative, affective, socio-cultural and meta-cognitive levels' (p. 16). The model is based on changes in Chinese students' learning particularly involving their engagement with students and teachers. In terms of the relationship to my research, the model suggests an improvement strategy for textbooks aimed at Chinese students that allows them to get involved in the formulation of ideas and the expression of personal and group opinions. The ideas underpinning the model suggest a strong basis in encouragement and mutual support; in addition, the idea of risk taking among Taiwanese students is interesting in that, although willingness to take risks would generally be seen as helpful in language learning, the students may have to have to engage in discourse a good deal more proactively than they are accustomed to in order to benefit from the risks.

Hymes' (1980, in Roberts, 2003, p. 115) work purports to use 'common sense ways of learning' and building up gradual understanding through 'observation and interaction.' The suggestion may well be appropriate in a tightly controlled learning environment, however in the EFL scenario the student is ordinarily required to do a substantial amount

of interacting with the local people by themselves. Roberts and colleagues developed a detailed template for ethnographic training and support to help students conduct their own ethnographic work without assistance, yet many students find this an enormous challenge and the hosts may not always be 'welcoming' (Jackson, 2008, p. 47). In the case of the Taiwanese students, this may be partly attributable to their educational and societal background; a Confucian based education system combined with predominantly collectivist principles. Having previously touched on the 'dimension' of individualism and collectivism in the discussion on essentialism, it is now my intention to look in more detail at the distinction between the two in order to determine their place in this research.

2.3 Individualism and Collectivism

Hofstede et al. (2010) take a rather binary position when justifying this (in their terms) dimension. When discussing members of a collectivist society they note, 'The "we" group (or in-group) is the major source of one's identity and the only secure protection one has against the hardships of life' (p. 91). As opposed to an individualist society: 'Neither practically nor psychologically is the healthy person in this type of society supposed to be dependent on a group' (p. 91). Piller (2011) defines individualism as referring to 'the level of connection in a society and whether individuals are expected to fend for themselves or act as members of a group' (p. 78). But according to Holliday (2011), 'the collectivism-individualism distinction is an "easy answer" and needs to be bracketed,' which he defines as 'making the familiar strange,' and allowing a person to 'work out from first principles how the culture works in terms of its basic structures' (p. 31). He suggests we should 'put the distinction, or the possibility of such a distinction, aside' and we 'may also see something else' (p. 31). However, this can be difficult, and as I explored the issue of cultural learning among multinational students as part of this Literature Review, the

apparent dichotomy between the individualist society and the collectivist society continued to appear – see Sections 2.4 and 2.5.

In attempting to identify points of possible importance I needed to understand the background and nature of a collectivist culture, and the apparent tendency of members of such a community to gravitate towards members of their own culture in social situations. It could be argued that this is true of most people – including British people who are overseas – however it appears to be more pronounced in the case of Taiwanese students. This, combined with a potentially deeply embedded belief in Confucian principles – discussed in the next section of this chapter – can provide a barrier to social integration, and different beliefs may be strongly opposed by the students.

Shih and Cifuentes (2003, p. 84), quoting Hofstede's 1982/1986 comparison of the US and Taiwan, cite the importance to the Taiwanese of the 'collectivist culture,' and due to my continued contact and observation of the students, I believe that the link between the individual and the group is the predominant feeling at the heart of the Taiwanese students' study ethic. Paradoxically, it is a feeling borne out of contradictions: the need to provide a personal example of success vs. the need to reflect the native culture's collective embodiment of success; the need to gain a firm foothold in an alien culture vs. the need to remain fiercely loyal to the Taiwanese/Chinese *modus operandi*. Yet, this 'inner solidarity' seems to be an asset that the average Taiwanese student possesses in abundance, so perhaps the maintaining of self – and group – identity is most at risk during the cultural learning stage. From a psychological perspective, the perceived self-image can take a damaging blow during the initial stages of cultural learning.

Yet the situation may now be undergoing some subtle changes. Chang (2008, p. 850) reports that economic improvement and modernisation have blurred the line between

the principles of the collectivist society, and those attributes normally associated with an individualist society: 'Taiwan has become a society emphasising more on individualism, freedom, and self-determination as its democratic system and economic development continue to advance.' Although substantial research into this apparent shift is lacking, it may be that this merging of approaches is a possible reality in the near future for the young Taiwanese of today. Yet, for many students, the distinction between individualism and collectivism appears to be still strong.

Holliday (2005) points out that a significant problem with such a binary distinction is that the foreign 'Other' becomes generalised far too simplistically so that 'whole swathes of humanity are grouped together,' and significantly, 'the characteristics of all these groupings become remarkably similar to each other' thus losing any sense of individual difference, and noticeably separated from what Holliday refers to as the 'unproblematic Self' (p. 19). It is possible, however, that the role of the Confucian education system in Taiwan is responsible for certain elements of group identity, and it is closely related to this research as the students involved may bring aspects of the system – rules for politeness, saving face – into the classroom and onto the streets of Brighton and Hove.

2.4 Confucianism and Identity

Research has suggested that the Confucian culture ingrained in Taiwanese society is vital to the Chinese people (e.g. Hung and Marjoribanks, 2005; Chen and Chang, 2003; and González et al., 2001). According to Confucian principles, 'a person's attitude, personality, motivation, values, relationships, and beliefs are all culture related' (Nevara, 2003, p. 12). According to Jin and Cortazzi (2006, p. 12), the Confucian tradition approached learning as the 'careful study of a canon of texts combined with the practice of moral self-cultivation.' In terms of the specific research I am engaging in this would affect the ability

of the Taiwanese students to actively engage in discourse on several levels specific to the EFL environment they find themselves in, in this case, the South-East of England; specifically, in Brighton and Hove which has a substantial Chinese community; some of whom are residents, many of whom are students.

The Chinese belief in the power of knowledge and education, combined with deeply embedded traditions regarding the fundamental importance of the ownership of knowledge accord improved status and a higher level of respect to well-educated members of the collective community (Hung and Marjoribanks, 2005; González et al., 2001). English is often seen as the 'visual cue' of a Western standard of living (Chen and Chang, 2003); this can create a cultural double standard that sees the young English student struggling to remain faithful to their Chinese heritage while simultaneously being pulled in the direction of the 'correct' (Chen and Chang, 2003, p. 3) lifestyle of the 'advanced' countries depicted in the textbooks the student presumes is appropriate.

Understanding the nature of these beliefs, and their foundations at the heart of a system of social and moral order developed thousands of years ago, in my view sheds some light on the more contemporary issues surrounding Taiwanese students' difficulties with intercultural communication in Britain. The Confucian principles at the heart of the Taiwanese education system may present a number of conflicts when attempting to interpret the Western cultural practises depicted in the textbooks, especially in a multinational class. In many Taiwanese families, traditional values are revered and educational values are held in similar reverence. This is complicated when we understand that the values relating to educational principles are grounded in 'cultural philosophies of learning' (González, et al. 2001). This can be further complicated when considering that as Chang (2004, p. 175) suggests many 'Western studies of international education' often

contain 'misperceptions' about such Confucian principles. She bases her assumptions on Biggs' (1996) work, who suggests the focus should go much deeper to gain access to the 'cultural roots and assumptions of the observed behaviours.' And although Liu (2005, p. 216) proposes – somewhat optimistically, in my opinion – that '(Taiwan) is under the dual influence of Western cultures and Chinese traditional culture,' Kim (2002, p. 3) observes that Far Eastern cultures have 'inflexible rules of inter or cross cultural communication that stem from basic schooling education.'

In terms of culturally-based peer relationships – which can be crucial in a multinational class – Chang states, '(Confucian) cultures have specific standards for superior-inferior relations, but few guidelines for the behaviour of equals' (2004, p. 849). This may be one of several reasons why I have observed that Taiwanese students appear to feel uncomfortable in the presence of far more outgoing students (whether through culturally-inspired motives or not), and the uncertainty is compounded when observing peer students apparently communicating with ease. This is an aspect that will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 5, Section 5.2 The Safety of the Family and Relationship Discussion Inhibitions.

A compromise would appear to be the fusion of the host culture with the student's own culture. The learner's ability to respond to the new culture may be achieved by their ability to view the culture through the 'lens' of their own culture (Liaw, 2006). As Liaw points out, learning about the host culture is only a part of the cultural learning process. The student needs to learn how the target culture 'interacts with (their) own cultural experience' (p. 2).

As Byram et al. (2003) note, the EFL student faces a certain dilemma when attempting to take on aspects of the host culture while remaining faithful to his or her own culture. This

change, that Byram et al. describe as 'the capacity to change one's behaviour under the pressure of outside events in an effort to overcome strangeness in the environment' (p. 112), is a process of fitting in that most EFL students will be faced with, especially during the early stages of their stay overseas. For my purposes the most significant aspect of this fitting in would be the effect of Taiwanese students' classroom experiences and their external experiences, and principally the role of language in their cultural learning process, and how this affects their sense of individual and group identity.

Block (2007, p. 27) tells us that identities 'are about negotiating new subject positions at the crossroads of the past, present and future.' He rejects the traditional social structuralist approach to identity which 'involves the search for universal laws or rules of human behaviour' (p. 12), in favour of the poststructuralist approach that searches for 'more nuanced, multileveled and ultimately, complicated framings of the world around us' (p. 13).

Importantly, he determines identity as being 'socially constructed ... ongoing narratives that individuals perform' (p. 27). This is important in that it suggests the journey the students – in this case – will undertake and it also points to the nature of identity as being a continuous part of their social lives.

Indeed, the social nature of human beings and the need for social interaction (Alred, et al., 2003) and the consequent forming of cultural identities leads to the development of the 'what's familiar is right' view, in which people socialised in certain groups can come to believe in the infallibility of their rules and conventions. It is in the implicit nature of the intercultural experience that the student begins to question this rightness, or conversely to establish a barrier to block out all cultural information that does not accord to the specific cultural blueprint. This blueprint can be a substantial stumbling block to students

already wrestling with the concept of diverse cultures in the same classroom, particularly when coming to terms with textbooks that may present a version of reality at odds with students' expectations.

If we are to look at students' motivations, then doing so from a purely individual point of view would be insufficient considering that Taiwanese students have collective outcomes in addition to personal ones. Chang (2008, p. 849) refers to such issues as 'social cohesion, social harmony and stability ... etiquette, a work ethic, a high valuation of education.' Interestingly, he also points out that 'Asian cultures dominated by Confucianism have specific standards of personal civility, but they are relatively weak in the areas of impersonal interaction,' and teachers of multinational classes containing Taiwanese students may become aware of this tendency at an early stage.

'When an individual moves from one culture to another, many aspects of self-identity are modified to accommodate information about and experiences within the new culture ... (this process) involves changes that take place as a result of continuous and direct contact between individuals having different cultural origins' (Ryder et al. 2000, p. 49). When the Taiwanese student 'moves from one culture to another' the important thing is that the process requires them to override much of their inbuilt reluctance to communicate in the classroom and merge aspects of the host culture into their own self-identity. The literature relevant to the topic contains numerous references to identity, but for my purposes the most significant area would be the effect on self-identity of Taiwanese students' classroom experiences and their external experiences, and principally the role of language and the textbook in the process of cultural learning. Nihalani (2008, p. 244) blends the need for multicultural identity to 'the pedagogical issue of an "education target."' This is interesting in that it presupposes an integral link between a certain form

of group identity required to succeed in a multicultural environment, and a (possibly, but not necessarily) linguistic target. This close bond between culture and language is again evident here, but I have not examined identity formation or change as such as it would have taken me away from my primary focus on the influence of textbooks, and the students' process of cultural learning, and it is to cultural preparation and the education system in Taiwan that I now turn.

2.5 Education in Taiwan and Cultural Preparation

The historical rise of the importance of traditional factors as they affect Taiwan are well documented in Tsai (2002). It becomes clear that the political ideology of the 'three principles of the people'² have had a profound impact on the evolution of educational standards and practice in Taiwan, although, as Tsai points out, democracy, the rise of the importance of global English, and the resultant need for a creative as opposed to a political curriculum, is causing a profound shift in the educational foundations of the country. The original ideology imposed on the Taiwanese youth between 1959 and 1978 was actually a mainland imported curriculum designed to instil fierce nationalist sentiments and eradicate any trace of communist leanings. As a political solution, this seemed to be a logical course of action; as the foundation for an effective educational curriculum, it was at best optimistic (Tsai, 2002, pp. 229-231). To this day, Taiwan Ministry expectations far exceed anything that the teachers or schools are capable of delivering, or have the power to deliver (Nunan, 2003); and this has impacted on the EFL schools in the form of unrealistic standards and 'cramming' to gain language skills as quickly as possible.

²A reference to the democratic foundations of Taiwan based on the teachings of Dr. Sun-Yat Sen. See Sharpe (2002).

The Taiwanese turned initially to their economic and political allies, the United States, for the massive 'rush' to learn English. Although the balance has shifted the US still has a great deal of influence in the Taiwanese EFL system and this partly explains the plethora of studies conducted in the US concerning Taiwanese students. Principal among these studies is the work of Ying (2002), who concerns herself primarily with Taiwanese students' cultural learning difficulties.

Ying justifies her research by quoting the large number of Taiwanese students then studying in the US – 31,000; the fifth largest group of overseas students. Based on previous work by Cupach and Imahori (1993) in conjunction with her own research, Ying suggests that there is a greater likelihood of the students forming cross-cultural relationships if they are: more extroverted, have greater knowledge about the US, have a favourable attitude toward friendship formation with members of the host culture, and a less positive attitude towards Taiwanese students, and finally attend a school where fewer Taiwanese students are present. As previously mentioned, simply being in the host culture is no guarantee of increased language ability if the interaction with the locals is found wanting (Eoyang, 2003). Yet, as has been alluded to, the insular undercurrent of the Taiwanese education system may make the accommodation of a 'global' outlook a difficult proposition, and as Jin and Cortazzi (2006, p. 9) point out, Chinese students tend to take for granted certain 'aspects of learning,' such as the nature of interaction, the way they learn and how they are taught, and 'attitudes' and 'beliefs.' These 'cultural expectations' will undergo modification when subjected to various aspects of the host culture, and the extent of cultural learning students achieve has to compete with increasingly deep-rooted attitudes and beliefs.

Regarding Ying's two latter points, it would seem to be going totally against the cultural grain to behave in a less positive way to one's own compatriots, especially when we are discussing students from a Confucian-based society. Ying's reasoning appears to be that restricting contact with Taiwanese students would automatically entail increasing contact with members of the host culture. Later in the same paper, however, Ying acknowledges that there is a greater likelihood of Taiwanese students turning to each other for support, given their cultural background, and although she quotes previous research (Church, 1982; Klein et al., 1980; and Kang, 1972) in establishing that such relationships give Taiwanese students 'a feeling of belonging' and also add to 'continuation of cultural values' (2002, p. 48), she stops short of defining exactly where she stands on such cultural issues.

Ying's research does point to three areas that seem to recur throughout much research into Taiwanese students abroad: attitude, communication skills, and integration. Communication skills are effectively the essence of the students' lives in Britain, and Ying's research demonstrates that better cross-cultural relationships are formed by students who can communicate well in English (p. 48), based on the apparent hypothesis that the greater the students' linguistic ability, the greater their confidence. Although Coleman (1997, p. 17) points out that 'Aptitude ... might play only an indirect role in residence abroad.'

The issue of attitude needs a little more analysis as it is difficult to isolate especially when considering the reactions of students who are less inclined to be proactive in the classroom. The cultural defence mechanisms used by some Taiwanese students can lead to patterns of classroom, and indeed 'real' world, behaviour that appear to be at odds with reality, but are simply part of the students' coping mechanism. As Coleman (1997, p.

11) points out, 'Attitudes are culturally acquired in the home environment ... although they may be modified by experience and reflexion, they tend to be deep-rooted and persistent.' The impact of cultural beliefs on classroom behaviour can be significant because, as Simpson (2008, p. 382) points out, 'Pedagogies are often bound up in and are expressions of cultural mores.'

Such patterns as 'face' saving – defined by Nwoye (1992, p. 313) as 'an individual's desire to behave in conformity with culturally expected norms of behaviour that are institutionalized and sanctioned by society – facial expressions and gestures, and inappropriate emotional behaviour come into this group,' and simplified by Kramsch (1998, p. 128) 'A person's social need to both belong to a group and be independent of that group.' Scollon and Scollon (1995, p. 34) view face as 'the negotiated public image, mutually granted each other by participants in a communicative event.'

This area of study was important in forming Research Question 3, and on a wider scale it seems to be an issue with East Asian students per se. Kim's (2002, p. 1) cross-cultural study of Korean students confirms that without appropriate knowledge of the system, from the very outset of a cross-cultural encounter, there can be 'confusion, misinterpretations of feeling and possible "loss of face."' As one of the principal barriers to cultural learning for the Taiwanese student, and possibly a significant issue related to Research Question 3 as well, face has become a very important factor in this main study inside and outside of the classroom. Park (2007, p. 123) describes 'face' as 'a cornerstone in theoretical frameworks of linguistic politeness,' and reminds us that 'as a social phenomenon ... its interpretation is dependent upon a given society's social attributes' (p. 127). This face saving also extends to gestures and body movements. Kim observes that in Korea and Japan the ubiquitous smile may be used as a device to 'mask embarrassment'

or to avoid giving a 'negative answer' (p. 5). Roskams (1999, p. 81) refers to the 'tension between the social unacceptability of public disagreement' in Chinese society which, he believes, manifests itself as face, and Jin and Cortazzi (2006, p. 19) point out that 'fear of making mistakes is compounded by fear of losing face.'

There seems to be a distinct link between face saving and apology, at least in terms of correlational studies. Park and Guan (2006) discovered that Chinese students generally had weaker disposition to apology than US students. This is interesting considering that the very nature of saving face is fundamentally a culturally appropriate apology mechanism, reinforcing themselves as 'polite, considerate, respectful members of their culture' (Kramsch, 1998, p. 46). Research has indicated that the nature of apology in collectivist societies may be dependent on 'in group' and 'out group' status, and as such the possible group loyalty guiding Taiwanese students may be a formidable barrier to effective classroom interaction in a multicultural environment. This may also impact on students' politeness strategies inside the classroom and out of it; an area that has been included in this investigation.

But what of the students' interpretation of the host culture; in this case, the everyday culture that they will experience on the streets of Brighton and Hove? In this study it was also important to examine the students' experiences away from the study 'world', i.e., the classroom: what is happening in the vast amount of time the Taiwanese student is outside the classroom in the British environment and how can they be better prepared for interacting with the host culture in advance? As Jackson (2008, p. 48) observes, 'In SA' (Study Abroad) 'programmes where much of the learning takes place out of the class, we cannot ignore the potential impact of the host environment on the language and cultural learning of L2 sojourners.' Adequate cultural preparation for study in Britain, prior to

arrival, may be advantageous for many Taiwanese students whose first experience of a multinational classroom environment can be daunting. There may be numerous factors other than the textbooks that could be of use to the students due to a range of complex factors including, the link between global English and the use of the English language in international contexts, and the influence of the global English market in the production of classroom materials.

If we look at the British educational environment in particular and add to the above the pluricultural nature of an EFL class, we begin to see the difficulty of choosing a specific set of values to address such a diverse audience; also taking into account the complexity of society as a whole. The great diversity of the British student environment in EFL schools; for example, in terms of range of nationalities and individual cultural practices, can mean that values that began as culture specific may tend to merge in the light of interaction with other students and first-hand experience of daily life in Britain as a student, and significantly as a member of the international community.

Any discussion regarding students' needs in a multicultural environment is fraught with contradictions and the only stakeholders who can realistically determine their cultural requirements in this specific environment are the students themselves. This may have quite profound implications for the students' cultural development in the host culture, in addition to the possible shifting of personal cultural boundaries. And the students are, of course, often at the mercy of the language schools preparing them for overseas study.

Language institutes in Taiwan are often guilty of promoting the communication skills necessary to speak English well while almost entirely neglecting the cultural aspects. As Wei (2004, p. 3) points out, as Taiwan gradually becomes incorporated into the 'global community,' the neglecting of intercultural communicative ability may cause problems

when attempting to come to terms with the host culture. 'Study abroad program objectives should also include learning about the foreign society and culture,' (Anderson et al., 2005, p. 458). Absence of cultural content is closely linked to the governmental control of the curriculum that was very much in evidence in Taiwan until the 1990s.

The students' view of the host culture is influenced by the EFL schools they choose to attend prior to their departure, yet for many students the process of choosing an appropriate language school in Taiwan is, for the most part, fairly arbitrary, although word of mouth is a powerful tool for recommendation. When choosing which language school to attend in Britain, the balance of power shifts (largely due to economic, and to a lesser extent, status issues) and the students are often highly influenced by the principal stakeholders, the parents. Previous personal experience in Taiwan suggests that parents will tend to choose any school that has the appearance of being prestigious, and that has a valid academic record. But before the student even leaves Taiwan, what perceptions do they have of the host nation? What does the 'British culture' entail, and what is the meaning of 'Britishness?'

2.6 Concepts of 'Britishness'

The central importance of the idea of Britishness in this thesis is related to its effects on the visiting Taiwanese students and how this concept is portrayed in the EFL textbooks being used by the students. It is important at this stage, therefore, to determine what that 'Britishness' consists of, what it might mean to the students, and what other researchers have said about it. Taiwanese students are subjected to manifold aspects of what could be considered 'British culture,' implicitly and explicitly, from the day they arrive in the country. Many may be curious about what being British entails – some may not. Yet all will be affected in some way.

So what does being British entail? As Ward (2004) points out, there is no simple or singular way of defining the concept of Britishness. Historically, the 'blending and mixing of ethnic groups in ever larger communities,' (Kidd, 1996, p. 368) has led to a combination of peoples who can legitimately claim British heritage. And then there is the highly arguable position of the influential extent of Englishness, as opposed to Britishness – and inevitably, for that matter, the issue of Scottishness and Welshness. It is not necessary to get involved to any depth in these national issues except to determine how they influence the perception of Britishness by overseas visitors.

Yet, the dominance of Englishness cannot be overlooked in this equation. Langlands (1999, p. 53) asks an interesting question: 'What is Britishness? Is it just a transnational state patriotism, or is it a secondary form of national identity constructed largely in English terms?' Langlands makes a strong case for the English infrastructure at the centre of Britishness: 'What would we expect to find if we stripped Britishness back to its central values and institutions? ... predominantly English historical myths, values and institutions at the core of Britishness,' (p. 56). And perhaps more worrying, she refers to the 18th century 'creation' of a British identity as being driven primarily by 'institutional measures' determined largely by 'local and individual circumstances' (p. 62). Yet, shortly afterwards she points out that 'levels' of Britishness have more traditionally been determined by 'allegiance to the crown, rather than by any ethno-cultural homogeneity' (p. 63). Aughey (2003, p. 49) also refers to English dominance and also attempts to explain one of the attributes of being British: 'It depended on a willing association of nations, which applied as well, if not all the more, to the majority nation, the English.' Aughey also suggests the inherent dangers involved when several nations are united 'if allegiance remains wedded to its component parts,' (p. 53). Langlands (1999, p. 57) concludes by suggesting that 'versions of Englishness consist at one and the same time of bundles of values, traits and

stereotypes that are held to be intrinsic and unique to the English people, and which are measured against perceived external and internal significant *others*' (emphasis in original). Although true, this information adds little to the argument in that it is probably safe to assume that this would be true of almost all cultures. And although the English invariably claim that Britishness is Englishness 'writ large' (Langlands, 1999, p. 64), the role of the Scottish and the Welsh may also be considerable.

Related to this apparent dominance of Englishness in the equation, is the issue of devolving the 'best' of Britishness into a given area thereby creating a set of values and behaviours consistent with a small minority of the country, yet supposedly indicative of all of them: 'interpretations of the national essence in the late nineteenth-century ... depicted the counties in the South-East of England as the repository of authentic English values which were uncorrupted by the perceived imperial cosmopolitan ethos of London and the racial degeneration and social decay of urban and industrial areas,' (Langlands, 1999, p. 64).

This sentiment, although outdated, is important to mention as I believe it has implications for certain elements of language teaching and materials production that followed in the 20th century, and may identify London and the South-East as the nexus of the EFL materials culture; a fact made all the more salient by the repeated reference to famous London landmarks in such contemporary EFL textbooks as *New Cutting Edge* (Cunningham and Moor, 2005) and *New Headway* (Soars and Soars, 2009) – both analysed in Chapter 4.

It would be naive to assume that the territorial identity built into the concept of Britishness does not have a significant ethnic component implying, as Langlands correctly points out, that 'Britishness operates on both a political and a cultural level at the same

time,' (1999, p. 54). This cultural component is important to visiting students in order for them to gain a certain territorial security regarding where the boundaries of Britishness lie and, equally importantly, where they do not lie.

In terms of Taiwanese students' understanding of Britishness, we need to remember that the Taiwanese education system, with its roots in Confucianism, places enormous significance on a country's history in order to determine their current status. The students may assume that the country has achieved its present position based on its history – a logical enough assumption – therefore, armed with such knowledge, students may gain a more secure, if initial, grasp on the culture. As Aughey (2003, p. 48) points out, this sentiment is shared by others:

'Understanding British history was the means by which a worldwide readership could grasp how the modern world had come into being. Britain's achievements had inaugurated the important ages of modernity. It was the first modern state-builder. It experienced the first bourgeois revolution, it generated the first Industrial Revolution, and it was the first urbanised society.'

Aughey seems to imply that the overseas nations will necessarily be impressed by what he refers to as 'The British ... achievement of civilisation,' (2003, p. 49), but what of Britain's modern position in the world? Aughey reflects on the country's status with the empire but a memory: 'Britain was becoming again what it had once been, a small offshore island, a medium-sized power with limited ambitions and limited influence,' (p. 50). This would seem to be a rather dire fall from the heights of empire, however he does go on to suggest that a new role was opening up for the post-empire Britain. So a reality for the Taiwanese students could be that the historical background that underpins their knowledge of Britishness may now need to be tempered by a realisation of what Britain

has evolved into as a European power – rather than a global authority – in the 21st century.

As the Taiwanese students come to terms with their new environment they will necessarily have numerous encounters with British citizens, especially younger people in pubs and clubs and various social places. With this in mind it may be wise to consider how young British people view their own Britishness. Fenton (2007) comments on the importance of the individual over the group in Britain today: 'The modern nation-state makes a direct appeal to the individual' (p. 324). Unlike the Taiwanese students in their quite tightly-woven communities the British individual 'does not require the mediations of family, community, region or class to be a member of the nation. Nationality is understood precisely as an attribute of the individual' (Calhoun, 1997, p. 46). This sharp contrast between the two cultures demonstrates the difficulty a Taiwanese student may encounter when faced with a national feeling that the individual comes first.

Steve Fenton's (2007) Bristol based interviews of a large group of British respondents forced him to conclude that: 'it was impossible to escape the impression that considerable numbers of young adults were either not very interested in a question about national identity, articulated some kind of hostility to national labels, or rejected nation in favour of broader identities like "citizen of the world"' (p. 328). He found a small group of respondents who were willing to 'embrace' their 'English or British identity,' however even within this sub-group there was still a 'measure of hostility towards assuming a national identity' (p. 329).

In contrast to Calhoun's idea of identification with a nation, Fenton found that a number of respondents were more concerned with just being themselves. 'The "I'm me" individualism reported ... is indifferent or opposed to national identity because it is

opposed to *any* categorisation' (Fenton, 2007, p. 333, emphasis in original). Some respondents opted for a more global outlook: 'their family migration history, their working life in Europe and beyond, provide the logic for demoting Englishness or Britishness. Supra-national experience is embraced' (p. 334). Somewhat more controversially, Fenton suggests that the lack of a strong national sentiment among the respondents may be because 'young adults are suspicious of collective identities. Their view of themselves is formed in relation to their life trajectories, their careers, families, and friends, and a local area community' (p. 336). Although this may be true of Fenton's respondents, the area of the country surveyed may well be quite revealing in determining if this is a national phenomenon. For example, similar research carried out in large cities or small villages in Britain may generate similar or contradictory data.

Fenton's respondents were aged 20-34, so the results are certainly indicative of younger people's feelings about Britishness, and taken as a whole, there is little evidence of the importance of national identity among this age group. Based on his research, it would seem logical to assume that the barriers preventing Taiwanese students from gaining easy access to the new culture – for example, suspicion of collective identities, and strong feelings of individualism among, especially younger, British people are still firmly in place, albeit not necessarily for reasons of national pride.

2.7 Culture and the English Language

Having looked in some detail at several of the issues that may affect the cultural learning of Taiwanese students in Britain, it is now important to bring these threads together under what is in my opinion the principal factor – the English language.

Hoffman (1989, p. 118) suggests the reciprocal link between language and culture and implies the complexity underpinning the relationship: 'the acquisition of language is tied

to social and cultural context, and the acquisition of culture occurs at least in part through language,' yet as Croucher (2009, p. 2) tells us, such adaptation is really nothing more than 'a fusion of cultural norms through a process of communication,' and his conclusion that communication is 'a vital aspect of the assimilation-cultural adaptation process' reinforces this importance substantially.

