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An Investigation of Teachers' Perceptions of Culture Teaching in Secondary Schools in Xinjiang, China

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An Investigation of Teachers' Perceptions of Culture Teaching in Secondary Schools in Xinjiang, China

By

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'Culture is something like making bread with butter in. It is named as butter bread. If butter is spread on the top of the bread, it is not butter bread'.

'Culture and language are twins, look very much like each other. People can't easily distinguish who is who'.

Quotes from school teachers
in Xinjiang, Northwest China

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Dedication

To my late parents and my beloved husband, Zhou Yuan-ren and our lovely daughter Zhou Wen-xuan

An Investigation of Teachers' Perceptions of Culture Teaching in Secondary Schools in Xinjiang

Han Hui

Abstract

English Language education in China has gone through several stages of development in the past 30 years. The early method of language learning was centred on grammar acquisition but this has since moved to the current approach of communicative competence development. Although the Official Document in 2001 laid down 'cultural awareness' as one of the language teaching objectives, there seems to be a gap between the new curriculum and what goes on in classrooms. The aim of this study is to investigate teachers' perspectives on cultural teaching in terms of the teaching objectives of language and culture; teachers' understanding of 'culture'; the cultural topics they favour to teach in the classroom; the techniques they use to teach culture; time allocation to culture teaching and finally their attitudes towards intercultural communicative competence so as to design courses at the teacher training college to meet the needs of the teachers. The method of my research involves a survey: questionnaires were sent to the schools as well as trainers in the teaching college after a pilot run and group discussion in refining the questions. The returned survey is then categorized and analyzed based on Byram's intercultural communicative competence model. The analyzed results show encouraging signs of teachers' and college trainers' willingness to engage in cultural teaching, but the results also reflects teething problems to fully engage cultural communicative competence in the classrooms. The highly examination-oriented environment, the practical approach of teachers and students and the academic qualification/experience of teachers are some of the current problems in teaching culture in the classroom. The teachers' college plays an important role in changing the perception of cultural teaching of teachers and the results show a need for courses to build the understanding and confidence of teachers in the classrooms.

Key words: survey, teachers' perceptions, cultural/intercultural teaching, foreign language education, intercultural communicative competence, curriculum, cultural awareness and teacher training courses.

Declaration

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A list of Abbreviations

ELT = English Language Teaching

ICC = Intercultural Communicative Competence

IC=Intercultural Competence

ICT= Intercultural Teaching

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

CET = College English Test

TEM = Test for English Majors

FLT = Foreign Language Teaching

SFLL = Standards for Foreign Language Learning

ESL = English as Second Language

ELD = English Literacy Development

CECS = China's English Curriculum Standards

ESC = English Speaking Countries

NNCE = National New English Curriculum

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Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Research background

1.1.1 Personal experience as a learner /teacher of English

The origins of this thesis lie principally within my own experience of learning English language as a student, teaching English in a secondary school, and in an educational college as a teacher and teacher trainer for English language over a period of 20 years. The way I was taught exerted a great impact on the way I teach. That was the grammar translation method which probably was the most commonly used way of learning language in China for years, and it is still practiced in many situations. It was thought that by analyzing the grammatical structure and by finding equivalents between the students' mother tongue language and language to be studied, the students will learn how the foreign language is constructed. I was a product of such a pattern of language learning through the grammar-translation method in the 1980s in China. The acquisition of English grammar and language I had devoted so many years to didn't appear to be any problem until I went to the UK for further study in 2000. It was the first time for me to realize that good linguistic competence didn't necessarily mean good communicative competence in a real language situation. My personal experience proved this. As soon as I landed at Heathrow Airport, I was suddenly bewildered as I was thrown into great trouble. The language I spoke could be understood but I couldn't catch what the native speakers said because of their strong accent or dialect. Incidents like how to open an account, how to call back home and how to define the names of the food in the supermarket which I took for granted at home became big problems in a foreign country. I came to be aware that a whole new set of language and culture learning priorities rose up to meet me. For the first time, I had to use English to communicate with all sorts of people in many different situations in the UK. Apart from social contact, however, I also

had to adapt myself to the English way of life, a process that took time, effort and attention. My daily social life and study encountered one challenge after another that I had to somehow handle cautiously without making a fool of myself or offending anyone. Looking back over my diary entries at that time, I saw how confused I often was, how strong my emotions were, how categorical my judgments were, how much I wrote about my own culture, how many questions I asked, and how much I wondered about myself. The process I was going through was unlike anything I had ever experienced. I had no frame of reference for these experiences. Models of cultural entry, adjustment, adaptation, and cultural shock were not available to me at that time; consequently, I had to figure things out as best I could, observing others. I was trying to determine how to adjust to English culture and established myself somewhere on a continuum between an insular expatriate Chinese community on one end and, on the other, full assimilation into English culture, leaving my own culture and language behind.

I began this research report with a story of my own experiences as a language and culture learner for a number of reasons. Above all, I want to understand the importance of teaching culture integrated with language teaching; I want to emphasize that culture learning, whether it occurs in a foreign language or second language context, inside or outside the classroom, with or without teachers, through books or through people, is best seen as a lived experience, as a personal encounter with another way of life. This encounter is unique to every learner. Every learner has a distinct story to tell and has a different way to learn language and culture. In the final analysis, as language teachers, we too have stories of learning language and culture. The way we teach culture springs from our histories as language and culture learners and our own understanding of ourselves. Bringing my own stories to light can help me see how to foster culture learning in the students in the language classes.

My intercultural encounters in UK made me realize that using one's own values to judge someone from another culture is bound to result in miscommunication even though both

parties are well intentioned. Attempting to understand another person through the perspective of that person's own culture is an important step towards better relationships. Furthermore, learning about other cultures can be intrinsically rewarding and fascinating, helping us to appreciate the richness and depth of the human experience. Therefore the new research areas of culture studies and intercultural communication in language education opened up a new interest for me and made me reflect on language education in China.

1.1.2   The Role of language and culture in 21st century

Kramsch (1991, p.217) holds that culture and language are 'inseparable and constitute a single universe or domain of experience'. Regarding language teaching, Byram and Morgan (1994, p5) strongly maintain that culture learning has to be taken as an integral part of language learning and vice versa. However, when the target language is English, the world's lingua franca in its new global form (Graddol, 2006), the scope of the target culture becomes fuzzy and unpredictable. Regarding the relationship of English and culture, as English is an international language, the use of it is no longer connected to the culture of inner circle countries like Britain and America where English is the primary language. In reality, the current trends in ELT have reflected this assumption. According to Risager (1998, p.243) the foreign language approach which is 'based on the concept of the single culture associated with a specific people, a specific language, and normally with a specific territory ' has evolved into the intercultural approach that rests on a concept of cultures as 'structurally related to each other' (p.244), and therefore, teachers and students are expected to relate the foreign culture to their source culture and, possibly, to the cultures of still other countries. This trend reflects, to a certain extent, the departure from the single target culture (Anglo-American cultures in English teaching) to more complex and expanding target cultures in language teaching and the increasing awareness of the target language being lingua franca in international communication.

1.1.3 Challenges of ELT in the era of globalization

Graddol (2006, p.12) claims that 'the phenomenon of English being a global language lies at the heart of globalization'. We have been witnessing 'global economic flows' and 'global cultural flows' in today's global village, and therefore there have been increasing interdependence and interconnectedness among nations and people as well. Crystal (2003, p.13) suggests that 'there has never been a time when so many nations needed to talk to each other so much'. Indeed, 'social and economic globalization has necessitated the use of an international means of communication in the world. English has become the language of international communication' (Alptekin, 2002, p 32). Therefore the vitality of English in the era of globalization produces more changes and challenges to the established pedagogies in English teaching. It may be asked what the goal of English teaching in the age of information and globalization is. To develop learners' communicative competence or, to use the more popular term, intercultural communicative competence (ICC), is all too easy an answer, simple enough to be on the lips of everyone concerned but tough enough to engage scholars worldwide in search of the true nature of English language education and an agenda that best reflects this nature. With regards to English language education as a foreign or second language, this search seems even more challenging and more inviting at the same time. The fact is that non-native English speakers have already outnumbered its native speakers. Crystal (2003, p.69) estimates the ratio of native to-non-native is around 1:3 taking into account macro acquisition of English in the EFL context. Based on this, Graddol (2006) predicts that an inexorable trend in the use of global English is that fewer interactions now involve a native speaker. In other words, English is very often the language used between non-native English speakers, e.g. between the Japanese and Koreans, between Russians and Germans. With the changing profile of English speakers, the intercultural communication participants are likely to be non-natives bringing with them distinctive cultural backgrounds; the global village has increased such kinds of intercultural

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encounters. Thus it is unrealistic to expect that English would stay the same as the 'standard English' and the non-natives would share the beliefs and conventions of the British and Americans. 'English has ceased to be a vehicle of western cultures' (Kachru, 1986, p.92), but carries the experiences and cultures of its respective users. The questions provoked by this fact are: Should the cultural norms and values embedded in English be followed by the learners even when they go against those of their own? What are the dynamics that are at work in foreign or second language education? How is foreign/second language education related to the general education framework? How can we empower learners with the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of different colours, beliefs, accents, and ways of life? These questions and many others of the kind point at the complexities of English language teaching. Cultural contents about other countries apart from those of Anglo-American must be taken into account and will start to play a more relevant role in today's intercultural communications.

In this study, Chinese teachers' opinions on language-culture teaching objectives, what cultural contents should be included in language teaching will be investigated to see whether they are ready to meet this challenge in this new situation.

1.1.4 The status quo of ELT in China

ELT researchers and practitioners in China are facing this challenge as China has the largest number of English learners and China's overwhelming internationalization and modernization will push up the already huge demand for competent English users. The social status of English in China means that English teaching occupies a dominant place in Chinese school and university curricula. English learning starts in primary school as a compulsory subject in recent years and it continues up to the last year of senior high school. Most students learn English for more than 9 years before they enter universities or colleges. As college students, they continue to learn English in order to pass the

College English Test (CET) Band 4 & Band 6 for non-English majors, and the Test for English Majors (TEM) Band 4 & Band 8. Besides these institutional requirements on English as a subject of learning, there is also a high demand in English proficiency for employment and professional promotion throughout the country. Many Chinese students have spent more than twelve years in studying English, but the result shows that most of them, having got high scores in the exams, can't communicate well with foreigners (Liu, 2008). Sometimes their English is perfect without any grammatical mistakes, but they just don't know how to use English appropriately and effectively. Failure in communication with people from other cultures is a very common phenomenon. The real reason often lies in the fact that they don't know that the cultural aspect also plays a very important role in foreign language learning, as I have shown from my own experience above. Because of lack of understanding of foreign culture, language learners have no idea about what should be said and what should not be said in some given situation. As Professor Deng Yanchang once said 'Learning a foreign language well does not simply mean mastering its pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. In fact, the learning of a language is inseparable from the learning of its culture' (Deng, 1996:34). The fundamental function of language is to communicate. A successful English teaching is to help language learners cultivate a good communicative ability.

This incompetence of the students in using English has brought home to Chinese educators, especially to foreign language teachers all over the country, the importance of reflection about past teaching ideologies and practice as well as serious contemplations on reform in the future.

Research on effective English language teaching and in particular the integration of language-culture teaching to meet the demand on students' ability to use English in an appropriate way are current issues in the academic world in general, and also in China. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, the promotion of the communicative approach began to overshadow the more traditional approaches such as grammar-translation and

audio-lingual approaches. There have been appeals for shifts from the teacher-centred to the learner-centred, structure-based to task- and content-based, linguistic proficiency-based to English plus another specialty in paradigms of teaching (Hu, 2006b). In the past 20 or more years, there has been an increasing emphasis on the learners' communicative ability over sheer linguistic proficiency, and the teaching of culture alongside the teaching of language. In more recent years, new teaching approaches and methods are being explored, which aim to help Chinese learners to develop the intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Many English teachers have considered ICC as the goal of English teaching, and urged an integration of intercultural communication with English language teaching. Indeed, with the exploration of interrelationships between culture and communication and of problems related to communication between people from different cultural backgrounds, the studies of intercultural communication have much to offer for foreign language teaching.

As was mentioned before, English is taught as a compulsory subject at schools for a long time. There are many changes taking place in terms of the curriculum; the teaching objectives, teaching methods and evaluation system. Modifications are made from time to time to uplift the quality and quantity of teaching and to import current teaching ideas, which will be discussed in details in Chapter 2. A reformed National English Curriculum for junior middle school was introduced in 2001. This curriculum is consistent with communicative language teaching and teaching philosophy which put emphasis on needs and skills. The concept of 'cultural awareness' appeared in the new curriculum for the first time. New textbooks were introduced into the junior middle school. But other than the new materials, new expectations and new demands on teachers also come along with the implementation of the new curriculum. Thus, it is important to know more about teachers' thinking and beliefs if the implementation of a new curriculum and textbooks is to be successful and this new change will be examined in this study, as will be detailed in the next section.

1.2 Research questions

Based on what is described above about the new situation in language teaching and learning, the new language teaching object of 'cultural awareness' introduced into the curriculum, and also in the light of my own personal direct experiences of cultural shock in the UK and my own academic interest in trying to find out how school teachers perceive this concept of cultural awareness as one of English teaching objectives, the overriding and overall aim of the thesis is to find out school teachers' perceptions of cultural teaching and their current practices in the English classroom so as to provide a general picture of the current situation in language teaching in Xinjiang, Northwest China.

To achieve this aim, the research questions are thus raised as follows:

1) What are the existing culture elements in the curriculum in terms of ICC?

2) Is it necessary to teach culture in language education?

3) What are the school teachers' perceptions of culture/intercultural teaching in the classroom in the aspects of :

___How do school teachers of English define culture?

___How do they understand the language and culture teaching objectives?

___What are their favourite culture topics to be taught in language teaching?

___What methods or approaches do they think should be used in teaching culture?

___How much time is distributed to teach culture in the language classroom and

___What is the percentage of culture content included in the exam?

___What role do teachers play in the language and culture teaching in their classroom?

4) Are teachers' perceptions an encouraging basis for introducing change in their teaching?

The above research questions are raised in terms of the overall aim of the thesis. Some specific sub-questions for more detailed descriptions of the content of the thesis are needed so that it is possible for more concrete analysis and discussions. These sub-questions will be raised in later chapters.

1.3 The composition of the thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters which are described in a quick review of the title and contents of them as follows:

Chapter One   Introduction

This current chapter serves as an introduction to the key elements of the whole thesis. It includes the background of the study and provides the reasons why I focus on this area. And the research questions are proposed and the composition of the thesis is outlined.

Chapter 2: The historical development of English curriculum in China

This chapter attempts to answer the research questions 1 and 2: 'What are the existing cultural elements in language curriculum in terms of ICC?' and 'Is it necessary to develop cultural elements into the curriculum?' from the historical perspective by a review of the development of the English language curriculum in junior secondary level. The purpose is to see how English language teaching adapted to the socio-political mandates of different periods; how the role of the English language changed; how the emphasis shifted from the grammar-translation to the communicative approach, from which it is traced to see how the cultural dimension is given a place in the 2001 revised

English language curriculum, in which 'cultural awareness' as one of the language teaching objectives is officially designated. The continuity of the past and present of the English curriculum development in China traced may serve as a fundamental explanation of the need to add cultural elements into the English curriculum in China.

Next the focus will be shifted to the analysis of other countries' language curricula like America, Canada and Britain in terms of culture teaching so as to get a better understanding of culture teaching in China through comparative analysis.

Finally it will be proposed that English teaching in China should be for intercultural communication in the situation of globalization and Byram's intercultural communicative competence model will be introduced (ICC), based on which the analysis of 2001 curriculum in the terms of ICC will be made so as to see if there is any orientation towards this intercultural perspective.

Chapter 3: Analysis of the literature on language-culture teaching

This chapter presents an account of the relationship between language and culture in general; questions about the role of culture in language education, the reasons why culture is included in language teaching and what culture should be taught in the language classroom are analyzed from both Western and Chinese scholars' opinions. Then research on teachers' thinking and beliefs in language and culture teaching is also reviewed. This is focused therefore on answering research question 3.

Chapter 4: The research methodology

The fourth chapter discusses the nature of research in education and its main features of quantitative and qualitative methods. The need for conducting this empirical work in relation to the aim of the thesis is given. The reason to choose the quantitative research method as the empirical study of the thesis is presented. Specific procedures such as questionnaire design, pilot study, the research sample, and the procedure of data

collection and treatment of data are introduced. Methodological issues which will arise during the course of the study are discussed. These issues include such factors as ethics, reliability, and validity that should be taken into consideration in conducting any quantitative research.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and results discussion

The fifth chapter presents the data collected from school teachers in Xinjiang and based on them some findings are drawn and discussed in line with the research questions, supported by relevant literature. The focus is on question 3 'What are school teachers' perceptions of cultural/intercultural teaching in the language classroom?' in terms of language–culture teaching objectives, cultural topics ; ways of culture teaching ; time distribution for cultural teaching, cultural teaching materials and percentage of cultural content in the examination and their attitude towards intercultural teaching. Some interpretations and discussions are given to link data with the discussions in Chapter 3.

Finally the teachers' general attitudes towards intercultural competence teaching are analyzed in order to provide a whole picture of teachers' perceptions. If teachers' perceptions are positive and they are willing to teach English in this new dimension supported by the findings, I may safely say that a promising and encouraging basis will be present to introduce change in teachers' teaching. The research question 4 'Are teachers' perceptions an encouraging basis for introducing change in their teaching?' might be answered.

Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks

As the final chapter of the thesis, this chapter will summarize the whole study and its implications for practice, and reflect some limitations of the research and possible areas for future research will be discussed.

In summary, this introductory chapter outlines the background of the study, raises the

research questions and gives an overview of all the chapters of the thesis. The next chapter will review the historical development of English curriculum in terms of cultural dimension in language education.