The influence of culture on learning a second language can be considerable, and perhaps students who are more attuned to a diversity of cultural influences may find the language learning task much easier. Citron (1995, p. 107) points out that 'if languages reflect the cultural patterns of their speakers, a language learner who is open to understanding these cultural patterns should have an advantage when learning a new language.' Yet Jiang et al. (2009, p. 482) point out that the process of cultural learning is merely one 'component' of a (presumably) much more complex process. As the researchers above demonstrate, there can be a strong case either way for regarding cultural learning as a component in language learning or the primary component. But if we are to look at the English language being studied in Britain, not through a cultural lens, but from a linguistic standpoint, particularly as presented by the textbook, we may find Ha's comment (2009, p. 204) regarding the ownership of language as rather fitting: 'English users may be better served by their proactively taking ownership of its use and its teaching.' In particular, he claims that 'non-native' speakers may ultimately be the prime agents of change in creating language shift. In other words, the influx of various non-native groups – and, to a lesser extent, students – in Britain has seen the reshaping of the English language into several 'varieties;' an issue discussed on a larger scale by Kachru and Nelson (2001).

Although elements of a shift in students' behaviour may be visible in areas of Britain that contain a considerable foreign student intake – for example, Brighton and Hove – it is

difficult to view this pattern as anything other than isolated. Considerable personal experience in Brighton and Hove has allowed me to observe student talk over a 10 year period and any change in language patterns among Taiwanese students has to compete with their loyalty to their native identity, discussed earlier in this Literature Review. In fact, Ha's research pointed to the fact that several Chinese students felt a greater connection to their own culture following considerable exposure to the host culture (2009, p. 208), and this may also be applicable to other nationalities.

Although there are clearly issues that need to be addressed when applying Ha's theories to Taiwanese students in the South-East of England, the fact that his theory had students in mind as opposed to other groups makes it somewhat more suitable than, for example, the approach of the INCA Project – Intercultural Competence Assessment (2004), which is geared much more to members of a workforce. Additionally, Ha's focus on the cultural aspects of language influencing Chinese students' experiences when studying abroad touch on an area of culture not covered by the INCA Project.

2.8 EFL Textbooks

It is important at the outset to establish what is meant by the term 'textbook' in language learning and more specifically in the EFL context. 'The word is used in the broad sense of "an organized and pre-packaged set of teaching/learning materials"' (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994, p. 315). The materials may be bound in just one book or distributed in a package, such as the familiar coursebook, workbook, teacher's guide, and CDs.

Some authors, however, prefer the term 'coursebook,' which Tomlinson (2011, p. ix) defines as:

'A textbook which provides the core materials for a language-learning course. It aims to provide as much as possible in one book and is designed so that it could serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course. Such a book usually includes work on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.'

This comprehensive definition effectively treats the term coursebook as analogous with textbook. For consistency I use the term textbook throughout, unless quoting from specific authors.

The textbook is in many cases a central component of an EFL class. As Hutchinson and Torres point out (1994, p. 317), the textbook has become 'an almost universal element of ELT³, playing as it does a vital and positive part in the everyday job of teaching and learning English.' Jolly and Bolitho (2011, p. 136), on the other hand, agree, but with a proviso: 'Coursebooks can provide a useful resource for teachers. Providing they are used flexibly, we think they can be adapted and supplemented to meet the needs of specific classes.'

³English Language Teaching.

This positive view of the ELT textbook is not shared by all researchers. Swan (1992) feels that the 'ready-made textbook' may allow a teacher to 'sit back and operate the system,' relying on the wisdom of the writers. These sentiments are shared by Littlejohn (2011) who refers to the teacher as a manager of a pre-planned classroom event.

Several of the criticisms levelled at textbooks were debated by Hutchinson and Torres in 1994, in particular the issues of structure as a negative factor, and the inability of the textbook to satisfy individual teaching-learning situations. I have decided to look at these two factors more closely because structure is an issue underpinning the textbook analysis in Chapter 4, and the issue of individual teaching-learning situations is directly applicable to the Taiwanese EFL students in Britain.

Regarding the structure of the textbooks, Hutchinson and Torres claim that 'all the evidence indicates that both teachers and learners want and benefit from the security that a clear structure provides, even though this restricts the options available' (1994, p. 324). And indeed, it is easy to see such structure being successfully utilised in many modern EFL classrooms. As Allwright (1981) points out, students have a need for a 'framework' or 'guide' in the classroom; the textbook often provides this framework.

Although somewhat dated, Allwright's view still has validity today, as Tomlinson (2011, p. 176) confirms when he refers to the development of EFL text materials which are 'constantly informed by a checklist of agreed principles.' However, Thu (2010, p. 20) describes the structure in a slightly different way: 'textbooks can also be a map that provides an overview of a structured program of language and culture elements.'

But can a textbook framework or 'map' be too rigid? Richards and Mahoney (1996) believe that too much structure in an EFL textbook (under certain conditions) may deskill the teacher. This stance was also taken previously by Swan (1992), and indeed I have had personal experience of this in the Taiwanese classroom when teachers have simply

expected that the textbook must be correct, and as a consequence sat back and let the materials do the work. As Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p. 315) observed:

‘The danger with ready-made textbooks is that they can seem to absolve teachers of responsibility. Instead of participating in the day-to-day decisions that have to be made about what to teach and how to teach it, it is easy to just sit back and operate the system, secure in the belief that the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what was good for us.’

Built into the ready-made framework of almost all contemporary textbooks is the abundance of visual images that tie in with the language, and this is where the structure of some textbooks begins to break down. The images do engage the students with the language, however, the quality of this engagement has been commented on. As Wallace (2002, p. 96) points out, one of the principal aims of the textbook author is to engage the students with a ‘diet of dating, dining, and dancing,’ and the inclusion of eye-catching visual images seem to facilitate this process. As noted by Pennycook (2007), the stress is on providing images that the students may find appealing and giving them what they think they want, rather than textbooks that are designed specifically to promote linguistic improvement and cultural awareness.

Secondly, there is the issue of individual teaching-learning situations. A comment made about the textbook is its inability to cater to an individual teaching/learning situation. As Riasatin and Zarez (2010, p. 60) point out, ‘no single textbook can meet the needs of a large and different group of language learners.’

This argument could be countered by saying that the global textbook – which will be looked at in Section 2.9 – is actually designed for mass-appeal. Previous research by

Hutchinson and Torres (1994, p. 325) comes to a similar conclusion; in addition they correctly identify the complexity of students' needs: 'A textbook can never be more than a workable compromise, but then, given the range of needs that exist within any learning context, so is everything else in the classroom.'

This is a very valid point as it identifies the textbook as an agent of change, and not a classroom bible that must be adhered to. The implication is that the textbook may be used as the teachers and perhaps the students decide.

It is also worth considering the students' position when all EFL textbooks in a classroom are considered flawless by the students; in other words, the EFL textbook chosen for the Taiwanese students and any other students is invariably considered an authority in its own right by the teachers, and the students. This treatment of the textbook as a sacred object was confirmed by Ariew (1982, in Otlowski 2003) and more recently by Nguyen (2011) and this would seem to be to some extent justified in the case of students from Taiwan. The 'culturally biased views' regarding the 'printed word' (and also the virtual word, given the plethora of written information on CD Rom and the Internet) that Richards and Mahoney (1996, p. 42) speak of are particularly applicable to the Taiwanese students. An educational background steeped in Confucian principles, and an examination driven education system reinforce this belief.

Yet despite debates about its validity and claims concerning its possible redundancy, 'The textbook not only survives, it thrives' (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994, p. 316). Because, as explained by these authors, there are several factors responsible for this success, one of the principle ones being the afore-mentioned 'structure' that the 'teaching and learning system requires' (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994, p. 317).

Research into ELT textbook use has flourished since 1994 and several of the most influential studies of textbook use, Harwood (2010) and Tomlinson (2011), for example,

agree the EFL textbook has evolved from a single book containing grammar exercises to a sometimes confusing range of workbooks, and electronic and virtual learning materials; perhaps even altering the definition of what a textbook is (see Jolly and Bolitho, 2011; and Tomlinson, 2011).

This evolution has also been explained by Rubdy (2003, p. 37) who observes that the textbook has become far more complex than in its 'early days' when it contained a set of 'reading texts accompanied by a set of comprehension questions.' She goes on to discuss the 'packages for language learning and teaching' that have become almost an accepted part of the EFL classroom: 'workbooks, teachers' guides, audio and video support' are all used to fulfil a role once occupied solely by the textbook.

This is also confirmed by Littlejohn (2011, p. 180), who adds 'DVDs, electronic whiteboard materials, (and) test-generating software' to the list. He attributes this increase in hardware in part to the 'fiercely competitive industry' that ELT publishing has become; an issue that will be looked at in more detail in section 2.9. Richards (2004) appears to sidestep the issue of additional classroom material, yet the substantial increase of supplementary material in recent years – even in the Taiwanese classroom; a phenomenon I have personally witnessed – suggests an underlying importance that warrants future investigation. Despite the development of such additional material, my focus in this research is solely on the core textbook.

2.9 The 'Global' Textbook

It is now necessary to look at the impact of the global textbook in order to determine its place in this research. The global textbook is an EFL textbook that is written for a wide and diverse audience and may be unsuitable for a specific EFL class. Bell and Gower (2011, p. 117) prefer the term 'global coursebook,' which they define as 'a coursebook for a restricted number of teaching situations in many different countries rather than all

teaching situations in all countries.’ The second part of this definition is somewhat open to question as the realisation of a textbook that satisfies ‘all teaching situations,’ and ‘all countries’ is unlikely. Tomlinson’s definition (2011, p. xii) is somewhat more generic: ‘A coursebook which is not written for learners from a particular culture or country but which is intended for use by any class of learners in the specified level and age group anywhere in the world.’ Similarly, Gray (2010, p. 1) adopts the term ‘global coursebook,’ which he defines as ‘the genre of textbook which is produced as part of an incremental English language course designed for the global market.’

Critics of the global textbook suggest an inherent falseness. Wallace (2002, p. 99) speaks of the ‘modified worldview of the ELT textbook’ and agrees with Gray (2002, p. 96) in criticising its ‘typically narrow and parochial discourse.’ Tomlinson (2011, p. 176) points out that efforts to narrow the focus of the textbook can be detrimental: ‘closed principles can lead to inflexible procedures which cater for a minority of learners only.’ Yet, this proviso, while true for multinational classes, may be an asset when dealing with monocultural groups of students. For example, a textbook catering specifically for Taiwanese students may be advantageous in Taiwan or, in an admittedly more unlikely situation, in a monocultural EFL class in Britain, however Tomlinson correctly warns of the dangers of such rigidity when dealing with a more varied body of EFL students.

Related to this are the diverse needs of the multinational class, and the potential difficulties caused by textbooks that bear little relation to students’ lives. These can range from cultural misunderstandings to rejection of the host culture. The particular drawbacks of a textbook aimed at such a large target audience is that it actually becomes anything but global, and in order to make the activities or topics in the textbook more appealing to a wider audience authors often use elements of ‘pop’ culture that provide a

safe backdrop for the textbook (Widdowson, 2003; Wallace, 2002; and Gray, 2002). This pop culture may indeed be what certain students require, but it would be unreasonable to expect this appeal to extend to a mass audience. This is echoed by Wallace (1997, p. 372), who speaks of the 'obsession with Western interests.' And more recently Bell and Gower (2011, p. 117), who refer to the 'singing-and-dancing, glitzy (expensive) multi-media package, usually produced in a native speaker situation but destined for the world with all language in the book (including rubrics) in the target language.'

Pennycook (2007, p. 81), although critical of the global textbook, implies a certain inevitability to the introduction of pop culture into EFL teaching materials: 'it is hard to see how we can proceed with any study of language, culture, globalization and engagement without dealing comprehensively with popular culture,' and as Feng and Wu (2007) point out, the influence of such culture is even finding its way into mainland China due to the 'extensive exposure to the Western lifestyle' (p. 76) that resulted when China opened its doors to the rest of the world.

Pop culture in terms of the global textbook features the use of topics and themes that are likely to be of interest to the greatest number of students. Critics of this approach to topic choice refer to the dumbing down of culture and its replacement with a more uncomplicated culture: 'From a culturally conservative point of view, engagement with popular culture is seen as a failure to appreciate higher values and a tendency to wallow in the superficial and vulgar' (Pennycook, 2007, p. 79). But he counters, 'popular culture is equated with passive consumerism.' He claims that this 'underpins views of cultural and linguistic imperialism' (p. 80).

Cook (2003, p. 279), in discussing contributions to EFL textbooks, also leans towards pop culture at the expense of what she terms 'high-end' culture: '... soap-operas (gossip was

top of the teenagers' list), sport ..., quiz shows ..., pop music ... The danger here would be choosing the 'high culture' of opera, etc., rather than people's everyday interests such as football.' As attractive aspects of the target culture they are perhaps an understandable addition to the textbook, yet they may indirectly sustain stereotypes.

Bell and Gower (2011) are clearly aware of several important elements of the global textbook. Firstly, their opinion of the pop culture presented in such EFL textbooks is consistent with that of Wallace and Pennycook. Secondly, they refer to the cost of the textbook (and presumably its additional add-ons – workbooks, CDs); cost is a tangible issue as it has a direct impact on the textbook's marketability. Finally, they mention a critical component of the textbook – language. In terms of the language used in general in the global textbook, Bell and Gower (2011), writing about the textbook's linguistic input from a commercial perspective, use *New Headway* (Soars and Soars, 2009) as an example. This is a textbook that I will analyse in Chapter 4 and refer to in Chapter 5 as it was used in several of the observed classes in this research. Bell and Gower (2011) claim that some of Headway's success was attributable to its reversion to a 'familiar grammatical syllabus when many other coursebooks were becoming too functionally oriented' (p. 140). Rather than viewing this decision in a pedagogical light, the authors see it as a sensible business compromise in which Headway's writers provide a 'blend of the new and different with the reassuringly familiar;' although they wisely allude to the potentially troublesome implications of the gap that may be created between the 'aesthetic principles of a designer and the pedagogic principles of the writers.'

An important point, however, which must be considered in parallel to the issue of authors' aims in any detail, is the larger economic factor that reduces the global textbook to a profitable item intended for as wide an audience as possible. Indeed, any discussion

of pedagogical input to textbooks would be incomplete without mentioning the substantial influence of the publishers. In formulating their own EFL textbook Bell and Gower encountered difficulties as the pedagogic aims with which they approached the task of formulating a textbook were often in conflict with the publishers' economic mandate. A good example of this was the inclusion of review units as the first four units of the book. The authors felt that this approach would 'activate' students' existing language and allow the completion of any necessary 'remedial' work (2011, p. 148), but the publishers objected to this approach, and 'wanted straightforward presentation of the main language items.' This is indicative of the publishers' ability to limit the writers' pedagogical input.

Several researchers have commented on the powerful influence of the publishing world on the completed EFL textbook, and the problems associated with publication. Donovan (1998, p. 187) speaks of the 'increasingly stringent corporate world in which many publishers operate,' and more recently Aziz and Wala (2003) and Amrani (2011) refer to the different levels of submission and review a textbook has to pass through before publication, from the planning, the writing and the piloting, all the way through to the feedback.

Perhaps as Donovan (1998, p. 149) pointed out, global textbook writers need to be constantly aware of their potential audience and build the content of the book around their immediate needs, 'Rather than trying to arrive at a final, definitive state for the materials, such development is often a continuing open-ended process of refinement and adaption to different groups of learners.'

As I explain in Chapter 4 the analysis of all three textbooks selected for this research showed that an economic element was clearly visible in the books' production. For

example, the multi-ethnic drawings and the liberal use of names from the different continents; and in some cases, this economic element appeared to be a substantial force. This is an issue that was incorporated into Research Question 1 in order to investigate if the representation of many different cultures in the global textbook, although in some ways beneficial, inhibits the Taiwanese students' understanding of the host culture if perceived through textbooks too populated with ethnic varieties.

If pedagogy is at the heart of the authors' focus then decisions still have to be made about how the syllabus and the activities within the book are structured. If writers are also teachers there can be a tendency for them to structure the syllabus in a manner suited to their teaching rather than the needs of any intended audience. Bell and Gower (2011) imply that this is an aspect of textbook formulation that is to be avoided. To reinforce this, Pulverness (2003, p. 431) comments, 'Course materials are largely governed by a tacit consensus about what should constitute a language syllabus.' He goes on to describe the purpose of most contemporary textbooks, which 'aim ... to develop a command of the language as a systematic set of resources.' In his opinion, 'the focus of most teaching materials remains fixed on the content of these resources rather than on the choices that speakers (and writers) make in the course of social interaction.' The importance of the linguistic contents is therefore crucial to the organisation of the textbook; an issue discussed in section 2.7 Culture and the English Language, in this chapter.

Bell and Gower experienced first-hand the compromise situation created by balancing the needs of learners and publishers during the formulation of their textbook. Significantly, the authors' recognised the need for clear visual images – in particular, colour photographs – and the publisher's refusal to allow many of these images due to

production costs. In terms of language, when formulating rubrics, the writers targeted them at the teacher, however the publishers required that they be intelligible to the students thus, in the authors' opinion, challenging the role of the teacher as mediator. However, previous experience in Taiwan has demonstrated to me that guidance by the teacher is given preference to guidance in the textbook in this context.

In terms of Bell and Gower's proposed textbook's content, the realisation that they 'could not please everyone' adds little to the observations, but they did endeavour to include more sensitive content which they define as 'the taboo subjects of sex and so on' (2011, p. 148). Yet the EFL textbooks that tend to satisfy this demand are often seen to be 'breaking new ground at the time they are published.' The authors quote *Headway* as an example of this trend. Their conclusion is as follows: authors 'have to try to anticipate the needs and interests of teachers and students and to modify any initial ambitions they may have as a result of what they continue to learn about those needs and interests' (2011, p. 135).

This is a reasonable conclusion. However the realisation of such an ideal – the balancing of students' needs, teachers' interests and writers' ambitious tendencies – would be complex to implement, and during this research I found that students' needs in and of themselves can be so varied and complex as to make a writer's job even more difficult. Clearly, there is little room in this equation for the complications that may result when adding substantial elements of culture to the textbook. As Pulverness (2003, p. 431) adds, 'Like many coursebook texts, tasks requiring oral interaction tend to be situated in neutral, culture-free zones, where the learner is only called upon to "get the message across."'

The need to integrate language and culture through materials was identified as long ago as the mid-1960s. 'Teaching materials, to justify their presence in the classroom, must be capable of contributing to the achievement of the linguistic, cultural, and general educational aims of the foreign language program' (Spicer, 1968, p. 16). Yet Byram et al. (1994, p. 10) allude to the secondary position occupied by cultural learning: 'In only a handful of texts is cultural learning valued as an equal complement to language learning and as an activity valid in its own right.' This suggests a focus on language learning at the expense of cultural learning; however the issue of cultural integration in language classes in Taiwan – see section 2.11 EFL Textbooks in Taiwan, in this Literature Review – has been demonstrated with some success and is explored in this research. For example, studies have taken place in the Tainan County area exploring the effects of having a language teacher and a culture teacher in the same classroom (Tsou, 2005).

2.10 Cultural Components in Textbooks and Frameworks for their Analysis

When considering the role of the global textbook in developing students' intercultural competence, it becomes apparent that there is a shortage of cultural components included in the contemporary EFL textbook. These components could be defined as activities that are intended to improve students' cultural knowledge about the host culture, but not stressing any specific aspect of language. For example, an activity that raises students' awareness about the social pastimes of the British people while not focusing on a new grammatical structure or lexis. Pulverness (2003, p. 426) speaks of the 'marginalization, and at times the complete exclusion, of culturally specific content in published teaching materials,' which he attributes to the "communicative turn" taken by ELT since the late 1970s.'

But as Cunningsworth (1984, p. 426) highlighted earlier on, the nature of the cultural component may well be invalid if it does not achieve the goal of developing students' intercultural competence, and even the realisation of the 'culture-specific coursebook' may produce problems of its own: 'a strong portrayal of British life might well prove to be an impediment to the learner.' Cunningsworth argues that this may be the case if the students are unfamiliar with the 'cultural background' of the textbook. He concludes by saying that the students' time would be more advantageously used 'learning the language rather than the structuring of the social world in which the learner is never likely to find himself' (p. 426).

This statement would appear not to be applicable to Taiwanese students studying in the South-East of England who would be engaging with the host culture, yet from another perspective, how much access can the students actually gain to the social world? Research conducted during my MEd confirmed that Taiwanese students tended to socialize with each other and eventually with multinational students, but in a limited manner with members of the host culture. This situation may cause the students to rely on the textbooks even more, and additional use of textbooks may be a good means to expose students to cultural symbols and representations by situating language in a given cultural context. This may largely be achieved through visual images – cartoons, photographs (the nature of which I will analyse in Chapter 4) – and language – dialogues, discussion and conversation activities, which are both areas I have investigated as part of this thesis to establish how students react to them, and the influence this has on their cultural learning.

Pulverness' suggestion (2003, p. 467) of developing 'cultural awareness alongside language awareness' is important in that the textbook used would 'focus ... on culturally

significant areas of language and on the skills required by the learner to make sense of cultural difference' (p. 427). He suggests the inclusion of aspects of language 'generally neglected ... connotation, idiom ... rhetorical structure, critical language awareness' (p. 427). We could add more subtle aspects of language such as irony and sarcasm to this list – issues I will explore in my textbook analysis in Chapter 4 and examination of student data in Chapter 5. Given the importance of linguistic components in the textbook to the Taiwanese students, the inclusion of the above may be a means by which culturally appropriate language could be introduced to the students especially through the language; the extent to which this is done will be investigated in Chapter 4.

As a concluding point, the link between language and culture is closely tied to the concept of discourse communities, in this case, the host community and the Taiwanese community because as Kramsch (1998, p. 10) points out, 'Culture is the product of socially and historically situated discourse communities ... created and shaped by language,' so perhaps the presentation of British history and various aspects of British society may be allowing the students access to important elements of the British discourse community.

There are a number of approaches to textbook analysis and several researchers have developed their own frameworks. Sercu (2000) undertook an analysis of six German textbooks and how they affected the intercultural competence of Flemish students in Belgium. She concluded that the textbooks did not have a sufficient impact on improving students' intercultural competence due to a negative image of the Germans linked to the War – that presumably manifested itself through the textbooks. The analytical framework she adopted is based on four levels:

1. The skill of learning other cultures.
2. The application of these skills – especially in novel situations.

3. Knowledge of cultures.
4. Tolerating other cultures, and having respect for them.

Risager's (1990, pp. 182/183) framework is also made up of four features:

1. 'Micro level:' social interactions and the characters' 'environment.' This is in some ways consistent with Byram's (1993) framework that proposes revisiting topics to gain a deeper linguistic knowledge of them.
2. 'Macro level:' broader social facts and 'sociopolitical' issues.
3. International and intercultural issues: national comparisons, 'stereotypes,' and working together. Byram (1993) also stresses the importance of stereotypes in his framework.
4. Point of view and style of the authors.

This final point is an interesting one and returns to the influence of the publishers in creating a textbook that not only appeals to the widest international audience, but one that will cause the least offence across the multinational student body.

Tomlinson (2003, p. 107) takes a 'text-driven approach' as the basis of his framework for textbook analysis. First, he selects an appropriate text (pp. 111/112), and then he moves onto the stage of 'Text Experience' (p. 113) which allows him to reengage with the text, and encourage the future students to do the same. This reengagement is the basis for devising 'Readiness' activities (p. 113); assisting the learners to achieve 'mental readiness.' This then leads to 'Experiential Activities' (p. 114) which introduce 'personal engagement.' The three remaining forms of activity in the framework are 'Intake Response' (pp. 114/115), 'Development Response' (p. 115), and 'Input Response' (pp.

115/116). Tomlinson goes on to give detailed examples of the framework and how it can be adapted in the classroom. Perhaps to reflect more contemporary trends, he also provides an example of the framework when adapted to the Internet – rather than conventional texts.

Tomlinson (1998; 2003; 2011) and Littlejohn (1992, 2011), both suggest using different stages of use to evaluate textbooks; they base their analysis on Pre-use, Whilst-use and Post-use. This was intended to determine how the textbooks would be viewed by the students firstly using predictions of how they would react, followed by an analysis of the textbooks at the time, and finally an evaluation to consider the results of using the textbook. It was not possible to do this in this research, however, because of the amount of time needed to access the groups, in addition to the schedule for the EdD not allowing for such a longitudinal study.

The framework for textbook analysis suggested by Jolly and Bolitho (2011) initially seemed more suitable to my own research. These authors suggest five essential steps: Identification, Exploration, Contextual Realisation, Pedagogical Realisation and Physical Reproduction. Although providing me with substantial background information, the framework proved to be far too broad to adopt for my own purposes and focus on cultural learning in relation to students' expressed needs.

Ultimately, I decided to adapt the more generic analysis suggested by Littlejohn (1992, 2011), referred to again in Chapter 4, Section 4.2. Littlejohn's framework is composed of three levels of analysis: 1. Objective description, 2. Subjective analysis and 3. Subjective inference. Littlejohn's (1992, 2011) three levels of analysis are defined as follows:

1. 'What is there? Objective description' (2011, p. 186). This level of analysis covers such headings as: division of material into sections (units, modules); how units or modules are sub divided; supplementary materials (CD, workbook).
2. 'What is required of users? Subjective analysis' (2011, p. 186). Littlejohn defines this as a 'deeper level of analysis' that allows 'teachers and learners' to 'draw deductions' about what has to be done in order to gain the maximum benefit from the textbook (2011, p. 188).
3. 'What is implied? Subjective inference' (2011, p. 197). This level aims to find conclusions about 'the underlying principles of the materials' (p. 197), and what the materials actually do 'as a whole' (p. 197), and the consequent implications for language learning.

I decided to use only the first two levels in my research as the level *subjective inference* did not seem appropriate due to its more general nature, and its focus on 'the role of materials as a whole' (2011, p. 197), rather than specific elements, for example, visual images and language. As Littlejohn explains, *subjective inference* aims to find 'general conclusions' (2011, p. 197) about the principles underlying the materials and as my aims were somewhat more specific I omitted this level of analysis. In addition, Littlejohn proposes that subjective inference may allow researchers to 'make statements about the roles proposed for teachers and learners' (1992, p. 46). However, despite the positive impact this may have, I felt it was beyond the scope of this particular piece of research.

Having established a suitable framework for analysis, I now needed to consider the nature of the language in the textbooks. Establishing uniform criteria for how the English language should be taught in the textbook, and which cultural values should be made explicit is an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task given the sheer breadth of cultural

variety among the EFL students, not to mention factors such as whether to adopt a Eurocentric or an US-centric view, or whether to integrate larger elements of a specific culture into the language learning process. In fact, given that the English language grows and develops – and as a consequence – evolves, the possibility that British and US English are no longer seen as the appropriate standards for overseas students is a factor that should not be overlooked. For example, Kachru and Nelson (2001, p. 10) report that the ‘transportation of the (English) language’ has created many varieties or ‘subtypes (s)’ of English the predominance of which outnumber the ‘inner-circle countries’ (p. 13) – the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and the wide variety of EFL textbooks available from the different countries attest to this evolution of the English language. As Gray points out (2010, p. 49) when discussing Byram et al.’s (1994) suggestion that ‘the increasing use of English as a lingua franca raises the question of what kind of English students should be exposed to in language teaching materials.’

2.11 EFL Textbooks in Taiwan

Research in the field of EFL textbook production especially for the Far Eastern market has been done by Richards (1993, 2004, and 2006) guided mostly by his work in the Hong Kong teaching environment. The Taiwanese environment shares some features with Hong Kong yet this is not to suggest that this part of the Literature Review is a comparative study, it is simply a means to show the relationship between the two environments and thus show the relevance of Richards’ work to my research.

Several of the textbooks used in Taiwan, for example *Person to Person* (Richards, 2005) and *New Interchange* (Richards et al., 2005), were originally produced in Hong Kong for the Hong Kong market, though feedback from ELT teachers’ forums suggest the latter has for a number of years been recognized internationally as a global textbook of

considerable value. Richards (2004, p. 1) views the textbook as providing 'a central core' in the Hong Kong educational environment, yet the underlying cultural belief system prevalent in the ubiquitous EFL textbook is not made apparent. However, the transmission of views and beliefs, whether conscious – perhaps due to societal pressure – or, as Alptekin and Alptekin (1984, p. 143) point out, 'unconscious,' can mean that the cultural system embedded in the discourse becomes the prime cultural determinant in the students' learning experience.

Richards (1993, p. 7) recognises the 'culturally-based views' at the heart of textbook formulation and refers to the impact of these beliefs on teachers and students alike. He points out that 'exercises and activities that (textbooks) contain will achieve what they set out to do.' A reasonable enough assumption, but his observation that teachers may 'believe that activities found in a textbook are superior to ones that they could devise themselves' is worthy of further consideration. This again, reduces the teacher to a facilitator, although it could be argued that that is one of the teachers' principal roles. Of more concern is the tendency for students to believe that 'cultural information provided by the author (is) true and shouldn't be questioned' (p. 7). If, as Richards contends, students do believe this, it suggests that their cultural blueprint of the host country is provided by the textbook writers. In this research I examine the extent to which this is the case for Taiwanese students.