Chapter Two

A Brief History of English Language Curriculum

Development at the Secondary School Level in China

2.1 Introduction

The history of China's post-1949 English curriculum development has often been discussed in three periods: before, during and after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) since the foundation of China in 1949 (Adamson, 2004; Lam, 2005). In the first period, the Soviet model of socialist reconstruction was dominant. While the primary and secondary education system before 1949 (six years of primary school, three of junior secondary and three of senior secondary) was maintained, university education was extended from four years to five years. The socialist planning system produced specialist graduates for the major sectors and the overall educational level of the population was raised during this time. During the second period, the education system was streamlined with primary education reduced to five years, secondary education to four years and higher education to three years. The greatest disruption during the Cultural Revolution was in higher education as regular universities were closed and academic research was discredited. The current third period has seen modernization and reform and expansion at all levels. The system of education changed back to six years of primary school, three of junior secondary, three of senior secondary and four of higher education. Education for the first nine years was also made compulsory (Hayhoe, 1991, pp.117-119). My discussion of English language curriculum development will focus on the third period (1976 to now) and for the junior secondary school level. The reason for omitting the first two periods is that learning of English at the secondary level has been promoted mainly after the Cultural Revolution and because prior to this, Russian was the most important foreign language (Lam, 2005). The reason for selecting the junior secondary school

curriculum arises partly from convenience (my involvement in curriculum training was at this level), and partly from the importance (the most important innovations in English curriculum in China have been at this level) (Adamson, 2004). Finally, it is this stage of schooling, Year 7 - 9 ages 12-15, at which most students study English.

In this chapter, the historical development of English language curriculum will be examined at the junior secondary level to see how English teaching adapted to socio-political mandates; how the role of English language has changed; how the emphasis on the grammar-translation method has been changed to the communicative approach. I will trace how the cultural dimension is given a place in the 2001- revised English language curriculum, in which cultural awareness is designated as one of the language teaching objectives.

Next I will turn to culture teaching again in the context of globalization to examine how other countries teach culture across the language curriculum especially the United States of America, Canada and Britain in order to better understand culture teaching in China. Finally I will propose that English teaching in China should aim for intercultural communication in the situation of globalization. Byram's intercultural communicative competence model will be introduced (ICC), and the 2001 curriculum will be looked at in the terms of ICC to see if the policy claims are in fact being reached in this intercultural perspective.

2.2 A brief review of the historical development of the English curriculum from 1976 to the revised 2001 curriculum

Chinese curriculum reform has gone through countless difficulties and many setbacks but has also achieved tremendous progress over the past 30 years. As I mentioned above, my discussion will be focused on the third period that is after the Cultural Revolution

from 1976. The English curriculum can be classified into three phases: beginning, developing and deepening in terms of progress and development in the course of language education in China's secondary schools.

Beginning stage (1976-1985)

The political and social turmoil of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) disrupted instruction in all schools. Students were mobilized as Red Guards and 'should not only learn book knowledge, they should also learn industrial production, agricultural production and military affairs. They should also criticize and repudiate the bourgeoisie. The length of schooling should be shortened, education should be revolutionized and domination of our schools and colleges by bourgeois intellectuals should not be tolerated any longer' (Mao, 1966: pp.32). Such ideas contributed to the violence that accompanied the Cultural Revolution. Most schools stopped teaching foreign languages. Many foreign language teachers were considered bourgeois intellectuals and were accused of spying for other countries or worshipping everything foreign (Tang Lixing, 1983). Anarchy erupted throughout the education system.

After Mao's death in 1976, Hua Guofeng was designated successor and the arrest of the 'Gang of Four'---the most powerful faction in the national leadership during the later stages of the Cultural Revolution--- marked the end of a period of political turmoil and economic isolation for China. Hua Guofeng reactivated a number of economic policies, most notably the 'Four Modernizations', targeting agriculture, science and technology, defence and industry. In the event, Hua's tenure of office proved to be just a brief interregnum and in 1978 Deng Xiaoping who had been ostracised was rehabilitated and took control as the paramount leader of China and carried on further economic reforms.

Deng Xiaoping, who initiated China's reform and openness drive in the late 1970s, devoted much emphasis to education. He considered education played a crucial role in

the Four Modernizations and ordered college matriculation exams to be resumed upon his rehabilitation, which gave rise to a nationwide thirst and respect for knowledge and prompted students to work hard to acquire knowledge. As part of this openness policy, the 'national door' to the outside world was also opened and gained Chinese scholars the chance to get in touch and exchange academic ideas with foreign countries. In this period much work was done by scholars to translate and evaluate curriculum theories and practices from Western countries.

In addition, there was quick recovery of the normal teaching order; design of curriculum and the construction of textbooks became very urgent tasks after the 10-year standstill in education. Especially after the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee in 1978, English teaching in secondary schools became one of the three main subjects, alongside Chinese and mathematics. The acquisition of a foreign language was valued once again.

In January 1978, the Ministry of Education issued two syllabuses, one being 'The Syllabus for Russian Teaching at Full-time Ten-Year Primary and Secondary schools', and the other being 'The Syllabus for English Teaching at Full-time Ten-year Primary and Secondary Schools'. (Note: most primary schools and secondary schools adopted the system of 5 years in primary school and 5 years in secondary schools from 1960 onwards. The twelve-year school system has gradually been restored from 1980). This early period of uncertainties so soon after Chairman Mao's death is reflected in the socio-political climate, hence the two syllabuses.

Take the English syllabus issued in 1978 as an example; the presence of the influence of the personal cult towards Mao couldn't be cast off:

English is a very widely used language throughout the world. In certain aspects, English is a very important tool: for the international class struggle; for economic

and trade relationships; for cultural, scientific and technological exchanges; and for the development of international friendship. We have to raise Chairman Mao's glorious flag, and carry out the policies initiated by the Party under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, so that by the end of this century, we can achieve the Four Modernizations of industry, science and technology, agriculture and defence and make China a strong socialist country. To uphold the principle of class internationalism and to carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary diplomacy effectively, we need to nurture a large number of 'red and expert' people (

) proficient in a foreign language and in different disciplines. That's why we have to strengthen both primary and secondary teaching.

English syllabus for primary and secondary schools (Beijing: People's Education Press, 1978).

The 1978 English language curriculum marked the formal restoration of English in junior secondary schools on a nation-wide basis, but was fraught with uncertainties in 1977, when work started, because schooling was still in the process of recovery, and the political situation was unclear. According to Adamson (2004) the socio-economic climate was one of 'tentative de-politicization and national economic reconstruction'. Hence the 'red and expert' -- meaning we need those who are 'to love the Party and people and to be expert in one's area of learning' equation -- was repeated as a precaution.

With this rationale for the curriculum, new school textbooks were urgently required to support the new policy of national economic development (Lofstedt, 1980). A nation-wide centralised series of textbooks for the ten-year secondary school system English (9 volumes) was compiled by the Ministry of Education and came into use in the September of 1978 and lasted till 1982. The English in the textbooks was not the English of any English-speaking country, but the English of China (Xiao, 2001). Textbooks

always began with 'Long live....'and ended with 'quotations of Chairman Mao'. For example, in the passage in Series Six Book 2 Lesson 32: 'We hold high the great banner of Chairman Mao, and Deng Xiaoping is leading us on a new Long March'. Not a single text dealt with a foreign theme or foreign culture. To teach with textbooks like these, the teacher had just to teach the new words, read the text, and translate the text into Chinese. This was the typical teaching procedure. The features of the curriculum of 1978 are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2. 1   Key features of the English language curriculum 1978

	1978 English language curriculum
Genesis	Commitment to economic modernization after Cultural Revolution
Role and status of English	Means of access to scientific and technical information: low/medium official status
Role of agencies People's Education Press: consultant / teachers	Writing syllabus and textbooks resources; some participation in writing syllabus and textbooks resources negligible input; some arbitration over disputes about the textbook content
Progress	Team formed to write syllabus and textbooks under pressure of time
Syllabus	Stresses the balance between knowledge and usage of language, advocates integration of political, moral and language education
Resources	Six textbooks (series six)
Organization	Sentence and dialogue drills---reading passage—grammar exercises; traditional sequence of grammatical items
Discourse	Progression from weak to strong realism
Linguistic Components	Phonetic alphabet; 1250 vocabulary items, established grammar items
Intended pedagogy	Mainly audiolingualism and structural approach: some grammar-translation
Political and moral messages	Strong presence of moral messages; moderate presence of political message

(Cited from Adamsom, 2004: 133)

From this table we can see that English is used as a tool to access scientific and technical information. Language teaching aims to train people to be 'reds and experts' serving the

purpose of the Four Modernizations. The official status of English is low, according to Adamson. The emphasis is still on political and moral education. There is no interpretation of a cultural dimension in the beginning stage because the focus of language teaching is placed on the acquisition of language structures through the grammar-translation approach and on the Chinese perspective and politics, with the result that culture boundaries were set in the school textbooks, and this caused students to be unable to understand other nations' cultures and the point of view of their culture.

After a four-year trial in schools, feedback from teachers led to the revision of this English syllabus. Teachers complained that the books were too difficult to teach, primarily because of the excessive political content in language instruction (Xiao, 2001).

By 1982, the revision of the syllabus was carried out by the editors from the People's Education Press (PEP) in consultation with specialists from Beijing Foreign Languages Institute. Based on the 1978 syllabus, the PEP made changes to the stated aims of English instruction. The 1982 curriculum had two specific aims: to correct the orientation of the previous curriculum, which was viewed as problematic; and to prepare an educated elite to play a pioneering role in economic modernization in the context of the Open Door Policy, which had raised many Chinese people's heightened interest in interacting with foreigners, and had led to a blossoming interest in spoken as well as written English. Therefore the revision work of syllabus both oral English and Western culture are taken into account. The features of 1982 syllabus are shown in the following:

Table 2.2   Key features of the English language curriculum 1982

	1982 English language curriculum
Genesis	Development of multi-track education, especially the establishment of key secondary schools; supporting

	economic modernization in a *period of low politicization and high official status of English*
Role and status of English	*International transfer and communication; access to higher education and lucrative employment; high official status*
Role of agencies PEP: consultant / teachers	Designers and writers of syllabus; feedback and advice; piloting, feedback and advice
Progress	Research into English language teaching in *China and abroad*; team established to develop syllabus and materials, piloting in some schools;
Syllabus	*Stress communication*, lists targets in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, provides hints on pedagogy
Resources	Textbooks, cassette tapes for reading passages and practice drills, teacher's books, wall charts
Organization	Sentence-dialogue-drills---reading passage---vocabulary—grammar exercises
Discourse	Progression from weak to strong realism
Linguistic Components	Phonetic alphabet; 1250 vocabulary items, traditional sequence of grammar items
Intended pedagogy	Predominantly Structural Approach: with Audiolingualism, Grammar-translation and *Functional Notional Approach*
Political and moral messages	Strong presence of moral messages; *weak presence of political message*

(Cited from Adamsom, 2004: 152 – emphasis added to identify significant changes from the previous table)

From the italicized phrases in the above table we can see some changes have taken place compared with 1978 curriculum. The 1982 curriculum was drafted during a period of relatively low politicization and the status of English rose at this time because a long established closed-door policy came to an end. Chinese people began to have contacts with foreign countries. Scholars had more chances to get in touch and exchange academic ideas with foreign countries. In this period research into English language teaching done by scholars was mainly translating and evaluating curriculum theories and practices from western countries and as Adamson noted, the research into English language teaching was not only focused on China but also extended to abroad. Under such circumstances, the 1982 draft version was published and distributed for feedback to

specialists in tertiary institutions and teachers in different parts of the country. The message from teachers was a request for more conversational dialogues. This message implied that English language teaching should shift from the acquisition of language knowledge to communicative skills. The idea of learning language for communication was stressed in the 1982 curriculum while the 1978 curriculum emphasized the balance between knowledge and usage of language, integration of moral, political education with language education (see Table 2.1). A well known statement of three orientations by Deng Xiaoping was introduced into the syllabus ('education towards modernization, towards the outside world and the future'), which served to legitimize current trends in education that might be viewed as politically sensitive, such as the move in the English curriculum towards more listening and speaking to facilitate communication with foreigners. Though there is no explicit statement about culture teaching, the idea of communication with the outside world is clearly addressed. The shift of teaching approach from the predominant Structural Approach presented in the 1978 curriculum to the Functional/Notional Approach shown in the 1982 curriculum is also evident and supports language learning for communication with more emphasis on listening and speaking practice in the classroom. Further proof can be seen from the preface to the new syllabus which concentrates more on the economic benefits of studying English:

Foreign language is an important tool for learning cultural and scientific knowledge; for acquiring information in different fields from around the world, and for developing international communication. 'Education has to be oriented towards modernization, to the outside world and the future.' Our country is a modern socialist nation, with a high level of civilization and democracy; we have to raise the cultural and scientific quality of all people in the country. We need to nurture a large number of experts who are goal-oriented and ethical, possessing culture, discipline and, to different extents, competence in various aspects of foreign languages. Under these circumstances, the value of foreign languages as important tools becomes greater.

Therefore, foreign languages are listed as a basic requirement in our country's secondary schooling (Beijing: People's Education Press, 1986: 24 translated by the researcher).

In common with the 1978 syllabus, the 1986 syllabus sets out general learning targets and rationale, teaching principles, and specific linguistic components to be covered at each level. The learning doesn't contain a political dimension, unlike the syllabus for the previous curriculum, but stresses developing competence in English as the priority and, at the same time, declares it is important to provide students with good moral education (PEP, 1986:2-3). The teaching principles stress the primacy of oral language, as the basis for competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing. This emphasis on oral-aural English indicates that the intended teaching technique had departed gradually from the Grammar-Translation method and reflected more audio-lingual approaches. English skills were thus perceived as a conduit for acquiring skilful expertise and for dealing with foreigners.

This period was considered as the beginning of the research on curriculum reform in China.

Developing Stage (1985-1993)
Educational documents like the *Decision on Educational System Reform* issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1985 and *A Nine-Year Compulsory Education of the People's Republic of China* enacted in 1986 quickened the pace of curriculum reform. At the same time an Evaluating Committee of Primary and Middle School Teaching Materials was set up and the Evaluation Criteria of Primary and Middle School Teaching Materials were formulated. A very good opportunity was provided for those who were interested in compiling textbooks and they were greatly encouraged by these openings. Many scholars approached this subject from different

angles. The reform of the curriculum construction turned out to be one of the major concerns of society. Many discussions were held on whether textbooks should reflect the trend of the times, and the national and local conditions (China Education Daily, 1985) .There were a number of reforms between 1985-1993: for example the syllabus for English teaching in full-time junior secondary schools and the syllabus for English teaching in full-time senior secondary schools, both of which were revised to follow communicative language teaching theory. The clear guideline is provided in the preface of the syllabus:

A foreign language is an important tool for interacting with other countries and plays an important role in promoting the development of the national and the world economy, science and culture. In order to meet the needs of our Open Door Policy and to accelerate socialist modernization, efforts should be made to enable as many as possible to acquire command of one or more foreign languages. (English Syllabus, Beijing: People's Education Press, 1993: 12 – researcher's translation)

In keeping with this guideline, the objectives of English teaching in the syllabus for junior secondary schools were:

to enable students to gain basic knowledge of English and communicative competence by training in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to form good study habits and to lay a basic foundation for future study.

While the objectives for full-time senior secondary school English teaching were:

to reinforce the students' basic knowledge gained during the compulsory lower secondary English learning, develop their basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, foster students' ability to carry out some basic communication in English in both oral or written forms, while giving attention to students' ability to read so as to enable students to obtain some ability to study on their own, and lay a good foundation in real earnest for patriotism, socialism and so on and

promote the understanding of the country whose language is learnt; develop students' intelligence, promote their ability to think, observe, notice, imagine, associate and so on (Syllabus for English teaching at full-time senior middle schools, 1993:17 the 1st edition, - the researcher's translation).

It is obvious from the above two teaching objectives that a cultural dimension of language teaching can be noted in the communicative approach asserted in the document, for example, phrases like 'to promote the understanding of the country whose language is learnt' and 'to foster students' ability to carry out some basic communication in English' can be interpreted as allowing the development of students' competence in using language they are learning and to cultivate their understanding of the target country and its people . These two objectives can be considered as a breakthrough in terms of cultural teaching in Chinese foreign language teaching. Following the two groups of teaching objectives, another new series, co-authored with Longman (Britain), was written and put into use from 1993. The key features of the 1993 syllabus are shown in the following table:

Table 2.3   Key features of the English language curriculum from 1993

	1993 English language curriculum
Genesis	Nine-year compulsory education; strengthening of English language teaching ; national economic modernization; strengthening of the Open Door Policy; *decentralization of decision-making*
Role and status of English	Economic development---***International transfer and communication***; access to higher education and lucrative employment; very high official status
Role of agencies PEP: consultant / teachers	*Collaboration in researching and producing new textbooks with foreign agency*
Progress	Research into English language teaching in China and abroad; collaboration with foreign publisher, specialists and teachers; *extensive piloting; teacher training; continuing revision in **the light of post-implementation feedback***
Syllabus	Stress ***communicative competence***, lists of function/notions

	as well as vocabulary and grammar
Resources	Textbooks, teacher's books, workbooks Reading practice books, cassettes, wall pictures, videos, CD-ROMs, etc
Organization	Integrated topic-based , cyclical progression with regular revision
Discourse	*Anecdotes, stories, everyday dialogues, scientific and cultural passages*
Linguistic Components	Focus on realistic oral skills; functions, notions, traditional arrangement of grammatical components
Intended pedagogy	Eclectic: ***Structural-Functional/Notional*** ,with some Audiolingualism
Political and moral messages	*Some moral messages; very weak political content*

(Cited from Adamsom, 2004, pp.171 – with italics and bold emphasis added to show new features)

By the highlighted parts above in italics and bold, it is clear that Adamson has identified more emphasis on the use of language for purposeful communication and the development of students' communicative competence. Some phrases like '***International transfer and communication; communicative competence; cultural passages'*** are strongly indicative that the key concept of language teaching is for communication and aims to develop students' communicative competence. I have also added emphasis to new elements which Adamson does not mention, notably the presence of cultural passages. The shift from language structures/rules to a Functional/Notional Approach to foreign language teaching can be seen, emphasizing the importance of contextualizing features and pragmatic intentions that govern language in use. This is a novel approach for China recalled by Liu Daoyi, the leader of the working team of English syllabus and also Deputy Chief Editor of the PEP:

It is the first time in the history of EFL in China that actual use of the language for communication should be placed in such a prominent position. This indicates that schools will no longer teach students about the language but teach them how to use it (Liu, 1995: 8).

The official role of English is highlighted by the following statement from the 1993 syllabus:

> A foreign language is an important tool for making contact with other countries and plays an important role in promoting the development of the national and world economy, science and culture. For the purpose of meeting the needs of our Open Door Policy and *speeding up socialist modernization*, efforts should be made to enables as many people as possible to acquire certain command of one or more foreign languages (PEP, 1993: 1 – emphasis added).

The phrase of 'speeding up socialist modernization' is expressive of this period of curriculum innovation.

Deepening Stage (1994-1999)

The Open Door Policy increased people's dealings with English speakers and was a further significant boost to both the status and role of English. Language learning also became more popularized by increased access to electronic goods and to various forms of mass media in English produced either domestically or imported from overseas. It is estimated that, in 1995, about 50 million junior secondary students were learning English, 350,000 were studying Russian and 160,000 Japanese (Liu, 1995). The learning of English was compulsory for all tertiary students, and led to the College English Test, a nationwide examination which attracts around 5.5 million candidates annually (Yang, 2000).

A series of major reforms in education were undertaken from the early 1990s onwards. Two policies had a particular impact on the development of the English language curriculum. The first aimed at the provision of mass education, as there were some areas in which China had yet to achieve this goal, which had social equity implications. The Nine-Year Compulsory Education Law was promulgated in 1986. The second was the policy of decentralization that was designed to cater for the specific educational needs of

different localities. The impact on the English language curriculum was the wider range of teaching and learning situations that it would have to serve, and the opportunities for agencies at a local level to develop and publish their own textbooks in competition with those produced by the PEP, although the PEP remained responsible for publishing the syllabuses.

The reform programme was multi-faceted at this stage. Some issues it addressed were : how to make compulsory educational courses link with senior secondary school courses; how to critically and justly reflect objective needs of the society, and needs of students; how to deal with the relation between the social values of the course and the values of the education of individual (Liu, 1995). The course construction of senior secondary school had been one of the problems in this stage with respect to theory research and practice implementation. In 1995 the national working conference on senior secondary school education was held by the Ministry of Education, at which the new course plan, new syllabus of each subject and new teaching materials were discussed. Two years later in 1997, the Ministry of Education decided on a pilot experiment of the new course programme of senior secondary school that was first conducted in two provinces and a city in China and gradually then expanded nationwide. This was evaluated by a professional organization and then implemented nationwide. This also reflected rapid development of academic research on curriculum reform generally. The research concerning the development of curriculum, its theoretical basis, features, position, function, aims, content, and teaching materials, was carried out. The final important result of this multi-dimensional research in this stage was the issuing of the 2001 revised curriculum to which I will devote special consideration in the next section.

After the brief discussion of curriculum development over three decades, it can be seen that English teaching at the secondary level had made a tremendous step in terms of teaching objectives from the highly politicized programme of training 'reds and experts'

to developing more capable individuals with knowledge and ability 'to think, observe, notice, imagine, associate' and 'to foster students' ability to carry out some basic communication in English' expressed in the 1993 curriculum. This is essentially a move from knowledge transmission to knowledge acquisition and skills; from grammar-translation to the advent of a communicative teaching approach. The cultural dimension in language education has not been explicitly stressed in the curriculum until the recent times in response to the Ministry of Education's release of an Action Plan for Rejuvenating Education in the 21st Century (MEC, 1999). The reformed curriculum came into being in 2001. It is in this new curriculum that cultural awareness is, for the first time, officially declared. A detailed discussion of the 2001 revised curriculum will be presented in the following section.

The 2001 English curriculum

The unified curriculum, syllabuses and textbooks were imposed nationwide. Many criticisms have been levelled at this approach (Bao, 2002, Liu, 2003). It was felt that this practice not only ignored the diversity of regional needs and developments but also stifled local innovation. Nationally drawn-up curricula, syllabuses and textbooks had been used to ensure educational equality and control over the quality of education in the past, but there were widening differences in the pace of social and economic development between different parts of the country. One of the important measures taken in the reform of education was to decentralize decision making and allow considerable regional autonomy in exploring and implementing new approaches to teaching and learning. With this new policy, curriculum development was staged by education authorities in seven economically developed provinces like Shanghai and Zhejiang, where local innovation was permitted in curricula, syllabuses and textbooks with the aim of pioneering curriculum changes in basic education and providing relevant experiences for later possible curriculum reform throughout China (Ding, 1997), while the production of primary and secondary curricula, syllabuses and textbooks for most of the

country remained centralized. In 1998, Shanghai set up its Curriculum and Teaching Materials Reform Committee (SCTMRC) and began its own curriculum reform. One outcome of this reform was a draft curriculum for both the nine-year and senior secondary phases. After years of trial, both curricula were revised and finalized (SCTMRC, 1998a, 1998b). By 2000, nearly 85% of all the primary schools in Shanghai offered English classes from Year One (Teaching Research Institute, 2000). Beginning with the autumn semester of 2001, all the remaining schools also started to teach English from Year One. The popularization of ELT throughout primary schooling is a major measure taken to ensure that by the time students will have graduated from senior secondary school, they will have strong competence in English. Encourage by Shanghai's success, the Ministry of Education (2000a) issued guidelines which recommend that primary schools at municipal and county levels should start to offer English classes from Year Three from the autumn of 2001. As a matter of fact, some primary schools in large cities and developed areas had started to teach English years earlier (Wu, 2001). Since 1994, there had been an annual increase of more than a million primary English learners. Currently, there are eight million primary school pupils learning English as a school subject for two to three hours a week (China Education Daily, 2001). Introducing English into primary schools is not a temporary policy but rather a long-term goal and an enterprise aiming to enhance the cultural and educational quality of all citizens and promote quality-oriented education. The Chinese government issued two documents on quality-oriented education and the reform of basic education in 1999 and 2001.

Also in 2001, Beijing Normal University Press published *New English Curriculum Standards* (pilot version), which is taken as the programmatic document for basic English education. In this document the overall objectives of English education are stated as: English education should be oriented towards the development of students' comprehensive language competence at the basic education stage. The foundation of the

comprehensive language competence relies on students' language skills, language knowledge, emotion and attitude, learning strategy and culture awareness. The language knowledge and the language skills are the basis of language use in a comprehensive way. Cultural awareness is the assurance of appropriate use of language. Emotion and attitude are important factors which affect the students' study and development. Learning strategies are the guarantee of promoting learning efficiency, developing an ability of autonomous learning. These five parts together are to promote the development of comprehensive language competence. (*New English Curriculum Standards*, 2001)

The definition of cultural awareness stated in the above document is no more than the usual definition of communicative competence, and a more detailed definition of culture awareness found in the literature will show that this is a very narrow definition (see chapter 3).

The aim of NECS is not overtly political and economic, merely stipulating that comprehensive language competence should be developed and the study of English also should be expanded to include aspects of foreign culture. The importance of this change will be elaborated in the following discussion.

2.3. Globalization and English teaching for intercultural communication

The status of English and consequently of ELT has changed radically over the past half century, to arrive in the 21st century as the dominant language in global economic, information and popular media spheres. This status is greatly strengthened by the fact that the international communication system operates primarily in English. The electronic revolution of the 20th century has contributed further to this position of English with advantage given to academic communities that use English. It is the main language of books, academic journals, the media, international sports, and entertainment,

and is the international language of aviation and maritime control. English is either the single or co-official language of every major international organization, and 80% of all information stored in the world's electronic retrieval systems is in English (Altbach,1998). Graddol (2006: 12) claims that 'the phenomenon of English being a global language lies at the heart of globalization'. We have been witnessing the global flow of economics and cultures in the global village. Therefore, there have been increasing interdependence and interconnectedness among nations and people as well.

No other language but English has spread around the globe so extensively and a significant increase in the use of English and people professionally involved in English language teaching in 90 countries and the impressive speed of expansion are shown by a British Council project in 1995. Accordingly, more than 93% of respondents to the British Council project agree or strongly agree with the statement 'The global market for English language teaching and learning will increase over the next 25 years' (Graddol, 2006, Crystal, 1997). This is especially the case in China, where the proliferation of English learning materials has been overwhelming and English teaching has become a thriving business. English has now assured its status as a global language, because it is now universally recognized as an unrivalled common language of international communication, being used in all spheres (Phillipson, 1992).

As a result of this growing trend of internationalization/globalization, English becomes today the world's most widespread lingua franca (Crystal, 1997), a necessity for communication because a shared language is an important bridge for people from one nation to communicate with people from other nations. Graddol's (2006) assessment shows that about half the world's population will know English by the middle of this century.

With its further opening to the outside world, China's communication with other

countries has become more frequent. We face and enjoy an endless flow of foreign investments, information, and global fashion, etc. Anyone may have an account in an overseas bank where she/he can deposit and withdraw her/his money within one day. Anyone may stay at home while joining a distance learning class from another side of the globe. Anyone may be skiing on the top of the Alps while managing a business over the internet. These amazing experiences are widely considered as evidence of globalization.

In fact, globalization in China is not new. Perhaps the term is new, but the concept has been a part of human history from the earliest time. Zheng He was an early pioneer in globalization. His seven voyages in the early 15th century from China across Asia and to Africa opened trade, migration and other activities between China and some 35 countries. Until the 21st century in China the evidence of globalization has been seen continually. The success of holding the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, joining the World Trade Organization, hosting Asian Pacific Economic Co-operation forums has made China heard by the world.

All these achievements show that China is ready to find her place in the world. The world is coming closer to us. Look at the younger generation who love to eat KFC and McDonald rather than Chinese dumplings; they love to drink Coca-Cola rather than tea; they love to see Hollywood films rather than domestic movies. They even pay more attention to celebrating Christmas than the Spring Festival. We may ask if we are losing ourselves during this globalization. Our answer is that our civilization has charmed the world. The great success of the movie 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' in the Oscar awards has made Western people take notice of Chinese movies as well as Chinese Kongfu. The fascinating Peking Opera, the amazing Chinese acrobatics, and the magic of Chinese acupuncture make people all over the world admire Chinese culture. We need globalization. Globalization needs us too. Therefore globalization implies two-way communication. We not only contribute to the outside world, but also clarify our sense of

self, through knowing more about people around us (Girder, Smith & Ke Jianghua, 2004).

Because of international communication, communication is emerging as the supreme value of language teaching (Cameron, 2002). Using English as global language means seeing learners as potential global communicators (Cortazzi, 2001). If we consider who we are communicating with in today's international communication, a shift regarding the cultural dimension in ELT seems unavoidable; cultural contents about other countries apart from Anglo-American must be taken into account and will start to play a more relevant role in today's intercultural communication.

There is extensive research into theory and practice of foreign language teaching and intercultural communication in Western countries. At present, research in this area in China is booming. More and more Chinese scholars, as I will discuss later in the literature review, realize the significance of our national effort for English teaching is that it should be directed to intercultural communication because English teaching not only imparts language knowledge but also trains students' skills of communication and application of English in intercultural communication. Students learning the pronunciation and grammar rules of a foreign language and mastering a quantity of words does not mean that they can communicate successfully with this foreign language. Both participants in communication produce misunderstanding, and communication will fail if they can not go negotiate culture through intercultural communication (Hu, 2001). Pragmatic breakdown can not be treated as a grammar fault. A person who can speak a foreign language fluently will be thought short of courtesy or unfriendly according to his use of language. His faults may be attributed not to the absence of language ability but to rudeness or hostility (Behler, 1986). Therefore education in language-and-culture for intercultural communication is a necessary new insight dimension in foreign language education in China.

2.4 Cultural teaching – a comparison

The integration of culture into second/foreign language curriculum has progressed rapidly in recent years. Standards of cultural competence and goals for culture learning are currently an integral part of instructional programmes at all levels in Western countries. The aims of cultural teaching in the foreign language curriculum are well documented in some countries, and there is little doubt that educators would agree that culture teaching in the foreign language classroom is an inseparable part of achieving intercultural understanding and intercultural competence. The reason is that bringing a foreign language to the classroom means connecting learners to a world that is culturally different from their own (Sercu, 2005). Therefore, all foreign language educators are expected to exploit this potential and promote the acquisition of intercultural competence in their learners, who are taught intercultural communicative competence as well as the acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language. In order to get a better view of intercultural competence through language teaching in a global perspective, I would like to explore the issue in some English speaking countries and discuss China against this background to see what culture teaching concepts are contained in the English curriculum.

2.4.1 Cultural teaching concepts in the language curriculum in the United States of America

The United States carried out a new wave of educational reform nearly at the same time as China in the 1990s. American educational reform is characterized by the standards movement or standards-based reform. According to the *Goals 2000, Educational American Act,* signed by President Bill Clinton in 1994:

By the year 2000, all students will leave grades four, eight and twelve having

demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in the nation's modern economy. (US Department of Education www.ed.gov/index.jhtml)

With this statement made by Clinton and hard work done by the foreign language professionals and a general social awareness of urgent improvement in American foreign language teaching in 1996, a collaborative effort produced the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning (SFLL): Preparing for the 21st Century*, also called American Five Cs Standards. For the sake of convenience, people prefer to call this document the *Five Cs Standards* for short.

What is 'the Five Cs'?   'C' is the first letter of five key words of the statement, which are identified as the five goal areas of foreign language education in the United States. They are Communication, Connections, Cultures, Comparisons and Communities. Each goal contains two or three content standards, eleven in total. These standards describe the knowledge and abilities that all students should acquire by the end of their high school education. Each standard is followed by a brief discussion to further explicate and illustrate the standard and to define its place within the goal area. Essentially the five Cs mean that students should communicate in languages other than English; gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures; connect with other disciplines and acquire information; learn to compare and develop insights into the nature of language and culture; and learn to participate in multilingual communities in the United States and around the world after school foreign language learning. The emphasis and focus are on developing competency and proficiency in the target language. Now I want to focus my discussion on the second C-Culture.

'Culture' is generally understood, according to the *Standards*, to include the philosophical perspectives, the behavioural practices, and the products, both tangible and intangible, of a society. The three components of culture are closely interrelated because language is the primary vehicle for expressing cultural perspectives and participating in social practices, and the study of a language provides opportunities for students to develop insights in a culture and cultures are expressed through that language. It is important that students become skilled observers and analysts of other cultures.

The Cultures Goal includes two standards. The first standard requires that students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied (SFLL, p.46). Understanding perspectives, that is the meanings, attitudes, values, and ideas of the culture being studied, is the ultimate goal for learners of the world's languages. Perspectives are the common thread in the two standards that fashion the culture goal. Cultural practices refer to patterns of behaviour accepted by a society and deal with aspects of culture such as rites of passage, the use of forms of discourse, and the use of social space. They represent the knowledge of 'what to do, when and where'.

It is considered important to understand the relationship between these practices and the underlying perspectives that represent the cultural view of the world. This standard focuses on the practices that are derived from the traditional ideas, attitudes and values (perspectives) of a culture. The second standard asks students to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures being studied (ibid, p.47). Cultural products may be tangible (e.g., paintings, a cathedral, a piece of literature) or intangible (e.g., an oral tale, a dance, a system of education). Whatever the form of the product, its presence within the culture is required or justified by the underlying beliefs and values (perspectives) of that culture.

Though there is no concrete and detailed cultural content specified the Five Cs Standards, the cultural instruction is more flexible and goal-directed to the perspectives, practices and products of various cultures being studied. Therefore as a country of multilingual and multicultural communities, America gives cultural education ain especially important status in its foreign language education. It can be concluded that the US has a rather elaborate and systematic approach to culture teaching in foreign language education. *Culture is a key word for foreign language instruction* (Phillips, 2003).

2.4.2 Cultural teaching concepts in the language curriculum in Canada

Canada is officially bilingual in French and English, but it is also a multilingual, multicultural and multiracial country. There are many small communities that maintain a distinctive culture and language. This special mosaic structure exerts a profound influence on education. For example, the needs of French speaking children in Quebec or Ontario have been on the educational agenda for some time. Classes which include children from dozens of different language backgrounds have become the norm for growing numbers of schools in Canada. The national identity, culture and heritage etc have resulted in an acceptance of a Canada itself united by diversities. Hodgettes (1968: 34) stated in his research '…it is closely geared to the pluralistic, multiracial nature of our society; it recognizes that Canada is not only a North American country but also is becoming more involved with the world community of nations'. The country has to face the challenge brought to education to be able to adjust the school systems to meet the changing needs of society.

For pedagogical reasons, it is recognized the quality of civic life can be greatly improved through education and young people should develop an intelligent, knowledgeable love for their own country and appreciation for other's value systems and cultures through language education. Language is a fundamental element of identity and culture. Students need language skills. For many years English was exclusively taught in schools for

children from multi-backgrounds in Canada. The increasing linguistic and cultural diversity provides many opportunities for cultural enrichment and global education for all students. Because of the variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds that students have, schools need to provide language programmes to ensure that all students develop the level of proficiency in English required for success at schools (http://www.concordia.ca/info/).

Owing to this characteristic of Canadian society, I will focus on the language curriculum of Canada to explore the cultural aspect of teaching. After searching for a National Curriculum in Canada, I discovered that in Canada there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared powers, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that 'In and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to Education'. Therefore departments or ministries of education in each province are responsible for organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels within their boundaries. I chose the Ontario curriculum as an example to discuss.

The Ontario curriculum (2001) of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) offers Levels 1-5 for ESL and ELD courses. Before I move on to discuss this, an explanation why there are two types of English (ESL and ELD) and who they are for, is needed so as to clarify these terms. Students who have immigrated to Canada, students from Canadian communities in which a language other than English is spoken, and students who speak a language other than English at home may come to school with a limited understanding of English. These students are usually proficient users of their own languages but require assistance to learn English, the language of instruction in Ontario schools. English as a second language (ESL) instruction is designed to provide such assistance. Students who have not developed literacy skills in their first language because of limited access to schooling or who come from

communities where Standard English is the official language but where other varieties of English are in common use may also require help in developing the English-language proficiency they need to succeed in school. English literacy development (ELD) instruction is designed to help such students to improve their skills in reading, writing, and oral communication in English (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca.). Students in any grade may be placed in appropriate ESL or ELD courses, which are intended for students whose first language is a language other than English or is a variety of English significantly different from that used for instruction in Ontario schools.