Textbooks per se are actually viewed from a different perspective in the Far East. In fact the role of written texts, whether printed – or more commonly, virtual – in Taiwan is somewhat different from its counterpart in Britain. As Osterloh (1986) points out in his paper on third-world intercultural differences, Western societies tend to see written texts as man-made with man-made flaws, whereas certain societies seem to see many written

and virtual texts as the infallible word of their superiors – divine and/or mortal. The ideas that are created from such reification can take ‘on a life of their own (and) become more “real” and influential than the original idea’ (Holliday, 2011, p. 141). Holliday defines reification as, ‘Treating something as though it is real to the extent that it becomes believed to be real’ (2011, p. 199), and he informs us that it ‘takes place when it becomes, in people’s minds, something that exists over and above human behaviour’ (Holliday, 2005, p. 22), and he reminds us that ‘normalisation involves *making* a social construction “normal” ... reification involves *forgetting* the unreal nature of social construction altogether’ (Holliday, 2011, p. 141, author’s italics). And it is not only the student who is affected but the teacher too: ‘Reification of textbooks can ... result in teachers failing to look at textbooks critically and assuming that teaching decisions made in the textbook ... are superior and more valid than those they could make themselves’ (Osterloh, 1986, p. 7). As already alluded to earlier in this chapter this may be true among many Taiwanese students where tradition can be of significant importance.

But what impact do the opinions of teachers have on textbook production and distribution in Taiwan? The government generated curriculum that dominated all tertiary education in Taiwan fully until 1978, and partially since then, required no input from teachers or students. Textbooks in all subjects ‘were edited and printed as part of a national program by the government’ (Tsai, 2002, p. 233). This also applied to EFL textbooks, when a higher power was responsible for the textbook’s input regardless of the views of teachers and students. Yet despite this somewhat biased approach to textbook formulation, cultural input was often seen as a necessary component of the language textbook. This may be important when considering that the global textbook often contains conflicting cultural information, or ‘safe texts’ (Wallace, 2006) that can leave the student somewhat culturally adrift. However, the production and introduction

of a new generation of British and US EFL textbooks, for example, *New Headway* (Soars and Soars, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2009), and *Spectrum* (Byrd and Warshawsky, 2003) in the early part of this century in Taiwan is reversing this trend, and safe texts can now no longer be taken for granted by government regulators, as pointed out in section 2.5 *Education in Taiwan and Cultural Preparation*.

But despite the introduction of these textbooks, very few contain a substantial cultural component. Tsou's (2005, p. 39) research identified that language ability improved when cultural material was integrated into the lessons. She quotes a strong body of research in support of inclusion of cultural content (p. 40), and gained feedback from several stakeholders regarding the efficacy of the research design. Her decision to have a language teacher and then a culture teacher in the same class seems to have worked well in the Taiwanese classroom, although this dual teaching method is of questionable value for multinational classes in Britain as the requirement for cultural knowledge may vary between students from countries other than Taiwan. This approach does however raise doubts about the teacher's ability to maintain credibility in the class due to a shared teaching approach. If implemented, such a method of teaching would mean the responsibility of the class is shared between teachers.

Although Tsou reaches some valid cultural conclusions, her work is limited in that the research only involved elementary school children; the effects on adults has yet to be researched. She also limited her study to the Tainan County area. It is difficult to generalise given the relatively limited range of the study, and indeed my own research should be able to add a diverse range of students from various parts of Taiwan who are studying in Britain.

Differences in culture, whether inside or outside the British classroom, may entail the need for classroom practices and techniques for classroom communication that are unfamiliar to the Taiwanese students and, as a consequence, may make the study of culture difficult for the students. Furthermore, as noted in Ang et al. (2007, p. 336), there is a lack of adequate research concerning individual cultural learning in the Taiwan context: 'research on individual capabilities for intercultural effectiveness is sparse and unsystematic, leaving an important gap in our understanding of why some individuals are more effective than others in culturally diverse situations.' Examples of this diversity would be their views on cultural matters portrayed within the EFL textbooks, and their ability to interpret cultural symbols outside the classroom.

Detailed research into individual responses to cultural stimuli may allow us to gain greater understanding of cultural behaviour within the Taiwanese student body as a whole. Ang et al. (2007, p. 337) term the 'individual's ability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings ... Cultural intelligence (CQ).' Although this concept may well be applicable to almost all intercultural groups, it is especially pertinent to the Taiwanese students due to the difficulties they seem to have with effectively engaging in certain aspects of a new culture – in this case, Britain, therefore I will be investigating both texts and students' reactions.

But to what extent do the Taiwanese students' cultural backgrounds have an effect on their ability to communicate effectively in the multinational classroom? Liu (2005) reports that Taiwanese students can appear to be lacking in communicative skills and indeed 'uncooperative' in the US classroom. As he correctly identifies, 'Some students are aware of the importance of speaking up but feel it difficult to really do so' (p. 215). He quotes Taiwanese EFL scholars – Huang (1998), Yao (1995), and Shing (2001) – who feel the issue

may be concerned with the possible conflict between 'newly advanced application of language teaching and Taiwanese traditional education and viewpoints' (Liu, 2005, p. 215). For example, Liu points out the conflicts Taiwanese students may face: 'To maintain harmony within the group, it is essential both to save face and to show respect. For this reason, the typical Chinese native speaker maintains a more listener-centred attitude within communication' (p. 215).

Deakins (2009, p. 220) also noticed this tendency in the New Zealand multicultural classroom, and observed a need among Chinese students in particular to 'blend in.' Traditional Chinese values do present an obstacle to effective classroom communication. For example, it may be difficult for students to maintain politeness and make their views known, and it may be difficult for them to maintain 'a focus on insiders' (p. 215) while integrating with the multinational group.

In my research I therefore want to explore the extent to which the textbooks' representation of the target culture is perceived as accurate by the students based on how they choose to interpret this culture. Furthermore, the importance of this to the students may coincide with the tensions students experience when coming to terms with appropriate cultural behaviour in the classroom, therefore I am examining the experience through my classroom observations and small-group interviews.

2.12 Key Issues Arising in Relation to my Research

The Literature Review has framed my research in the following ways: examination of the literature led me to look into Taiwanese students' societal and educational backgrounds because they may be important in establishing their potential for cultural learning in a multicultural classroom in Britain. This was important in reshaping Research question 2: Which factors, other than the text materials, may also be important in determining the

degree to which and the rate at which the Taiwanese students come to terms with the culture in Britain?, Research Question 2.1: multinational classroom environment and 2.2: students' experiences outside the classroom, in that it confirmed that the multinational nature of the class, and the students' external experience may be important factors in their intercultural learning. This led me to analyse Taiwanese students' backgrounds in greater detail. I therefore looked at the literature related to Confucianism and identity and Education in Taiwan and students' Cultural Preparation prior to arrival in Britain. The key issues arising from this part of the research were the importance of the Taiwanese students' Confucian educational backgrounds when interacting in a multinational classroom and in the host culture; and, related to this, the high regard in which Taiwanese students hold the printed word, whether in a textbook or on a computer screen. This allowed me to reshape research Question 3: Are there any significant barriers, specifically related to cultural factors, in Britain that are particularly troublesome for Taiwanese students?, in that students' backgrounds and beliefs may prove to have an impact on their cultural learning that differs from – for example – European students. I concluded the initial part of the Literature Review by looking at concepts of 'Britishness,' and how this may impact on students' cultural learning, and finally culture and the English language, drawing the conclusion that research into language and culture suggests an important link between them and the possible merging of the two in the EFL classroom.

Examination of the literature on EFL textbooks, specifically the impact of the global textbook, confirmed the importance of pop culture in the contemporary textbook, and the quite profound influence of the publishers, especially regarding content in the completed textbook. This helped to reshape Research Question 1: What influence do textbooks used in EFL classes in the South-East of England have on Taiwanese students' experience and understanding of the culture in Britain?, and Research Question 1.2: Are

the cultural practises represented in the textbook aligned with what the students require?, in that it became important to learn what the students themselves wanted from their textbooks and their cultural journey.

This macro view of textbooks led me to examine the literature regarding specific cultural components in EFL textbooks and how the textbook is used in Taiwan, and I concluded that while the teaching of such language features as idiom, sarcasm and rhetoric may be valuable to the students, research suggests specific knowledge about Britain may be less so, particularly for short-term students. This helped to reshape Research Question 1.1: In what ways do the textbooks relate to the contemporary culture in Britain as experienced by the students in South-East England? How important is this for students' learning? And Research Question 3: Are there any significant barriers, specifically related to cultural factors, in Britain that are particularly troublesome for Taiwanese students? Does the information available to the students in the textbooks raise or lower these barriers?, in that it helped me to acknowledge that barriers to cultural learning may be specific to Taiwanese students, and as such, may be easier to isolate. Traditional beliefs among Taiwanese students regarding the importance of the textbook per se, suggest they may have similar feelings regarding the EFL textbooks they use in Britain.

In conclusion, there may be plenty of research on Taiwanese/Chinese learners, textbook design, and on intercultural teaching/learning, but little that looks at the interface between them or at cultural learning in textbooks and the experience of Taiwanese/Chinese learners using global textbooks and studying abroad. Considering the increasing high number of Taiwanese, and in particular, mainland Chinese, students now studying in Britain, this is an important gap in the research.

The Literature Review did not include examination of the effects of host families, the EFL teachers, long-term Taiwanese students, or the role of managers in the process of student placement in Taiwan and the UK. This was omitted because it is not directly related to the research focus, and was beyond the scope of this research. The Literature Review did not fully provide the answers to the effects of face in the EFL classroom, and this is a point I would like to place emphasis on in future research.

Chapter 3 Methodology and Methods

In this chapter I explain the methodology adopted and the methods used during the course of the research. I begin by looking at the methodology, and my rationale for the approach adopted, before moving on to the research process. Then I give details of the methods used, the reasons for choosing these methods, and how they were implemented within the research; i.e. how they enabled me to answer the three research questions. Finally, I look at the ethical considerations relevant to this research.

3.1 Methodology

In order to answer the research questions I needed to choose an appropriate methodological approach that allowed me to analyse students' reactions and use of the textbooks from several perspectives. The extent to which human interaction is a key aspect of the research gives it a firm ontological basis leading to a specific approach. In other words, the Taiwanese students are effectively creating their own study 'world' within a larger multinational study environment, and as such the perception of that 'reality' will need to be analysed in its own right. Yet, the research does not fit comfortably within the boundaries of any particular paradigm although it leans decidedly towards interpretivism, which can be defined as the 'view which argues that there are no absolutes, but that all phenomena can be studied and interpreted in different ways' (Burgess, et al. 2006, p. 55). For my purposes the most important element that Burgess et al. refer to is the human factor: 'The key element of interpretivism is that it is defined or constituted in terms of human beings attributing meaning to, or interpreting phenomena under investigation' (Ibid. p. 55).

The 'interpretation of phenomena' in this case refers to the investigation of the Taiwanese students' interpretation of the information in the EFL textbooks and what this

tells them about culture in Britain. For this reason, I have decided to use a case study approach for this research, and I will now look at case study in detail before moving on to how it has been used in similar research.

My aim in adopting a case study approach was to observe the interaction of a group of students in the classroom and as a consequence 'provide evidence to support any claims' (Burgess et al., 2006) that were being made from any data being produced. Burgess et al.'s comment 'Case studies can provide unique examples of real people in real situations' (p. 59) underlines a significant aspect of my research. I wanted to establish what was happening to these 'real' people in the 'real' situations they encountered; to understand how the 'cultures "work"' (Delamont, 2004, p. 206), and to gain access to the Taiwanese students' perspectives on culture in Britain. I believe that generating theory 'through research data' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Dey, 2004) by immersing myself in the situation – as a passive observer in the classroom and as the facilitator – allowed me to gain the most reliable – and indeed, unique – data from the 'community in which the research is located' (Burgess, et al., 2006, p. 59).

But what is this 'community,' and can it accurately be defined as a case? Corbin and Strauss (2008) report a 'wide disparity' not only in what is defined as a case but also in how the analysis takes place. They go on to suggest their own definition: 'an in-depth study of a single person or group' (p. 325). If we are to accept this as an adequate definition of a case, then my research could be characterised as an in-depth study of a group of Taiwanese EFL students studying in the South-East of England.

There are numerous examples of case study in similar research contexts. For example, Springer and Collins' (2008, p. 39) case study of two advanced English as a Second Language (ESL) students who were observed firstly as students in a nine-week ESL class,

and secondly as tutors of a three-week children's summer teaching-program, attempted to determine if 'real-world and classroom experience offer different but complementary opportunities for oral interaction.' The authors used similar methodology and a case study far more specific than my own in that they gathered detailed information on individuals rather than a small group; however they also used classroom observation although they only focused on two students in the classroom throughout the research, whereas I looked at a larger group of students over the course of the main study.

A larger case study was employed by Lin (1996) when considering social adaptation of Taiwanese immigrants in the United States. Lin chose six Taiwanese immigrants and attempted to establish 'common experiences and psychosocial difficulties' (p. 3). Interestingly, Lin's case study demonstrated a strong link between Confucian background, education, and status: 'With their Confucian tradition, Taiwanese immigrants have a high expectation on their children's education. Seeking better education is one of the popular reasons why Taiwanese parents immigrated to the United States' (p. 10).

Li's (2006) case study of four Chinese EFL students in Britain focused on their motivation. Similarly to my research he was dealing with students who were studying in Britain for the first time. Li admits that the four respondents' exposure to English was 'varied,' again similar to the students involved in my case study. Although motivation was the central concern of his research, students' 'communication and interactions in English,' and their apparent need to 'integrate into British society,' (p. 45) all have a close overlap with the motivations of the students involved in my research.

A very thorough case study of ten female teachers in Taiwan (Su, 2006) used interviews, although the number of interviews was somewhat larger. Su conducted '40 interviews, average 1-2 hours each' (p. 270). In a similar fashion to my own research, Su used both

semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. In her case, the classroom observations followed the interviews; I decided to do the interviews after the observations in order to clarify problematic points that might be raised in the classroom. Su's research attempted to determine 'what Taiwan's EFL teachers at the elementary level believe about the policy of English as a compulsory subject and how they perceive the benefits and obstacles of the policy's implementation' (p. 265). Although I have given details of the specific methods used in Su's research, the purpose of referring to this study is to point out the similarities or differences between different case studies, and to show that case study has been used in a similar way and is an appropriate approach in my study.

I looked in detail at parallel research that was conducted using a survey approach and established a comparison of a survey approach with a case study approach in order to demonstrate how the different methods have been used by other researchers. Brown et al.'s research (2007) into cross-cultural learning approaches among US, Taiwanese, and Japanese students used a survey approach that resulted in a statistical analysis of a large group of students' behaviour patterns in classroom situations. Although thorough, the method appeared to be somewhat clinical to measure personal attributes such as motivation and approach to learning. As Seale (2004, p. 382) comments there seems to be an attempt to overwhelm with facts and bury the argument in 'inverted commas.'

In contrast, Han (2008) used a case study approach to explore Taiwanese transnational identity in Japan. The in-depth analysis of a relatively small group of Taiwanese – the 'focus group' – covered such aspects as history methodology, field study and theory examination. Han used semi-structured interviews to gain access to the focus group's feelings on cultural identity. Given the more concrete conclusions when compared to

Brown et al., the qualitative methodology utilised by Han seemed to offer greater validity to the findings and a more substantial springboard for continued research than Brown et al.'s (2007) almost entirely statistical findings, in addition to providing the means to explore the feelings, beliefs and attitudes of the focus group. Like Han, I am also dealing with relatively small numbers of students.

It may be argued that I am using elements of a survey approach in this research as I have selected questionnaires as a means of gathering some information; however the small sample used – eight students in Data Collection Phase 1, and nine students in Data Collection Phase 2, is more indicative of case study. In addition, based on Burgess et al.'s (2006) definition, I will indeed be gathering data by 'asking a set of pre-formulated questions, in highly structured questionnaires.' However, they go on to state 'Because surveys aim to be representative, the selection of individuals, the sample, carries particular significance' (p. 61). This is true of my own research in that the small sample cannot be representative of all Taiwanese students in Britain and therefore does not provide generalisable data.

In terms of my personal involvement in my own research, although I am quite well-known to the teachers and the administrative staff at one of the language institutes used in this study I am not a teacher in the institute and therefore not an insider. Related to this is the depth of involvement in the research. Becoming 'steeped in the data' (Open University E835 Study Guide, p. 110) is crucial from my perspective, yet the employment of 'devices to ensure breadth and depth of vision' (ibid.) was accomplished chiefly through my own field diary. I believe that using a grounded approach, despite the large amounts of data collected from participants and the consequent breadth of analysis, has largely allowed me to achieve my objectives. A grounded approach is defined as research that 'begins

with an area of study and what is relevant to that area of study is allowed to emerge' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 23). In 2008, the same authors define it in a slightly different manner: 'A specific methodology ... for the purpose of building theory from data' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 1). And indeed, as my research progressed, theory was built and themes did emerge. This grounded approach is particularly relevant to my research because of the case being researched – the exploration of a group of Taiwanese students' experiences of and views on textbooks and cultural learning. In retrospect, I believe that the case study and grounded approach chosen has allowed me to progress through the research and ultimately to answer my research questions. It allowed me to gather and analyse the required data in an unbiased a way as possible using my chosen methods which are explained below.

3.2 Research Process

This section gives details of where and when the research took place, who it involved, and what measures were taken to ensure validity. The research process comprised two data collection phases. A data collection phase is defined as a period of time in a particular location – in this case, Hove – where a combination of questionnaires, classroom observations, and interviews were carried out. Students' diaries were used as the data gathering progressed. The first phase was in 2009, and the second in 2010. Each data collection phase lasted four days.

Out of a total of twelve schools in Hove which were contacted because they all have substantial intakes of students from the Far East, the two schools in Hove that agreed to participate in the study, School A, and School B, cater to overseas students with year-round courses. The staff at both schools were very helpful in allowing me access to the students and classrooms. Other than a brief conversation at the beginning and ends of

the observed classes I had little contact with the teachers. Ethical issues pertaining to the students, the teachers and the institutions are covered in detail later in this chapter in Section 3.4 Ethical Considerations.

The rationale for doing two separate research sessions in Hove was due to a smaller than anticipated sample of Taiwanese students in the area during the first data gathering phase, and also to add rigour to the findings by sampling across a wider range of Taiwanese students. Although there are usually many Taiwanese students in Brighton and Hove, it is extremely difficult to determine how many students will be available at a specific time; I believed this may have brought the validity of the research into question if the student sample had been too small.

The Taiwanese students involved in the research are in Hove for several different reasons – see Appendix F. Most of them are graduate or postgraduate students wishing to improve their level of spoken English in order to advance their future careers. The remainder are business people who wish to improve their level of English to advance within their companies. The students involved in the study did not, at the time of research, have plans to settle in Britain.

In September, 2009 I also collected data in Taiwan— originally classified as Data Collection Phase 2 – in order to gain a greater understanding of contemporary students' views on the textbooks, overseas study, and cultural considerations prior to travel to Britain. At the time it seemed to be potentially efficacious to ascertain Taiwanese students' views of the text materials used in the Taiwan classroom as I believed that any data gained from such questions might have served as a basis for comparison of materials per se. On reflection, however, I ultimately discarded this data collection session as it was drawing me away from my primary aim of determining students' responses to text materials in Britain. Data

from the Taiwan data collection phase has not been included as the link between the British data collection phases and the one in Taiwan proved to be too tenuous to warrant inclusion in the final thesis.

The following Tables, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 give details of the classes that participated in both data collection phases in Hove in 2009 and 2010.

Table 3.1

Data Collection Phase One

<u>Class</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Number of students in Class</u>	<u>Number of Taiwanese Students in Class</u>
1	Intermediate	9	1
2	Intermediate	15	2
3	Upper Intermediate	14	1
4	Intermediate	7	1
5	Intermediate	6	1
6	Pre-Intermediate	8	2

Table 3.2

Data Collection Phase Two

<u>Class</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Number of students in Class</u>	<u>Number of Taiwanese Students in Class</u>
1	Pre-Intermediate	7	1
2	Advanced	13	1
3	Advanced	8	2
4	Intermediate	6	1
5	Advanced	7	2
6	Pre-Intermediate	12	1
7	Mixed-Intermediate	8	1

Table 3.3

Total Number of Students Involved in Data Collection

<u>Total Number of Taiwanese Students</u>	
Data Collection Phase One	8
Data Collection Phase Two	9
Total	17

3.3 Research Methods

I used four methods to collect data and this provided some triangulation. The utilisation of four methods: questionnaires, classroom observations, small-group interviews and students' diaries, allowed me to gain a more detailed picture, and put me in a position to judge whether students' responses were biased or misleading in any way by checking the consistency of the responses. There is a possibility of bias in students' responses due to their attitude based on face-saving/giving strategies, but I believe that validation was achieved in the research through the triangulation of methods and the consequent depth of the data gained. In addition, as the research progressed I needed to make some amendments to the research questions, the questionnaire and interview questions, and the structure of the classroom observations in order to ensure validity.

Over the course of the research, and supported by the results of the Initial Study, I perceived these methods as complementary means of obtaining data. The initial information gained in the questionnaires was considered alongside the classroom observations, and the combined data was examined together with the results of the small-group interviews. The interview questions were framed by the data captured from the questionnaires and the observations. The diaries were intended to offer additional information to complement the other research methods, although this was only partly realised. The data from all sources was combined and examined in order to answer the three research questions. Despite my substantial prior knowledge of Taiwan and the nature of Taiwanese students' behaviour in the EFL classroom I attempted to analyse the resulting data in as unbiased a way as possible, and believe that, in fact, this prior knowledge assisted my analysis at times. Lack of time and access to the participants prevented any in-depth case studies of individual students, but when relevant, data from

certain individual students has been highlighted. Ethical procedures relating to the research are detailed in the section 3.4 Ethical Considerations, later in this chapter. The next sections explain in detail the approach to using the methods in both data collection phases.

3.3.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires, as demonstrated by Tsai (2008), have been frequently used in the field of foreign language study. Tsai used post-study questionnaires in his research on improving EFL classes. This student questionnaire was used in tandem with a post-observation teacher interview. The bulk of Tsai's data, however, appeared to come from classroom observations; the questionnaire results only provided background information.

The literature I referred to on research methods allowed me to look at the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires and the types of data that they generate (Burgess et al. 2006). I also looked at the use of questionnaires with a small group of students (Gobo, 2004).

In this research, my aim in distributing the questionnaire (Appendix C) at the start of the main study was to gain a good deal of background information regarding Taiwanese students' views, reactions and perceptions concerning culture, understanding intercultural awareness/competence, classroom materials, and living and studying in Britain. I believe the questionnaire provided valuable information to frame the rest of the study, and helped me to focus the three research questions with greater clarity, and was important in providing data that led to answering all three research questions.

The questionnaire informs the other methods of data collection by providing a sounding board to verify students' behaviour in the classroom and the small-group interview. I felt

that the questionnaire provided a means for the students to express themselves in private, and it allowed me to plan the subsequent observation and small-group interview schedule with greater clarity. The questionnaires were conducted in June, 2009, with the 8 Taiwanese students involved in the research during Data Collection Phase 1, and April, 2010, with the 9 students involved during Data Collection Phase 2. The purpose was to gain an idea of the students' predispositions to textbooks per se, and to those used by EFL schools in the South-East of England specifically. All of the students had prior experience of using EFL textbooks in Taiwan, and in Britain.

The questionnaire was not carried out at the same time, or for that matter in the same place, due to the students having other responsibilities and being difficult to isolate. I therefore had to arrange to meet students in advance. The questionnaires were then completed in a classroom, or in one case in the school library.

Data Analysis

The questionnaires were coded by recording the results and writing a few sentences in explanation of those results (Appendix C, Table C1, and Appendix D, Table D1) in order to establish any patterns or trends. Mandarin Chinese translations of the questionnaires were not necessary due to the students' level of English (Intermediate to Advanced) and therefore the high probability that the language in the questionnaires would not be difficult to understand; this was validated in the Initial Study. The short-term nature of the research did make validation somewhat difficult, but the positive results from the Initial Study demonstrated the rigour of the questionnaires.

The students were initially given the questionnaire and informed that I was conducting research to determine Taiwanese students' expectations of studying in Britain, the textbooks they are familiar with in this environment, how well those textbooks have

prepared them, and their expectations regarding textbooks in Britain. The students were reminded that their answers would be anonymised, and that their identities would be protected. The students appeared to be indifferent to issues of identity protection, but I wished to ensure that the research conformed to ethical standards – as emphasized in the Ethical Considerations section at the end of this chapter.

The questionnaire is split into distinct components related to the research questions. Section 1, questions 1 to 5, focuses on textbooks, providing data related to Research Questions 1, 1.1 and 1.2. Section 2, questions 6 to 10, focuses on cultural learning, providing data related to Research Questions 1.1, 1.2 and 2. Section 3, questions 11 to 15, focuses on socialisation and cultural background, providing data related to Research Questions 2.1, and 2.2. Section 4, questions 16 to 20, focuses on classroom vs. external learning, providing data related to Research Questions 2.2 and 3. Finally, Section 5, questions 21 to 25, focuses on possible cultural bias among the Taiwanese students, providing data related to Research Questions 1.2 and 3. Questions 21 to 25 are intentionally written somewhat at odds with the mainstream Confucian beliefs because my aim was to ascertain whether students still believed fully in the Confucian ideas imparted to them in Taiwan, or if Western cultural effects had impacted on them in any way. These questions provide data related to Research Questions 1.2, 2 and 3.

3.3.2. Classroom Observations

Classroom observations are a very common means of gathering data in qualitative studies, and Tan's (2007, p. 87) study 'examining classroom questioning behaviour and its impacts on students' development' is a good example. Tan observed nine university English classes, videotaping six of them. Nine teachers were involved in the research. Tan used a checklist built around question initiation during the observations. Although I

myself considered such an approach, Tan's observations were targeted far more specifically than my own.

Chen (2006, p. 5) used what he termed 'extensive classroom observations' in his study of partial English immersion programs in Taiwan. Chen clearly utilised a grounded theory; as he explains 'important themes and issues emerged' although he admits to beginning 'with some general and important aspects in mind' (p. 5). My own research also began with important aspects such as students' involvement with the textbook, and the grounded approach I used allowed issues to emerge. The literature consulted on classroom observations including ten Have (2004); Delamont (2004) and Peräkylä (2004).

The principal theme of my research is Taiwanese students' reactions to and interpretations of textbooks, and the classroom is the only environment where I could observe such student behaviour and interaction first-hand. This method was crucial in answering Research Questions 1, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 3. Students cannot be asked how they react because the need to save or give face and to say what they feel the researcher wants to hear may affect the responses; their natural behaviour must be observed, and the observations were conducted in order to analyse how students reacted to the textbook being used in the classroom environment. This gave me considerable opportunity to determine whether the textbooks inhibit or augment the students' ability to understand the culture in Britain, thus attempting to answer Research Question 1. In addition, it allowed me to determine if there are factors other than the textbooks in the classroom environment that affect the students' cultural learning; thus finding possible answers to Research Questions 2.1 and 3.

When attempting to formulate a framework for my observations, I initially designed a basic observation template to record students' views and reactions to textbooks in the

classroom based on anticipated classroom behaviour. However the observation conducted in the Initial Study proved this approach to be unfeasible due to difficulties in writing notes under pre-set headings, and the possibility of bias. In other words, predicting students' behaviour would not allow me to gather data in an objective manner, in addition to creating a situation where such data was no longer grounded. Themes would not emerge if I took a pre-arranged framework into the classroom with me. I had considered the possibility that reactions to the textbook and consequent classroom behaviour may vary according to different classroom activities; for example, discussion, conversation or writing; but I saw no evidence to support this and I did not pursue this line of enquiry. The following tables, 3.4 and 3.5, give details of the classroom observations for both Data Collection Phases.

Table 3.4

Classroom Observations: Data Collection Phase 1

Class	Level	Number of Students in Class	Number of Taiwanese Students in Class
1	Intermediate	9	1
2	Intermediate	15	2
3	Upper-Intermediate	14	1

Table 3.5

Classroom Observations: Data Collection Phase 2

Class	Level	Number of students in Class	Number of Taiwanese Students in Class
1	Intermediate	9	1
2	Intermediate	15	2
3	Upper Intermediate	14	1
4	Intermediate	7	1
5	Intermediate	6	1
6	Pre-Intermediate	8	2
7	Intermediate	7	0
8	Advanced	9	0

I gathered the information by means of audio recordings using a Sony mp3 recorder, combined with field-notes. The idea of using a recorder was based on the difficulty I had relying on field-notes alone in the Initial Study. In addition, the recorder proved to be quite an unobtrusive piece of equipment that could be used in the classroom virtually unnoticed. Although students had been informed that I was using a recorder, it was apparently quickly forgotten. The field-notes provided a back up for the audio recordings, and allowed me to differentiate between students' voices – which can be extremely difficult when relying on audio alone – and allowed me to record physical actions as well as verbal behaviours.