There are two expectations identified for each course which describe the knowledge and skills that students are expected to develop and demonstrate in their class work, on tests, and in various other activities on which their achievement is assessed and evaluated. Two sets of expectations are listed for each strand of each course. The overall expectations describe in general terms the knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate by the end of each course. The specific expectations describe the expected knowledge and skills in greater detail.

The content in each of the ESL and ELD courses is organized into four interrelated strands, or broad areas of learning: Listening and Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Socio-cultural Competence and Media Literacy. Effective instructional activities blend expectations from the four strands in order to provide English language learners with the kinds of experiences that promote meaningful learning and that help students recognize how language and literacy skills in the four strands overlap and strengthen one another. The programme at all levels is designed to develop a range of essential skills in the four interrelated strands, built on a solid foundation of knowledge of the language conventions of standard English and incorporating the use of analytical, critical, and metacognitive thinking skills (Ontario curriculum, 2001: 18). My analysis will focus on the last strand of social-cultural competence and media literacy. I choose ESL and ELD Level 4 as a representative to achieve a consistent age level (Grades 8-9) in my

discussion.

The Socio-cultural Competence and Media Literacy strand has four overall expectations, in ESL and ELD which is identical in content as follows:

Overall expectations: By the end of this course students will:

1. Use English and non-verbal communication strategies appropriately in a variety of social contexts;

2. Demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of Canadian Citizenship, and of the contributions of diverse groups to Canadian society;

3. Demonstrate knowledge of and adaptation to the Ontario education system;

4. Demonstrate an understanding of, interpret, and create a variety of media works.

Specific expectations:

Using English in socially and culturally appropriate ways

Developing awareness of Canada, citizenship, and diversity

Adapting to school life in Ontario

Developing media knowledge and skills

From the above expectations of the social-cultural communication strand, it can be seen that students' ability to interact appropriately at different levels of formality; the ability to understand and use the different language forms and observe the behavioural norms appropriately in a wide variety of situations are emphasized. In socio-cultural teaching, students are encouraged to value and maintain their own linguistic and cultural identities. As mentioned before these two curricula are for students who are in Grade 8-9. The development of their linguistic and cultural competences in English should not be at the expense of their own language and cultures (Ontario curriculum, 2001: 4). Cultural awareness is placed in the understanding of Canada diversity as a new citizen. Therefore social-cultural teaching in the secondary language education is very important and

considered as a critical factor for students from a multitude of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The aims of learning languages and cultures presented here are determined within the diversity agenda of Canadian multiculturalism and multilingualism. As we shall see below, this element is missing from the Chinese documents even though China is also an ethnically and linguistically diverse a country with 55 minority nationalities and over 80 languages (Xiao Hong, 1998: 221). Xinjiang , where the current research context is set, is also an area of 13 ethnic minorities living together and this issue of a diversity agenda which should have been considered in the national curriculum design is made evident by this comparison with the Ontario curriculum. Owing to the fact that the national curriculum is used all over the country, as Lam argues (2003), it might be feasible for China to deal with macro-level policy, but it is much harder to justify a unified and homogeneous approach when discussing the individual histories of minorities. This is because at the micro-level of individual interactions and experiences with languages, one might reasonably expect data indicating the presence of crossing, code switching and perhaps even the emergence of fused lects (Lam, 2003: 56). Therefore the macro-policy may result in some problems during the application of the unified curriculum, especially in the ethnic minority areas in terms of syllabus, textbooks, trilingual and tricultural learning (first language, Chinese and English), criteria for their linguistic competence etc., which really deserve my future effort to study because Xinjiang is the largest minority province in China. This analysis of the Ontario curriculum reveals a new area for future research: to develop a localized curriculum for minority students, which is not my major concern in this study. This becomes all the more significant because of the disturbances which are taking place as this is being written (July 2009).

2.4.3 Cultural teaching concepts in the language curriculum in England and Wales

The national Curriculum for England and Wales is a part of a major Education Reform Act passed in 1988, nearly ten years earlier than in China. It specifies 10 levels of attainment in subjects, usually covering compulsory education from 5-16, but for foreign languages covering only the 11-16 age-range. Each subject is specified in terms of 'attainment targets' which for languages are the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, each skill being further specified in terms of ten levels.

The major innovation of the national curriculum was the introduction of the concept of 'cultural awareness' and recommendations for a comparative methodology. In this new curriculum, the language teaching objectives are added to the established list of educational purposes. One purpose of language teaching is 'to develop pupils' understanding of themselves and their own culture' (DES, 1990: 3). As we shall see below, there is nothing of this kind in the Chinese documents – no reference to own culture. The concept of 'cultural awareness' in this document is defined as 'the promotion of understanding of and respect for other cultures…one of the most important aims of modern language studies' (ibid, 36). It continues to emphasize the concept of 'cultural awareness' in a very succinct way:

A growing awareness of the culture of the people who speak the language of study is intrinsic to the learning of it and it is in this context that the *areas of experience* have been defined in the second part of the programmes of study. *Without the cultural dimension, successful communication is often difficult (…) comparison between learner's own way of life and that of the other language community are an essential means to better understanding of both.* (DES, 1990: 37 – emphasis in italics added).

If I read between the lines of italicised part, it is not difficult to find that 'the area of

experience' is an attempt to specify something related to students' life for them to experience which is essential for language and culture learning in lower secondary education. The last two sentences clearly express the importance of culture teaching in language education and understanding of one's own life and others' by means of comparison of different cultures.

The detailed descriptions of the 'area of experience' are provided for key stages as following (cited from Byram & Morgan, 1994: 75-77)

Area A. Everyday activities

During each key stage, pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with activities they are likely to engage in at home and at school. This should include the language of the classroom.

Examples of topics: home life, shopping, going out, leisure activities and sports, school life….

Area B. Personal and Social Life

…topics which deal with aspects of their personal lives, relationships with family, friends and others, social attitudes, customs and institutions which are relevant to them

Examples of topics: self, family and friends, health and fitness, major institutions (schools, hospitals, clubs, etc), personal, teenage and social attitudes towards religion, politics and society (including stereotyping and equal opportunities).

C. The World around Us

…topics which deal with the physical environment including their own home, home town or region and environmental themes at home and abroad.

Examples of topics: home town and region, weather and climate, the man-made environment, home region compared with a region abroad.

D. The World of Education, Training and Work

…topics which deal with education, training, employment and careers; the world of business and industry.

Examples of topics: school subjects, courses and further study or training, personal experience of the world of work, personal finance, unemployment.

E. The World of Communications

…topics which deal with the various means of communication, including the use of information technology and the media.

Examples of topics: writing and sending letters (informal and formal) including the use of electronic mail/fax, radio, television and satellite TV, computers and IT at home, school and work, advertising.

F. The International World

…topics which deal with experiences of travelling or staying abroad; contact with speakers of the foreign language; wider international issues.

Examples of topics: school visits and exchanges, national stereotypes, the foreign language in use in different countries or regions of the world.

G. The world of Imagination and Creativity

…topics which deal with imaginative and creative activities of all kinds, hobbies and interests; the creative arts in one's own and other cultures.

Examples of topics: designing and making, fashion and make-up, TV, cinema, theatre and other entertainments, making a class cassette, magazine or video (DES, 1991: 27-9).

The 'area of experience' by specifying topics and themes in England and Wales language curriculum are distinctive features of culture teaching. The concrete topics and themes in connection with culture teaching can help teachers to integrate the language learning with cultural experiences so as to raise pupils' cultural awareness. The areas covered go from daily activities to relatively wider topics of international issues.

Similarly, the concept of 'cultural awareness' was introduced into the revised 2001 English curriculum in junior secondary in China. I intend to examine how the concept is interpreted in the Chinese curriculum document compared with curriculum in England

and Wales, Canada and USA.

2.4.4 Cultural teaching concepts in the language curriculum in China

As discussed above, the new English curriculum was issued in 2001.There are five parts concerning English educational goals structured in a circle to indicate the relationship of each other, more or less like *American Five Cs Standards* which uses Olympic five rings (Zhang, 2003) to illustrate how they interconnect and suggest the richness embodied in human language (see the diagram of English language teaching objectives in China below).
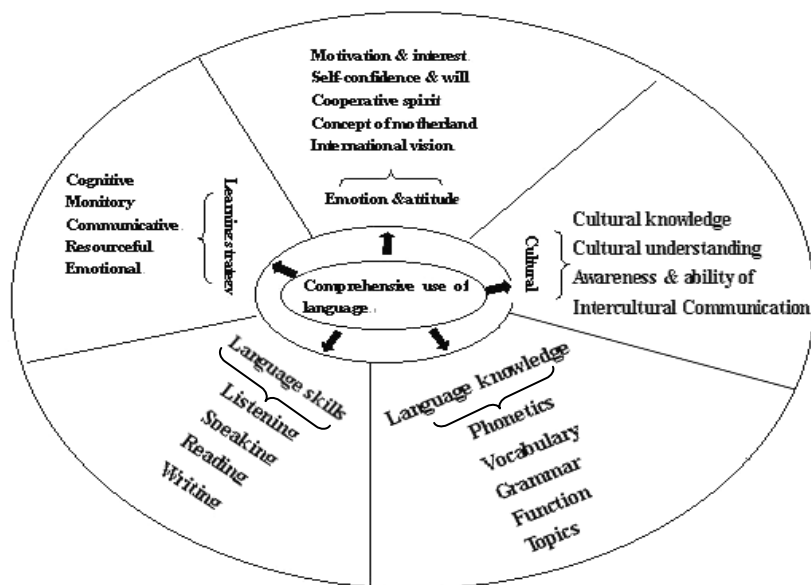
(Taken from 2001 English Curriculum, China, People's Education Press)

The five parts are language knowledge, language skills, learning strategies, emotion and

attitude, and cultural awareness. It is very interesting to notice that the Five Cs Standards in America also bears five parts indicating communication, connections, culture, comparisons and communities. It is clear that the contents of the five parts are different though the structure of the two curricula is quite similar. The five parts analysis of Five Cs was given in the section 2.4.1. Now I want to have a close look at the five parts of our English curriculum in particular.

Comprehensive language competence is the central part. The surrounding five small instructional fields aim to achieve this central goal. Language skills and language knowledge are two basic instructional goals and no matter how different the curriculum gets developed each time, these two always remain as essentials; the emphasis on language knowledge and language skills. Students can acquire knowledge of a foreign language through its vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, topic and etc Using them can help improve language knowledge. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four basic language skills, in which effective communication occurs. Most communication takes place by this means. So they are not only necessary language skills but carriers for English practice as well. They are the solid foundation in basic linguistic language. However, in the Five Cs, each part is essential and each part or goal area is interlocked like the Olympic five rings. None of those goals can be separated from the other. They work together to present the foreign language goals of the country. China's curriculum is a circle with five parts evenly contributing to the central part to achieve the comprehensive language competence. It is debatable whether each part gives the same contribution to the central target if one is over stressed, for example language knowledge and language skills as shown above. In my empirical study the result shows only 20% time distribution is given to culture teaching (see chapter 5, section 5.6). Therefore the five parts are not equally treated by teachers in practice. I will continue to explore the other three parts.

Learning strategies, which contain cognitive strategy, communicative strategy, monitoring strategy and resource use strategy, also function positively in language learning and personal development. The traditional strategies of English teaching, relying on learners' imitation and memorization while paying less attention to thinking and creativity, lead learners to develop a high dependence on their teachers and have a low level of learning autonomy. However, the diagram above taken from 2001 *English Curriculum* emphasizes the training of learning strategies in a wider scope, such as cognitive strategies, monitoring strategies etc. These strategies can prove effective in yielding twice the result with half the effort and also seen effective in equipping learners with strategies useful to their lifelong education after graduation (Wang, 2003). From this it can be seen that more attention is given to help students learn English effectively and to develop their autonomous learning strategies. As mentioned above, communicative strategy is a part of learning strategies and the interpretation of this aim is described in the curriculum document as: 1) to be able to communicate with people in English in and out of the classroom; 2) to grab every possible opportunity to communicate in English; 3) to pay attention to the meaning while communicating; 4) to use gestures and facial expressions if necessary when communicating; 5) to seek help if encountering communicative problems; 6) to pay attention to custom differences in communication (2001: 24 - my translation). The message I got from these interpretations is to use English language for communication but the culture aspect is not stressed even though non-verbal communication like gestures and facial expressions can be used if necessary in the communication. However, in the Five Cs standards, language and culture education is part of the American core curriculum, and 'it is tied to programme models that incorporate effective strategies, assessment procedures, and technologies.'(American Five Cs Standards 1996:11). I notice that though no specific part is given to illustrate learning strategies in the American Five Cs Standards, the standpoint emphasizing learning strategies is reflected implicitly. The connections part in the American standards shows this: 'The conscious effort to connect the foreign language

curriculum with other parts of students' academic lives opens doors to information and experiences which enrich the students' entire school and life experience.' (American Five Cs Standards, p.23). Foreign language acquisition focuses on the broader education of students. It can help students' learn how to learn.

Emotion and attitude are specified as another goal in China's English Curriculum while in the Five Cs they are not. China's curriculum refers to learners' interests and motivation towards the target language, whether they are autonomous or cooperative with others and what kinds of feelings they hold about their own country and the outside world compose of affective zone. Language learning will be facilitated if learners are positive, but if they are negative, this will debilitate their learning. Human beings are emotional creatures, and their emotions vary from person to person and from time to time. These emotions play an active part in learners' English learning which is a complicated process.

The fifth aspect is cultural awareness. The teaching objectives in culture first officially appeared in the new English Curriculum in written form here and evidenced their important position in language teaching. The introductory part of cultural awareness suggests a rationale for English teaching as follows:

> The language contains *abundant cultural contents*. In foreign language teaching, culture teaching means teaching students history, geography, local customs, traditional custom, life style, literature art, behavioural norm, values etc. of a target language. Getting in touch with and understanding cultures of English speaking countries are beneficial to the comprehension and usages of English; helpful to obtain a deeper *understanding of our cultures,* good for the development of the world view. In such teaching, teachers should consider characteristics such as the student's age and cognitive abilities expanding the contents and scope of cultural knowledge gradually. At the beginning stage of

learning English, students should be made encouraged to be interested in culture in which the language is taught. Cultural knowledge involved in English teaching should be closely linked to students' daily life and what they learnt about the *similarities and differences in the culture will stimulate their interest in English.* At the higher stage, the scope and coverage of cultures should be expanded so that students will *broaden their view, and develop sensitivity* to the similarities and difference of our own and others' culture with the *aim of developing intercultural competence*

(*China's English Curriculum Standards* (CECS), 2001, p.5, the researcher's translation and emphasis added)

The italics to indicate key words and phrases appearing in the introductory part of the 'cultural awareness objective' show that the latest national curriculum accentuates the need to teach cultural knowledge and raise students' awareness of English speaking cultures since an awareness of the target-language culture can help students compare their own and others' culture so as to develop intercultural competence. The focus shift from solely language learning to intercultural communication can be traced.

To achieve this goal, there are three attainments concerning the cultural awareness part in connection with their year and age level. A attainment 2 is for primary school pupils (year age 9-11). A attainment 5 (year age 12-15) and a attainment 8 (16-18) are set respectively for the students of junior and senior secondary school. In each some specific objectives are expected and are presented in Appendix 1. Here I will discuss attainment 5 set for junior secondary students (age 12-15) consistent with my focus throughout the study.

In the requirements for cultural awareness in attainment 5 at the age of 12-15, the students are expected to know:

__ non-verbal communication (gestures, facial expressions etc); the common names of different genders and the intimate addresses;

__terms of address among family members;

__ clothing appropriate for formal and informal occasions; .

__ habits of eating and drinking in the target culture;

__ basic knowledge of common plants and animals which bear cultural implications;

__ natural phenomena possibly indicating cultural meanings;

__ traditional entertainments and sports activities;

__ important festivals and holidays and their ways of celebration;

It is notable that the requirements for cultural awareness in attainment 5 bear some similarities and differences compared with England and Wales National Curriculum (see section 2.4.3 above). Both are topic-based and cover small c culture. However, the list of topics in attainment 5 in China seems to be arbitrarily chosen and topics in England and Wales National Curriculum are arranged by an area of experience, from everyday activities to the world of imagination and creativity. That is from daily life to the extension of the world view. The pattern is easily followed. In spite of this arbitrary choice of cultural topics in China's National curriculum, it is important to say this is the first time the attainments have been explicitly set for culture teaching in the curriculum showing that the culture teaching in the language education is gaining more and more attention than before. Compared with the 1978, 1982, 1986, and 1996 English language curricula as I discussed earlier, this 2001 revised English curriculum is stepping closer to integration into world education and globalization. It is a tremendous progress in English language curriculum reform.

However, I can see that these attainments for culture teaching are to teach mainly about culture knowledge, and as the American Five Cs and the standards for culture show, this is not enough. Students are expected to identify how to use appropriately the practice of

addressing, greeting and saying goodbye to each other; how to respond properly to the praise and requirement of others and to express such ideas appropriately, to know about what people from a given cultural group are likely to do and understand the cultural values placed upon certain ways of acting or upon certain beliefs. Cultural competence in this case comes to be viewed as a body of knowledge about the country on the one hand and seeks to describe cultures in terms of the practices and values on the other. Such learning sees culture as unvarying and composed of discrete, concrete facts which can be taught and learned as factual information, which may be problematic for language teaching because it omits key elements of cultural knowledge which are important for intercultural communication, such as underlying value systems, cultural variability within target language communities, the role of the individual as a creator of culture and the ways in which language and culture interact in the creation of meaning (Paige, *et al*, 1999). A result of this orientation is that the cultural component becomes self-contained and is often very remote from the language itself (Liddicoate, 2004), which obviously can't meet the new curriculum guidelines '….students will broaden their view, and develop sensitivity to the similarities and difference of our own and others' culture with the *aim of developing students' intercultural competence*' (CECS, 2001, pp. 5 – emphasis added).