At the beginning of each classroom observation, I began by making notes about the textbook used unless I had been able to do this earlier – which was rare. Then the teacher explained who I was and what I was doing in the class. In some cases, I did this myself. In all cases, I then went through ethical issues with the students – see Ethical Considerations at the end of this chapter. During the classes I made notes and observed how students reacted to the textbooks. In recording this information I decided to look for any reaction from Taiwanese students that differed from the reactions of their multinational classmates. Additionally, I recorded any patterns in students' behaviour that may have a cultural source. For example, I noticed silences that might indicate a coping strategy when faced with a potentially face-losing situation. At the completion of the classes, I thanked the teacher and the students before making arrangements to do the follow up small-group interviews.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed by listening to the recordings, and using the field-notes as support. Due to the noise level in most of the classes it was often difficult to identify individual

speakers and notes taken in the field diary proved to be very useful at this time. When listening to the recordings I established themes and patterns that occurred among the students, particularly in relation to the textbooks. While listening to the recordings and referring to the field-notes, transcripts were produced which were then coded according to themes and consistencies that had appeared in the questionnaire. The reliability and consistency of the coding system was checked by constant comparison with data gained in all 11 observed classes – see Appendix G for samples of the coding system. During the process of deriving concepts from the raw data, additional issues raised in the Literature Review that might influence the research findings were analysed for their applicability to this study.

3.3.3. Semi-Structured Small-Group Interviews

The semi-structured interview is 'often constructed to elicit views or accounts in relation to quite specific questions' (Wooffitt and Widdicombe, 2006, p.29), and there are advantages and disadvantages to this method. Given the more intimate nature of the interview environment it is possible to get to know the interviewee on a deeper level than in questionnaires or when observing their behaviour in the classroom, however getting at the 'truth'- a troublesome concept, at best – can be difficult.

Holstein and Gubrium (1995) point out that if questions are asked correctly, appropriate answers should be forthcoming. This would, however, be open to some interpretation as the nature and understanding of a 'correct' question may not be shared by the interviewer and interviewee. They go on to say, however, that meaning within the interview is actively 'assembled' by both parties (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, p. 141) and this meaning may produce more valid responses due to engaging the interviewee in the discourse rather than allowing them to be 'passive vessels of answers' (Gubrium and

Holstein, 2002, p. 13). They claim that validity is not determined by 'meanings within the respondent' but by what they convey (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995, p. 145), but they caution that interviewers may be 'unavoidably implicated' in 'creating' these meanings within the students (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002, p. 141), a fact I had to be aware of in my own research due to my familiarity with the way Taiwanese students may convey the meaning they believe the researcher wants to hear. I remained aware of this by asking more searching questions and remaining alert to conflicting or contrasting responses.

Research into the co-construction of an interview (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Briggs, 1986) has suggested that rather than being simply a case of the interviewer extracting information from the interviewee, the interview process is 'a co-construction between' the two (Mann, 2011, p. 4). As Mann points out, co-construction is important because it 'requires more attention to be paid to what the interviewer is bringing to the process' (2011, p. 4). The interviewer brings knowledge and understanding of the interview topic, but also possesses at least some knowledge of the interviewee and opinions and possible expectations regarding their responses. Showing empathy towards the interviewee may be an important aspect of gaining their trust, however, as Watson (2009, p. 106) points out, the dangers of 'manipulation' are very real, and the ethical implications of such research practice may be substantial, an issue I had to be constantly aware of during the interviews I conducted.

A significant advantage of the interview is that students will usually understand the 'procedure' of the interview process (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 1). The disadvantage of this is that they may behave in an unnatural way because they are under interview conditions, which can be due to the presence of the recorder or the interviewer. However, modern unobtrusive recording devices do allow interviewers to create an

interview environment conducive to more relaxed discourse because invariably the recorders are often forgotten about due to their compact size (Wooffitt and Widdicombe, 2006).

Empathy with the interviewee, however, may be a way to gain access to valuable data, yet Watson refers to the problematic nature of the interviewer getting the 'truth' from the interviewee – mentioned above – and questions the empathetic assumption that the 'agenda and the motives' of the latter are consistent with those of the former (Watson, 2009, p. 108). Block's view of looking at the 'interview data' as 'presentational of the individuals speaking' (2000, p. 758) is symptomatic of the empathetic approach in that it is based on how the interviewee relates to the interviewer. For example, do they view the interviewer as an examiner, a teacher, or perhaps a peer?

Conceptualising interviews as co-constructions affects the status of research data overall because the resultant data are not viewed as the product of memory, 'but as voices adopted by research participants' as a result of the interviewer's 'prompts and questions' (Block, 2000, p. 759). Block makes considerable use of the 'concept of *voice*' (p. 759, his emphasis) – the things people say are indicative of their discourse community – and his point that interviewees may change 'roles' (p. 759) during an interview might be relevant to the Taiwanese students in my research who may shift the way they respond to the interviewer based on saving or giving face dependant on the reactions of their peers. Block's view is particularly relevant to group interviews; the co-construction then being between the interviewer and the interviewees.

In this research, my purpose in using small-group interviews was to gain access to Taiwanese students' opinions and views regarding the textbooks by isolating them in a cultural group in order to give them the opportunity to express themselves in a more

culturally secure environment. In other words, the Initial Study indicated a reluctance to speak alone or in front of students from other language backgrounds among some Taiwanese students and the follow up small-group interview confirmed that they were concerned that they would make a mistake in front of their multinational classmates and lose face. This would not be likely in the small-group interviews as the students were dealing with a mono-cultural environment and consequently could – they assumed – rely on their Taiwanese peers to respect face, although the issue of their influence on each other and their possible desire to please the interviewer would still be present. The interviews were important in answering Research Questions 2, 2.1, 2.2 and 3, and they were based on the research questions, preliminary questionnaires and the results of the Initial Study. Students’ availability dictated the times of the interviews. The small-group interviews took place as detailed in table 3.6.

Table 3.6

Small-Group Interviews

<u>Data Collection</u> <u>Phase</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>
1	06 to 09 June 2009	8
2	19/20 April 2010	9

At the outset of the small-group interview I asked a question, students were then given the opportunity to respond and discuss the issues with each other. In order to isolate specific views – although conceptually this is difficult to define – I felt there might have been a need for additional individual interviews, although in practice this proved to be extremely difficult due to scheduling conflicts and students’ apparent difficulty in getting to the interview site; the idea was therefore abandoned. I feel, however, that it is

important to reflect on this part of the research journey as the inclusion of individual interviews might have added to the findings to some extent. I had also hoped to conduct the small-group interviews immediately following the classroom observations in order to facilitate easier recall of significant events that may have occurred during the observation. Again, students' schedules made this option virtually impossible. The time delay in some cases was an entire day, yet students' recall seemed to be quite good so the impact on the research was not substantial.

Data Analysis

The data from the small-group interviews was analysed in a similar way to the data from the classroom observations. I transcribed the recordings of the interviews and attempted to confirm themes and patterns that had been suggested by the classroom observations. In this case, the data was based entirely on the recordings due to my inability to take hand-written notes in an interview setting, although clarification of facts was made possible in the interview situation by being in direct contact with students; in other words, I was in a position to return to the students for any necessary clarification.

When reviewing the data I decided that any attempt to summarise the interview results into grid form in a similar way to the questionnaire analysis would be simply unrepresentative of the data due to the depth and flexibility of the responses. I analysed the responses on an individual basis by comparing them with themes emerging from the questionnaires and the classroom observations. Comparisons were made by cross-checking the responses for similarities and/or differences. In addition, I was able to cross-check and correlate the results of the data analysis across the interviews, the questionnaires and the diaries (see next sub-section) from the two Data Collection Phases. Occasionally there were problems identifying individual speakers in the group

interviews, but as already mentioned this was minimised by returning to students for clarification when this was possible.

3.3.4. Students' Diaries

The purpose of the diaries was to gain access to students' views regarding their cultural expectations and experiences and to allow them to voice, in a more personal manner, topics that they – for various reasons – may not feel able to express in the classroom or the small-group interviews. The diaries were also intended to be the principle means of determining the extra-curricular effects of the overseas experience on the students, and how this influences, or fails to influence the process of cultural learning. The diaries have allowed me to find more in-depth answers to Research Questions 2, 2.2 and 3 in terms of the effects of extra-curricular activities, and other issues the students felt were causing them problems that may be indicative of their own cultural beliefs. However, the small number of diaries returned restricted what might have proved to be very revealing data. The literature I consulted concerning diaries included Burgess et al. (2006) and Andrews et al. (2004).

The amount of information the students were willing to disclose may be an ethical matter requiring more consideration; however I did fully brief the students on such matters when I explained the purpose of the diaries; for example, points to include and points to exclude, and how to keep in touch with myself regarding any problems with making entries. In investigating Research Questions 2 and 3, I felt that students might be unwilling to share their views in the small-group environment concerning experiences outside the classroom; in particular, interactions with members of the host culture, and the diary offered them a more secure area to record these views. In fact, students

demonstrated that contact with members of the host culture outside of the classroom tended to be minimal, reflecting the following quotes from the Initial Study:

Ben: 'I try to talk to ... um ... the family in the evening but they are quiet. I thought maybe they don't like me, but now I think it's ... it's their way.'

Ken: 'We talk in the pubs in the evenings, but that's just with (other) students. I try to practise my English with people in the restaurants or out in the street but they don't want to ... what ... to talk.'

The diaries were felt to be an important means of answering such questions, although they were always intended as a supplement to the observations, the interviews, and the questionnaires, accessing data that is not clouded by the image the students create for themselves in the classroom. This image is generally a persona that, in the case of Far Eastern students, is complicated by the group dynamic. In other words, the beliefs about group identity at the heart of their culture may present a barrier to any genuine understanding of their motives and aspirations. This is pointed out by Alptekin and Alptekin (1984, p. 17) who sympathise with the students who see 'little need to "affiliate" with the hosts, either linguistically or culturally.'

As the diaries were presenting the students with an opportunity to disclose potentially revealing information, and with a higher degree of confidentiality than the other methods of data collection, I felt that the ethical issues at stake needed to be covered in a little more detail - see Ethical Considerations at the end of this chapter. All of the students were asked to complete diaries; ten agreed. The diaries were originally planned to be kept by the students on a daily basis, and returned to me at the end of every week via email. This did not prove to be practical due to the students' hectic schedules, and their apparent difficulty in returning the information within the time agreed. Following an

initial briefing they assured me that they would make every effort to complete their diary entries. Unfortunately, only five of the ten students selected complied with the request and then the entries were quite erratic, although the information supplied provided useful data. As I wished the students to be as specific as possible in their accounts, I realised that I had to give them a little more information in terms of the subject matter I wished them to cover, and the students were asked to consider their experiences in Brighton and other local places during the past week – or since the last diary entries. I gave the students a list of questions they could use as a guide – Appendix E. They were also encouraged to write their honest thoughts on the topic, and to email their entries once a week to me. Students were thanked in advance.

Unfortunately, only two students from Data Collection Phase 1, and three students from Data Collection Phase 2 returned the emails, but the data was still useful despite the small sample obtained. The data from the diaries was analysed by reading the emails and looking for patterns or themes that either reinforced the data from the questionnaires, the classroom observations, and the small-group interviews, or suggested new issues based on students' more personal information. The coding was done by highlighting similarities and differences between emails and the data from other sources, using constant comparison. See Appendix F, Table F.10 for pseudonyms of students who submitted diaries.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Previous experience in the Taiwanese classroom, combined with knowledge of the difficulties many Taiwanese students have when called on to adapt to an unfamiliar culture, suggested that ethical issues in and out of the classroom might be significant for my research. The ethical guidelines followed in this research were based on BERA (2011).

In terms of my role in the research process I needed to be aware of respecting students' privacy and anonymity, although few students expressed concern about anonymity, and although remaining on good terms with the students I needed to achieve a good deal of detachment in order to remain unobtrusive.

In order to make the research as valid as possible, I decided to brief the students and the teacher prior to the questionnaires, the classroom observations, the small-group interviews, and the diary explanations. The briefings were carried out in each school before each questionnaire, classroom observation session, interview, and diary request. This was done by arranging with the school or the teacher that a briefing would be taking place in order to put my position in the class in perspective. I briefed the whole class on the proceedings prior to the classroom observation as I felt that singling out the Taiwanese students may introduce a bias into the data gathering. Taiwanese students were, however, singled out purposely for briefings for the questionnaires, the small-group interviews and the diary explanations.

The briefings covered the following points:

- a. The reason for my presence in the classroom – to observe students' interactions, with the teacher, the other students, and their use of the textbooks.
- b. That I, as an observer, would be taking no part in the classroom activities.
- c. That my primary interest was in how students reacted to the textbooks; no group of students, and no individual students, would be put under pressure of any kind.

Note: It is difficult to realistically determine how the students would define 'pressure' in this situation; however one of the reasons for including this

information in the briefing was as a means to reassure them and allow them to relax in my presence as much as possible.

- d. That the information gained may be used in the longer-term to assist in the cultural and linguistic preparation of students prior to their departure to Britain by giving institutes in other countries and in Britain means to allow for a smoother transition, linguistically and culturally, into the host culture.
- e. The Taiwanese students were informed that their responses would be used in a piece of research, and as a result, they had the option of using pseudonyms for the classroom and interview stages. The students decided in favour of using English pseudonyms. This allowed me to refer to specific students in my analysis without using the students' real (Chinese) names.
- f. They were informed that if they would like to express their true feelings it may be more beneficial for the research and indeed for themselves. This proved to be more of a challenge considering that the students may resort to less than truthful answers as face-saving strategies. This is not in any way to imply that the students may be knowingly dishonest, but to suggest that they may resort to coping strategies in order to avoid embarrassment to themselves or others.

The issue of face is referred to in Chapter 2 and again in Chapter 4. As Delamont (2004, p. 212) states: 'informants may systematically hide things, and tell lies, to protect themselves, their secrets or their privacy.' Given this information, it was important to make the ethical briefing as friendly and conciliatory as possible in order to reduce the possibility of the students feeling themselves to be under any undue pressure, and in more of a position to use face-saving strategies. As a researcher, I dealt with this issue myself by beginning the interviews with rather more general questions and then moving

into the more specific and somewhat more personal areas. I believe this assisted me in helping the students to feel more at ease in addition to allowing me to analyse the students' responses with greater rigour.

This was particularly important when students came to complete their diary entries, given that the purpose of the diaries was to allow them to put their experiences, feelings and perhaps frustrations down on paper in order to create a picture of their life outside the classroom. I emphasised that the information would be in confidence, and I assured them that it would not be possible to identify individuals in any reports as real names would not be used. I stressed the fact that the students may be uncomfortable in discussing certain issues; if this was the case, they were under no pressure to disclose any information they did not wish to. This created a very fine balance for myself as a researcher. I needed to gain the maximum information while remaining true to the ethical principles employed, in addition to maintaining my awareness of Taiwanese students' underlying cultural values, which can sometimes force them to hide the truth behind a more culturally secure version of an incident, or even to suppress the incident entirely and record only those experiences that the students see as acceptable to their preconceived blueprint of the British experience.

The teachers' ethical responsibilities to the students are very closely tied to the institutes' responsibilities. In fact, three of the teachers at School A expressed concern that the students' privacy would be respected, and the integrity of the institute would be maintained. I gave them a verbal assurance that this was the case, in addition to an offer of anonymity for the teachers and the students.

As a learning experience the research journey demonstrated that I had to have a certain amount of flexibility when planned elements of the research; for example, the number of

diaries completed and the timing of post-class interviews, did not go as planned. I ultimately decided that such events and consequent changes were an integral part of the research process and that the rigour of the triangulation of methods used was robust enough to accommodate some change in the initial plan.

Chapter 4: Textbook Analysis

The focus of this chapter is an analysis of three textbooks used in multinational classes in the South-East of England, and in one case, also used in EFL classes in Taiwan. The analysis examines book format, visual images and language identified in the Literature Review. The specific aims of this chapter are to establish the manner in which the selected textbooks contribute to Taiwanese students' successful cultural learning in Britain by addressing students' needs, as identified in Chapter 1: The Initial Study. The chapter begins with a Rationale for the Selection of Textbooks; then details the Framework for the Analysis of Textbooks before proceeding onto the analysis of the selected textbooks. The results of the analysis enabled me to answer specific research questions and are also used in conjunction with student data in Chapter 5.

4.1 Rationale for the Selection of Textbooks

The three textbooks used in this research are: *New Headway Intermediate* (Soars and Soars, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2009); *New Cutting Edge Intermediate* (Cunningham and Moor, 2005); and *New Interchange 2* (Richards, et al., 2005). The justification for the selection of these particular books is their consistent use by EFL teachers in Britain, and especially in the South-East of England. The books *New Cutting Edge* and *New Headway* were used in several of the classes observed during the two data collection phases. *New Interchange* is a book commonly used in Britain, including the two schools visited during this research.⁴ As Islam (2011, p. 256) points out *New Interchange* is 'marketed in East and South-East Asia' and this specific marketing may make it more appealing to Taiwanese students. *New Interchange* is widely used in Taiwan, although it is not the only

⁴The 2nd edition of *New Cutting Edge* was produced in 2005; the 3rd edition of *New Interchange* in 2005, and the 4th edition of *New Headway* in 2009.

textbook available. It was still being used when I visited several language institutes in Taiwan in September, 2009 – and although the book uses American English I have decided to use it in my analysis due to the students' familiarity with textbooks that use US English. The three textbooks have proved to be very popular in Taiwan and Britain, with several editions being published. Language institutes in the South-East of England tend to choose these books because, from a language perspective, many students and many of the teachers feel the books have value for the learners – this is confirmed by end-of-class student surveys conducted by both schools involved in this research, and informal conversations with the teachers have indicated that the language studied in the textbooks could be used by the students in a meaningful way. From a business perspective, the marketing strategies aimed at the British schools offer substantial discounts for wholesale purchase; in addition to the student's book all three books are accompanied by teacher's guides, CDs and workbooks. All three books have a similar approach to the presentation of the English language activities and the actual structure in terms of organising the units into vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing tasks. *New Headway* and *New Cutting Edge* are both organised into 12 units, and *New Interchange* is organised into 16 units, or modules, as they are referred to in the book.

4.2 Framework for the Analysis of Textbooks

In terms of the focus of the analysis, as Rubdy (2003) suggests, I needed to assess the textbooks in order to decide which aspect to focus my analysis on. In that respect my purpose was to find effective answers to Research Question 1 and to determine the extent to which the three selected books supported learners in their process of cultural learning in Britain, and developed students' cultural competence in terms of the culture they experienced in Britain.

As explained in detail in the Literature Review, Section 2.10, I am using my adaption of Littlejohn's (2011) framework based on two levels of analysis.

1. 'What is there? Objective description' (2011, p. 186). This level of analysis covers such headings as: division of material into sections (units, modules); how units or modules are sub divided; supplementary materials (CD, workbook).

2. 'What is required of users? Subjective analysis' (2011, p. 186). Littlejohn defines this as a 'deeper level of analysis' that allows 'teachers and learners' to 'draw deductions' about what has to be done in order to gain the maximum benefit from the textbook (2011, p. 188).

In adapting Littlejohn's (2011) framework I chose to firstly conduct an 'objective description' of the textbook; this is included in the Overview that precedes the textbook analysis. In addition to the points Littlejohn isolates (division of textbook into units, and sub-division of units) I have added: language objectives; for example, grammatical tenses covered; and characterisation; for example, range of ethnicities, use of names, whether characters are happy, sad, and the nature of their expressions through the visual images (non-verbal communication). In addition I analysed the visual images based on Halliday's (1985) metafunctions as detailed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).

The three metafunctions are the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual. The ideational, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 42), regards representation of 'aspects of the world' based on the experience of people in the world. The interpersonal regards the projection of 'the relations between the producer ... and the ... receiver' of a sign (p. 42). And the textual regards the potential to 'form texts;' groups of signs that link 'internally' and 'externally' with the appropriate 'context' (p. 43). The metafunctions were used to analyse images by firstly examining the images for 'aspects of the world'

Taiwanese students may or may not be familiar with; for example, familiarity with rituals and traditions may be culturally specific and therefore unfamiliar or even insignificant to the students. Can the image be viewed simply as a link to the language or is there a deeper semiotic meaning? It may be important to view the images in terms of how they fit together; are they distinct from one another or are they part of a bigger structure? What might this mean to the students?

Given Taiwanese students' tendency to 'read' a person's expression to determine their intent – a fact I experienced personally on numerous occasions in Taiwan – I analysed the textbooks' characters' expressions, and in particular the direction of their gaze. Is it directed at the student or does it avoid them? Are they smiling or grimacing, and how is this affected by the direction of their gaze?

This was followed by an assessment of the effectiveness of the textbooks in terms of the specific needs and context of the intended learners in relation to what is required of them regarding cultural learning, in addition to analysing how well they serve the teaching and learning process and determining the extent to which they meet the students' requirements for cultural learning in the South-East. This is related to Littlejohn's second level of analysis in that the requirements 'of users' are connected to my exploration of students' needs when interpreting the cultural symbols in the textbooks. This adapted framework meets my own needs in the following ways:

It allowed me first to gain a macro perspective of the textbook in terms of how I analysed its content in relation to the pedagogic approach, beginning with an overview that provides background information mostly gained from the explanations on the books' covers (see Table 4.1).

Following this overview I evaluated the textbooks in terms of how well they may meet students' needs, as explained in Chapter 1, and what is expected of them culturally. This consists of an analysis of two activities from each textbook, taken from separate units that relate to students' needs or demonstrate difficulties students may encounter when dealing with the visual images and the language in the activity.⁵ The section concludes with an overall evaluation of the key aspects of each textbook. I have chosen books at a similar level in order to allow any similarities or differences to surface during the analysis.

Table 4.1 gives details of the textbooks selected for analysis.

Table 4.1

Selected Textbooks

<u>Book</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Modules Analysed</u>
<i>New Cutting Edge</i>	⁶ Intermediate	2005	1 and 12
<i>New Headway</i>	⁷ Upper-Intermediate	2001	1 and 12
<i>New Interchange 2</i>	Intermediate	2005	1 and 16

I chose the first and last units in each book in order to see how each one of them introduced content and language to the students at the beginning and end of the course of study, and in which direction the students are prompted for further study. In the chosen units I analysed how each book approaches the presentation of visual images and language, and how cultural information is given to the students through the unit. Specific activities are highlighted in the analysis as they contribute important cultural and linguistic information. The data gained from this analysis shows the extent to which the visual images and the language in textbooks might contribute to students' process of

⁵In order to maintain consistency, the word 'activity' will be used in Chapters 4 and 5 to refer to a discussion or conversation topic/exercise.

⁶ Intermediate level takes the students from B1 to B2 of the Common European Framework.

⁷ Upper-Intermediate is set at B2 of the Common European Framework.

language and cultural learning, and the information is cross-referenced across all three analysed textbooks. The activities analysed in the textbook units are recorded in Table 4.2. The titles are based on the theme of the analysed activity:

Table 4.2
Textbook Activities Analysed

<u>Textbook Title</u>	<u>New Cutting Edge</u>		<u>New Headway</u>		<u>New Interchange</u>	
<u>Unit</u>	<u>Unit 1</u>	<u>Unit 12</u>	<u>Unit 1</u>	<u>Unit 12</u>	<u>Module 1</u>	<u>Module 16</u>
<u>Activity</u>	Everyday Pastimes (p. 8).	Internet problem page (pp. 128/129).	Comedy song (pp. 13/14).	Great Events of the Twentieth Century (pp. 124/125)	Exchanging Personal Information (p. 2).	Excuses and Lying: ⁸ (p. 111).
<u>Learning Objectives</u>	Asking and answering questions in the present simple and continuous tenses.	Resolving imaginary situations in the past with <i>if</i> .	Gaining a basic idea of irony.	Using adjectives to describe well-known events.	Introducing yourself; exchanging personal information; asking about someone's childhood.	Making excuses; the nature of 'white lies.'

The selected activities provide substantial opportunity for cultural interpretation by the students. For example, the *New Cutting Edge*, Unit 12 activity, Internet Problem Page (pp. 128/129) provides the students with the opportunity to discuss such potentially culturally rich topics as: Family, Relationships, Friendships, Money, and Careers, while *New Headway*, Unit 1, Everyday Pastimes (pp. 13/14) allows the students the opportunity to examine humour from a Western perspective.

⁸ Although this term may seem a little strong, it is reproduced exactly as it appears in the textbook for the purpose of accuracy.

For each individual textbook the activity is set out in a grid under the headings of Visual Images and Language (See Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5). The analysis that follows examines the following points: whether the images and language offer cultural information that is of value to the students; whether the dialogues are transferable – for example, can they be used effectively in the outside world, and whether all the concepts chosen for discussion or conversation work equally well across cultures. The multinational nature of the classes involved in this research highlights the importance of these questions. For example, do students have a shared understanding of issues such as complaints and excuses; permission, politeness, obligation and prohibition, the nature of sarcasm and humour in general and making excuses? Their importance in students' cultural learning is based on possibilities for misinterpretation of certain aspects of humour, and the different rules associated with being polite in Taiwan and in Britain, as noted in the Literature Review, in Section 2.10 Cultural Components in Textbooks and Frameworks for their Analysis.

I have included several references to economic factors related to textbook production in the Literature Review and this issue will be referred to again when relevant. This is done because many EFL textbooks are aimed at as wide an audience as possible, it may therefore be important that the authors include considerable cultural diversity, and as such their position as stakeholders in the textbook should not be overlooked.

4.3 Textbook: New Cutting Edge, Intermediate (2005)

4.3.1. Overview

- Twelve units, or 'Modules'
- Intermediate level; from B1 to B2 level of the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001).
- The general learning outcome at this level takes the student grammatically from a review of the Present Simple Tense to use of the Past Perfect Tense and past modal forms.
- This book also consists of CDs, workbooks, and a teacher's resource book.
- A variety of ethnic groups are depicted in the images. The characters facial expressions suggest a happy community.

Table 4.3 gives the details of the two analysed activities.

Table 4.3

New Cutting Edge: Analysed Activities

<u>Analysed Units</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Selected Activities</u>	Everyday Pastimes (p. 8). Discussion of several pastimes.	Internet problem page (pp. 128/129). Reading and discussion of five problems.
<u>Visual Images</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of adults and children from different ethnic backgrounds, although Caucasians predominate. • The people are engaged in various leisure activities from using a computer to riding a bicycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five hand-drawn images in the activity, each denoting a different part of life.
<u>Language</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes the form of everyday phrases ('I spend a lot of time with ... I'm not interested in...'). • Quite informal ('hanging out;' 'chatting'). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly informal; typical of letters pages found in many tabloid newspapers: 'I am terribly worried about her coping on her own;' 'What should I do? I know if I go to a solicitor she will make things really hard for me' (p. 128).

4.3.2. Unit 1: Analysed Activity

Students are given twelve sentences and need to consider which ones are true in their own country; they then discuss their choices. Sample sentences: 'People are working longer hours than in the past;' 'Watching TV is the most popular leisure time activity.'

The cultural context is of relaxed and in some cases sporting ways of spending free time. The language demonstrated in the activity is highly likely to be effective for the students outside of the classroom. Such expressions as 'Do you like playing computer games?' and 'I spend too much time chatting on the phone' are typical of communicative exchanges in Britain. The language is likely to be effective due to its informal nature: 'hanging out with your friends;' 'texting your friends,' and the possible frequency of using such expressions. For example, 'I'm quite good at computer games,' or 'I'm not interested in shopping.'

There is quite a close connection with the informal language used and the visual images, which range from playing computer games to enthusiastically texting, and it would be relatively easy for the students to link the images to the language. This activity was probably chosen for its applicability across cultures and because it allows students to compare cultures. For example, students read the sentence, 'People are working longer hours than in the past,' and then go on to consider which statements may be applicable in their own countries. Several of the phrases provide ample opportunity for students to gain knowledge about each other's cultures and to compare it with culture in Britain. For example, 'Women do the main share of the housework' would probably be true of the Taiwanese household, but not necessarily in some European households. 'Young people these days spend more time socialising than doing homework' may be true in some countries, but may be unacceptable in Taiwan. Both of these sentences provide fertile

ground for cultural discussion. This also relates to the Taiwanese students' identified need for getting to know other people and other cultures; see Chapter 1: Introduction.

4.3.3. Unit 12: Analysed Activity

This is the final unit in the book and students are expected to have made the following progress: Grammatically, they should be able to communicate in the present, past and future; they should be able to make predictions and use obligation and permission in the present. The lexis focuses on problems and solutions. On completion of Module 12, and indeed the completed textbook, students should be able to use past modal verbs, talk hypothetically about the past, and talk hypothetically about the past and present together.

The activity is a reading and discussion of five entries on an Internet problem page called 'shareyourdilemmas.com.' Examples of titles are 'Love online?' 'Can we leave my Mother?' and 'My mother-in-law has taken over our lives.' There are five hand-drawn images in the activity, each denoting a different part of life. For example, a house to denote 'Family,' a love heart to denote 'Relationships,' two girls talking to denote 'Friendships,' a pile of coins to denote 'Money' and a mortar board to denote 'Careers.'