Cultural knowledge is not therefore a case of knowing information about the culture, it is about knowing how to engage with it and gain insights about ways of living, in particular, the cultural context (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoate, 1997). Byram (1997) argues that a learner needs to become an 'intercultural speaker' and Carr (1999) also echoes Byram that learners should become 'interculturally competent players as well as sensitive observers'. Thus I can say that culture teaching is to develop students' intercultural competence, clearly asserted in the curriculum, but it is not explicitly specified what the intercultural competence should be. Before I move to the discussion of the intercultural approach to foreign language teaching in greater detail, a summary of culture teaching in

the language curriculum in different countries is given as following:

----Culture teaching in America is considered as a core of language teaching. Culture becomes integrated with and integral to language learning.

----Culture teaching in England and Wales is regarded as 'areas of experience' a culture-topic based from daily practice to international contexts with concrete examples for cultural understanding.

----Culture teaching in Canada is located in the educational agenda of multilingual, multicultural context for understanding the culture and country they are socialized.

----Culture teaching in China is culture-information-centred for acquisition of culture knowledge, or in other words, culture is learnt simply by learning the language associated with the culture.

Thus I may say that the language curricula in these countries provide very broad concepts which spans high culture, cultural norms and practices. No matter what it may be, the cultural dimension in foreign/second language curriculum has been given more emphasis in recent decades. American Five Cs curriculum sees the relationship between language and culture as very close and culture teaching is put in the core part of language education. In Canada, the diversified multilingual and multicultural feature of society is determined by the environment of culture in language and language in culture. In England and Wales, culture teaching is for the development of understanding of one's own and the other cultures, but this is not strong in the Chinese curriculum. In China's new English curriculum, the relationship between language and culture doesn't make as close an association as in America. There is a disconnection in the document between the purpose of culture learning (asserted) and no clear consideration and guidance of what sorts of culture teaching/learning are needed to support improved communication and better understanding of others (not identified) in the present curriculum. Unlike Canada, in China there is no reference to diversity in the learners' own country and focus is above all on the target language countries. The ideas I got from England and Wales National

Curriculum include the systematic arrangement of the cultural topics. The good point I think, is that teachers can follow clear guidance about what should be taught rather than individual teachers' free behaviour .In my empirical study I asked teachers what cultural topics they prefer to teach. They gave their preference of topics and result of their choice will be presented in Chapter 5, section 5.4.

The curriculum reform of our country is at the end of the experimental period and the beginning of the disseminating period. We can improve ourselves by comparing and learning from others. Some tentative suggestions to improve our national curriculum are offered in the following:

1) Awareness on English education in China needs enhancing, especially culture awareness;

2) More concrete, specific guidance, less general description of requirements;

3) Sample lessons should be given as the Five Cs does to help incorporate the standards into real classroom teaching and learning.

The suggestions listed here are only tentative ones, and there is still much room for further study in this area in future.

2.5 Intercultural teaching

In the previous sections, a comparative analysis of culture teaching in three countries' language curricula has been carried out. As this analysis of curricula has shown, there is growing interest in curriculum issues connected to language education to develop cultural awareness Many educators and researchers agree that one of the basic and important goals of intercultural education is to lead students to some understanding of the notion of culturally determined behaviour as such (Fantini, 1999: 167, 184-185; Kramsch, 1983: 438; Mantle-Bromley, 1992: 119), so that they begin to see themselves, not just others, as culturally *marked*. In Byram's terms, this amounts to an understanding

of relativization of self (1997: 22); thus Byram's definition of the intercultural speaker includes recognition of self and other as socially constructed (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001: 30). Relatedly Damen (1987) has argued that awareness of self is a necessary corollary to awareness of others:

> Cross-cultural awareness involves uncovering and understanding one's own culturally conditioned behaviour and thinking, as well as the patterns of others. Thus, the process involves not only perceiving the similarities and differences in other cultures but also recognizing the givens of the native culture. (p.14).

The goal of understanding self and other as culturally constructed features in the national curriculum in America, Canada, England and Wales and China as illustrated in the documents respectively. Among the general objectives of culture learning cited in Ontario's curriculum is the broadening of students' cultural horizons, defined as openness to cultural difference and altered awareness of one's own culture (p. 86). China's equivalent aims to '…develop sensitivity to the similarities and difference of our own and others' culture with the aim of developing students' intercultural competence' (p.5). Similarly, one of the objectives in England and Wales stipulates that 'comparison between learner's own way of life and that of the other language community is an essential means to better understanding of both' (p.37). The Five Cs curriculum of America says that 'students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own' (p.56) and students recognize that culture use different patterns of interaction and apply this knowledge to their own culture (p.58).

Apart from this, the development of English language curriculum in China reviewed in a previous section shows that language education changes according to historical, economic, cultural and social circumstances. The goals of yesterday are not necessarily the goals of today and tomorrow. The norm of the native speaker in language education is now being questioned (Widdowson 2004; Kramsch 1998) and replaced by a new ideal:

the intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997). This implies that a language speaker, who acts as a mediator between two cultures, interprets and understands other perspectives and questions what is taken for granted in their own society. Communicative competence is combined with intercultural competence to intercultural communicative competence, ICC (Byram and Zarate, 1997). Byram (1997) has developed a theoretical framework for teaching and assessing this competence which is a contribution to a revised foreign language teaching approach. He presents five 'savoirs' or factors of knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical awareness, which form an intercultural competence model and is widely cited. Apart from Byram's model, there are some other scholars' ICC models. For instance, Chen (2009) summarizes a number of relevant intercultural competence models in chronological order and defines ICC/IC models into two kinds: models designed for the purpose of acculturation, which are mostly useful for sojourners, immigrants, or business purposes; and models that are useful for teachers in education. Byram's model belongs to the second kind which I think may be more suitable in my research because Byram's model is proposed initially for the purpose of foreign language education, which allows foreign language teachers to design syllabus and lessons to educate students to acquire ICC through education. Since my aim is to analyze ICC components contained in China's English curriculum, his model is going to be used in my research.

From the earlier review I can see that in the revised 2001 curriculum in China there is a strong signal that language teaching is for *developing students' intercultural competence* (CECS, 2001, p.5). I wonder whether there is any implication for teaching intercultural competence, and if any, how much weight in the curriculum is being given to teaching intercultural competence, how much teachers understand this new concept in theory and in practice (see discussion in Chapter 3). The curiosity triggers me into examining the curriculum from an intercultural perspective to see to what extent this has been taken into account in the existing junior curriculum in China; whether there are any emphases on skills and attitudes apart from cultural knowledge acquisition. The purpose of doing this

is to see whether our latest curriculum can be used to develop students' intercultural competence, what is missing; what are the mismatches in teaching intercultural competence which may serve as a departure to rethink our teacher training programme in which the missing part might be included in future. Undoubtedly the revision of the curriculum is beyond my power if needed but I could do what I can do within the limits of my responsibility and commitment to foreign language education. In the next section I will analyze the English language curriculum in terms of the components of intercultural competence.

2.6. The analysis of curriculum in aspects of intercultural competence

In Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), he defines five 'savoirs', i.e. knowledge, attitudes, two kinds of skills and critical cultural awareness (see the Table 2-4 below) within cognitive, affective and behavioural domains.

Table 2.4   Components of ICC developed by Byram (1997)

	Skills Interpret and relate Savoir-comprendre	
Knowledge ▪of self and other; ▪of interaction; individual and societal Savoirs	Education Political education Critical cultural awareness Savoir-s'engager	Attitudes Relativize self and value others Savoir-etre
	Skills Discover and/or interact Savoir-apprendre/savoirs-faire	

He argues that learners need knowledge both of their own and their interlocutor's country, and of the general process of societal and individual interactions. Moreover, he believes

that an attitude of 'curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own' is also essential in communication. In addition, he proposes that learners need skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction to handle various cognitive and affective tasks to acquire intercultural competence. Ultimately, learners should be able to develop a critical mind towards perspectives, practice and products in their own and other cultures. Taken together, the list of abilities forms the elements of becoming an intercultural speaker, the goal of foreign language education.

After studying Byram's model and our English curriculum closely, I find it is difficult to distinguish knowledge, attitudes and skills, because the relationship between them is inter-related and overlapping. Skills of interpreting and relating, for example, draw upon knowledge without which these skills can't be acquired. A clear division between which is knowledge and which is skill is difficult to make. However this is both the strength and the weakness of the model. They make this clearer but simplify the complexity and so it is necessary to look for the evidence of the five elements whenever they appear not necessarily as separate elements. Therefore I want to look for the statement of evidence contained in our current curriculum.

To make this process operable, the first step is to make a table in which the attainments in the Chinese curriculum and five components (attitude, knowledge, two kinds of skills and awareness) of intercultural communicative competences are indicated (see the table below). The reason for this is that it will hopefully enable me to identify each factor more easily and provides clearer reference for later analysis.

Table 2.5   The Example Table of Classification of ICC of English curriculum in China

Attainments	Knowledge	attitudes	Two sets of Skills	Critical Awareness

Attainment 2				
Attainment 5				
Attainment 8				

As mentioned earlier there are three attainments in the cultural awareness component as one of the language teaching objectives in the 2001 revised curriculum. Attainment 2 is set for Years 3-6 (ages 9-11) and attainments 5 and 8 are for Years 7-9 and Years 10-12 (ages 12-15 and 16-18) respectively. Though my study is mainly focused on Years 7-9 throughout, I intend to take three levels of attainments into the classification of ICC as a whole in order to see whether there is any shifting emphasis on these factors of ICC.

The classification process of ICC components is to first locate Byram's book (1997) and the English curriculum of China side by side to refer to, looking at the first component of knowledge under which the objectives are identified by Byram as follows:

Knowledge: 'of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction' (p.58).

Objectives (knowledge of/about):

(1) historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor' countries;

(2) the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity), of travel to and from, and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems;

(3) the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins;

(4) the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries;

(5) the national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from

one's own country;

(6) the national definitions of geographical space in one's own country, and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries;

(7) the national definitions of geographical space in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own;

(8) the process and institutions of socialization in one's own and one's interlocutor's country;

(9) social distinctions and their principal markers, in one's own country and one's interlocutor's;

(10) institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them;

(11) the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country;

According to Byram's model, knowledge is classified into two kinds : 1) knowledge of others and of social processes of intergroup communication social groups(savoirs) and 2) Knowledge of self and of critical cultural awareness, which involves an ability to evaluate practices and products of one's own and others' cultures (savoir s'engager).

In order to be identified clearly and easily, I decided to use the short form (K1,K2,K3… K11) to identify the knowledge factor with a corresponding specific objective. The letter 'K' stands for 'knowledge' and the number '1' for the first objective of knowledge. I will proceed in this manner for other components such as attitudes, skills and awareness.

I first look at the attainment 2 for Years 3-6 pupils (age 9-11). When they finish their primary school education at the age of 11, students are required to

1) know the expressions of simple forms of addresses, greeting and farewell in English ;

2) be able to respond appropriately to general praises and requests;

3) know about important recreational activities and sports activities in the world;

4) know the names of the most common food and drinks in English speaking countries;

5) know the capitals and flags of major English speaking countries;

6) know the important symbols of major countries, like Big Ben in London; and

7) know the major festivals and holidays in English speaking countries.

<div align="center">(English Curriculum, People's Education Press, 2001)</div>

The way I am going to proceed is to see what the curriculum requires at attainment 2 and match this with the objectives under the factor of knowledge (Savoirs). For example, I group the item 4,5,6, with Byram's model of knowledge as K9 which says that the intercultural speaker knows about social distinctions and their principal markers in one's own country and one's interlocutor's country while at attainment 2 pupils should know the names of food and drinks, flags and capitals, symbols and markers like Big Ben in London. It seems that the three items 4,5,6 can generally match the 9th objective of knowledge. Items 1 and 2 can be linked to K3 because misunderstanding may be caused by different ways of greeting and addressing as modes of socialization and as cultural customs and rites. Differences in address forms are real across cultures. For example, the family name and given name are different in order. In Chinese, the family name is in the first place and the given name follows just the opposite of English speaking countries. Items 3 and 7 are possibly put into K4 which deals with events are related to and seen from the perspective of others.

I notice that only the first kind of knowledge of others and of social processes of intergroup communication are mentioned and the second kind of knowledge of self and of critical cultural awareness, which involve an ability to evaluate practices and products of one's own and others' cultures are missing. Without comparison of differences in one's own culture with others' through the language being learnt, learners can't develop greater insight into their own language and cultures and realize the multiple ways of

viewing the world .

Pursuing this same method I move to the second factor of attitudes under which there are 5 objectives illustrated as follows:

Attitudes: 'curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own' (p.57).

Objectives:

(a) willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or the profitable;

(b) interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices;

(c) willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment;

(d) readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence;

(e) readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction;

At attainment 2, none of the given items can be grouped into the objectives of attitudes. The focus obviously is placed on introducing knowledge of other cultures to the pupils' rather than developing their attitudes of willingness and readiness towards foreign culture. The factor of attitudes, one of the most important components of ICC, does not feature in the 2001 revised curriculum

Next the other two factors: skills and critical awareness will be looked at. Byram's model divides skills into two kinds, '*Skills of interpreting and relating* and *skills of discovery and interaction* '. In order to differentiate one from the other, I mark the first as 'S1' and the second as 'S2' using lower case letters for the objectives of skills and critical awareness in the categorization. The same method is employed: first presenting the

specific objectives in Byram's model and then grouping the items in attainment 2 into the objectives.

Byram's definition of *skills of interpreting and relating is: Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own* .

Objectives (ability to)

- identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins;

- identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural system present;

- mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena;

Skills of discovery and interaction: Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and culture practices and ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

Objectives (ability to)

- elicit from interlocutors the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena;

- identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations;

- identify the similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances;

- use in real-time an appropriate combination of knowledge ,skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture, taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country and culture and the extent of differences between one's own and other cultures;

- identify contemporary and past relations between one's own and the other culture and country;

- identify and make use of public and private institutions which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures;

- use real-time knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one' own and a foreign culture

Critical cultural awareness/political education: An ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

Objectives (ability to)

- identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures;

- make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria;

- interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of them by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes.

After presenting particular objectives in terms of skills and critical cultural awareness from Byram, I continue with the process of classification used above to see to what extent the items in Attainment 2 can match these objectives in terms of skills and critical awareness. The result will be shown using the following schema:

Table 2.6   The Classification of ICC in Primary School(age 10-12)

Attainments	Knowledge	Attitudes	Skills	Awareness
Attainment 2	K3, K4, K9		S2c	
Attainment 5				
Attainment 8				

From the classification of Attainment 2 in terms of components of ICC, knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical awareness presented above, I can safely draw the conclusion that there are no objectives on attitudes and cultural awareness in attainment 2. As

explained earlier, attainment 2 is set for pupils of primary school (ages 10-12). The pupils are just beginning to learn a foreign language, which is quite different from the mother tongue they have started to learn at age 7 in Year 1. They would be curious about and interested in differences brought to them through classroom English teaching. They usually appear eager and willing to learn a new language with its very different culture (Wang, 2002). But regrettably the attitudes of curiosity and openness to use the new opportunity to develop pupils' positive attitude towards engaging with otherness, an ability to question values, interest in discovering other perspectives on familiar and unfamiliar phenomena in one's own and in other culture's practice; readiness to engage with communication verbally or non-verbally are not given any attention at attainment 2. The sole presentation of knowledge of another culture is not enough to constitute intercultural competence. It does also involve the development of one's attitudes, skills and awareness in successfully interacting with people of diverse cultures.

This result invites me to examine attainment 5 which is my major concern in the present study. In order to get a more objective picture of the classification of components of ICC in English curriculum, I have decided to employ the same process to classify attainments 5 and 8 .

After pupils finish primary school around the ages of 11or 12, they start junior secondary school education. Compared with the items in terms of cultural awareness in attainment 2, there are 14 items at attainment 5 for junior school students. The requirements for cultural awareness involve higher expectations. In attainment 5 (year-age 13-15), students are expected to:

1) know commonly-used body language such as gestures and facial expressions etc. in English communication;

2) be able to appropriately use forms of address and expressions of greetings and farewell ;

3) know and differentiate the common names of genders and very intimate forms of address;

4) know the custom of the forms of address among the family members in English speaking countries;

5) know about clothing appropriate for formal and informal occasions;

6) know about the food customs in English speaking countries;

7) be able to respond appropriately to praise and requests of others;

8) be able to express praise and requests to others in a proper way;

9) know about the geographic position, weather characteristics and history of English speaking countries;

10) know about familiar animals and plants of their cultural connotations in English speaking countries;

11) know about natural phenomena and their possibly implied cultural meanings in English;

12) know about the traditional entertainments and sports activities in English speaking countries;

13) know about important festivals and holidays and their ways of celebration in English speaking countries;

14) get a deeper understanding of Chinese culture.

<div align="center">(English Curriculum, People's Education Press, 2001)</div>

I classify items 1,4,11,12 into K11 which says the intercultural speaker knows about levels of formality in the language and non-verbal behaviour of interaction, about conventions of behaviour and beliefs and taboos in routine situations such as meals, different forms of public and private meeting, public behaviour etc, and items 3,5,6 into K9 which says that the intercultural speaker knows about social distinctions in two countries and how these are marked by visible and invisible phenomena in the communication verbally or non-verbally. Items 9, 10,13 are grouped into K7, K5, K5 which are about national memory of others like events, cultural products, sites of

significance and geography etc. The knowledge presented in attainment 5 also belongs to the second category of knowledge classified by Byram and the first knowledge of self and social critical awareness is not mentioned. The proportion of component of skills seems to add more than the one in attainment 2. Three items 2,7,8 are related to skills and I grouped those as S1b, S2d, S2d respectively. The last item 14 mentions that students should get a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, which I allocate under Awa.

Table 2.7   The Classification of ICC in junior middle school (age 13-15)

Attainments	Knowledge	Attitudes	Skills	Awareness
Attainment 2	K3, K3, K4, K9, K9, K9, K4		S2c	
Attainment 5	K11, K9, K11, K9, K9, K7, K5, K11, K11, K5,		S1b, S2d, S2d	Awa
Attainment 8				

It is clear that the 'attitude' factor, aiming to develop students' ICC is not given any emphasis in attainment 5. Though it is still knowledge centred, students are expected to identify how to use appropriate means for addressing, greeting and saying goodbye to each other; to be able to respond properly to praise and requests of others and can express these ideas appropriately. The ability to interpret and explain an event in terms of each of the cultural systems are more or less mentioned .Byram argues that the simple presentation of cultural knowledge without comparing with one's own culture will lead students to only listening to and learning of 'typical' differences, of haphazard facts about foreign cultures (Byram, 1989:87), which can't help them raise consciousness of

their intuitive knowledge of the patterns of their mother culture. After classification of the cultural elements in attainment 2 and 5, I find that language learners are provided with more *unselected information* about the foreign countries, people and cultures as they learn English. This unsystematic approach to providing information leaves learners with unstructured information rather than knowledge (Byram, 1989: 91) and is likely to be without effect on learners' understanding of others, as it is shown in Byram, Esarte-Sarries and Taylor (1991: 34).

With students entering senior secondary school at ages 16-18 , attainment 8 requires them to:

1) comprehend common English idioms, popular sayings and their cultural connotation;

2) comprehend legends and classical reference used in English conversations;

3) know about the major literary figures, artists, scientists and their historical achievements in English speaking countries;

4) gain an initial knowledge of political and economic aspects of English speaking countries;

5) know about the mass media in English speaking countries

6) understand life-style differences and similarities between China and English speaking countries;

7) understand differences and similarities in behaviour bearing and social etiquette of dealing with people between the English speaking countries and China;

8) know about religious traditions in the English speaking countries;

9) develop consciousness of the world through learning and understanding world culture;

10) get a better understanding of Chinese culture by comparing and contrasting foreign cultures ;

(English Curriculum, People's Education Press, 2001)

Before attainment 8 is grouped, I will have to distinguish between 'know' and

'understand' used in the description of the objectives in this attainment. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *to know* means: be aware of through observation, inquiry or information, to have knowledge or information concerning; *to understand* means: perceive the intended meaning of words, a language, a speaker, perceive the significance, explanation or causes of, interpret or view in particular way. Students at this stage are required not only to know some cultural knowledge but also to be equipped with an ability to explain and interpret the meaning on the basis of understanding the target-speaking cultures.

I group items 1, 2, into S2b, saying 'identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations'; students are asked to comprehend frequently used English idioms, popular sayings, their cultural connotations and implied meanings used in the language they are learning. The items 6,7 which aim at understanding the similarities and difference in life style and in behaviour bearing and social etiquette of dealing with people between China and English speaking countries which can match S2c, 'identifying similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances'. If the techniques of comparison and contrast of different cultures are used properly, students' cultural awareness will be developed, which are considered the most useful and effective way to develop ICC. I put item 3,4,5,8 into K1, K8, K2, K9 and items 9, 10 into Awb respectively. The result is presented in the following table:

Table 2.8   The Classification of ICC in senior middle school (age 16-18)

Attainments	Knowledge	attitudes	Skills	Awareness
Attainment 2	K3, K3, K4, K9, K9, K9, K4		S2c	
Attainment 5	K11, K9, K11, K9, K9, K7, K5, K11, K11, K5,		S1b, S2d, S2d	Awa

Attainment 8	K1, K8, K2, K9		S2a, S1a, S1a, S1a, S2b, S1a	Awb

Though the objectives at attainment 8 are still knowledge-based, the emphasis of cultivating students' abilities of acquiring new knowledge of a culture and cultural practice and of explaining their cultural meaning is given some attention.

From the categorization of ICC in the English curriculum, we can see that the objectives of cultural awareness stated in the national curriculum of English in China are mainly focused on the acquisition of cultural knowledge of English speaking countries (ESC) in respect to attainments 2, 5 and 8. Students, in attainment 2 (age10-12), are expected to know the basic expressions and forms of greetings, addressing, saying goodbye to others; to know the names of common foods and drinks in ESC; to know the cultural symbols of flags, capitals and landmarks of significance, important festivals etc. Obviously the emphasis is put on the acquisition of preliminary knowledge of the culture of others and of social processes of social groups. What Byram (1997) calls an ability to evaluate practice and products of one's own and others' culture is not mentioned in the curriculum in attainment 2. Skills of this kind are not given much attention.

When students move to the junior and senior middle schools, it can be seen from the categorization (see Table 7) for attainment 5 and (Table 8) for attainment 8, the instruction of cultural knowledge shifts from its dominant place gradually to skills development. The students are not confined to the passive reception of knowledge but they are encouraged to comprehend the English idioms, popular sayings, allusions and their cultural implications; to compare the similarities and differences in life styles, behaviours, interactions in our own countries and other countries. Through comparison of different cultures, students will receive a better understanding of our own culture and develop an international perceptive. But the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practice and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills to

communicate and/or interact with people from other cultures are not given importance in the curriculum.

As far as attitudes are concerned, there is no explicit statement in attainment 2, 5, 8 about attitudes such as curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (Byram, 1997), but there are some statements mentioning 'attitude and emotion' as explained above in the new English curriculum as one of the five components recommended for English language education. Empathy and attitude include motivation and interest; confidence and willpower; cooperative spirit; national identity and international vision in general, these being more linguistic-attitudes directed rather than intercultural attitude-oriented. Attitudes are viewed as fundamental to the development of intercultural competence by Byram *et.al* (1997). When people from different cultures communicate in respect of the cultural meanings, beliefs and behaviours they exhibit, they are likely to adopt attitudes characterized as prejudice or stereotypes (Allport, 1979). Such attitudes are often but not always negative, but even positive prejudice and stereotype can create unsuccessful communication. With this kind of concept, learners need to cultivate attitudes of willingness and openness to understand, accept and tolerate others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours, which are different from their own social community or that of others.

In short, the analysis against Byram's model has shown some gaps in the Chinese curriculum like attitudes of curiosity, openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own are missing, but there are also some changes in emphasis as learners grow older. This is an issue which will re-appear in the empirical study of teachers' views of the curriculum and what they would like to teach in the language education in terms of ICC (see Chapter 5).

2.7 Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I have reviewed the development of the English curriculum over nearly three decades since 1979 in China, which has provided me with a general view of gradual gained place of culture in the language curriculum. Then my attention was shifted to some major English-speaking countries like Canada, Britain and USA to examine culture teaching in their respective language curriculum so as to place our understanding of culture teaching in a global context. After analyzing culture teaching in these countries, I came to realize that all curriculum documents in the four countries share some common ground in respect to culture teaching. It is agreed that language teaching/learning is to develop students' communicative competence for intercultural interaction and intercultural communicative competence is necessarily developed towards this language education goal. There were also differences and these showed in the following aspects:

1. Big C vs Little C

It is not difficult to find that the culture goals of America , Canada and England & Wales are inclined to 'little C' culture instruction, the topics are more extensive concerning those aspects of daily living, housing, clothing, food and all the patterns of behaviour that members of the culture regard as necessary and appropriate. China's curriculum tends to cover both 'little C' and 'big C' culture which is concerned with some knowledge of the formal institutions, the great figures of history, and those products of literature, fine arts and like, which have been discussed in previous sections.

2. Different objectives

The objectives set for language learning and teaching are different in a sense, for instance, American students are expected to meet the national 'Five Cs' goals in which culture and communication are key words to represent the final goal of foreign language education for the country. Canadian students are required to adapt themselves in multicultural and

multilingual context and the cultural awareness is placed in the understanding of Canada diversity as a new citizen. Students in England and Wales are expected to develop understanding of themselves and their own culture as one of the important purposes of learning foreign languages .Chinese students are expected to have comprehensive language competence, paying special attention the language competence.

3. Approaches and learning experience varied

The approaches and learning experience of three countries are much more varied than those in China. For example, the task-based approach in China is strongly suggested in the curriculum while approaches in other countries are more flexible and a wide variety of various situation is considered when approaches are employed. Students in China have less colourful learning experience in the language class than those in other countries. For example in (DES, 1991: 27-9) I found topics like 'designing and making, fashion and make-up, TV, cinema, theatre and other entertainments, making a class cassette, magazine or video' which appear more imaginative and creative if they are used in classroom teaching.. The classroom activities seem more interesting and various than classroom activities in China's English classroom learning because of conditions, time, and other resources problems.

For intercultural communicative competence, Byram's model is introduced and discussed, on which our curriculum has been analyzed. The components of ICC, according to Byram, are knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical cultural awareness. Our curriculum analysis findings show that culture teaching in China is still above all transmission of culture information about English-speaking countries and the skills of relating, interpreting, discovering and interacting are not given much weight in the development of students' ICC. Attitudes and critical cultural awareness have not been paid attention although they are vital in the whole process of language education. The gap in this aspect of foreign language teaching is very marked by the Table 8 shown

above and may suggest a need to reconsider the value of teaching language in intercultural dimension. An intercultural approach to foreign language teaching is not much researched or officially debated in China. By doing this research I hope to draw attention to a neglected area, and contribute to extend knowledge and discussion in the English curriculum and teacher education.

Chapter Three

An Analysis of Literature on Language-Culture Teaching

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at providing the theoretical foundations for teaching culture components in the foreign language classroom in order to consider in more depth research question 2: Is it necessary to teach culture in language education?

In this chapter I will present an account of the relationship between language and culture in general. I shall then consider culture teaching in ELT, what the role of the culture in language education is; what culture contents should be taught in the language classroom; what methods should be used to teach culture, and I will also see what teachers can do, in particular, the role of teachers in the changing ideas of teaching and learning.

Finally I will look at the research on teachers' thinking and beliefs in language and culture teaching as part of the preparation for my empirical analysis of teachers' beliefs in China.

3.2 The debate about the relationship between language and culture and its implications for language teaching

The discussion of the relationship between language and culture has never stopped and opinions have been diverse from a variety of disciplinary perspectives for many years. Linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, culturists, and foreign language teachers, out of their own research area and interest, have sought to understand whether and how cultural

factors influence aspects of human behaviour such as perception, cognition, language and communication. Relatively easy is the commonly accepted differentiation of 'big C culture' and 'small c culture'. 'Culture' refers to historical events, geographical icons, major institutions and major works of arts and music, whereas 'culture' refers to the products of everyday life and to the conditions of their production.

Williams defines culture as 'a whole way of life' (1966) reflecting a shift of emphasis which has taken place from a consideration of products to the ways and circumstances in which they are created. This is similar to the way interculturalists such as Cushner and Brislin (1996) and Bennett (1998) associate the big C and small c distinction with objective culture and subjective culture respectively, following sociologists such as Berger & Luckmann (1966) and psychologists such as Triandis (1994). Objective culture not only refers to culture creations----the institutions and artefacts that were defined above as big C culture----but it also includes patterns of everyday behaviour such as eating, shopping, artefacts, and clothing that were characterized as 'small c culture'. Subjective (small c) culture refers to the invisible, less tangible aspects of culture (Cushner & Brislin, 1996). It focuses on the world view maintained by members of a society. This world view is the set of distinctions and constructs that can variously be described as cultural values, beliefs, assumptions about life, and goal-directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as 'right' and 'correct' by people who identify themselves as members of a society.(Brislin 1990: 27). There is a significant overlap of this notion of subjective culture and the idea of deep culture, as described by Brooks (1997) based on his reading of Edward T. Hall's influential *The Silent Language* (1959). However in the continuing development of Hall's work, the culturists define the elements of subjective culture as language use, nonverbal behaviour, communication style, and cognitive style and culture values.

Many linguists agree upon the concept that language is an innate faculty in the human

race and it is not an artefact (Pinker, 1994). This statement is correct in terms of humans' natural language skills. But so far as the field of pragmatics is concerned, one can't safely say that language can be isolated from its socioculture, as cultural factors are always reflected in our daily and professional communication. To obtain a clear picture of the close relationship between language and culture, perhaps what one needs to pursue in more depth the real meaning of culture.

According to Brislin (cited in Linda, 2001), culture is an attribute of individuals, of small groups, of organizations, of nations; a single person can belong to a multiplicity of cultures, any one of which may be important at any given time. What is implied in this definition is that culture may comprise macro-culture, such as the national or large communal one, and micro-culture, as can be observed even in the individual culture. It also denotes that culture is changing all the time. However, the most important implication that can be drawn from Brislin's definition is that culture is not monolithic, for it can consist of different layers of content and should be analyzed from various perspectives, such as age, gender, religion, ethnicity, etc.

Nevertheless, how does a person know or understand a culture, and in what ways does a person maintain his/her cultural identity? Despite the multiple means, such as arts and films, language is probably the most common method by which a person can achieve these goals. This is because human thought or ideology is an important component of culture and because language is a most important medium to convey thought. Therefore, language can't be isolated from culture. Based on this relation between language and culture, it is easy to understand why a person who knows thousands of words of another language may still find it difficult to communicate with people of that language. The English phrase 'read between the lines' is an explicit demonstration of how context impacts on semantics. How culture lies behind language can be further explained by the Sapir-Whorf theory. The Sapir-Whorf theory is a very influential but controversial

theory concerning the relationship between language, thought and culture. What this hypothesis suggests is this: our language helps mould our way of thinking and, consequently, different languages probably express our unique ways of understanding the world. Following this argument, two important points could be captured in this theory. On the one hand, language may determine our thinking patterns; on the other, similarity between languages is relative, the greater their structural differentiation is, the more diverse their conceptualization of the world will be. Consequently, two versions of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis have been developed, a strong version and a weak version. The strong version of the theory refers to the claim the original hypothesis suggests, emphasizing the decisive role of language as the shaper of our thinking patterns. The weak version of this hypothesis, however, is a modified type of its original theory, suggesting that there is a correlation between language, culture and thought, but the cross-cultural differences thus produced in our ways of thinking are relative, rather than categorical.

In fact, many scholars have analyzed and commented on the relationship between language and culture. Brown (1999: 23) describes their relationship as following: 'A language is part of culture and a culture is a part of language: the two are intricately interwoven so that one can't separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture.' A large number of other social scientists hold almost the same views as Brown that language and culture are inseparable and that language simultaneously reflects culture, and is influenced and shaped by it. Such assertions are extremely frequent within the subject area of language and culture pedagogy represented by people such as Roberts *et al*. (2001), and Mckay (2000) points out that by teaching a language, one is inevitably already teaching culture implicitly. This is also one of the reasons why we call the conversation between people from different cultures cross-cultural communication (Hu, 1999).

To further demonstrate the close relationship between culture and language, Jiang (1999),

a Chinese scholar, made a survey of native English speakers and native Chinese speakers on what items they usually associate with the word 'food'. The results exactly indicate the inseparability between language and culture. When the Chinese group came to face the word 'food', they often thought of steamed bun or rice while the English group tended to come up with steak and bread, or even their related cooking processes. Truly, language is deeply rooted in the culture where it operates. In addition to 'food', numerous other examples are frequently employed by English teachers in China to illustrate the difference between these two languages and their relevant cultures. For example, 'dog' is not a word that often conveys a derogatory connotation in western societies whereas 'a lucky dog' in China is rarely used. And 'to look like a wet rat' can be converted to 'look like a wet chicken ' in Chinese cultural settings.

3.2.1 The Implications for language teaching

The above discussions can explicitly attest to the inseparability between language and culture. Therefore, when learning a second or foreign language, one will inevitably encounter a new culture. The target culture may bear some similarities to the source one, but for the most part, they may vary from each other. If language teachers are not conscious about these cultural differences and teach them, the final outcome of foreign language acquisition and communicative ability may be affected. The misunderstanding of intercultural communication may occur if there comes an opportunity of communication between two people from different cultures.

Language is not simply a reflector of an objective cultural reality. It is an integral part of that reality through which other parts are shaped and interpreted. It is both a symbol of the whole and a part of the whole which shaped and in turn is shaped by sociocultural actions, beliefs and values. In engaging in language, speakers are enacting sociocultural phenomena; in acquiring language, they acquire the ability to enact cultural phenomena. Given this theoretical viewpoint, it follows that to teach culture without language is

fundamentally flawed and to separate language and culture teaching is to imply that a foreign language can be treated in the early stage as if it were self-contained and independent of other sociocultural phenomena (Buttjes and Byram, 1991 :18). The differentiation made in this statement is so fundamental that it indicates that language doesn't exist in a social vacuum, but is firmly fixed in the way of life, beliefs, practices and value system of its speakers.

In other words, language is a reflection of culture and culture is reflection of language. With differences in cultures and differences in languages, difficulties often arise in intercultural communication. Consequently, it is now commonly accepted that language teaching should emphasize not only the language form, but also its culture. Thus there is great need to explore further what is the significance of culture teaching in FLT in the next section.

3.2.2 Development of Culture teaching in foreign language education

As argued above, I can see that it is impossible to deal with second language education without taking culture into account. When the goal of second language learning became communication, culture was inevitably involved. The role of culture in second language education has traditionally been placed in a fairly unconsidered, constrained and taken-for-granted fashion; the importance of culture has often been recognized but seldom analyzed.

However, in recent times, applied linguists and language teachers have become increasingly aware that a second or foreign language can rarely be learnt or taught without addressing the culture of the community in which it is used. Thomas observed (1983, 1984) that non-native speakers are often perceived to display inappropriate language behaviours and often are not aware that they do. She cautions that violations of cultural norms of appropriateness in interactions between native and non-native speakers

often lead to sociopragmatic failure, breakdown in communication, and the stereotyping of non-native speakers. As a consequence, Thomas (1983: 91) points out that teachers must draw on research to 'develop ways of heightening and refining students' metapragmatic awareness, so that they are able to express themselves as they choose.'

The importance of teaching culture in foreign language education has thus been given new attention. In the early decades of language teaching in Europe, according to Stern (1983), there was 'no reference to anything that might be described as 'cultural' aspect of language teaching' (1983:263) for example when Sweet's book *The Practical Study of Languages: A Guide for Teachers and learners* was published in 1889. On the other hand, the teaching of European civilization was officially acknowledged and recommended for school curricula by the Modern Language Association of America (1900). In many countries, after World War 1, great effort was made in promoting international understanding and foreign language teaching. To support this point, Hall (1947:4) quoted the long standing view of J.S Mill who declared that an important purpose of language learning was to learn about a country and its people. The content about foreign countries and peoples must be added to language teaching. It was believed that some knowledge of the history of the people who speak a language is necessary in language programmes (Atkins and Hutton, 1920).