The cultural context should not be too problematic for most nationalities, and as an introduction to the kinds of letters the students can expect to read in various magazines and Internet forums the activity serves its purpose well. The nature of the letters may create substantial opportunities for debate among students from different cultures. Overall, the letters suggest emotional problems centring on family members or partners. For example, letter 2 features a girl involved with a boy who refuses to let her meet his family due to his strict religious upbringing. Subjects like this may provide an excellent basis for conversation due to different religious beliefs and different cultural expectations

concerning dating practices. This letter leaves the cultural questions quite open to interpretation by not specifying the religion or the background of the couple involved, perhaps leaving the way open for considerable cultural debate. In particular, Taiwanese students may find the boy's behaviour understandable, but for reasons related to Confucian ethics rather than religion. A situation regarding personal relationships did occur during a classroom observation of an activity titled, 'Sophie's Dilemma.' See Chapter 5: The Safety of the Family and Relationship Discussion Inhibitions.

The drawings in the module that are intended to denote Family, Relationships, Friendships, Money, and Careers are quite revealing in their choice of symbolism. This fits quite closely with the Taiwanese students' need 'Cultural symbols students can relate to;' see Chapter 1: Introduction, and with Kress and van Leeuwen's 'symbolic processes' (2006, p. 105). Family is usually denoted by a detached house. This is somewhat culturally specific, as many Europeans and US people do indeed base their status on their home – the detached property perhaps being the ideal symbol of this status – yet this is not necessarily the case in Taiwan, where the concept of family is based more on its constituent members than on external symbols. However, the textbook, catering to global needs, is depicting a standard culture, and as an indicator of status in Britain this tells the student a good deal about the culture.

'Money', represented by three piles of coins (p. 129), is particularly relevant to the Taiwanese students in that it is a powerful indicator of status. 'Careers', denoted by a university mortar board (p. 129), would be highly indicative of Taiwanese students' needs to achieve high academic status, as confirmed by Hung and Marjoribanks (2005). All of these cultural representations are effectively giving students positive impressions about culture in Britain, particularly when it accords with their own. The reason Taiwanese

students may see such representations in a positive way is because they are consistent with students' own cultural values. It could be argued that the textbook is using universal values in order to appeal to as many students as possible, however the virtues of wealth, and the benefits of high-status education are not uniform across all cultures. For example, the accumulation of wealth for its own sake is viewed with disdain in some cultures, however, the fact that wealth and education are such key aspects of all cultures, whether in a positive or a negative way, confirms their importance as discussion topics in the multinational classroom. Looking at the images from the perspective of metafunctions, the ideational is served well as each object portrayed is representative of 'aspects of the world' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 42) that will be familiar to all students, however the nature of the representation will be defined by several factors, but principally by the students' culture and education. As symbolic representations, the 'meaning and identity' (p. 106) will be apparent, but the depth of engagement with the symbols may vary.

4.3.4. Summary

In assessing the effectiveness of this textbook in terms of the specific needs and context of the Taiwanese students, the two analysed units demonstrate a strong sense of community among the textbook characters, portrayed by groups of people of all ages and nationalities engaging in positive pursuits in a friendly manner; invariably, being very helpful to one another. This sense of community may allow students to compare cultures through genuine conversations consistent with those heard in Britain. The textbook also used cultural symbols that students may be able to relate to in their everyday lives in the South-East in order to understand more about culture in Britain. For example, a detached house to denote successful married life, and a block of flats to denote living alone, yet the depth of understanding the cultural symbols represent may vary across cultures.

The practice of comparing the dialogues in the textbook with 'real-life' conversations may, as noted by Dat (2003), be a way for the students to compare the validity of the textbook dialogues to conversations practiced outside the classroom. This fits with the Taiwanese students' need for genuine conversations detailed in Chapter 1: Initial Study.

4.4 Textbook: New Headway, Upper-Intermediate (1998)

4.4.1. Overview

- Twelve units.
- Upper-Intermediate level; B2 level of the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001).
- The general learning outcome at this level takes the student grammatically from a review of the tense system to noun phrases, and the passive to add emphasis.
- The series also consists of CDs, workbooks, a teacher's resource book, and a student's website.
- The characters are mostly white and possibly middle or working class, and this theme is continued with some consistency throughout the textbook. Characters are mostly happy, based on their expressions.

Table 4.4 gives the details of the two analysed activities.

Table 4.4

New Headway: Analysed Activities

<u>Unit</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Selected Activities</u>	Comedy song (pp. 13/14). Listening and comprehension activity based on the song 'Camp Granada.'	'Great Events of the Twentieth Century' (p. 125), Listening and discussion.
<u>Visual Images</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depicts several young men in eight separate cartoon drawings in various situations; for example, being chased by a bear; developing poison ivy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven photographs depicting seminal events of the twentieth century; for example, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Kennedy assassination.
<u>Language</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links the cartoons to the story using the song, 'Camp Granada.' • Stresses pronunciation and emphasises the humour of the situations depicted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built around a Listening text. • On the tapescript, eight people give their opinions about important twentieth century events 'I think the collapse of the Berlin Wall was one of the seminal events of the twentieth century;' 'Oh, I think that the Internet has changed erm ... quite a lot of people's perspective of the world' (p. 125).

4.4.2. Unit 1: Analysed Activity

The Camp Granada activity (p. 13) begins with a 'Pre-listening task' that explains the idea of summer camps and holiday camps, and analyses the potential dangers of camping. Students listen to the song, Camp Granada, and match the accompanying images with the descriptions in the song; for example, 'He developed poison ivy,' and 'They're about to organise a search party.'

There are several cultural aspects of the activity that warrant analysis; firstly, comedy. The song has a strong sense of irony. For instance, the boy in the story has been at the camp for only one day, but has encountered numerous problems. In addition, much of the humour is targeted at people who are suffering various misfortunes: Joe developed poison ivy and Jeffrey has gone missing. The Western reader will immediately isolate the irony of these situations, and view them from a humorous point of view – as they are intended. However, the Taiwanese student may view them in a more serious light – as misfortunes; this is not to say the student would believe this to be a real situation, but any sense of irony or humour may be lost on the student during the cultural translation. I encountered situations similar to this in the EFL classrooms of Taiwan on several occasions, when it became clear that what I considered amusing, the students may consider unfortunate.

The song's value as a linguistic activity that can be used outside the classroom is limited, but its usefulness as a possible device for the explicit teaching of aspects of western humour – rhyming, irony and sarcasm, for example – is considerable, as will be explored in Chapter 5 when commenting on students' views on humour and in their experiences with sarcasm and irony in Brighton and Hove, in Section 5.4 Humour Across Cultures. Although this activity was not used in an observed class, it is worthy of analysis

considering Taiwanese students' wishes to 'understand' humour; as demonstrated in the Initial Study and the main study small-group interviews, and its link to the students' need to understand more subtle linguistic elements: see Chapter 1: Initial Study.

There is also perhaps a certain element of novelty introduced by the authors in choosing this song because the students are not simply expected to sing along but need to interpret the literal and implied meanings of the lyrics. Maley (2003) speaks of the 'newness' of an activity, although the Taiwanese students' ideas of something new may not be identical to what the author is referring to. Maley includes such attributes as innovation or anything that is 'unusual' or 'surprising' (p. 184). The song certainly satisfies this criterion, however, whether this will translate into a positive learning experience is more questionable.

4.4.3. Unit 12: Analysed Activity

This is the final unit in the book and students are expected to have made the following progress: Grammatically, they should be able to communicate in the present, past and future; they should be able to use second and third conditionals and reported speech. The lexis focuses on verbs to describe ways of speaking; for example, 'quarrel,' 'advise,' 'chat' (p. 97). On completion of Unit 12, and indeed the completed textbook, students should be able to use present, past and present perfect tenses; modals of probability, and reported speech in thoughts and questions. The final unit of the textbook has the greatest concentration of real life images, in terms of different feelings and expressions than elsewhere in the book. In evaluating these images I will look at the facial expressions used by the characters, based on Kress and van Leeuwen's metafunctions (2006); an issue noted in Chapter 2: The Literature Review, and in Chapter 5, in Section 5.3 Politeness and Non-Verbal Communication.

Pages 124/125 comprise several Listening and Vocabulary activities linked to 'Great Events of the Twentieth Century.' The first listening activity is made up of seven snapshot photographs featuring significant events of the last century. For example, US President Kennedy's final drive in Dallas and Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon. Kennedy's beaming smile moments before he was killed and a photo of napalmed Vietnamese children are particularly harrowing. The final image – man on another planet, depicted by the figure of Neil Armstrong standing on the lunar surface, his expression hidden by his helmet's reflection, removes the human face from the text. Culturally, it is difficult to imagine how these particular images would benefit students' cultural learning as they may have difficulty separating the famous faces – and perhaps, more significantly – the historic events of which they are an inextricable part, from the activity they are engaged in. As a stand-alone activity using famous events as a background, it may be more than successful. As an activity that may help students' cultural learning, particularly focusing on the possible interpretation of facial expressions, it is likely to be valuable but may require adaptation by the teacher. These historical facts may also provide more cultural knowledge on Western tradition and possibly prompt further classroom discussion in this area.

Looking at the images from the perspective of metafunctions, the interpersonal becomes important when we look at the direction of the subjects' gaze. In only one of the images is anyone looking directly at the camera (therefore, the viewer). The Vietnamese child hit in the napalm strike is looking in the viewer's direction, but it is difficult to determine specifically what she is focusing on. Although Neil Armstrong is facing in the direction of the camera, the reflective helmet does not allow contact with the viewer. In terms of the interpersonal metafunction the lack of eye contact suggests 'an absence of a sense of interaction' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 43), and although the viewer may be

capable of interpreting the images, the lack of eye contact implies an impersonal relationship between the student and the producer.

The texts related to the visual images of seminal twentieth century events in Unit 12 use many superlative expressions. Examples of this tendency are: 'most special,' 'marvellous,' 'wonderfully excited' (dialogue 1); 'astonishingly,' 'incredibly quickly,' 'one of the great events' (dialogue 2). Some of the dialogues have a more relaxed nature, particularly dialogue 3, which also contains a number of natural pauses and hesitations that may occur in a spontaneous monologue: 'And it's ... it's quite strange. Erm ... there is the thing, though ...;' 'And it's ... it's very strange, the way that I think ... you would talk ... you can talk to someone on the Internet.' The textbook is clearly trying to use language that the students may encounter in a real conversation, and the use of pauses and hesitation is common enough, however the use of superlative expressions is somewhat more sparing in real conversation and the students may have to be cautioned against overuse, as Taiwanese students can resort to these expressions all too easily: see Chapter 5: Section 5.2 The Safety of the Family and Relationship Discussion Inhibitions.

4.4.4. Summary

In assessing the effectiveness of the textbook in terms of the specific needs and context of the Taiwanese students, the two analysed units display characters whose helpful behaviour is linked very closely to the ideals of a Confucian based society. The importance of non-verbal communication was demonstrated, as was the possible novelty of activities that used more subtle linguistic elements; for example, humour and the use of irony. The superlative language used may encourage students to adopt such language in their everyday lives, but appropriate guidance from the teacher may be necessary due to tendencies to overuse such language among Taiwanese students.

4.5 Textbook: New Interchange, Book 2 (2005)

4.5.1. Overview

- Sixteen units.
- Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate level; from B1 to B2 level of the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2001).
- The general learning outcome at this level takes the student grammatically from the past tense and used to for habitual actions to reported speech.
- The series also consists of CDs, workbooks, a teacher's resource book, and a CD-ROM.
- The characters are sometimes depicted by photographs but mostly by cartoons. In the 1997 edition, the cartoons were of a somewhat exaggerated nature; however the 2005 edition features characters with a little less of the exaggerated nature of the previous edition.

Analysed Activities

Table 4.5 gives the details of the two analysed activities.

Table 4.5

New Interchange: Analysed Activities

<u>Unit</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Selected Units</u>	Exchanging Personal Information (p. 2).	Excuses and Lying, Reading and discussion (p. 111).
<u>Visual Images</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cartoons of a young man and woman lying on the	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cartoon of a man and a woman who have just

	<p>ground dressed in rollerblading clothing. They have just accidentally collided with one another.</p>	<p>finished cooking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The man is extremely pleased with the meal. • The woman's expression suggests she does not share the man's opinion, although she is saying 'Mmm ... delicious.'
<p><u>Language</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologising in order to begin an introductory conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws the students' attention to four kinds of 'lying:' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to hide something; <p>'For example, a son doesn't tell his parents that he's dating a girl because he doesn't think they will like her.'</p> ○ to give false excuses; <p>'For example, someone invites you to a party. You think it will be boring, so you say you're busy.'</p> ○ to make someone feel good; <p>'For example, your friend cooks dinner for you, but it tastes terrible. ... You probably say, "Mmm, this is delicious!"'</p> ○ to hide bad news; <p>'For example, you have just had a very bad day at work, but you don't feel like talking about it. ... you just say that everything was fine' (p. 111).</p>

4.5.2. Unit 1: Analysed Activity

The first dialogue in Unit 1 is a '*Conversation*' activity devoted mostly to two people introducing themselves following a chance meeting, however the initial part of the conversation is made up of a series of apologies that firstly allow the people to say sorry, and secondly form the basis for the introductory conversation. The dialogue is worthy of analysis due to the practical application of apology in almost all cultures, and the link with the students' need related to the nature of apology, politeness and the British concept of manners: see Chapter 1: The Initial Study.

The dialogue (p. 2) takes the following form:

Man: Oh, I'm really sorry. Are you OK?

Woman: I'm fine, but I'm not very good at this.

Man: Neither am I. Say, are you from South America?

Perhaps due to space limitations, the initial apologies are rather brief, but the use of expressions such as 'By the way,' may be useful for the students in initiating a conversation. The nature of the dialogue implies that the authors may have assumed that the students have an interest in each other's backgrounds.

The cultural information given to the students concerns the feasibility of striking up a conversation with a complete stranger. The nature of the incident may be viewed in different ways by different nationalities. For example, following a collision while rollerblading – or running – the reaction of some people may not be quite as positive as the conversation suggests, although the cultural issues reflected (exercising outdoors, multinational people engaging in conversation, and basic apologies) are consistent with what many students may have experienced in an EFL environment.

The language used is typical of an informal apology, and the introductory statements that follow are equally informal. The connection between the language and the visual images is tied in to the informal nature of the conversation. Both characters are wearing sports clothing, both look bemused at their predicament, and both are still lying on the ground in a somewhat extreme position with their legs in the air. As mentioned earlier in this section, and in detail in the summary at the end of the chapter, the somewhat extreme nature of the drawings does appear to make the situation look a little more serious than it is; in particular the character's facial expressions, which suggest shock.

Looking at the images from the perspective of metafunctions, the normally predominant role of the male in the interaction (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 67/68) is apparent. Although, apparently on level ground, the male is shown above the female – denoting a superior position; the man's positioning giving him the 'power' over the woman and allowing him to 'look down' on her (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 140).

4.5.3. Unit 16: Analysed Activity

This is the final unit in the book and students are expected to have made the following progress: Grammatically, they should be able to communicate in the present, past and future; they should be able to use passive structures in the simple present and simple past. On completion of Unit 16, and indeed the completed textbook, students should be able to report what people say, speculate about the past and the future, interpret body language, and ask about someone's past.

The unit contains an activity about excuses, an area of importance to the language student and one they will almost certainly encounter in their time in Britain. For example, in Unit 16: 'The Truth about Lying' (p. 111), students face the cultural problems associated with situations such as telling lies to protect people, and making excuses to

allow other people to feel better. Students are asked to read the passage, then discuss under what circumstances they would tell 'white lies.' The single cartoon depicts a man wearing a proud expression, waiting for a response after just serving a young lady a meal. The woman is clearly forcing herself to smile. This activity is linked quite closely to the students' need related to more subtle linguistic elements. See Chapter 1: The Initial Study. This activity and the students' comments and reactions to it are detailed in Chapter 5 in Section 5.3 Politeness and Non-Verbal Communication.

The activity begins by informing us that 'lying is wrong;' this perhaps being the Western cultural interpretation, although it may not be considered right or 'wrong' in other cultures. Resorting to telling lies may be based on what is necessary or unnecessary given the social situation, for example, to save or give face (see Chapter 2: Literature Review: Section 2.5 Education in Taiwan and Cultural Preparation for a discussion of face). The cultural information given to the students is that lying is undesirable, yet often necessary for four main reasons. The first two reasons, 'Lying to hide something,' and 'Lying to make an excuse,' may be viewed with suspicion by individuals from different cultural backgrounds due to the obvious cheating and deception necessary to maintain these lies. The other two reasons, 'Lying to make someone feel good,' and 'Lying to avoid sharing bad news' are more indicative of helping people, and are more likely to be accepted by different cultural groups. The language used, mostly in the form of examples of lies, is indicative of the way people in Western countries would use lying. For example, if a good friend cooks a dinner that looks and tastes awful, how might you respond? 'Mmm, this is delicious.'

4.5.4. Summary

In assessing the effectiveness of the textbook in terms of the specific needs and context of the Taiwanese students, the two analysed units make use of cartoons integrated with genuine conversations, and allow the students to work with apologies and excuses – two very important areas of language. The information on lying to help others is quite culturally valuable and particularly relevant to the Taiwanese students, but may conflict with experiences of such situations in the South-East. In addition, Taiwanese students have strong cultural beliefs about the acceptability of lying to help and protect themselves and others. This is not viewed as distorting the truth by the Taiwanese, it is merely an obligation to oneself and the greater community.

The frequent cartoons that appear throughout the textbook seem to be merely decoration for the activities themselves. In terms of metafunctions, the symbolic meaning of the participants is often neutralised by the language activity they are built around. They may serve the purpose of allowing the students to put a face to the voice on the tapescript and this use of images creates the fine line between what Hill (2003) refers to as the 'Use versus Decoration' dilemma of many images appearing in contemporary EFL textbooks. Hill defines this as images that are 'specifically used in the text' and those that are used for 'decorative purposes' (p. 176), although the functional nature of the cartoons in *New Interchange* is quite apparent due to the link with the language. Gray (2010), however, argues that all artwork is an important part of the 'imaging of English' and subsequently cannot be purely for decorative purposes (p. 178). The somewhat exaggerated facial expressions used in the textbook's cartoons may help to confirm the importance of non-verbal communication, although the images in the 2005 edition of *New Interchange* have less of these extreme qualities than previous editions. Although

the reasons for changing the cartoons in the latest edition are not made totally clear, conversations with EFL teachers in Hove suggest that teacher and student feedback may have led to this change. Gray (2010, p. 56), in reviewing *Streamline English Connections* (Hartley and Viney, 1979), describes the images in that textbook as ‘reminiscent of British children’s comics, whereby the represented participants are generally depicted as brightly coloured with minor anatomical exaggerations,’ so it would appear that the images found in *New Interchange* may not be an exceptional case.

Looking at the images from the perspective of metafunctions the use of bright colours is perhaps more apparent than in the other two textbooks. The bright reds, blues and yellows of the characters’ clothing and equipment tend to be quickly noticed by the viewer. Given Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006, p. 230) point that ‘colour is used to act on others,’ perhaps in terms of projecting the positive attributes of a character or situation through the use of colours in a textbook, it may be that in addition to using colour as a marketing strategy – to gain students’ attention – it may also be a device for establishing the nature of characters and situations.

4.6 Key Points Raised in the Analysis of the Three Textbooks

All three books have a similar approach to the presentation of the English language and the actual structure of the units in terms of organising the units into vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing activities. All three books make liberal use of visual images by means of photographs and cartoons. The drawings in *New Interchange* are somewhat more animated than their counterparts in *New Headway* and *New Cutting Edge* due to the bright colours and the varied facial expressions of the characters.

The information on the books’ covers in each case claims that the textbooks promote a ‘new’ approach to various aspects of language learning, but it is not totally clear what this

newness means in terms of significant advantages to the students. The Taiwanese students' need to experience 'something new' appears to have been satisfied with the inclusion of exotic locations. The sense of a community is quite strong in all three textbooks. For example, textbook characters tend to help each other, work together, and be part of a family. Arguably, this may be a marketing ploy that allows students to engage with a discourse community – a fact that the Taiwanese students may find appealing.

Visual Images

The visual images are firmly established in a multi-ethnic, rather clean community of mostly contented people. The images in *New Headway* deviate somewhat from the depiction of smiling faces to potentially conflicting expressions – a smiling face prior to a well-known tragic event, for example – in activities built around significant twentieth century events. Several of the representations are arguably more for 'decoration' than 'use' (Hill, 2003), however this tendency would appear to be isolated. The display of culture in Britain to the students through the images occurs mostly through the use of well-known locations and the pastimes of the characters. This is significant in relation to Research Question 1 in that a good deal of the students' knowledge of culture in Britain may be based on images and characters in the textbooks, and the extreme nature of the cartoons, discussed in particular in relation to *New Interchange*, may hinder students' ability to react to conversations outside the classroom.

It is not totally clear why the cartoons were originally presented in an exaggerated manner in *New Interchange* except perhaps to draw the students' attention to the images as quickly as possible. Whether this will allow them to complete the activity – or find a higher level of interest in the completion of the activity – is open to question.

In relation to this slightly exaggerated style, Hill (2003) splits the purpose of visual images into groups. The use of images in *New Interchange* is consistent with the group Hill terms 'Finding or giving information.' Hill further separates the analysis into 'Functional illustrations' – those 'making comprehension of the language easier,' and images 'whose object is to stimulate a mental and linguistic response' (p. 178).

Although Hill suggests a dichotomy between these two units of analysis, it may be possible to find elements of both in the images used in *New Interchange*. For example, the comprehension of language may indeed be made easier by relating the cartoons or photographs to the dialogues. In addition, the slightly exaggerated nature of the cartoons can stimulate a response from students. It would seem, based on interview responses, that some of the *New Interchange* images; in particular, the cartoons may increase the students' ability to link the images to the language and gain a greater understanding of the activities and ability to talk about them in a more varied way by allowing the students to compare the images with situations they have seen in Brighton and Hove.

In terms of metafunctions, the images feature some extreme facial expressions, and the direction of the characters' gaze is significant as in some cases the direct gaze seems to be intended to draw the students into the image, while the characters not engaged with the viewer seem to be occupying a world where the student is merely a passive observer.

Language

The language is sequenced in a predictable format giving it a somewhat unnatural sound; however, this could be said of almost all EFL textbooks in terms of the detailed structure that was referred to in the Literature Review. See Section 2.8 The EFL Textbooks. Similarly, people's names support the corresponding visual representation of a cross

section of different ethnic groups; an issue directly related to marketing, again as noted in the Literature Review.

Such issues as apologising and excuses appeared in all three books, and indeed are critical cultural and linguistic areas that the Taiwanese students need to understand. However, it was in more subtle areas of language that the students expressed an interest. In particular, certain aspects of humour – irony and sarcasm, for example – caused some confusion among Taiwanese students in the Initial Study. This will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5, Section 5.4 Humour across Cultures.

The textbook analysis has demonstrated that in some ways the three textbooks provide appropriate cultural information to the students through the visual images and the language. The analysis has also vindicated my adaptation of Littlejohn's (2011) framework in establishing how effective the textbooks may be in terms of meeting the specific needs of the Taiwanese students.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Student Data

This chapter examines the findings from both data collection phases. Data was gathered by means of questionnaires, classroom observations, small-group interviews, and students' diaries. Reference to the results of the Initial Study, and the findings in Chapter 4, is made when relevant and the data is explored in order to answer the three research questions.

The discussion of findings is organised around the themes that emerged from analysis of the data collected from students. The themes are:

- **Textbook Views: Development of Cultural and Linguistic Needs.** This introductory theme firstly establishes the students' views prior to and shortly after arrival in Britain. It then examines if the needs of the students are being satisfied by the textbooks.
- **The Safety of the Family and Relationship Discussion Inhibitions.** Through this theme I examine the effects of safe topics chosen by the students for discussion or conversation and how this affects the process of cultural learning in Britain. It also provides a comparison between students' textbook use in Taiwan compared with their textbook use in Britain. For example, monocultural classes in Taiwan would discuss or avoid certain topics as part of cultural protocol, but in the multinational environment of Brighton and Hove students may have to adapt to cultural differences and avoid assuming that some topics are safe while others are less so. In contrast to the apparent need for safety, students also expressed a need for 'something new' in their discussion and conversation topics.

- **Politeness and Non-Verbal Communication.** This theme developed out of students' needs to learn more about politeness in Britain and how it operates in the classroom and in the local area. In some cases, information in the textbooks, especially the opening units, led the students to believe that politeness was simply a matter of saying a few appropriate words – for example, 'please,' 'sorry' – rather than the complex range of language that it involves. It also relates to the tendency of students to revert to the culturally safe strategies of silence and certain gestures and facial expressions when dealing with difficult situations in the classroom. The facial expressions used by characters in the textbooks also affected the way the students perceived the characters and the textbook in general. Students reported in their diaries and in small-group interviews a need to fully understand the concept of manners in order to avoid embarrassment and consequent loss of face.
- **Humour Across Cultures.** This theme reflects students' difficulties in interpreting the Western concept of humour, and includes such culturally specific concepts as sarcasm and irony. This theme is examined by looking at the impact of textbook activities that are clearly intended to be amusing, yet the nature of the humour may not carry across all cultures in the same way. More subtle uses of language such as this proved to be problematic for students still making sense of literal meanings. Students expressed a need, mostly in their diaries, to understand Western humour firstly, to avoid embarrassment, and secondly to 'enjoy the fun (funny) side of the conversation' (Bob).
- **The Community: Connecting with the Outside.** The final theme brings the analysis together in looking at whether the information gained in the classroom,

particularly through the textbooks, allowed students to communicate effectively in Brighton and Hove. Students reported a need, mostly in small-group interviews, to transfer the linguistic knowledge gained in the classroom into language that could be used in their daily lives outside the classroom. The following sections examine these themes in detail, and their relationship to the students' needs identified in Chapter 1: Initial Study and referenced in Chapter 4.

5.1 Textbook Views: Development of Cultural and Linguistic Needs

In order to answer Research Question 1, Parts 1.1 and 1.2, it was necessary to assess the importance of the textbook's reflection of the target culture for the students, and to determine which aspects of culture were most important to them. This data also complements my adaptation of Littlejohn's (2011) framework of the textbook analysis regarding students' needs, as identified in Chapter 1, and my actual analysis of the way the textbooks meet those needs, and links between those needs and conclusions emerging in this chapter will be made clear.

Students' expectations about the textbooks they were going to be using before coming to Britain and the culture they were going to be engaging with became important in establishing a pedagogic/cultural foundation for them, although the majority were somewhat uncertain about what to expect from their experience with culture in Britain per se prior to arrival. This may possibly indicate a minimum of cultural preparation prior to departure. Indeed, both data collection phases confirmed that students did not necessarily feel a need to prepare themselves linguistically or culturally.

For example, in answer to small-group interview question 12: "Do you think there might be ways to prepare yourself better for study in the UK before you leave Taiwan?" (Data

Collection Phase 2) the majority of students implied that linguistic preparation would be unnecessary as they would be able to respond to naturally-occurring dialogue in Britain – and in most cases, the primary reason for visiting the host country was to engage in such forms of communication. Students felt that if they had a sufficient level of English to survive in Britain, then enhancing that skill in Taiwan would be less beneficial than practising in a native English speaking environment. In a minority of cases, students felt that excessive language study prior to departure may even have a negative effect on the language learning process in Britain.

The level of students' linguistic competence prior to arrival in Britain is a significant issue, and the organisations that are responsible for student placement in Britain need to be satisfied that the students have the ability to 'function' in the host culture. This functional ability tends not to be made particularly specific, but informal conversations conducted with representatives from three different organisations with responsibility for Taiwanese students' placement in Britain demonstrated that students would have to be graded Intermediate (from B1 to B2 of the Common European Framework) or above in order to be considered for study in Britain. An additional marker of suitability is a TOEFL⁹ score above 500.

In terms of cultural learning, data from the questionnaires suggested that the various means of preparation students had taken in Taiwan – for example, attending 'cram' schools (rapid learning institutes), had not allowed them to come to terms with culture in Britain. Additional responses in the Initial Study indicated this was largely attributable to having done language study at the expense of cultural preparation:

⁹ Test of English as a Foreign Language: a US test designed to assess competency to study overseas, particularly in the United States.

'We did a lot of grammar, sentence structure ... but no real time for culture.' (Ben)

'I just prepared by shopping for things I might need in UK.' (Emily)

'Many people think that we will learn when we get here; why would we prepare?' (Jack)

Questionnaire responses (Appendices C – Table C1 – and D – Table D1) suggested that the textbooks' cultural representations were not unusually surprising to most of the students. The fact that five students in Data Collection Phase 2 regarded these cultural representations as irrelevant does not accord with the positive view many Taiwanese students had regarding textbooks prior to arrival in Britain; attempts to elaborate on this view of irrelevancy during the small-group interviews proved to be unsuccessful. Several diary entries demonstrated, however, that students were quite enthusiastic about the textbooks' portrayal of culture in Britain through visual images and dialogues:

'I remember seeing it (Big Ben) in the book, and then we really saw it on the day-trip to London. It was a fun experience.' (Bob)

'I went into the fish shop and ordered a meal. We studied the conversation in the class last week and it worked for me.' (Peggy)

All of the students agreed that the textbooks contained interesting, and in many cases, novel activities. Whether this was a convenient answer to appease all concerned, or whether it reflected the high interest level of the activities, was difficult to say with any accuracy when looking at the questionnaire responses alone. However, classroom observations suggested a high level of involvement in the textbook activities presented to the students, and small-group interviews confirmed this view:

'It's funny (fun). We can talk about the story and make it better.' (Mitch)

In the questionnaire, two students, Eileen and Joy, viewed question 4: 'The textbook activities are more or less what I anticipated' as irrelevant. This may be the result of the students simply not having expectations about the nature of the textbook, and simply accepting whatever was laid before them. Yet Eileen's diary entries expressed concern about the textbook activities:

'Today the topic was dull. I do not think this helping ... helps my English.'

Joy also appears to express more concern in her diary:

'I thought we would be talking about our lives, us, or more interesting things in the class.'

It would seem that the greater confidentiality of the diaries allowed Eileen and Joy to express their reservations about the textbook activities, and clearly their opinion was somewhat different from their questionnaire responses.

The suitability of the activities in the textbooks received a positive response from all the students in the questionnaire. Part of this could be attributable to a need to give the 'correct' answer, or the feeling that the students would begin the questionnaire in a more positive light if they gave positive answers to the initial questions. Although the above may have been factors in the initial responses, it was extremely difficult to verify if this was actually the case, although I attempted to do so by cross-checking the initial responses to the questionnaires from the Initial Study, the results were inconclusive.

Classroom observations, on the other hand, showed a high level of interest in the activities, and the mostly positive reaction from the Taiwanese students implies the activities were suitable. For example, in Data Collection Phase 1 (Class 4, Day 2), students were discussing a supplementary IELTS¹⁰ topic that the majority of the students found

¹⁰International English Language Testing System.

rather dull. In contrast, the Taiwanese student – Sherrie – remained animated and enthusiastic throughout the lesson. Her diary entries reflect this level of interest:

'I enjoyed so much the (activity) of moving around the class talking to other students to find information.'

Two of the students taking the questionnaire found that the textbooks were not particularly easy to understand, while the majority believed the opposite to be true. Some students' responses in the small-group interviews suggested that the exercises felt more like 'homework.' It is worth pointing out, however, that this was the minority view. In a related diary entry, Bob admitted that he used the textbook as 'bedtime reading;' he went on to say that he found the information easier to recall in this way, and as Edge and Wharton (1998) suggest, many contemporary EFL textbooks are designed with activities that can be completed as homework. The Initial Study demonstrated a positive view of textbooks among the Taiwanese students, but the issue of homework was not covered.

More than half of the students viewed the textbooks as dull, yet the majority of the students felt that the time taken up using textbooks was mostly not wasted; the implication being that textbook use was an accepted part of classroom life, although perhaps more lively activities (or indeed, a more lively approach to the activities) were required. Small-group interview responses supported this:

'I have used situations in the book in my daily living (life).' (Bob)

'I don't think any of the book is ... is ... unnecessary. The teacher will be choose.' (Lilli)

'It's useful ... but sometimes not too fun.' (Peggy)

In their diary entries two students appeared to resent time 'being wasted' in the classroom on textbook activities or conversations that 'did not lead anywhere.' This is

almost a reverse of the same students' views in the small-group interviews. It would seem likely, as previously mentioned, that the more confidential nature of the diaries, possibly combined with the time to reflect on the situation more, allowed students to reconsider their positions.

Small-group interview question 13: How do text materials help you in the classroom? – provided students with an opportunity to determine the value of their textbooks:

'Well, they let me focus on something. Maybe some vocabulary or grammar. If we didn't have the books ... maybe we would just playing the games.' (Eileen)

In her diary Eileen suggested a good deal of time was wasted using textbooks in class, however the above small-group interview response suggests a different view in a more public setting.

The majority of the students did not feel that the textbook got in the way of the teacher. This question was formulated following a series of interviews with Taiwanese students in the Eastbourne area during my MEd that suggested the textbook activities were restricting the students' opportunities to deal directly with the teacher. Students reported that they viewed the teacher as the sole authority in the classroom when studying in Taiwan, regardless of any possible constraints; for example, syllabus or textbook. However, when students had spent some time in Britain, small-group interviews suggested that the teacher's apparent infallibility was open to question:

'If he is given the poor books, he will teach the bad class.' (Jane)

'It seems ... maybe the teacher, the books, and the class must all (work) together. A good teacher maybe is not enough.' (Bob)

This was supported in the classroom observations when almost all of the students accepted the textbooks they were using without apparent complaint.

Closely related to this is the students' view that the textbook writers are probably expert teachers. Again, there seems to be a close connection to the principle of the teacher as all knowing, and the textbook as cultural artefact. This is really quite a potent combination. If students truly believe in the infallibility of the printed – and virtual – word, and sympathise with the Confucian ideal of the teacher as expert, as discussed in the Literature Review, it can be tremendously difficult for a teacher who rejects mainstream Taiwanese pedagogy, in other words teaching according to Confucian principles, to convince them otherwise. The position of the teacher in the class was an issue I had originally planned to analyse, but as the research progressed it became clear that the teacher's role was a highly complex and detailed subject in its own right, so I decided to focus exclusively on the textbook.

There was general agreement in the questionnaires and the small-group interviews that the culture portrayed in the textbooks was useful, and that the textbooks helped the students understand the culture in Britain. The responses to whether the cultural activities used in the classroom had been valuable outside the classroom were much less enthusiastic. In Data Collection Phase 2, one student (Eileen) responded in the negative, and the remaining eight students classed the question as irrelevant. Additional responses suggested that references to culture made in the textbooks – famous British historical figures, the changes in society due to ethnic diversity – had no real daily application in the students' lives. They reported feeling that they had learned something new in the classroom, but the usefulness of that knowledge ended at the classroom door:

'They were interesting, maybe. But I will never using this information.' (Eileen)

'I will not talk about culture or those ... well ... the things in the evening. The conversation is more important.' (Joy)

'Culture is not a (my) favourite subject. I can read it in a book.' (Jim)

Pei confirmed his view in an additional diary entry: 'I learned so much about people in the past. I like this. It interests me, but I have never used it to help me talking (communicate).'

The difficulty here is that students tended to respond to cultural information presented to them in the textbooks not in and of itself, but because it was built into other aspects of the activities. For example, integrated into discussions and conversations about travel – a popular means of presenting culture – or alluded to with references to famous places, people, or events. The activities themselves can also cause cultural misunderstandings among some of the students.

Certain assumptions repeated in individual textbooks during the classroom observations implied that certain activities would be culturally acceptable per se, and indeed this often proved to be the case. However, there were examples of students clearly needing a higher form of cultural input than that offered by the writers. Firstly, there was the topic of shopping, perhaps felt by the writers to be universally acceptable, although the more mature Taiwanese students seemed to view it as somewhat tedious.

Eileen paired with Brigitte (Germany).

B: (smiling) 'So, you like shopping?'

E: (shrugs) 'If I need something. Not as a hobby. Nothing like that.'

B: 'Yeah ... maybe I am the same sometimes. If I go shopping and I don't need – I mean, I really need something, then it's easy ... easier for me to spend my money.'

E: 'I think the very young people – some of them – are addicted to shopping. In Taiwan there are very many stores that sell ... well, maybe it's just garbage, really. Silly little things for the girl to ... uh ... wear to make her look more pretty.'

B: (smiling) 'Silly things for silly girls.'

E: (laughs, perhaps too emphatically) 'Yes, yes.'

Eileen clearly felt the 'silliness' of the pastime and the people who engage in it. During the small-group interview, Eileen added,

'It is as though we are told "This is your story (topic), discuss it." Sometimes it is a book exercise. I learn nothing new.'

Similarly, Bob regarded shopping as 'something I would never talk about. Why I am talking about it now?'

In Chapter 4 I made reference to students' reluctance to discuss the taboo subjects; even dating proved to be a difficult topic. This may be a worrying implication given many EFL textbook writers' penchants for choosing such subjects as the focus of activities. For example, all the textbooks analysed in this research contained references or tasks concerning dating. This confirms Wallace's observation (2002, p. 96) that the global textbook almost always contains 'the three Ds of consumerist EFL culture, *dinner parties*, *dieting* and *dating*,' and much of the exposure to this form of culture comes to the students through the available media.

In conclusion, students in Taiwan felt that they did not need to prepare themselves linguistically or culturally for study in Britain, and this matched with the questionnaire responses demonstrating that none of the students felt that their preparation in Taiwan had allowed them to come to terms with the culture in Britain. This supports data gained in the Initial Study that students were far more concerned with the information learned in Britain, rather than any information gained prior to arrival.

The EFL textbook was viewed in a largely favourable light by the students, and almost all of the students agreed that the textbooks contained interesting, and in many cases, novel activities, although students who commented on the dull nature of many of the activities requested 'something new' in the small-group interviews. As the analysis in Chapter 4 illustrates the contemporary textbook contains a sufficient variety of activities to appease most tastes – the global perspective at work.

Classroom observations demonstrated that the textbooks' activities were viewed in a positive light by the students and small-group interviews confirmed this view. The suitability and interesting nature of the activities in the textbooks received a positive response from all the students, although small-group interviews suggested that the activities sometimes felt more like 'homework.'

Small-group interview responses suggested that the textbooks' cultural representations were not unusually surprising to most of the students. This may be related to the pop culture nature of many of the activities – explored in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 – and many students were already familiar with such cultural references largely from media sources. The majority of the students did not feel that the textbook took precedence over the teacher, although the effects of the teacher were not analysed in depth. When students were resident in Taiwan they tended to view the textbook writers as expert teachers,

although this tendency lessened as students became more experienced with study in Britain, and EFL textbook usage. All of the students reported that the TV and the Internet had allowed them to learn a good deal about the culture in Britain.

5.2 The Safety of the Family and Relationship Discussion Inhibitions

The choice of topics for discussion and conversation may impact on students' ability to interact with multinational peers. This became apparent during the classroom observations detailed below. The activities chosen for discussion – usually by the teacher – seemed to be intended to expose the students to aspects of the culture in Britain that may be of value to them. For example, for conveying notions of British tradition, photographs of the Millennium Dome (p. 105) and David Beckham in action (p. 42) were used in a *New Cutting Edge* (2005) Intermediate class.

On occasion, students were given the opportunity to choose discussion and/or conversation topics themselves. When given this option, Taiwanese students showed a tendency to choose subjects for their safety value. In addition, when a topic proved to be challenging or perhaps controversial, they often redirected the course of the conversation to more familiar subjects, such as the family. This was especially the case when two Taiwanese students were working together, but sometimes also the case when a Taiwanese student was working with a European student, although the non-Taiwanese student often attempted to stay on subject.

The following is a conversation between Brigitte (Germany) and Jane (Taiwan) that illustrates the way in which a Taiwanese student attempts to steer the conversation into areas she is more comfortable with. The conversation is based on a teacher-led discussion activity taken from the textbook *New English File 2: Intermediate* (Oxenden and Latham-Koenig, 2006) – which took place in Data Collection Phase 1.

B: 'Did you go skiing ... before?'

J: 'No. I didn't.'

B: 'Would you like to try it?'

J: (Shrugs) 'Maybe, I don't know. Maybe with my friends. Not alone.'

B: 'I ... uh ... like to ski alone. In my country, we do many sports outside.'

J: 'I like to play sports with my friends... in my home.'

There seemed to be a need for Jane to return to the safety of the ubiquitous 'friends,' which was just one of the core 'safe' topics, which included movies, shopping, Chinese food, free time and family.

In a similar vein, when the subject of foreign travel was brought up, Taiwanese students quickly returned to, Have you been to Taiwan?, largely regardless of whether the answer was positive or negative, the students invariably followed up with, Do you like Chinese food?

Occasionally, there was a more legitimate lead-in to Chinese topics, and then the students showed a good deal of interest in pursuing the topic. The following dialogue occurred during a discussion on tourism in *New Headway, Upper-Intermediate* (Soars and Soars, 2001) pp. 20/21.

Rita: 'What do you think ... I mean about being away from home?'

Eileen: 'I miss some of my life in Taiwan, but I know I am here to do study. If I feel uncomfortable, it's okay. It will be worth it. How about you?'

R: (shrugs) 'It's not the same, really. Berlin is so close. So much of the culture here is ... not the same, but ... maybe familiar. When I went to China, the culture was so strange for me.'

E: (interrupting) – 'You've been to the Mainland – sorry, China?'

R: 'One month only; three years ago. I went to Beijing – there were twenty of us.'

E: 'You studied Chinese?'

R: 'Yes, in the morning, but I went there to do martial arts.'

E: 'Oh, you plays ... play Kung Fu?'

R: 'In Germany I practice Shaolin Kung Fu. I thought I would be able to practice in China, but I couldn't.'

E: 'Did you go to Shaolin Temple?'

R: 'No. We had to stay in the city. It was quite harsh. I felt treated like a child sometimes.'

E: 'You only stayed in ... um ... Beijing?'

R: 'No. Some of us went to Shanghai for one week.'

E: 'Oh. (expressing awe) It must have been a very wonderful trip.'

R: (shrugs) 'Not really. Shanghai looks good, but the people are unfriendly. They try to make you buy things you don't want. Some of the students were cheated. It happened in Beijing, too, but that was just in the markets. In Shanghai it was all the time.'

E: 'Do you like Chinese food?'

R: 'Some of it. I like to try new things. We had some kind of fried dumplings at a restaurant in Beijing – a famous restaurant, I think – they tasted good. But some of the food on the street, close to the school, I didn't like it. It looked very dirty; the food, the people serving it. The whole thing. Do you like English food?'

E: (puts on a disapproving look) 'It's okay. Too many chips. Always chips.'

R: (smiles) 'Yes, in Germany we have, too.'

This dialogue shows Rita's attempts to maintain the flow of the conversation, while remaining honest about her experience in China. Eileen, on the other hand, seemingly feels more comfortable returning to the safe subjects:

'Oh, you play Kung Fu?'

'It must have been a wonderful trip.'

'Do you like Chinese food?'

In the observed classes Taiwanese students often found themselves dealing with topics that they were uncomfortable or unfamiliar with. For example, sexual matters, violence, and politics, despite the fact that such topics may be an important aspect of the global textbook. As Bell and Gower (2011, p. 149) point out, many contemporary textbook writers (including themselves) do not 'fight shy of the taboo subjects of sex and so on,' yet students tended to avoid such topics by returning the conversation to a safer area, although the influence of the publishers looms large when it comes to topics that 'writers are advised to avoid so as not to offend the perceived sensibilities of potential buyers and users' (Gray, 2010, p. 112). The Textbook Analysis (Chapter 4) demonstrated the safety value of pop culture activities, and although researchers debate the value of such culture – as a negative factor (Gray, 2002; Mares, 2003), or in a more positive light (Pennycook,

2007) – it is apparent that the uncomplicated nature of such activities are both a safety precaution and a constraint for the students.

Related to this was the habit of calling on what I refer to as *cultural scripts*. Just as in the classroom students resorted to such scripts, outside the classroom this was also clearly an issue. The sheer volume of bland or ordinary topics that the Taiwanese students referred to as ‘beautiful,’ ‘handsome,’ ‘excellent,’ and ‘perfect,’ were such that emphatic statements became a way for the students to appease all around them while still hiding the possible reality of their feelings. The Textbook Analysis in the previous chapter alluded to the lack of depth of many of the characters in the activities, yet students continued to use superlatives to describe these people. In the classroom observations, the very mention of a trip to the Far East would prompt the Taiwanese student to presume the best. The previous exchange between Eileen and Rita demonstrates this:

Eileen ‘You only stayed in Beijing?’

Rita: ‘No. Some of us went to Shanghai for one week.’

Eileen: ‘Oh (expressing awe). It must have been a wonderful trip.’

Rita: (shrugs) ‘Not really. Shanghai looks good, but the people are unfriendly.’

Interestingly, when Eileen was faced with such an (apparently) unexpectedly negative response, she maintained her composure and appeared to behave as if the response had been one she was expecting. Her use of language also became more enthusiastic when she discussed her favourite subjects: the trip ‘must have been wonderful.’

There appeared to be a clear link between discussing familiar topics and using somewhat more exaggerated language. In another class the students were discussing complaints (*New Headway, Upper Intermediate, Soars and Soars, 2001, Unit 11*). Lou (Taiwan) and

Francesca (Italy) were deciding how to deal with a driver's complaint about being given a parking ticket.

L: 'I know they are doing their work, but I would feel very sad if it happened to me.'

F: (shrugs) 'Maybe. I think I would pay the cost and move on. I need my car.'

L: 'Yes, me too. It would be a very terrible thing for me not to drive.'

F: 'You must really love your car.'

L: 'It is convenient and I like it.'

Lou's positive feelings towards his car are quite apparent, however his language suggests a rather dire situation: 'very sad;' a very terrible thing.' Francesca responds to this by attempting to confirm Lou's apparent 'love' for his car. At this point, Lou appears to realise that he has perhaps overstated his position and subdues his language somewhat: 'convenient;' 'I like it.'

Superlative comments were especially evident when students discussed their families, and indeed the family as a discussion topic was featured in several of the observed classes. Personal family issues were also an area felt by the writers of *New Cutting Edge* (Cunningham and Moor, 2005) and *New Interchange* (Richards et al., 2005) to be acceptable topics. In Data Collection Phase 2, using *New Headway Advanced* (Soars and Soars, 2003), students were called upon to give a pre-prepared presentation based on a textbook template on 'significant moments in your life.' The students' responses ranged from graduation to 'my boyfriend and I.' The two Taiwanese students, Cooper and Mitch, both spoke in general terms about their families:

'My younger sister is wonderful. She wants to be famous and travel in many countries.'

(Cooper)

'My father has the best restaurant in Taipei. He works so hard and my mother ... she ... she helps him.' (Mitch)

Students' responses were almost always highly positive when discussing, in particular, close family members. However, the extended family tree occasionally appeared in students' conversations; such relatives as second cousin and aunt's nephew were recalled with some fondness. Perhaps a preoccupation with the family is not entirely surprising given the students' educational backgrounds, the Confucian ethics pertaining to family life, and indeed a social system that makes the extended family an essential economic component of everyday life in Taiwan. However the depth of personal information that students were willing to disclose, especially to their multinational classmates, did vary:

In this conversation, Joy was teamed up with Chantelle (France).

C: (following teacher prompt) 'So, who do you turn to with your problems?'

J: (long silence; looking at text rather than partner) 'I think, it ... it is my mother.'

C: 'Why she?'

J: 'Hmm ... I always talk to her. My father's too busy.'

C: 'Well ... talking to my father about personal problems – even things like boyfriends – is easier than talking with mother.'

J: 'I cannot discuss those things with my father. Maybe with my mother. Maybe not.'

C: 'What about your friends?'

J: 'Um?'

C: 'Can you ask any of your friends for help?'

J: 'In Taiwan, yes. Maybe not this place ... here.'

C: (surprised) 'You don't have any friends here?'

J: (laughs without humour) 'Yes, I have many friends. But maybe I know them a short time; I don't want to tell them my big secrets.'

An observation in an Intermediate class in Data Collection Phase 1 demonstrated the difficulties that may arise when discussing personal relationships across cultures. The activity 'I'll marry you but only on a few conditions ...' *New Headway, Upper-Intermediate* (Soars and Soars, 2001- pp. 52 & 53), concerns a young couple who are planning to marry, and who wish to draw up a pre-nuptial contract that establishes responsibilities within the marriage. Following a reading of the text, students are asked to discuss the following question: 'Are Annie and Clifford the "saviours of modern marriage" or the "butchers of romance?"' Taiwanese student Bob was working with Antonio (Switzerland) and Ingrid (France); and Jane was working with Meeya (Slovakia) and Noriko (Japan).

B: 'There are some good ideas in the contract. No tobacco, sleeping by 11.30 (23.30). That kind of ... thing.'

A: 'I disagree. If they love each other why do they have to have this contract?'

I: 'Yes. I heard they do this ... this contract in America. Especially the rich people. Maybe for protect themselves. Something like that.'

A: 'But why do you want the protection from your wife? That is not being married.'

B: 'But the contract is a very organised way to live. There are clear ... uh ... duties. The husband knows what he must do. The wife knows what she must do.'

A: 'But, don't you see, contracts are between businesses or people who don't know each other.'

I: 'Strangers.'

A: 'Yes. But this is a marriage. It should be ... well, love and children, and home.'

B: 'But they can do that. They can enjoy it ... their life. Of course, they must have children. And they must have the home. Maybe the contract will make them organise that better.'

I: 'I'm not sure. The list of rules that the couple have it's like an excuse so they don't have to ... you know, try too hard.'

A: 'Commit themselves.'

I: 'Yes.'

B: 'Maybe, but the list is good for them to know who has leadership in the home, and what they must do when someone gets angry.'

A: 'But that's wrong. Leadership is in army or government, not the ... a marriage.'

I: 'When they get angry, maybe they should do what their heart tells them. Not make a rule months or years before.'

Bob is clearly impressed by the idea of a set of rules to guide the marriage, which fits quite well with the organised nature of the Confucian education system – detailed in the Literature Review. He views the establishment of leadership roles and conflict resolution as itemised values with established parameters that 'must' not be violated. He seems to

establish certainties that when fulfilled satisfy the requirements of married partners: a husband and wife who 'know what' they 'must do;' they 'must have children,' 'must have a home;' 'know who has leadership;' and know what they 'must' do when angry. Bob's contributions to the discussion were frequent and lucid, although there appeared to be a certain inflexibility when discussing issues that opposed his cultural beliefs. For example, in Bob's view the married couple 'must have children;' their personal thoughts on the issue did not appear to be particularly relevant. Despite prompts from Antonio and Ingrid, Bob did not mention the couple's personal feelings or, as Ingrid put it, decisions of the 'heart.'

In contrast, Jane's conversation with Meeya and Noriko came from a different perspective perhaps because of the similarities between the Taiwanese and Japanese cultures, although it may be related to the gender mix in the group, or show that students don't all respond in the same way.

N: 'I agree with making some rules, but I think this is too much.'

J: 'Yes, I agree. If they love them ... each other, then that will be everything.'

M: 'Well, I don't know if that's true. Love does not pay bills or feeding children.'

N: (smiling) 'That is true. They have to eat and live, but still rules are important in a relationship.'

M: 'A contract like this might be a good thing if the people are both honest.'

N: 'But do you think it is part of a stronger relationship?'

J: (laughing) 'It's not very romantic.'

M: 'I don't agree that a good relationship can be written on paper. It is the way you life (live).'

N: 'Maybe they combine some rules with good living. That will be good.'

J: 'Yes, I agree.'

Jane's comments during the conversation gave the impression that her opinions were pre-formed, regardless of what her classmates said. Jane seemed to agree with Noriko at a basic cultural level, but she appeared to have no response to Meeya's comments. She gave the impression of wishing to make a contribution, yet agreed with Noriko too easily rather than proposing a counter-argument or responding to Meeya's suggestion with original ideas. The brief dialogues favoured by all three textbooks analysed in Chapter 4 were in evidence in Jane's responses, and it is not clear if these short conversations are actually helpful to the student or if they provide the student with a system to respond in the least complicated manner.

In comparing both conversations, Bob was far more adamant in stating an opinion than Jane, who seemed content to agree. Bob was also more definitive in his view of what couples 'must do,' Jane appearing to comply with what others said. Some of this could be attributable to cultural expectations regarding male/female roles; however, the inflexibility shown by Bob may have been an attempt to defend his cultural standpoint; an issue Jane did not have to deal with because she seemed to rely on the cultural similarities – and greater language output – of her classmate, Noriko.

In a discussion class the following day, Jane and Mitch, two Taiwanese students working in a group of four, were involved in a class discussion about divorce and separation, 'Sophie's Dilemma,' which allowed the students to examine whether a young, western

career woman should leave her seemingly incompetent younger husband in order to pursue her career. The topic offered students the “leave him” or “stay with him” option, but the decision to leave was split into the far more controversial, separation or divorce.

The following dialogue came from a four-person multinational group: Fillipo from Italy, Carmen from Spain, and Mitch and Jenny from Taiwan. At this point in the conversation, the students have discussed Sophie’s background and have been called upon to give their opinion about her best final decision.

F: ‘This guy is no good.’

C: ‘I agree. She must move on.’

J: ‘Maybe she still loves him.’

M: ‘Yes, she must try to make it work.’

F: ‘But, the other boyfriends are better, the job is better. The guy is no good.’

J: ‘Hmm. But her job is so ... I think it’s good. I think she can be happy if she thinks about her work.’

M: ‘Yes, me too.’

F: ‘But that’s another story, really. Should she stay with this guy or not?’

C: ‘No.’

This brief exchange demonstrates ways in which Jane and Mitch support each with culturally appropriate statements. Carmen and Fillipo made their decision that the man in question is ‘no good’ and she must ‘move on.’ At this point, Jane’s previous tendencies would imply that she would simply agree, but in this situation there is a cultural issue at

stake. Divorce and separation are seen as 'wrong' in Taiwanese society, and Jane suggests they stay together by resorting to an admittedly valid, but still romanticized objection: 'Maybe she still loves him.' Mitch's comment is somewhat more forceful, and takes us back to the state of what people 'must' do to conform. Although in agreement with Jane, there seems little place for romance in Mitch's estimation. Fillipo's counter-argument is met by Jane's observation that Sophie can think about her 'work.' At this point Jane did not appear to have a valid argument in place, but her initial commitment and the cultural support she received from Mitch seemed to convince her to defend her position. Jane and Mitch clearly felt more comfortable with an activity or textbook that was organised into distinct and easily usable components.

In conclusion the data demonstrated that Taiwanese students showed a tendency to choose discussion and conversation topics that they considered culturally acceptable or 'safe,' and to engage in rather exaggerated language when doing so. On occasions when multinational classmates took the conversation into areas that made the Taiwanese students uncomfortable, they tended to redirect the conversation to more familiar topics. The family proved to be a popular discussion topic provided the discussion did not become too personal. Students also tended to be somewhat extreme in their views of what people in relationships 'must' or 'can't' do; in such situations, they seemed to be more at ease when accompanied by other students from a similar background.

Encountering difficulties in conversations discerned as being uncomfortable seems to hamper students' cultural learning by creating a communication barrier that blocks out topics considered 'unsafe.' This barrier is seemingly increased by students' attempts to steer the conversations away from the main focus into the more familiar areas of family and food. As demonstrated in Chapter 4 the global textbook will by definition contain a

variety of potential discussion topics, and the Taiwanese tendency to avoid some topics and expand others may mean that learning some aspects of culture in Britain through the medium of the EFL textbook may be more of a challenge than it would be for students of other nationalities.

5.3 Politeness and Non-Verbal Communication

This theme arose firstly out of students' need to learn more about manners and politeness in Britain, and secondly students' interview responses and behaviour in the classroom demonstrated that the nature of politeness and apology are closely bound up with students' societal and educational background. This has implications for textbook use, interaction with multinational students, and students' interaction with people in Brighton and Hove. And although the global textbook does cover politeness, there can be a tendency to portray manners as 'stereotypical representations ... from around the world' often culminating in 'lists of cultural "dos" and "don'ts" which are presented to the students as rules' (Gray, 2010, pp. 178-179).

Apologising and the use of what British people tend to refer to as 'manners,' were areas of language that many Taiwanese students had expressed an interest in learning prior to and on arrival in Britain. Questionnaire responses from both data collection phases indicated a need to understand the nature of manners and how politeness differed across cultures. Interview responses suggested different cultural approaches to being polite, and some responses suggested that politeness and honesty do not always go together:

'We say sorry all the time, but they don't use it the ... the same here.' (Lilli)

'We help each other very great (much), but we don't need to say please and excuse me so much.' (Titus)

'If I want to help a good man but I don't want to hurt him, yes, I will tell him ... he ... his work is great, or his food is delicious.' (Cooper)

This was made more apparent when working on the final activity in *New Interchange 2* (Richards, et al., 2005) Unit 16, 'The Truth about Lying,' p. 103, referred to in detail in Chapter 4, which contains several cultural points. The text firstly refers to the concept of 'white lies' which would be interpreted in different ways by different cultural groups, including the Taiwanese students. The text gives four common examples of when people tell 'white lies.' 'Number 1: Lying to hide something; Number 2: Giving false excuses; Number 3: Lying to make someone feel good; Number 4: Lying to hide bad news' (p. 103).

Number 1 and Number 2 would be used by the Taiwanese student in that hiding non-essential information from a friend in order to avoid causing them distress would be considered positive, and indeed culturally encouraged, as made clear in the Literature Review. This was confirmed by Park and Guan (2006, p. 189) who remind us that 'Chinese's intentions to apologize may be more closely related to their desire to protect positive face.' It was also salient in the small-group interviews:

'If he is in trouble ... I don't know what, then telling him so many other bad things would only hurt him more.' (Pei)

Pei's comment is a good example of not wishing to cause a distressed person further grief.