Some other cases can be traced. For example, in Germany, a theory of the teaching of culture, *Kulturkunde* as a part of language programmes was developed vigorously (Rulcker, 1969 pp47-70). In France, the study of civilization was a supplement to language programmes towards an analysis of the whole way of life of a country (Byram and Risager, 1999) and the anthropologically-inspired approach was developed. In Britain and the United States, the teaching of culture concentrated on history, geography, institutions and distinctive contributions of the foreign country to human civilization. The study of great literature, which was seen as a part of civilization, was one of the

objectives of culture learning in foreign language education.

After the Second World War, achievements in anthropology and sociology began to profoundly influence foreign language education. Many authors made great efforts in this field of research like Robinson (1985), Damen (1987) Kramsch (1993) and others in the United States and Byram (1989a; Byram et al., 1994; Roberts, 1997) in the United Kingdom. They discovered that other disciplines, like social psychology and anthropology are relevant to language education. The emphasis on combining the teaching of language and culture was stressed with the conviction that understanding foreign culture and comparisons between cultures are a necessary component of language education. This notion was most expressed by many educators from very early periods of 1950s up to now like: Lado (1957, 1964), Hall (1959, 1966, 1974, 1977), Bishop (1960), Brooks (1960, 1964, 1968, 1971, 1975), Hymes (1964), Rivers (1964, 1968, 1981, 1983), Nostrand (1966, 1973, 1974), Seelye (1968, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1984, 1988).

After this preliminary overview of the development of culture teaching in FLT which has shown culture teaching has been given increasing attention in FLT so that language teaching is culture teaching, in next section, I want to examine the growth of culture teaching in China.

3.3 Research situation of culture studies in China

Introduction

In the previous section, a general review on language and culture; cultural teaching in foreign language education has been provided in the context of the western countries by Western scholars. Byram (1997) and Byram and Fleming (1998) argue that foreign language teaching depends primarily upon a particular educational context. Therefore I want to review the literature on cultural teaching and research in language education

done by Chinese scholars and look at their viewpoints on culture and language relationship.

The literature of culture teaching in language education, as will be shown below, has mostly been published in the recent two decades. The study of culture in language education is an entirely new concern of the 1980s. Before that time, cultural studies had been like a forbidden zone for some decades particularly in foreign language education (Feng, 2000). Reviewing the literature for no more than two decades, which appears too short for a research area, seems to make sense of an overview of cultural studies teaching in language education chronologically rather than theoretical development.

3.3.1 Chronological development of culture teaching in China

In the early 1980s, Prof. Xu Guozhang gave a speech titled *the Cultural Connotation of Words and English Teaching*. It indicated that the foreign language teaching field started to show its attention on the relationships between culture and foreign language. Cultural studies and research into foreign language teaching was activated from then. There was a nation-wide discussion about Chinese traditional culture, a comparison between Chinese culture and Western culture and a debate about what China should learn from the West (Deng and Liu 1989). At the same time, articles and books about teaching foreign cultures were published concerning the introduction of some western ideas about teaching foreign cultures in China's foreign language education. Gu Jiazu and Lu Sheng edited a book *Language and Culture* (1988) in which wider topics are covered. For example, *Language, Signs and Culture: A Semiotic Approach to Culture as Communication* by Lu Sheng; *Speech Style in a Cultural Perspective* by Zhao Xueru; *A Cultural Approach to Rhetoric* by Lin Jicheng; *Language and Culture in Theoretical Perspective* by Lin Jicheng as well. In the latter's opinion, language is no more than a subsystem of the culture system, and as such it is unvaryingly subject to and constructive of culture, which in turn finds its survival in language. He goes on to state that language

mirrors culture. Semiotically, as culture is chiefly encoded in and conveyed by a language system, reflections of culture by language is perceptible at diversified linguistic levels, such as lexical, syntactic and register. In his view, only when language acquisition and culture acquisition are synchronized, will students be able to obtain what Hymes called 'communicative competence'.

Hu Wenzhong, a professor in Beijing Foreign languages Institute, is commonly regarded as one of the pioneers who advocated the teaching of culture in foreign language education. In his book, *Intercultural Communication – What it means to Chinese learners of English* (1988), he introduced some research results in intercultural communication abroad to Chinese language professions. In another book, *Culture and Communication* (1994), Hu collected 44 papers which offer the research findings in the area in both China and abroad. Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing are also professors from the same university as Hu. Their book *Language and Culture—the Comparison between English and Chinese Culture* (1989), deals with connotations of culture and non-verbal communication. The same idea is presented in Wang Fuxang and Wu Hanying's *Culture and Language* (1994), a collection of papers, which discusses culture and foreign language teaching. In Chen Shen's *Cultural Studies in Foreign language Education* (1999), cultural creativity is proposed as the objective for culture education. Hu's recent book *Crossing Culture Barriers* (2002), provides a great number of thorough examples to show communicative barriers caused by the cultural differences. He stresses that culture is an indispensable part of foreign language teaching.

From the review of the culture studies done by Chinese scholars, it can be seen that scholars appeared to tackle this field of research from different approaches. These works attempted to explore how a particular foreign culture has a remarkable impact on the forms or use of the foreign language and foreign language teaching. Such an effort can be seen as a reaction to the previous approach in which a foreign language was divorced

from its relative culture as was shown in Chapter 2. All this highlighted the need to place any study of culture in foreign language education in the framework of interaction between Chinese culture and foreign cultures at the social and political level. Chinese scholars have given more attention to culture dimension in language education than ever before. In order to have a further picture of this cultural dimension of language teaching, I will look at the books introduced from the outside which have influenced Chinese scholars' concepts of culture and culture teaching.

Books regarding language and culture and communication introduced by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press included *Language and Culture* by Claire Kramsch, *Communication Between Cultures* by Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter and Lisa A. Stefani, *Teaching Culture: Perspectives in Practice* by Patrick R. Moran, *Intercultural Communication: A discourse approach* by Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon. Influenced by these books, Chinese scholars such as Hu Wenzhong say that there is a close link between language and culture. There doesn't exist any language without culture and there is no existence of culture without language. Language is not only a carrier of culture, but also reflects culture (2002: 73). Cheng (1999) agrees to the idea that language and culture are inseparable held by many Western scholars and he quotes Halliday (1978), Hasan (1984), Damen (1987), (Robinson, 1985) and Byram (1989), but Cheng argues that this inseparability doesn't mean that everything is unchangeable. The meaning of language depends not only upon a specific culture but also on the changes in that culture, including those due to interaction with other cultures. The relationship between language and culture is dynamic rather than static (1999: 210).

As for English teachers, their enthusiasm in the study of intercultural communication is the shift from the traditional methodology to the communicative approach in EFL in China (Song, 2004). Language teachers realized the weakness of the traditional grammar-based teaching and tried to adopt the then prevalent communicative approach

in the language teaching. The introduction of intercultural communication best illustrates the interaction among language, communication and culture ((Hu & Gao, 1997). It was commonly agreed that the goal of EFL was to develop the students' communicative competence in using the target language; the learning of a foreign language was believed to be learning of a foreign culture (Song, 2004, Hu, 2002, Liu, 2003, Hu & Gao 1997).

Having discussed the ways in which scholars and teachers see the relationship between language and culture, next I will examine how Chinese scholars define the culture, and any influence from Western scholars on this issue.

3.3.2 Definitions of culture

In previous sections I discussed the current situation of culture studies done by Chinese scholars and influence exerted by Western scholars' works. In this section I will see how Chinese scholars define 'culture' and any influence they got from Western scholars. Deng Yanchang and Liu Runqing (1989) say the concept of culture as 'The Chinese term '   '(culture) in the expressions   (He is illiterate) or   (literacy class) doesn't apply. Nor does it mean culture in the sense of sophisticated tastes in literature, music, art, etc. Here it has a much broader meaning. Following the definitions of sociologists and anthropologists, the term culture refers to the total pattern of beliefs customs, institutions, objects and techniques that characterize the life of a human community (1989:3), which is similar to that given by Goodenough. According to Goodenough (1957), culture is a combination of what people have to know and have to believe so that their way of behaving is accepted by other members in the society. Jia Yuxin (1997) notes the definition given by Goodenough is beneficial to the study of intercultural communication. In Jia's opinion, culture is what people think, say, behave and feel. Under different ecological and natural circumstances, various nations create their own characteristic cultures, and in turn their people develop from their own culture.

Shu Dingfang and Zhuang Zhixang think when 'culture' is discussed, it is necessary to distinguish between 'culture perspective' and 'culture product'. 'Culture perspective' is kind of 'spiritual culture' while 'culture product' is what is called a general concept of 'material culture'. Culture product is an outcome of culture perspective, which is more like the distinction made by Saussure between 'langue' and 'parole' (1996:143).

Some scholars like to adopt the definition provided by C. Kluckhohn 'Culture is the total way of life of a people' (p34) (Hu, 1989; Gao, 2000; Pu, 2002). In broad terms, culture can be divided (Pu Xiaojun, quoted in Song, 2002) into:

1) High culture, including politics, philosophy, education, literature, art, etc.;

2) Deep culture, including sense of value, made of thinking, code of conduct, religious beliefs, criterion of morality, etc.;

3) Popular culture, including the patterns of customs, ceremony and propriety of social contact, way of life, family patterns, and even concrete catering culture, tea culture, football culture, etc.

From this definition it can be seen that language meaning is directly related to our experiences. These experiences are unique to each of us not only because of the differences we encounter as individuals while we grow up and learn to use a language, but also because of what our culture has exposed us to. Culture is a wider system that completely includes language as a subsystem (Hu, 1999). Linguistic competence is one variety of cultural competence; and speech behaviour is one variety of social behaviour. The relation of language to culture is then a relation of part to whole; they are interdependent (Shu and Zhuang, 1996).

According to what has been discussed above, it is obvious that it is not easy to define culture in Chinese scholars' approaches. However, unless culture is clearly defined, it

will be difficult to know what to do in culture teaching. Since the range of culture is so large that it is impossible for the teacher to teach all aspects of culture in the classroom, some aspects of culture are learnt in a formal setting, such as school, while other aspects are learnt informally in the process of day to day living. Liu (1989) can be taken as a summary of the Chinese views presented here. He argues that considering language has at least 2 sets of rules: one is the rules of structure; the other is the rules of using culture contained in culture teaching. So culture teaching refers to permeating students' awareness of appropriate ways of using the language into language structure teaching and learning.

3.4 Cultural Contents in Language Education

As we have seen, in China as elsewhere, the special relationship between language and culture has been increasingly realized. The debate is not whether to teach culture in language teaching but what culture to teach and how to teach become the major concern among Chinese scholars. In this section Chinese scholars' perceptions of cultural contents will be reviewed and analyzed.

3.4.1 Chinese scholars' perceptions on what cultural contents should be taught in language teaching

The discussion on what cultural aspects to introduce in language education is among Chinese scholars who offer their own opinions of cultural teaching. Zhang Zhanyi (1983), one of the Chinese linguists, puts the cultural background knowledge in foreign language teaching into two kinds according to its functions. They are knowledge culture and communicative culture. Knowledge culture refers to such cultural knowledge concerning a country's politics, economy, education, religion, law and cultural art while communicative culture refers to those linguistic and non-linguistic factors which affect

the accurate expression of information, perhaps causing prejudice or misunderstanding when two persons with different cultural background communicate with each other. These factors include the idioms, euphemisms, taboo expressions of greetings, thanks and so on.

Chen (1992) classified cultural contents in foreign language teaching into three types: culture in the language structure, culture in the semantic system and culture in language use. The first type refers to the structural differences of languages caused by different cultural backgrounds while the second, culture in the semantic system, suggests the unique connotations embodied in the language of the target culture. The last type, cultural in language use, refers to appropriateness of the language used in communication and it includes proper ways of greeting, thanking, expressing appreciation and respect, apologizing and bidding farewell.

In Zhao Xianzhou's book *Cultural Differences and Cultural Transmission* (1992), he summarized 12 aspects of culture which may affect effective communication and should be taught in language teaching:

1) Words that can't be translated generated by different social-cultural background;

2) Words that have different layers of meaning because of different cultural background;

3) Words that are used in different context have different meanings;

4) Words that have different commentary and derogatory meaning in different cultural background;

5) The potential differences in concepts due to different social background;

6) The differences caused by language information because of different cultural background;

7) Words carrying national and traditional culture;

8) Idioms, proverbs and mottos;

9) Customs and cultural information reflected by words;

10) Words that have specified cultural background;

11) Language structure differences caused by different cultural background;

12) Cultural differences caused by different values, psychological factors, social customs etc. (Cited in Su and Zhuang, 1996: 147).

Though the distinction between 'communicative culture' and 'knowledge culture' lacks enough theoretical support, it indeed has great practical significance in deciding what cultural aspects should be taught in language teaching.

Cheng Guanglei (1992) divides the cultural contents into three kinds: language-structure culture, semantic culture and pragmatic culture. Language-structure culture refers to the differences in language structure caused by different cultural background. Semantic culture is about the semantic system in which the cultural aspects are included and cultural spirit is embodied. The items presented by Zhao above, like items (1) (2) (4) (7) (8)(9) (10) can be categorized into the semantic culture; pragmatic culture refers to cultural rules in language use, namely rules which can be applied in language social background and interpersonal communication. Zhao's items (3) (5) (6) belong to this category. This distinction reveals the relationship of degree or layers of cultural contents, which helps us in understanding cultural connotation or cultural factors in language teaching.

Wei Muchun and Bian Juefei (1992) classify cultural contents into two types: cultural behaviour and cultural psychology. They think cultural behaviours are explicitly controlled by cultural psychology and stay on the surface of the culture while cultural psychology is implicit value system behind cultural behaviour and is the deep part of culture.

Hu thinks (1994) that cultural contents should be dealt with at four levels. The first one is

at the vocabulary level, for example, connotations of words, non-equivalents, culturally-loaded names of people and places, and frequently-used literary quotations. The second is the discourse level at which textual patterns and stylistic features should be analyzed. The third level is language use, the focus on the order of talking and other pragmatic rules. The last level is non-verbal communication.

Shu and Zhuang (1996) simply classified cultural contents into   (cultural-loaded words and expressions) and   (speech culture). In their views, cultural impact on language is mainly in two aspects: influence on meaning of words and on the structure of speech.   They admit that there exists a complicated relationship between cultural-loaded words and speech culture. However, this classification is simply for practical purpose in language teaching (p.149).

It is clear the classifications of cultural contents shown above have some common features. These scholars approach the cultural contents mainly through linguistic competence. Their major concern is placed on language structure, vocabulary with culture-loading etc. It seems that they don't talk more about the relationship with communicative competence. However, according to Hymes (1972), the essence of communicative competence is that speakers of a language have to have more than grammatical competence in order to be able to communicate effectively in a language; they also need to know how language is used by members of a speech community to accomplish their purposes. It is about knowing what to speak, when, with whom, how and why etc. This notion of developing learners' ability to use language appropriately in socio-cultural context has been reformulated by later scholars like Canale and Swain (Canale & Swain 1980; Canale 1983) and van Ek (1986). The more details of their interpretation of communicative competence will be dealt with in the next section where a Western perspective will be introduced in contrast.

3.4.2 Western scholars' perceptions on what cultural content should be taught in language teaching

After reviewing the Chinese scholars' perceptions on cultural contents taught in the language classroom, I will turn to Western scholars' views on the same issue to see what cultural contents they think should be taught in language teaching. In general, there are two main perspectives influencing the teaching of culture. One is to transmit factual, cultural information, that is institutional structures, aspects of target civilization, information, i.e. literature and arts which are taught by language teachers as Big C culture and colloquial information, which may focus on customs, habits, and folklore of everyday life (see Kramsch, 1993:24) as small c. This cultural instruction with facts rather than meanings leaves much to be desired as far as understanding of attitudes and values are concerned. What is the cultural content of 'mere book knowledge learned by rote' (Huebner, 1959:177) may blind learners to the significant aspects of their own as well as the target group's identity (ibid).

The other perspective, drawing on cross-cultural psychology and anthropology, has been to embed culture within a framework of language and establish connections between one's own and the target culture. The limitation of this approach may leave learners to their own ways to integrate that knowledge with the beliefs and mindsets already obtaining in their society (Thanasoulas, 2001: 4).

In order to be systematic I will first consider views of cultural content as presented by theorists and then look at what curriculum developers have done.

To study the literature used to be the main medium of culture learning in language learning (Lessard-Clouston, 1997). Students learnt about the civilization associated with language through reading (Flewelling, 1993: 339). In the time of audio lingual era in

language teaching, Brooks (1968) 'emphasized the importance of culture not for the study of literature but for language learning' and he offered sixty-four topics regarding aspects of culture as greetings, personal possessions, taboos and smoking, verbal taboo, restaurants and bars, town and country life. In a sense, the shift of focus is from teaching geography and history to an anthropological approach to the study of culture. He makes the important distinction we have seen earlier between 'Culture with a Capital C'---art, music, literature, politics and so on----and 'culture with a small c'---the behavioural patterns and way of life--- is helpful guidance to the teaching of culture. The main contribution of his work is to make people aware that culture resides in the very fabric of their lives, their attitudes and their beliefs.

Following Brooks, Nostrand (1974) developed six main categories of the cultural aspect of teaching 1) culture -- regarding value systems and habits of thought; 2) society -- included organizations and family and other institutes; 3) interaction -- interpersonal and intrapersonal; 4) ecology and technology -- included knowledge of plants and animals, health care, travel etc.; 5) individuals -- intra/interpersonal variation; 6) cross-cultural environment -- including attitudes towards other cultures.

Then Crawford, Lange & Lange (1984, 1987) suggested that cultural topic and cultural theme may prove useful to teach culture in the second language classroom. Crawford & Mclaren (2003) also make a distinction between a cultural topic and theme. A topic may be taken to identify cultural content, for example, geography, mealtime, occupations, school, and soccer. A theme focuses on issues, values, and/or problems related to the topic. For example, themes related to the topic of school may be: who is disciplined in school and for what offences? How are grades determined? How are extracurricular activities structured; who participates in them and why (p.139). The stronger the relationship of the theme to the lives of students, the more powerful the theme will be for language/culture learning (ibid.: 139). The topic-based approach is very much an

information processing approach rooted in the traditions of Life and Institutions and aiming to 'teach' the students about foreign culture. The problem with this approach, Davcheva thinks (2007), is that its content is mainly located at the level of facts about the institutions, beliefs, values, and behaviours of a nation. Learners study the facts and the assumption is that they will be able to learn and engage better in their academic and professional performance.