Number 3 is one of the cornerstones of Confucian thinking and one of the principle face saving/giving strategies in Taiwanese society. The textbook describes this as 'stretching the truth to make people feel good,' however it is the excessive degree of 'stretching' that makes the difference. For example, a birthday present may be 'the best gift I have

ever received.’ And here we see again the use of lavish praise as reported in Chapters 2 and 4. In the classroom it was often necessary to save other students’ face and this was confirmed during the interviews in Data Collection Phase 2. I was also interested to see if students found it important to protect face in the multinational class, and indeed this occurred in an Advanced class in Data Collection Phase 2.

Pei and Mitch, the two Taiwanese students, were working as a pair completing a ‘noughts-and-crosses’ activity using supplementary material, specifically phrasal verbs taken from an IELTS preparation textbook.¹¹ When called upon to justify the choice of phrasal verb, Mitch clearly did not know how to answer and when prompted by a Saudi student he seemed to withdraw even more, although he was smiling. At this point, Pei informed the teacher ‘He is not sure. I think maybe it’s a guess.’ One of the three Korean students interjected with, ‘We had difficulties with this, also.’

It may be that other multinational students rescue their classmates when they perceive them to be having problems, however this tendency was far more culturally specific among students from similar backgrounds. In addition, it may be observed that Mitch was given additional help by a South Korean student – a good example of students from similar backgrounds helping each other.

The above examples are an indication of the cultural obstacles that Taiwanese students face when attempting to use textbook activities. An activity that may be a formality for students from a Western culture – for example, honesty or relationships – may prove to hinder the cultural learning of students from Confucian based cultures.

Other examples of the third type of white lies, ‘lying to make someone feel good,’ were often much more clearly defined. The following example from a Data Collection Phase 2

¹¹ Black, M., Capel, A. (2006) *IELTS Objective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

interview illustrates quite well a student's frustration when giving false praise: 'One of the things I hate so much about my boss. She is so ugly and unpleasant, but we have to tell her she looks pretty and her clothing is very fashion or she will be ... ah ... very cruel to us.'

(Eileen)

Eileen has no difficulty expressing her true negative feelings about her employer, however she resents having to lavish any kind of praise on her. The use of 'have to' is significant in her response. Is it used because the employer implicitly demands it or to satisfy the need to adhere to cultural protocol?

Number 4 is a little more complex. Taiwanese people tend not to tell lies to mask disappointment or a bad day, but would simply resort to silence and leave the listener to guess. This was confirmed in Data Collection Phase 2 when students who were clearly troubled about some (unknown) issue remained silent, consistent with classroom observation results. Students who encountered difficult situations or who did not know the answer to questions would remain silent rather than guess, and risk being wrong.

In an Intermediate class on Day 3 of Data Collection Phase 1 the Taiwanese student, Lilli, exhibited several instances of face-saving silence. In the initial activity, Lilli was working with a French and a Saudi student. Pronunciation of names seemed to be a problem for Lilli and field notes made by myself at the time establish that the teacher insisted on correct pronunciation of names:

'Note: Lilli found pronunciation of names, French names in particular, difficult. T. (the teacher) insisted on correct pronunciation. I am not totally sure of the usefulness of this approach. It seemed to estrange Lilli to an extent; also I was not convinced that the correct pronunciation of a proper name was particularly useful.'

I have reproduced this reflection here as it demonstrates that Lilli was potentially put in an uncomfortable situation at an early stage in the lesson that seemed to have a negative impact on her behaviour during the rest of the lesson. My additional comment regarding the usefulness of the teacher's insistence on correct pronunciation sounds somewhat biased on reflection, however it may also indicate my own concern at seeing a student put in a potentially awkward position.

In the next part of the lesson, Lilli was paired with a Saudi student. They were discussing the ideal qualities for a job candidate (*New Cutting Edge Intermediate*, Cunningham and Moor, 2005, p. 55). Although her partner, Abdul, made a substantial attempt to engage Lilli in an appropriate dialogue, Lilli mostly remained silent. The dialogue has not been included here as an incomplete dialogue does not effectively illustrate the nature of silence, or the cultural undercurrent that caused it.

In the final stage of the lesson, the teacher called on students to state their conclusions. When Lilli was asked to respond, she was clearly very uncomfortable and remained silent, though smiling. The teacher appeared to misinterpret this behaviour and continued to elicit responses. Monocultural classes in Taiwan tend to suffer less from such issues due to the other students behaving in a similar way when their face is compromised. In addition, the teachers would be expected to avoid such situations. When questioned about their expectations of teachers in Britain,¹² students seemed to expect the teachers to respect students' cultural backgrounds:

'Yes, maybe. But I want her to know how I feel. That I am Chinese.' (Emily)

'If we have difficulties, the teacher must understand us.' (Vanessa)

¹² Q20. My teacher may be a very important factor in my UK study experience.

'We need to feel important in the class.' (Sam)

This sense of importance was effectively a paradox. The students wanted to blend in and be a part of the greater community, however they wanted to be distinct in terms of their language acquisition and general academic ability.

Yet silence is only one of several means of non-verbal communication that, if interpreted correctly, may be a bridge between the culture the students are familiar with and the host culture. It is perhaps inevitable that the majority of students will use facial expressions of some sort in the class; however, the Taiwanese students' use of such expressions may allow further insights into their behaviour than their oral responses indicate.

It seems that the appropriate use of facial expressions by characters in the textbook can influence students' views of the activities and tasks the images are linked to. For example, an Advanced class in Data Collection Phase 2 (see Chapter 3: Table 3.2) featured a great many supplementary cartoons from such textbooks as *Pair Work A&B* (Walcyn-Jones, 1984) and *Gallery* (Fassman and Seymour-Tavares, 1982). Due to the quiet nature of the class on previous occasions, according to the teacher, visuals were selected depicting many smiling faces engaged in outdoor activities. Students' reactions were extremely positive, although how much of this was directly attributable to the images is open to question. The teacher, however, informed me that this was the most animated he had ever seen the class.

Students' reactions to visual images, however, varied, and were sometimes inappropriate. For example, in the following class, students were dealing with *New Headway*, Unit 12, a unit examined in Chapter 4. A two-page vocabulary and listening activity featuring photographs of seminal 20th century events (pp. 124/125) was notable

due to students' reactions to the images. When working with a photograph depicting Princess Diana's funeral cortege, Jane drew her partner's attention to the image and then laughed. Similarly, when the teacher pointed out the image of the Vietnamese children hit in a napalm strike, Jane and Bob both laughed quietly. It would appear that this reaction is based on a cultural strategy that seeks to temper the harsh and sad reality of the situation. In the Taiwanese classroom, it is a common occurrence, however in this setting it appeared to be inappropriate and somewhat disrespectful. Students tended, however, to defend their behaviour in the small-group interviews:

'If it is sad, why would I want it ... make it worse?' (Joy)

'We want to show there is good, even when it all seems so very bad.' (Lou)

In conclusion, the students were aware that they were not being totally truthful when they praised people who did not warrant such praise. The Western concept of 'white lies' and the Chinese concept of saving face have much in common, however there are many subtleties, only some of which seemed to be known to the students. The need to protect classmates' face was evident, and silence was often used as a coping mechanism when students appeared unable to respond in the classroom. Visual images in textbooks sometimes prompted students to alter their mood based on the images they were working with, and on occasion, students appeared to respond inappropriately – laughing at images that would normally provoke a reaction of sadness or horror – but this seemed to be related to easing the discomfort of others. It seems that guidance on appropriate cultural responses when dealing with textbook activities may be an important step to allowing students to come to terms with culture in Britain in a comfortable way, as opposed to making mistakes in Brighton and Hove. This could be achieved in a

multinational class with relative ease because all of the students are learning about and exposed to the culture in Britain.

5.4 Humour across Cultures

This theme arose firstly out of students' need to learn more about humour in Britain, and students' classroom behaviour when confronted by humorous situations in the textbooks. As reported in the previous section, students did on occasion laugh at inappropriate moments, however this was based more on a cultural blueprint than any tangible comedy in the situation. This theme looks at how students reacted to textbook activities that were specifically geared towards comedy.

For example, in the Camp Granada activity referred to in Chapter 4, rhyming was often used to amuse and engage the listener – 'entertaining, raining;' 'Spivey, ivy' – yet if a Western listener attempts to dissect why this is amusing, he may have difficulty putting it into words. Similarly, the Taiwanese student may not find the use of rhyming amusing at all, and indeed it may detract from the students' understanding of the song. This may be because generally the students are placing their concentration on meaning, rather than the comical elements superimposed into the text:

'I would try to understand the meaning first.' (David)

A modest understanding of Western humour seems to be an integral component to the understanding of a new culture, and textbook writers and publishers seem to be aware of this as Gray (2010) concludes in his analysis of *Connections* (1979)¹³ 'at least 32 units may be said to include some elements of comedy, the function of which is clearly to entertain both students *and* teacher' (p. 56). Diary entries confirmed that certain aspects of

¹³Hartley, B. Varney, P. (1979) *Streamline English Connections*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

humour, in particular the nature of sarcasm proved difficult to understand, and very difficult to use.

'I ordered my food in the restaurant. The woman was friendly and helpful, so I gave her £1 to say thank you to her. Strange, she said "Oh, great." She looked unhappy, too.' (Bob)

Bob appeared to be working from a principle that any gift, no matter how small, is a gift 'from the heart,' however the waitress clearly viewed the coin as an insult. Bob was confused for two reasons. Firstly, the waitress had made a statement at odds with her true feelings; secondly, although the nature of saying something that is not true to make someone feel better is known and practised by Bob, the concept of not telling the truth to send a negative message to someone was alien to him.

Similarly, when Jane was buying clothes in a Brighton shop she was accused of 'pushing in' and 'not knowing her place.' As irrelevant as these concepts seem to be in the modern world, their position in the repertoire of language and cultural situations students may encounter is quite high. Challenging as these situations were in Brighton and Hove, classroom use of irony proved to be even more so.

There is quite a fine line between verbal irony and sarcasm. Partridge (2005) views sarcasm as being more 'caustic' than irony. Webster's Online Dictionary (2011) defines sarcasm as 'designed to cut or give pain.' Interestingly, Webster's also feature a language learners' definition of sarcasm:

'the use of words that mean the opposite of what you really want to say especially in order to insult someone, to show irritation, or to be funny.'

Whereas irony is defined as follows:

1: [*noncount*] : the use of words that mean the opposite of what you really think especially in order to be funny.

2: a situation that is strange or funny because things happen in a way that seems to be the opposite of what you expected [*count*].

In a discussion activity built around outdoor sports, students were given the opportunity to relate their experiences to their partners. Following this, the teacher (T) nominated individual students to give the pair's conclusion to the class. Peggy (Taiwan) was paired with Per (Sweden).

T: 'So, Peggy. Can you tell us all about Per's favourite sport?'

P: 'Yes. He likes go skiing in the mountain.'

T: 'Good.'

P: 'But he had the accident ... was it ... uh ... three years ago.'

T: 'Oh?'

P: 'Yes, he broke his leg.'

T: 'Ouch! That must have been a great holiday.'

P: (smiling in response to students' laughter) 'Oh, no. I don't think so.'

T: 'Just joking.'

Peggy's reaction is clearly the result of misinterpreting the teacher's comment. It could be argued that the teacher is at fault for making the statement, however a counter-argument could be that the teacher is introducing irony into the classroom in way that the students may be capable of understanding. Despite this, the resultant explanation,

'Just joking,' although true is perhaps insufficient for students who are experiencing irony for the first time.

These examples relate back to the 'real world' portrayed in the textbooks, and may signify a need for the inclusion of more subtle elements of language, such as sarcasm, irony and verbal strategies used to 'put people in their place.' I am not advocating such strategies as essential learning, however students studying in Britain could derive substantial benefit from learning such strategies, distasteful though some of them may be.

In conclusion, among several more subtle aspects of language used by Taiwanese students, humour – in particular, sarcasm and irony – was misinterpreted on several occasions. Humorous concepts such as rhyming and ironic comments concerning misfortunes proved to be difficult for students to understand. Similarly, the caustic nature of sarcasm was not something the students seemed to be comfortable with in their contact with the people of Brighton and Hove. Some of the above may be closely connected to the cultural concept of 'knowing your place,' something Taiwanese students had difficulty coming to terms with. This became apparent during the interviews in both data collection phases when students reported being treated 'in a different way' than other people. They expressed concern about being expected to give up their seat on a bus for another person, and the concept of queuing was met with some surprise. As Coleman (1997, p. 16) comments, 'Aspects of life such as perspectives on time, or knowing which behaviours are appropriate to which relationships, are both fundamental and culturally determined. We intuitively perceive them to be absolute, and painfully discover them to be relative.'

5.5 The Community: Connecting with the Outside

This final section examines students' ability to apply knowledge gained through the textbooks to their daily lives in Brighton and Hove. Classroom observations and follow up small-group interviews demonstrated that students were well aware of the manufactured world created (or suggested) by their textbooks, and very few of them seemed to harbour any illusions that the world portrayed in the textbooks was an accurate reflection of the world they actually encountered outside the classroom. Regarding the possible differences between the culture portrayed in the classroom and the culture perceived in the outside world, responses were mixed. Interview responses from students who responded in the negative suggested that the nature of the culture portrayed in the textbooks was inconsistent with the reality that they perceived in the South-East of England:

'We see big, old, wonderful buildings in the books ... a lot of smiling, happy people. I didn't have see so many people smiling. It's not as nice, I think.' (Joy)

The students' ability to transfer the information gained through the core textbooks met with some success, but the most difficult aspects of this process were striking up a conversation, understanding the nature of the conversation, and maintaining the conversation. Students' linguistic competence appeared to be adequate in the classroom, but their ability to communicate in conversations that lacked the predictability of textbook dialogues was less consistent.

All the students felt that the classroom is not the best place to learn about the culture. Small-group interview responses supported this:

'When I live in the UK. When I meet English people; that's study.' (Kirby)

'Classroom is about grammar, the ... um ... vocabulary, just study.' (Mike)

'Culture is outside. There. It is about living here.' (Cooper)

The students clearly established a distinct dividing line between study occurring in the classroom, and culture occurring in the outside world that may be influenced by the students' strong cultural background, as detailed in Chapter 2: Section 2.5 Education in Taiwan and Cultural Preparation. Whether they believe culture has no place in the classroom was not made totally clear, but the small-group interviews did give me the opportunity to elaborate on points of interest thrown up by the questionnaire. Activities with the primary purpose of transmitting cultural information rather than linguistic knowledge were not seen as a necessary addition to the class.

The majority of students claimed they learned about the culture in Britain in cafes, restaurants and shopping centres. Additional comments proved that pubs could be added to the places of cultural enrichment, although Macnaghten and Myers (2004, p. 67) caution against this environment: 'pubs are places that people do go to talk. But they can be noisy, and send the wrong signals; British pubs have strong class and local associations.'

I attempted to explore the effects of pub conversations in much more depth in the small-group interviews, but the students had a tendency to respond with predictable answers and seemed to be constantly afraid of making a faux pas in front of their peers.

'It is fun, I can talk to my ... the students ... friends.' (Joy)

'We just have good time. Not really conversation like the classroom.' (Cooper)

In conclusion, students recognised the textbook's interpretation of reality as an interpretation and not a mirror-image of what they would expect to find in terms of

linguistic and cultural representations in Brighton and Hove. This confirms findings from my MEd and the Initial Study when I was able to ascertain students' views of the conversations conducted in the classroom, and those conducted outside. Students' attempts to engage local people in conversation met with some success, but maintaining and fully understanding the conversation proved to be problematic. The students were almost unanimous in their opinion that cultural learning takes place outside the classroom – a cultural component to the EFL class was not viewed as a necessity. Compared with students' views prior to and shortly after arrival in Britain, covered at the beginning of this chapter, it appears that although most of the students felt that substantial linguistic and cultural preparation was unnecessary prior to leaving Taiwan, unless, in certain cases, it was combined with language content, in some instances the lack of cultural knowledge was seen as a hindrance during the first few months in the country:

'It could have saved me the time if I knew about lining up [queuing] and looking at people.' [staring] (Peggy)

'I expected what I must do before I left, but here it didn't work. I thought I had the knowledge, but I didn't.' (Joy)

Joy appears to have made several assumptions prior to arrival concerning the way the culture in Britain 'must' be. Her diary entry suggests that those assumptions were inadequate for effective engagement with local people. Peggy isolates two specific examples in her diary entry: she was firstly unaware that queuing was considered important in society and that staring was considered impolite.

5.6 Concluding Points

The students viewed cultural and linguistic preparation in Taiwan prior to departure as being largely unnecessary; the implication was that the linguistic knowledge would be gained by interacting in a native speaking environment, and the cultural knowledge would be accumulated during their residency. The cultural representations in the textbooks were viewed as suitable but somewhat limited in terms of practical application although students seemed to appreciate time spent using textbooks; indeed the infallibility of the printed and virtual word common in Taiwanese society was evident among some students. More confidentially however, others regarded it as time wasted. Discussion topics often seemed to be chosen for their safety value; that is, the students' level of comfort in discussing such topics. The family and relationships in general were among these topics, however students showed signs of discomfort when discussing more intimate relationships.

The complex matter of saving and giving face proved to cause problems in terms of misunderstandings created by the avoidance of being totally honest in order to help others. In some cases, silence was used in an attempt to alleviate a potentially embarrassing situation. Certain aspects of humour proved to be difficult to understand, and in some cases appeared to conflict with cultural strategies the students often used; for example, using sarcasm to cause discomfort rather than face-saving strategies to ease discomfort.

The students established a clear dividing line between culture in the textbook and culture in the outside world, yet their attempts to engage in meaningful communication with the people of Brighton and Hove and understand the local culture, although meeting with some success, were not as fruitful as many of the students would have liked.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter sets out the conclusions of the research in relation to the research questions and puts forward recommendations for teachers and teacher trainers, students, materials writers and publishers, and implications for study abroad administrators in this field, and recommendations for future study based on a number of questions arising from the analysis of students' responses in relation to their cultural learning in Britain and the role the textbook plays in that. I will also be looking at the limitations of the research. I will conclude by identifying teaching contexts elsewhere in the world where textbook research may provide tangible benefits.

6.1 Conclusions in Relation to Research Questions

The themes that emerged during the research, as explained in the previous chapter, showed certain patterns in students' behaviour when using textbooks in the EFL classes of Brighton and Hove and enabled me to answer the three research questions to some extent. At the outset of the research students' needs, gained largely from the Initial Study, were established in order to determine what they expected from the textbooks and the culture they anticipated in Britain. The questionnaires established students' views on preparation prior to departure, and provided preliminary information that allowed me to analyse students' behaviour when using the textbooks during the classroom observations, and to answer Research Question 1:

1. What influence do textbooks used in EFL classes in the South-East of England have on Taiwanese students' experience and understanding of the culture in Britain?

The responses discussed in Chapter 5 (Textbook Views: Development of Cultural and Linguistic Needs) demonstrated that the textbook was held in high regard by many of the

students who believed that they simply had to use the book and their language would improve. Other students, however, felt the textbooks were simply a tool, and a rudimentary one at that, that displayed aspects of the culture but did not significantly improve their cultural learning. Furthermore, in trying to adapt to the culture in Britain most students could not relate the culture portrayed in the textbooks to their daily lives, and part of this may be attributable to the all-encompassing nature of the global textbook, as made clear in Chapters 2 and 4, and its unsuitability for specific teaching contexts. The implications of this may involve further research into textbook activities specifically geared to improve students' cultural learning.

In the small-group interviews students' views of the textbook demonstrated the teacher's influence in the class. The students felt that both the textbook and the teacher were authorities in their own right, and they did not feel the need to question the teacher at any time – presuming he/she was correct. This belief seemed to stem from a traditional education background steeped in the Confucian tradition, but unfortunately, I was not able to research the effects of the teacher in sufficient depth due to the scale of such a project.

The first sub-question of Research Question 1 was partly answered by the data gathered in Chapter 4:

1.1 In what ways do the textbooks reflect the contemporary culture in Britain as experienced by the students in South-East England? How important is this for students' learning?

The Textbook Analysis (Chapter 4) based on my adaptation of Littlejohn's framework, and Kress and van Leeuwen's metafunctions, highlighted a number of aspects. For example, my analysis showed that visual images used in the textbooks were generally accepted at

face value by the students viewing the images, yet the cultural messages they imparted may be misinterpreted by Taiwanese students due to the mass audience they were aimed at. The language, mainly the dialogues, was sufficiently challenging and interesting to engage the students, but the generic nature of some of the conversations made them difficult to use in real life situations outside the classroom; thus the cultural representations provided were often inadequate to fulfil students' needs. It may be that dialogues based on what students really hear in the outside world – rather than what it would be ideal for them to hear – may result in an easier transition from the classroom to the street, and may even go some way to reducing the effects of culture shock.

In addition to these points, spoken communication was also limited due to students' tendencies to avoid stretching themselves linguistically when engaged in more open-ended conversations and return to the more familiar, safe, topics that they used in Taiwan. This is very closely linked to the second part of Research Question 1:

1.2 Are the cultural practices represented in the textbook aligned with what the students require?

The textbooks met the cultural needs of the students detailed in Chapter 1: Initial Study in the following ways. Students found the strong community feeling in the textbooks accorded with their own need for a sense of community and characters they can relate to. The need to understand humour and manners was partly satisfied, although the concepts of irony and sarcasm were often misunderstood. The students' need to get to know the host culture was satisfied to an extent, but interaction between students and the people of Brighton and Hove seemed to be minimal. It may be that the introduction of more subtle language use, for example, British humour – sarcasm and irony – might

allow visiting students to understand implicit meanings in conversations, rather than the explicit meanings they seem to be looking for.

The portrayal of a diversity of ethnicities in the global textbook for economic and other reasons sometimes caused Taiwanese students difficulties, specifically, the extensive use of multicultural references. Names and multi-ethnic communities caused some confusion among the students who were still trying to come to grips with the culture outside the classroom, and found themselves struggling with unfamiliar terms and names that did not appear to benefit their language ability in any tangible way.

When attempting to transfer dialogues used in class into 'real-life' situations (e.g. in the pubs of Brighton and Hove) students met with limited success. This was in some way related to students expecting a certain answer – as in a textbook conversation – and not receiving it, but perhaps also not having sufficient linguistic competence to maintain the conversation. The students established a clear dividing line between conversations that took place in the classroom and those that took place in Brighton and Hove. This separation perhaps can explain their difficulties in adapting the conversations to a live situation.

The questionnaires suggested that many students felt that media, especially television, had a considerable influence over their language, and over their ability to adapt to culture in Britain. This was also linked to most students' predilection for pop culture topics. The only exception to this rule was a more-mature student who appeared to respond better to more high-end culture. Students' opinions of learning the culture became important in answering Research Question 2.

2. Which factors, other than the core textbook, may also be important in determining the degree to which, and the rate at which, the Taiwanese students come to terms with the culture in Britain?

The students did not feel that studying cultural information – either through the textbook or separately – was particularly important. The general opinion was that culture was something to be experienced rather than rehearsed. In addition, the questionnaires and the small-group interviews both demonstrated that students' Confucian beliefs may be important in the development of students' views of the culture in Britain.

The nature of the multinational classroom – Research Question 2.1 – had an effect on Taiwanese students' ability to communicate in the classroom especially when more linguistically confident students dominated the activities. This was generally observed when Taiwanese students were working with European students who, in most cases, made a substantial effort to stretch their own language abilities.

Diary entries also pointed out a lack of encounters with the local people, linked to Research Question 2.2: students' experiences outside the classroom. This lack of involvement with the host culture combined with the passive nature of many of the students appeared to cause the process of cultural learning to slow down considerably. Linguistically and directly related to the previous point, several students regarded passive acceptance, particularly in the classroom, as an appropriate learning strategy. Students reported feeling somewhat estranged when in Brighton and Hove; the strong sense of in-group status typical of society in Taiwan seemed to be absent, which could explain why they sought out their peers much more than other students appeared to do. It may be that students preparing to come to Britain could be encouraged to be more proactive in order to gain the maximum benefit from the study abroad experience.

Classroom observations demonstrated a reluctance among the students to spontaneously engage in textbook activities and a tendency to simply accept what was placed before them and allow other students to lead the conversation. This passive acceptance, particularly in the classroom, was regarded by the Taiwanese students as an appropriate learning strategy, and consequently a means of face saving/giving. Related to this, the students found it difficult to confide in anyone other than their Taiwanese classmates, and their classroom behaviour was often punctuated by a good deal of non-verbal communication; for example, silence and smiling as coping strategies. This is closely related to Research Question 3:

3. Are there any significant barriers, specifically related to cultural factors, in Britain that are particularly troublesome for Taiwanese students in particular? Does the information available to the students in the textbooks raise or lower these barriers?

The textbook per se did not seem to raise or lower the barriers created by face saving as it was the students' interaction with the teacher and the other students that determined the effects of face in the classroom. However, the textbook did indirectly affect students' interaction with people in Brighton and Hove when the students attempted to practise dialogues with local people based on textbook' conversations. The textbook dialogues offered students a template based on possible responses people may make in a given situation. When the live conversation did not unfold in the streamlined manner posited in the textbook, students invariably became frustrated. Clearly an aspect of cultural learning students need to be aware of is the flexibility necessary to deal with the unpredictable nature of discourse – particularly discourse in a non-structured environment.

6.2 Limitations

The research would have benefited from a greater number of Taiwanese students in each class in order to enhance the validity of the work and possibly throw up other areas of interest that may have appeared due to the increased numbers. In terms of the location, the research was carried out in a small area – Brighton and Hove – and the results gained here may or may not correspond with results gained in another part of the UK, or research conducted over a wider area. The validity may have been increased if the students' external behaviour had been examined first hand, rather than relying on their recollections through questionnaires, small-group interviews and diary entries. The scope of the research only allowed analysis of three leading textbooks. Research using several – or, perhaps, more specific – EFL textbooks may increase the field of knowledge regarding facilitation of cultural learning through core textbooks.

6.3 Implications of the Research

This research increases knowledge in the field of foreign language and cultural learning by identifying Taiwanese students' areas of difficulties in cultural learning in Britain based on their perception of the culture as depicted by the visual images and language in the EFL textbooks available to them. The research addresses the gap identified in the Literature Review in that it looked at the effects of textbook design and research and specifically how this influences Taiwanese students on short-term EFL courses in the South-East of England. The research has implications for teachers and teacher trainers, students, materials writers and publishers, and study abroad administrators.

Teachers and Teacher Trainers

The findings from this study indicate that teachers need to be more aware of students' behaviour when using textbooks and when interacting within the host culture. Specifically, in the first few days of studying in Britain students might be finding the cultural learning experience a difficult and unpredictable one. Teachers need to be aware of students' potential reasons for adopting such strategies as silence, inappropriate responses, and feigning satisfaction. When using textbooks, for example, when engaged in classroom activities, Taiwanese students might tend to focus on what they perceive to be more culturally appropriate topics at the expense of activities that may be more challenging. They may also have difficulties dealing with unfamiliar language structures due to cultural differences regarding comedy, irony and sarcasm. In addition, cultural scripts adopted by the students may hold back their language learning, and need to be monitored by teachers. Finally, teachers should not underestimate the effects of face, particularly in the multinational class, and consider it a factor in all classroom discourse. For example, students may not always say what they mean; there may be a hidden agenda. Teachers may be able to use this knowledge to gauge whether a classroom situation requires teacher involvement, and the form that involvement should take. Although my research only dealt with learners from Taiwan, such awareness is important as it may well reflect the experience of learners from other backgrounds.

The findings from this research suggest that teachers in Taiwan can better prepare students for study in Britain by providing a pre-departure briefing on aspects of culture they are likely to encounter when in Britain. For example, what they are likely to encounter regarding the people, the language and the culture. Students could be given an overview of contemporary society in Britain, perhaps stressing its multicultural nature.

They could be introduced to open-ended dialogues with a variety of possible responses. Such strategies may prepare them for the unpredictable nature of discourse in the world outside the classroom when they arrive in Britain. An additional area of interest may be a briefing on what they are likely to be going through in their first few days or weeks in Britain, and ways of dealing with any negative issues that may arise during this time. Teachers should include information on the unpredictability of host families, and the students' potential for enhancing the study abroad experience considerably by actively engaging with the family. In order to make teachers in Taiwan more aware of these needs there may be a requirement for additional training.

Students

The implications of this study for Taiwanese students are that appropriate preparation for study in Britain goes beyond the accepted method of rote language learning – particularly in 'cram' schools – combined with a selection of information with a largely pop culture undercurrent. Pre-departure training could comprise language learning alongside appropriate cultural learning. Such training may include: response to culture shock, expectations for and dealings with host families, strategies for making – and maintaining – contact with people in the host culture, and ways of dealing with language when things do not go as planned. An additional means of preparation may be opportunities to talk to returning students, although aspects of saving/giving face may prevent the student from being totally candid.

Materials Writers and Publishers

This research also has implications for materials writers in that the choice of topics for discussion and conversation, the nature of the language, and the choice and positioning of visual images have all been seen to impact in some way on students' learning ability,

and need to be chosen with great care in order to satisfy the complex demands of the multinational EFL class. However, it has been shown that to a large extent, materials writers are constrained by the demands of publishers who wield substantial economic power (Bell and Gower, 2011; Gray, 2010, 2007; Donovan, 1998 and Littlejohn, 1992), and subsequently have a large stake in the completed textbook. Given the previous information, this research may have substantial implications for publishers even more than materials writers.

Publishers need to be aware that the diverse needs of multinational students are difficult to effectively realize in the global textbook, and the writers are perhaps the people best suited to filling those needs. Economic decisions taken by publishers regarding layout and specific content of textbooks may need revision in the light of the diversity of the contemporary global textbook market, and indeed an approach geared more to pedagogic input than immediate financial gain may in the long-term prove beneficial to the publishers in addition to the writers and of course the students.

Study Abroad Administrators

The potential implications for study abroad administrators are that more thorough preparation pre-departure, during, and post-sojourn, particularly regarding expectations, appropriate strategies for dealing with culture shock, and dealing with members of the host culture, may smooth the process of the study abroad experience for the students, and the people responsible for their welfare. In addition, closer ties between administrators in Taiwan and Britain may allow for a deeper understanding of students' difficulties when engaged in cultural learning. There is also the possibility that email contact between students and the home institution may allow problems to be discussed, and the students' feelings of estrangement may be minimised by such contact. It will be

noted that these are simply suggested implications as this study did not allow me to conduct detailed analysis of study abroad administrators.

6.4 Further Research

Based on the results of this study further research should concentrate more on students' language and cultural preparation prior to and on arrival in Britain, in terms of briefing and introducing students to the culture in Britain. The development and trialling of materials and activities that raise students' awareness of what is involved in moving from one culture to another, and how to respond appropriately in the new culture, may be a by-product of such research. A number of other areas for further research arise from this study.

Further research is needed firstly into Taiwanese students' cultural motivations when learning a foreign language, secondly to determine how cultural and language learning can be effectively combined in the EFL classroom in order to allow students to achieve cultural learning alongside language learning.

Students' cultural background seems, in some cases, to be a factor in adjusting to the host culture. How can this process be made smoother, either before arrival in Britain, or through the specific teaching of culture? Does engagement in ethnographic observation facilitate adjustment and cultural learning?

In terms of the development of resources, would the inclusion of high-end cultural representations be a means for the students to engage in cultural learning with greater success? Might an additional means of preparation involve introducing students to situations that may produce cultural misunderstandings? Although it is virtually impossible to predict such situations with any accuracy, some form of preparation may

ease the students' anxiety. As Coleman (1997, pp. 9/10) comments, 'Appropriate preparation for residence abroad is likely to include an awareness of the probability of experiencing culture shock.'

6.5 EFL Textbooks in South-East Asia

The rush to study English that Taiwan experienced 30 years ago is now apparently taking place in parts of South-East Asia, and as a consequence textbook authors and publishers are competing in this new market. EFL language institutes are now appearing throughout Vietnam and Cambodia and consequently there is a need for the most appropriate language and cultural preparation available, in addition to materials that address students' needs and are suitable for the teachers and the environment they are being used in. The findings from this research suggest a range of issues that will have to be considered in these contexts if students' cultural learning needs are to be met by the textbooks and activities they engage in.

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Appendix A: Initial Study Questionnaire

Text Materials and Cultural Considerations Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions by marking A, B or C.

Key: A) Yes

B) No

C) Irrelevant

Q1. The text materials contain interesting activities.

Q2. The text materials are suitable for the class.

Q3. The text materials make studying easier.

Q4. The text materials are more or less what I anticipated.

Q5. The text materials seem to be suitable for all the class regardless of nationality.

Q6. The text materials are dull.

Q7. The text materials take up too much time.

Q8. Not enough time is spent using cultural materials.

Q9. The materials get in the way of the teacher.

Q10. The textbook writers are probably expert teachers.

Q11. The culture portrayed in the materials is suitable.

- Q12. The materials help me to understand the British culture¹⁴.
- Q13. The materials help me to communicate outside the classroom.
- Q14. There is little difference between the culture portrayed in the textbook and my personal experience of the culture in the 'real' world.
- Q15. If I can speak English well, knowledge of the culture isn't too important.
- Q16. The cultural activities I have used in the classroom have been valuable outside the classroom.
- Q17. I learn a lot about the British culture from TV, DVD, magazines and the Internet.
- Q18. I learn a lot about the British culture in cafes, restaurants and shopping centres.
- Q19. The classroom is the best place to learn about the British culture.
- Q20. You cannot learn culture from a book.
- Q21. I knew what to expect from the British culture before I left Taiwan.
- Q22. My preparation in Taiwan has allowed me to come to terms with the British culture well.
- Q23. Cultural preparation prior to leaving Taiwan is the responsibility of the student.
- Q24. Learning about the British culture does not affect how I feel about the Chinese culture.
- Q25. The multinational class has allowed me to understand other students' cultures.

¹⁴Although references to the 'British culture,' 'Chinese culture,' and 'English culture' appear throughout the appendices, the term was discontinued as the research progressed as its essentialist nature was inconsistent with the thesis. It is retained here for the purpose of accuracy.

Appendix B: Initial Study Small-Group Interview Questions

1. What are your reasons for coming to the UK?
2. Why did you choose the UK in preference to other western countries?
3. What does the term 'British culture' mean to you?
4. What were your impressions of the British culture before you left Taiwan? Where did these opinions come from?
5. What experiences of the British culture have you had that confirmed your initial impressions?
6. What experiences of the British culture surprised or perhaps disappointed you?
7. Are the cultural activities in the classroom useful in your life outside the classroom?
8. Which group of people do you interact with the most outside of the classroom?
Why do you think this is?
9. How much interaction do you have with native English speakers on a daily basis?
Comment on this.
10. How much interaction do you have with the multinational students in your class?
How do you feel about this?
11. Are there any areas of your life in the UK, inside or outside the classroom, in which you feel particularly uncomfortable?
12. Do you think there might be ways to prepare yourself better for study in the UK before you leave Taiwan?

13. How do text materials help you in the classroom?
 14. How do text materials help you outside the classroom?
 15. What is the most important resource for improving your English?
 16. Are there any classroom topics that you would feel uncomfortable discussing?
 17. Are any of the text materials unnecessary?
 18. Is English important to your career?
 19. Do you feel under any pressure to gain good results during your time in the UK?
 20. In ten words or less, what does British culture mean to you?
-

Appendix C: Data Collection Phase 1

The following table (C.1) shows the questionnaire with the results added in the columns on the right. Students were requested to answer each question by checking Y (Yes), N (No), or IR. (Irrelevant). This is the version the students were given, but responses have been added.

Table C.1: Questionnaire with Responses

<u>Text Materials +</u>	Y	N	I R
Q1. The text materials contain interesting activities.	8		
Q2. The text materials are suitable for the class.	8		
Q3. The text materials are easy to understand.	6	2	
Q4. The text materials are more or less what I anticipated.	8		
Q5. The text materials seem to be suitable for all the class regardless of nationality.	8		
<u>Text Materials -</u>			
Q6. The text materials are dull.	6		2
Q7. The text materials take up too much time.			8
Q8. Not enough time is spent using cultural materials.	3	2	3
Q9. The materials get in the way of the teacher.		8	
Q10. The textbook writers are probably expert teachers.	8		
<u>Culture</u>			
Q11. The culture portrayed in the materials is suitable.	8		
Q12. The materials help me to understand the British culture.	5		3
Q13. The materials help me to communicate outside the classroom.	1	7	
Q14. There is little difference between the culture portrayed in the textbook and my personal experience of the culture in the 'real' world.	2	5	
Q15. If I can speak English well, knowledge of the culture isn't too important.		8	
<u>Other Culture</u>			
Q16. The cultural activities I have used in the classroom have been valuable outside the classroom.		4	4
Q17. I learn a lot about the British culture from TV, DVD, magazines and the Internet.	8		
Q18. I learn a lot about the British culture in cafes, restaurants and shopping centres.	8		
Q19. The classroom is the best place to learn about the British culture.		8	
Q20. You cannot learn culture from a book.	3	3	2
<u>Prior to Arrival</u>			
Q21. I knew what to expect from the British culture before I left Taiwan.		8	
Q22. My preparation in Taiwan has allowed me to come to terms with the British culture well.		8	
Q23. Cultural preparation prior to leaving Taiwan is the responsibility of the student.		8	
Q24. Learning about the British culture does not affect how I feel about the	8		

Chinese culture.			
Q25. The multinational class has allowed me to understand other students' cultures.	8		

The following table (C.2) gives details of the small-group interview questions.

Table C.2

Small-Group Interview Questions Phases 1 and 2

1. What are your reasons for coming to the UK?
2. Why did you choose the UK in preference to other western countries?
3. What does the term 'British culture' mean to you?
4. What were your impressions of the British culture before you left Taiwan? Where did these opinions come from?
5. What experiences of the British culture have you had that confirmed your initial impressions?
6. What experiences of the British culture surprised or perhaps disappointed you?
7. Are the cultural activities in the classroom useful in your life outside the classroom?
8. Which group of people do you interact with most outside the classroom? Why do you think this is?
9. How much interaction do you have with native English speakers on a daily basis? Comment on this.
10. How much interaction do you have with the multinational students in your class? How do you feel about this?
11. Are there any areas of your life in the UK, inside or outside the classroom, in which you feel particularly uncomfortable?
12. Do you think there might be ways to prepare yourself better for study in the UK before you leave Taiwan?
13. How do text materials help you in the classroom?
14. How do text materials help you outside the classroom?
15. What is the most important resource for improving your English?
16. Are there any classroom topics that you would feel uncomfortable discussing?
17. Are any of the text materials unnecessary?
18. Is English important to your career?
19. Do you feel under any pressure to gain good results during your time in the UK?
20. In ten words or less, what does British culture mean to you?

Appendix D: Data Collection Phase 2

The following table (D.1) shows the questionnaire with the results added in the columns on the right. Students were requested to answer each question by checking Y (Yes), N (No), or IR. (Irrelevant). This is the version students were given, but with responses added.

Table D.1

Questionnaire with Responses

<u>Text Materials +</u>	Y	N	I R
Q1. The text materials contain interesting activities.	9		
Q2. The text materials are suitable for the class.	9		
Q3. The text materials make studying easier.	4	3	2
Q3. The text materials are easy to understand.	9		
Q4. The text materials are more or less what I anticipated.	9		
Q5. The text materials seem to be suitable for all the class regardless of nationality.		8	1
<u>Text Materials -</u>			
Q6. The text materials are dull.	4	4	1
Q7. The text materials take up too much time.		1	8
Q8. Not enough time is spent using cultural materials.	2	2	5
Q9. The materials get in the way of the teacher.		9	
Q10. The textbook writers are probably expert teachers.	7		2
<u>Culture</u>			
Q11. The culture portrayed in the materials is suitable.	7	1	1
Q12. The materials help me to understand the British culture.	7	1	1
Q13. The materials help me to communicate outside the classroom.		1	8
Q14. There is little difference between the culture portrayed in the textbook and my personal experience of the culture in the 'real' world.	1	8	
Q15. If I can speak English well, knowledge of the culture isn't too important.	8		1
<u>Other Culture</u>			
Q16. The cultural activities I have used in the classroom have been valuable outside the classroom.	1	8	
Q17. I learn a lot about the British culture from TV, DVD, magazines and the Internet.	9		
Q18. I learn a lot about the British culture in cafes, restaurants and shopping centres.	8	1	
Q19. The classroom is the best place to learn about the British culture.	2	7	
Q20. You cannot learn culture from a book.	6	3	
<u>Prior to Arrival</u>			
Q21. I knew what to expect from the British culture before I left Taiwan.		8	1
Q22. My preparation in Taiwan has allowed me to come to terms with the British		9	

culture well.			
Q23. Cultural preparation prior to leaving Taiwan is the responsibility of the student.		3	6
Q24. Learning about the British culture does not affect how I feel about the Chinese culture.	9		
Q25. The multinational class has allowed me to understand other students' cultures.	2	7	

Appendix E: Student Diary Questions

1. Think about the things you have learned from the classroom materials in the past week. Which of these things have you been able to use in your daily life, and has this helped you or not?
2. How do you feel the text materials have improved your English language in the past week? If the opposite is true, please explain why.
3. How do you feel the text materials have improved your knowledge of the English culture in the past week? If the opposite is true please explain why.
4. Do you feel that the culture represented in the text materials is aligned with your expectations?
5. Do you feel your actual experience of the British culture is largely positive or largely negative? Comment on this.
6. Are you getting sufficient cultural exposure in the classroom? Outside of it? Comment on this, please.
7. Is the experience of the multinational classroom a positive or negative experience for you? Comment on this.
8. Now you are studying in the UK, are you finding any aspects of the Chinese culture helpful? Troublesome?
9. Do the text materials affect your view of your own culture in any way?
10. Are there any additional ways that you can learn the English culture and language more successfully?

Appendix F: Student Profiles

Table F.1: Reason for Study

Career	To enhance career prospects either in Taiwan or overseas.
Business	To achieve promotion within a Taiwanese company.
TOEFL Preparation	To prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language with a view to study in the United States.
MA Preparation	To improve chances of success when preparing to study MA in the United States or the United Kingdom.
Fun	For a variety of reasons not directly related to study or career.
Parent's Insistence	Because the student's parents have insisted that they study in the UK to improve their English, possibly for reasons related to career development.

Table F.2: Initial Study Students

<u>Student</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Reason for Study</u>
Ken	22	Male	Career
Emily	26	Female	Career
Ben	21	Male	Career
Jack	26	Male	Career
Kay	21	Male	Career
Nicky	22	Female	Career

Table F.3: Data Collection Phase 1 Students

<u>Student</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Reason for Study</u>
Lilli	26	Female	Career
Jane	23	Female	MA preparation
Bob	29	Male	MA preparation
Peggy	21	Female	Career
Sherrie	23	Female	Career
Sam	20	Male	Career
Mike	22	Male	Career
Connie	25	Female	Parent's Insistence

Table F.4: Data Collection Phase 2 Students

<u>Student</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Reason for Study</u>
Eileen	33	Female	Business
Joy	26	Female	Career
Pei	35	Male	Business
Mitch	25	Male	Career
Yolian	23	Male	Career
Cooper	24	Male	Career
Jim	24	Male	Career
Kirby	22	Male	Career
Lou	22	Male	Career

Table F.5: Initial Study Students Attending

<u>Initial Study</u>	
Classroom Observation	Small-Group Interview
4 Students: Ken, Emily, Ben, and Kay.	

Data Collection Phase 1

Table F.6: Students Attending Observations 1

<u>Classroom Observations</u>	
<u>Class</u>	<u>Taiwanese Student (s)</u>
1	Lilli
2	Jane and Bob
3	Peggy
4	Sherrie
5	Lilli (again)
6	Bob (again)
7	Sam and Mike
8	Connie

Table F.7: Students Attending Interview 1

<u>Small-Group Interview</u>	
<u>Interview</u>	<u>Taiwanese Students</u>
1	Bob, Lilli, Peggy and Sherrie.
2	Sam, Mike, Connie and Jane.

Data Collection Phase 2

Table F.8: Students Attending Observation 3

<u>Classroom Observations</u>	
<u>Class</u>	<u>Taiwanese Student (s)</u>
1	Eileen
2	Joy
3	Pei and Mitch
4	Yolian
5	Cooper and Jim
6	Kirby
7	Lou

Table F.9: Students Attending Interview 3

<u>Small-Group Interview</u>	
<u>Interview</u>	<u>Taiwanese Students</u>
1	Eileen, Pei, Mitch and Cooper.
2	Yolian, Joy, Jim and Kirby.

Table F.10: Students Submitting Diaries

<u>Diaries</u>	
<u>Data Collection Phase 1</u>	<u>Data Collection Phase 2</u>
	2
Bob	Eileen
	Pei
Peggy	Joy

Appendix G: Coding System Sample

G.1 Classroom Observation Sample

The following sample begins with the details of the example class. I used this format for each of the observed classes. The numbered sections give the details of what was covered in the class. The dialogue that follows contains highlighted words and phrases that established certain patterns – and eventually, themes – in students' reactions to textbooks.

Research Session 1

Class 1: Day 1:

Timings: 10.15 – 12.00

Location: School A, Hove.

Date: June 06, 2009.

Teacher: A.

1. Ss. now put into threes and told to discuss their own lives, and how they have changed in the last ten years.

Note: For this activity, the Ss. were allowed to choose their partners. Lilli (Taiwanese student) linked up with one Turkish girl and one Czech girl. From the immediate rapport generated, it was clear that the girls already knew each other quite well and had a relatively strong classroom relationship.

Lilli did not lead any of the conversations. She seemed content to let her two peers take the initiative. Although when she was asked about her opinions on how her life has changed, she did respond in an interested and quite animated manner.

2. Activity, p.47. For this activity, Ss. were arranged in pairs but they were seated face to face. The Ss. did not have access to their partner's information. T. gave out cut outs of the information to Student A, and then Student B. Ss. then read info. and engaged in conversation.

Note: Lilli was paired with a Spanish student, Paloma, for this activity. This activity ran very smoothly, and Lilli interacted well with her partner. There appeared to be genuine interest on both sides about the other student's activities, and to a lesser extent, about their culture.

3. Wrap Up: T. recapped on the salient points.
4. Homework Assignment: T. assigned main text, p. 47, activity D.

Note: This is actually a pairs exercise that allows the Ss. to choose an appropriate word from a given context using all the letters of the alphabet. I couldn't help but think that assigning it as a solo homework exercise diluted it somewhat.

Dialogue

Lilli = L (Taiwan)

Mitzi = M

Katrina = K

M: Let's start with home.

K: Fine.

L: (Nods assent).

M: Um ... I think I miss my old family home ... when I was a small girl. It's maybe ten years ago, maybe more (smiling).

K: What do you miss?

L: The family?

M: (Shrugs) I think just my room ... my bedroom.

K: Yes, me ... me, too. And my cat. I really miss ... her.

M: Lilli?

L: (smiles, pauses) After school we all sit down at the table to ... we eat. My whole family ... talking, talk about their day.

M: You miss this?

L: (smiling again) Yes.

M: Okay, let's talk about family, then.

K: Mm ... right ... well. I lived with my parents ten years ago, and (I) live with my parents now. I think maybe I will staying with them 'til I graduate.

M: Ten years ago I ... me too ... I lived with my family, but now I live alone.

K: Oh (seeming to express misfortune).

M: No, I like it. (unintelligible) I wanted to do what I want and go where I want. I think that's ... is a good thing.

L: (looking a little puzzled) Do you still see the ... your parents?

M: Yes, when I want to, I visit them.

L: Do you miss them?

K: (Speaking over Lilli) Don't you have any roommates?

M: Not now, but I maybe will do this. But I don't know.

L: (Holding up her hand) How about your family; do you miss them?

M: (Looking quizzical) I don't think that I can miss them if I can see them whenever ... I mean, if I want. I don't need to live with them now ... not at this time ... you know – at my age.

K: Yes. But do you ever feel ... no one ... uh ... alone?

L: Lonely?

M: (Shrugs) No. I like to be alone at home, and with my friends when I am not at home.

M: Okay, okay. (checks the clock) Let's talk about something else. Hairstyle ...?

K: (frowning) Who cares?

L: (laughs quietly).

M: (Smiling) Fine. (mumbled comment) What about your clothes then? How were they ... um ... different ten years ago?

K: (pauses for a short time) I think I dressed well ... or in a nice way. (pauses) What about you Lilli? What kinds of ... (unintelligible) clothes are popular in Taiwan?

L: I am not a very ... uh ... fashion person. But Taiwan girls really like clothes shopping. Yes.

M: what about before ... ten years ago? What did you wear before ... then?

L: (thinks for a short time, looking around the room) I was student, so I wore uniform all the time.

K: What about free time?

L: (smiling) My parents made me study English in the evening, so I usually go from school to bushiban – uh, language school ... in my city.

M: Wow.

K: That is maybe difficult.

M: Okay, one more. What about your personality? How has it changed?

(prolonged silence)

K: I think ... I know ... uh ... myself more now.

M: (frowning) What do you mean?

K: I think I know what (mumbles) I want ... things like that.

M: Okay. Lilli?

L: I am more ... uh ..confidence ... confident. I didn't think I could travel alone, but now I am here and I am happy with myself ... the way I feeling ... feel here.

Developing Themes

Classroom face-saving strategies.

Preoccupation with family matters when involved in conversation.

Fell back on family as a topic when really talking about fashion.

G.2: Small-group Interview Sample

The following sample begins with brief details of the example class. I used this format for each of the interviewed classes. The dialogue that follows contains highlighted words and phrases that established certain patterns – and eventually, themes – in students' reactions to textbooks.

Interviews: Session 1: Day 3

Sam, Bob, Jane and Peggy were all in attendance.

1. What are your reasons for coming to the UK?

S: To practise my English; to learn ... I think ... more ... more about UK; to travel.

B: I ... (unintelligible) will make my English better. Better than before. I will learn about England.

J: (shrugs) Maybe enjoy my study more.

P: I think I wanted to help my career, but now I just enjoy the ... uh ... life.

2. Why did you choose the UK in preference to other western countries?

B: I didn't. My parents decided. My brother went to the US, and I ... I come here.

P: I have been in Sweden before, so this was close for me.

J: (silence)

S: I think more Taiwan student are going to UK now.

3. What does the term British culture mean to you?

P: Not my favourite. I mean, the ... what is it ... the subject. I think culture, or talking about culture is boring.

S: I –

B: (interrupting) It is different from Taiwan. But that's not so ... so ... important. Now, we want to talk and enjoy the Brighton ...

S: (prompting) Jane? Uh, ...

J: (smiles) I think ... the life here is different, so the culture is different.

4. What were your impressions of the culture before you left Taiwan? Where did these opinions come from?

B: I like the MTV. Most of that is about US music and culture, but there is UK stuff, too. I don't know the names ... the places, too ... the buildings in London were on TV. About the people, I don't know. Maybe we met the UK teachers in Taipei, and we thought we ... we knew what UK people were like.

J: Gentleman ... like gentleman.

P: (laughing politely) Sometimes ...

S: We were taught to expect very serious people. Not joking, like that. But our teacher is very fun. Many people are. It's (unintelligible).

5. What experience of the British culture have you had that confirmed your initial impression?

B: (following explanation in Chinese) I think when you come to a place instead of watching it on TV, it will be different. Better, maybe. At least it's ... a ... real, though.

P: Friendlier, I think. More friendly than I thought. More friendly than Sweden, but not Taiwan.

S: I agree.

J: (silence).

6. What experiences of the British culture surprised or perhaps disappointed you?

B: Nothing big, I think. Just little things. Maybe my ... the ... host family should be more friendly, or more activities in our free time. Little things.

P: Nothing, really. I think I must experience it.

S: Jane?

J: More ... uh ... activities, I think.

S: Yes. Sundays are sometimes boring, or doing things we could do at home.

7. Are the cultural activities in the classroom useful in your life outside the classroom?

B: Not really. We study the grammar and the sentences in class, but outside it's real and we don't know what will happen.

P: I suppose some things are okay, but we just read it in class. That's not using it ... we need to use it.

S: Some of the things we saw in London they were the same ... the same ... as in the book. I liked looking at the English things in the book and then seeing them.

J: (silence)

8. Which group of people do you interact with the most outside the classroom? Why do you think this is?

P: All the students. I like to hear their opinion. We talk a lot in the pub, you know, the pub ... about all kinds of things.

B: Yes, everyone. We have a good class ... good classmates. Maybe it is better going out with the people you know well. I don't know, when I have been here longer I will know more people. Maybe.

J: My Chinese friends.

P: Only your Chinese friends?

J: (pauses, shrugs) Sometimes other people.

S: I try to talk as much as I can to all the people, but often they are not interested. But I ...
I try.

9. How much interaction do you have with English speakers on a daily basis? Comment on this.

P: I talk a lot with the host family; they are nice people. They are kind to me.

B: I talk to people I meet. I ask for directions, buy food ... like that.

S: I talk to the staff a lot. The people who take us on the activities. They are very friendly, and their English is very good.

J: (silence).

10. How much interaction do you usually have with the multinational students in the class?
How do you feel about this?

S: We talk all the time. They are my classmates. Why not?

P: I suppose some of them I talk to more than others. Their country is not important. If they are friendly and they want to talk, let's talk. What about you, Jane?

J: The friendly students, yes. They are good people in my class.

B: We are in the class to talk and practice, so I talk as much as I can. I do talk a lot with (my teacher), but that's because some things I don't understand, and I like to talk with a native speakers ... uh, more, more.

11. Are there any areas of your life in the UK, inside or outside the classroom, in which you feel particularly uncomfortable?

B: Only if I don't understand. Then I will feel a little stupid.

P: No. I want to learn. Why should I be afraid to talk about anything?

S: I think some things, personal things, I might not like to share. Things about myself.

J: (silence).

12. Do you think there might be ways to prepare yourself better for study in the UK before you leave Taiwan?

P: Not really. To know about here ... better to be here. I don't know, maybe if I knew more about English people's talking style before I come. Yes, maybe.

B: I think the grammar and the sentences we studied were OK, but I think the same. You must be here. You must study here.

J: I should study more grammar before I come here.

S: Maybe what to expect when I get here. Information about customs ... like that.

13. How do text materials help you in the classroom?

B: They are interesting. They help me, um. Yes, no problem.

S: I like the books we use. Many interesting activities.

P: Yes, I agree. But I think the teacher is also important. How they teach the book is important.

J: I like the book.

14. How do text materials help you outside the classroom?

S: They help me ... they make me confident that my speaking is correct.

B: We try to copy the language in the books. Sometimes it is OK; sometimes it is not.

J: It helps me to speak – to go around.

S: Yes, I agree.

15. What is the most important resource for improving your English?

B: Talking to people, the English class ...

P: I think just being here. I must use English all the time – well, most of the time.

J: The class, and my teacher.

S: I think everything. I study in my class, I have a very good teacher, my host family are very kind to me.

16. Are there any classroom topics that you would feel uncomfortable discussing?

P: No. I ... um ...the teacher decides.

B: Maybe some students don't want to talk about sex, uh, sex or politics, but I don't mind.

In Taiwan, the teachers did not like we talk about sex or politics; that's in *bushiban* (cram school).

J: (some hesitation) No.

S: It depends. Anything too personal may be uncomfortable to me. It depends.

17. Are any of the text materials unnecessary?

P: There are given to us by the teacher. She chooses.

S: No. I don't think so.

B: Some of the activities are boring, or they don't mean anything, but I ... uh ... don't mind. The book is OK.

J: I like the book.

18. Is English important to your career?

P: Definitely. I came here to improve my English because I want to make a career in computers. English is the international language and the more I improve ... um, it ... the more I ... the better career I have.

B: I think so. I am very young so I think about study now, not career.

J: Maybe in future, yes.

S: I need English to improve. In Taiwan, business is more and more with foreign companies and English is useful.

19. Do you feel under any pressure to gain good results during your time in the UK?

B: My family will want me to study hard and improve myself and be proud of me. Good for my parents.

P: No. I live alone now. If I don't reach my goal this year, I will try again.

J: I should do well.

S: I want to get good results for myself.

20. In ten words or less, what does the British culture mean to you?

S: Learning to ... uh ... accept others.

P: Something new and different.

B: Exciting vacation, learning something.

J: (silence)

Developing Themes

Bob often speaks in terms of certainties, rather than using modals of possibility.

G.3: Diaries Sample

The following sample includes the diary questions followed by sample answers to some of the questions. Highlighted words and phrases denote developing patterns – and in some cases, eventual themes – in students’ reactions to textbooks.

1. Think about the things you have learned from the classroom materials in the past week. Which of these things have you been able to use in your daily life, and has this helped you or not?

‘We did international nights out.’

2. How do you feel the text materials have improved your English language in the past week? If the opposite is true, please explain why.

3. How do you feel the text materials have improved your knowledge of the English culture in the past week? If the opposite is true please explain why.

‘In the pub ... it’s good ... we (multinational students) all talk together. Sometimes we try to talk to the English people, but it is difficult. In the book (Cutting Edge) the people introduced them (selves) to each other. When I did this in the pub, the man was not interested. I told him where I was from, and he didn’t want to talk’ (Bob).

4. Do you feel that the culture represented in the text materials is aligned with your expectations?

5. Do you feel your actual experience of the British culture is largely positive or largely negative? Comment on this.

‘I feel strange in the (host) family sometimes. They don’t want to talk, for example. In Taiwan, dinner is very important. The family are together after the day working and studying and they want to share ... to enjoy the other (people’s) experience. But here, no.

They like to stay silent, and even watch TV when they eat. This is strange for me' (Eileen).

6. Are you getting sufficient cultural exposure in the classroom? Out of it? Comment on this, please.
7. Is the experience of the multinational classroom a positive or negative experience for you? Comment on this.
8. Now you are studying in the UK, are you finding any aspects of the Chinese culture helpful? Troublesome?
9. Do the text materials affect your view of your own culture in any way?
10. Are there any additional ways that you can learn the English culture and language more successfully?

Developing Themes

Apparent difficulty in communicating with local people.