In contrast, Byram makes a thorough checklist (1993a) which focuses on cultural content. He examines the extent and manner in which a textbook includes a focus on each of the areas:

▪ social identity and social groups (social class, regional identity, ethnic minorities)

▪ social interaction (different levels of formality; as outsider and insider)

▪ belief and behaviour (moral, religious beliefs, daily routines)

▪ social and political institutions(state institutions, health care, law and order, social security, local government)

▪ socialization and the life cycle(families, schools, employment, rites of passage)

▪ national geography(geographic factors seen as being significant by members)

▪ stereotypes and national identity (what is 'typical,' symbols of national stereotypes)

Byram's list of cultural content not only refers to the cultural facts, but also includes behaviour and attitudes, and social knowledge that are used in situations the learners might expect to encounter in their learning.

After this brief review of some theorists' views on cultural contents, I would like to look at the same issue from another angle, that is the curriculum approach to cultural content.

In the past decades, cultural studies in foreign language education have drawn increasing attention from practitioners and textbook writers in China. Most of these textbooks present cultural facts of British and American societies, for example the book written by

Zhu (1991) for tertiary students, titled as a *Basic Knowledge of British and American Cultures* in Chinese although he gives *Essentials of British and American Culture* as the title in English. The majority of texts in his book are chosen from authentic sources with many from *A Background to English* by P.S. Tregidgo (1971) and *Life in Modern America* by P. Bromhead (1978) (cited by Feng, 2000). Another influential textbook used by most comprehensive universities is *An Introduction to the United Kingdom and the United States of America* focusing on knowledge or facts about British and American cultures in parallel with training course of language skills. The cultural contents, teaching methods of this course and teaching objectives are summarized by Cao (1998) as the following table:

Table 3.1   Features of cultural study courses in China

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

	the native culture

The major approach seen from the table is focusing on knowledge and facts of British and American cultures. Cao suggests that cultural teaching as this topic-based or cultural-facts based is necessary but the knowledge transmission is only the first step towards developing cultural understanding in learners.

A similar situation in cultural teaching does not only occur in China, but in the world elsewhere. For example, in the University of Sofia, Bulgaria. They offer a course named *British Society and Culture* for undergraduates at the department of English and American Studies. The purpose of this course is:

> The course aims to introduce students to British society and culture through lectures and a variety of texts (from the media, documentaries, and feature films) which analyze aspects of British culture as maps of meaning and a way of life. The course focuses on how these create and construct British people in terms of national, male/female or youth perspectives. It aims to give students a better idea of British society and culture. The course also offers the films A Passage to India, The Remains of the Day, and Chariots of Fire which are discussed in terms of what they offer as knowledge about Britain.
>
> Material is sequential and cumulative. Each topic will be presented in a lecture format followed by discussion and analysis of text samples, given to students in advance. The films will offer additional material for discussion consolidating knowledge from previous sessions. (Davcheva, 2007).

The approach adopted by the *British Society and Culture* in Bulgaria is very much an information processing approach in the traditions of Life and Institutions/ Landeskunde/ Civilization and aiming to 'teach' the students about British culture. The topics arise from a macro-description of British culture and the content is encyclopaedic (Davcheva, 2007) just as the course of *An Introduction to the United Kingdom and the United States*

of America offered in China is also facts-based and culture taught as knowledge of target language. It can be seen that the cultural studies or cultural learning is mainly through the textbooks used by culture studies courses where the culture is taught as factual knowledge or cultural information as discussed earlier. The following examples which will be discussed now are a radical departure from the information loaded approach to a more everyday life culture; a quite functional-based topics approach.

I would like to use the case study provided by Byram and Morgan (1994) on 'Cultural Awareness' and the National Curriculum for England and Wales passed in 1988. The major innovation of the national curriculum is the introduction of the concept of 'cultural awareness' and recommendations for a comparative methodology (p.75). 'Cultural awareness' is defined as 'the promotion of understanding of and respect for other cultures…one of the most important aims of modern language studies.' And 'to develop pupils' understanding of themselves and their own culture' (DES, 1990).

The 'programmes of study' and 'areas of experience' are recommended. The 'areas of experience' are an attempt to specify themes and topics which are essential for language and culture learning in lower secondary education. There are seven areas, of which I want to present only two areas as an example to show how the cultural topics are related to students' life experience as a way of learning culture rather than knowledge transmission approach.

Area A   Everyday activities

Pupils should have regular opportunities to explore in the target language topics which deal with activities they are likely to engage in at home and at school. This should include the language of the classroom.

Examples of topics: home life, shopping, going out, leisure activities and sports, school life….

Area B   Personal and Social life

….topics which deal with aspects of their personal lives; relationships with family, friends and others; social attitudes, customs and institutions which are relevant to them. Examples of topics: self, family and friends, health and fitness, major institutions (schools, hospitals, clubs, etc.) personal, teenage and social attitudes towards religion, politics and society (including stereotyping and equal opportunities).

It is noticeable that topics at different periods are influenced differently. The distinctive features of culture teaching in this project focus on life experiences and encourage students to explore what they are familiar with in real life rather than imparting factual knowledge. Under the banner of the communicative approach, the topics in the language and culture learning are chosen more in social, interpersonal interaction.

I am so interested in this case study because the reform of the curriculum in China also introduced the concept of 'cultural awareness' into the English curriculum in 2001. I gave an analysis of the curriculum in the aspect of culture teaching in Chapter 2, section 2.4.4. Here I want to look at the purpose of teaching 'cultural awareness' in more detail stated in the Chinese curriculum as follows:

Language learning has very rich cultural values. In language teaching, culture embraces history of the country, geography, local traditions, living habits, arts and literature as well as behavioural conducts and values. To understand and make contact with English speaking countries and their culture would greatly help the functional use and understanding of the English language and to nurture students' knowledge in the global perspective as well as increasing a deeper understanding and recognition of our own culture. In the process of teaching, teachers should gradually develop *students' cultural knowledge*, both in its contents as well as their understanding of the target culture. In the initial stage teachers should *enable students to have a general understanding of the cultural differences between*

Chinese and foreign cultures. The cultures of English speaking countries the students are in contact with should be closely linked to their daily lives which would definitely help arouse students' interest in learning English. At a later and more advance stage students' contact with English speaking countries and their scope of language should also be enlarged, enabling them have a more sensitive and discerning ability so as to develop intercultural competence (2001, p.12 researcher's translation with italics to emphasise key phrases).

The emphasis is on knowledge and understanding not communication or attitudes and skills. Though cultural teaching is still focused mainly on 'big C' – even though there is some reference to living habits – it does point out that the cultural information should be related to learners' existing knowledge, closely linked to learners' lives. If there is no linkage, modification and development, this approach will lead to the isolation of simple facts and comparison with an apparently similar phenomenon in English speaking countries (Byram, 1989), which may not develop students' critical thinking of self, of other culture, people, and artefacts.

As the discussion moved however, cultural teaching in terms of the contents in the curriculum changed with the understanding of role of the culture in language education. The shift from the factual knowledge/information of culture to cultural understanding is a necessary step to develop students' cultural awareness. Though we don't have a cultural syllabus, the cultural teaching is through a certain course called *An Introduction to the United Kingdom and the United States of America* for undergraduates as it was mentioned above. If the Cultural Studies Syllabus named *Branching Out* (British Council, 1998) is looked at, it can be seen that the Syllabus gives little weight to themes and topics, as suggested by theorists quoted above, as organizers of factual information. Its driving principle is the development of complex sets of skills and they are the ones which shape and determine the approach to cultural content. Why in this Syllabus the

skills oriented approach rather the topics-based approach is adopted and considered vitally important in teaching culture in foreign language education can be seen in the following extract from the syllabus 'One of the fundamental aims of the Syllabus is to develop our students' intercultural awareness' (p.23). The implication is that such awareness grows out of a combination of knowledge and skills. While it might be felt that the obvious way to organize a syllabus is around topics, this would give disproportionate weight to factual information at the expense of the acquisition of intercultural skills.

In this Syllabus the skills are organized in four major sets: critical reading and listening skills; comparing and contrasting skills; ethnographic skills and research skills. It is clear that the skills-based approach is a transitional approach from topic-to-skills in terms of cultural teaching. The traditional approach of cultural topics presented in course books is perhaps inevitable, but 'cultural awareness grows out of a combination of knowledge and skills' (Syllabus 1998:13). It is thus understood that it is important to help the students develop their ability to understand by means of questioning and analysis of the information supplied by the course book; it is also significant for them to be able to apply the appropriate cultural reading skills to engage critically with the information and make it into personal knowledge. To make this to happen, students need to be taken beyond the surface of meaning, to explore issues of meaning and value. The point implied here is the notion of students as ethnographer. Ethnographic skills should be developed.

So far I have discussed the cultural contents in language teaching from the theorists' points of view, and from the curriculum approach to cultural contents. It is noticeable that the transition of cultural teaching is from cultural hard facts instruction (cultural specific) to cultural skills approach. The purpose of this shift is not only to equip students with cultural knowledge in the target language they are learning but most importantly to promote students' ability to understand, to discover, to question and deconstruct any

cultural information that they encounter which may diverse from their home culture. The links with the knowledge and skills in cultural teaching----cultural information and cultural understanding---could be seen from the curriculum approach in cultural teaching. This approach is well reflected in Byram's work (1997) and he suggests cultural aspects of teaching include knowledge and skills and attitudes in order to develop students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC). He points out that teachers should arrive at a catalogue of objectives that includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and educational factors in teaching (ICC) competence. I want to focus on what knowledge; skills and attitudes are included and meant by him and will repeat here for convenience what was presented in the earlier chapter.

Table 3.2.   Factors in intercultural communication (Byram, 1997:34)

Knowledge Of self and other Of interaction Individual and social (savoirs)	Skills Interpret&relate (savoircomprendre) Skills Discover and /or interact (savoir apprendre/faire)	Attitudes Relativising self valuing other (savoir etre)	Critical cultural awareness

The knowledge he refers to is of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's own interlocutor's country, and of general processes of societal and individual interaction. Byram mentions two kinds of skills: skills of interpreting and relating: the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it documents from one's own and skills of discovery and interaction: the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. By attitudes he means curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbeliefs about other cultures and belief about one's own.

From the above it could be seen the knowledge of inter/culture he introduces is rather general. They are etic in the sense that they depend on universal categories (Bennett, et al, 2003). The skills are emphasized when teaching culture so as to develop students' intercultural communicative competence as a final goal in language education. Only Knowledge-based is not enough to develop students' understanding of others, skills and attitudes are also vital to achieve this purpose.

3.4.3 Summary

In this section, I mainly review what culture should be taught in language education. I first have a general look at cultural contents some theorists proposed which have been centred around Big C including the institutions (social, political and economic), history , geography, products of literature, arts etc ; and little c, including those aspects of daily living, like housing, food, transportations, all patterns of behaviours, customs and values. Then I further probe this issue by discussing curriculum approaches to cultural content: topic-based and skills-based approach to cultural contents which enables me to see the shift from the cultural information instruction to cultural understanding. The focus is on the cultural skills development though the cultural information linked. Finally I have reviewed another approach to cultural competence teaching through the intercultural perspective in order to develop intercultural communicative competence of learners. This approach is not cultural-specific but rather cultural-general focusing on internalizing cognitive frameworks for cultural analysis, overcoming ethnocentrism, developing appreciation and respect for one's own culture and for cultural difference, understanding and acquiring skills in basic cultural adaptation processes, (Bennett et al 2003). The cultural-specific approach is to achieve competence in a target culture. In this sense, specific-cultural learning is a direct parallel to specific-language learning, where competence in a second/foreign language is the goal. In language learning, knowing grammar and vocabulary alone does not equal competence and it is equally the case that knowing the objective aspects of target culture is insufficient for specific intercultural

competence.

So far I have considered what culture has to be taught in language teaching from the point of view of the relationship between language and culture and the implications for the contents of language teaching. Later in this study, I will see what school teachers think about cultural content in language classroom, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. I am sure this part of the review will also provide me with a better understanding of this issue for future teachers' training. In the next section, what methods should be used to teach culture will be reviewed to pursue the research question further and also to provide a better basis for teacher training in the future.

3.5 How to teach culture in foreign language teaching

In the previous section I discussed what cultural content should be included in foreign language teaching. After this issue was made clear, I must consider the methodology to teach culture in the language classroom. Can the same approach be used to teach culture as to teach language?   If the language teaching is to develop students' linguistic ability which is being taught through a task-based approach advocated in the new curriculum in China, can teaching culture be approached in the same way aiming to develop students' communicative competence?   Any methodology of teaching must take the broader setting and context into consideration and should be based on clearly articulated principles and aims (Byram 1989: 143). Language teaching should have as one of its central aims the development of 'intercultural understanding', which includes but goes further than communicative competence. (Byram 1991: 200). I come to realize that language teaching not only promotes students' linguistic competence, communicative ability, but also equally importantly that language teaching should always seek to develop students' intercultural understanding and intercultural competence. Having clarified the aims of teaching language i.e. that intercultural understanding is given

central importance, I will now discuss what approaches or methods of culture teaching should be adopted in language classrooms.

To prevent the proliferation of idiosyncratic approaches in culture teaching that typified the wave of culture fever in China (Yang , 2005), some basic principles are needed to guide educational practice. The cultural dimension neglected in the language education should be given its 'rightful place' in both terms of form and content. This doesn't mean shifting completely from traditional language teaching to cultural teaching, so as to set up a new teaching model which is culture-centred, but does imply that language education approaches as presently conceived need to be reformed to make culture content clearer and more important. In this section, the basic principles to guide the teaching of culture, the possible factors which influence the choices of cultural teaching methodology in language education, and finally the most common approaches to the teaching of culture in general as well as techniques and methods of culture teaching will be analyzed.

3.5.1 The basic principles of culture teaching in EFL in China

Zhao and Jang (2002) propose five basic principles in cultural teaching which they term 'acculturation'. I will continue to use the term 'culture teaching' in this study in accordance with the whole discussion of the previous sections. The following section paraphrases and translates the principles put forward by Zhao and Jang.

1) The principle of communication:
The purpose of teaching culture is to develop students' communicative competence, and it goes without saying that the principle of communication should be prominent. Cultural content should be focused on those parts of communication which may have direct effects on students' understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication between the

learners and members of other cultures.

2) The principle of cultural background

Most Chinese students lack first-hand experience of foreign cultures. The major access to foreign culture associated with the language being taught is through the textbook and teacher's instruction. However, the students do need to acquire general background knowledge of culture in the target language they are learning. Cultural background knowledge should be introduced to students as curriculum content in order for them to understand the language better.

3) The principle of comparison

Differences between the students' mother tongue and the foreign language they are learning are a major obstacle for communication. For Zhao and Jang (2002) the starting point should be to acculturate differences of language and culture beginning with the meaning contained both in language form and non-language form. The focus of cultural content therefore should be on similarities and differences between the foreign language and students' own language. Specially Zhao and Jang use the term '

(culture related, culture missing and culture different)' to characterize what should be taught in the language class. The general aim is to develop students' cultural awareness; to draw on students' own knowledge, beliefs and values which form a basis for appreciating different cultures. Writing in the North American context Robert Lado proposed, 50 years ago (1957), a similar schema to Zhao and Jang's. According to Lado there are three types of the contrastive analysis which are still useful today: 1) same form, different meaning, 2) same meaning, different form, 3) same form, same meaning, and different distribution (cited by Byram 1994: 45). Taken together Lado's contrastive proposal and Zhao and Yang's comparative principle provide a model for contrast and comparison in language-culture teaching. For example, vocabulary, semantic structures, idioms and fields within which lexical items bear different connotations can be located

systematically in these approaches. If these differences in the foreign language are to be compared and contrasted with students' equivalent items in their own language, students can begin to gain insight into the underlying schemata and perspectives of language and culture learning (Byram 1994: 44).

4) The principle of stages

It is well known that 'Rome wasn't built in a day'. Similarly, argue Zhao and Jang, foreign language teaching must proceed from the elementary to the profound and from the easy to the difficult. In so doing, students' language proficiency and comprehension ability should be taken into account in deciding on culture content in a language teaching curriculum.

5) The principle of moderation

The cultural teaching content should be carefully chosen and the quantity must be appropriate. Teachers must prepare cultural content meticulously, taking care to relate the selected content to students' language knowledge, such as functional items involved in communication and general topic of daily conversation. Essentially Zhao and Jang advise that culture content should be selected according to precise teaching tasks and objectives at any time. Culture content can't be acculturated without consideration of students' ability of acceptance, meaning their likelihood of absorbing the new knowledge.

In the same vein, Shu and Zhuang (1996) suggest three important principles in teaching culture; the principles of practicality, graduality and appropriateness. Cultural content should be closely linked to language content, connected to the students' life for daily communication; and linked to students' future careers. It is the third of these which is not mentioned by Zhao and Jang and thus adds a new factor to consider. The purpose is to make students feel the culture being taught is not too abstract, too extensive or too

elusive. And thus, students' interest in learning culture and language can be motivated. When teaching culture, students' language proficiency, ability to accept and comprehension ability should be considered. The cultural content should be covered in a systematic way at different stages taking the consistency of the content into account. Thus the unfortunate phenomenon of fragmentary cultural content can be avoided; because culture is very extensive, selection becomes a crucial issue. The appropriate choice of cultural content thus is vital in the teaching of the culture. In Shu and Zhuang's opinion (1996), cultural content should embody the essential aspects of a culture and it should be representative of mainstream culture. These writers thus place more emphasis than Zhao and Jang on the question of selection. However, unfortunately they don't identify which parts of culture teaching are essential. They only provide general guideline to the issue of selection.

The above principles are major guidelines for teachers in the teaching of culture in China today, but as I have argued there are weaknesses:

- lack of details about selection criteria

and strengths:

- reasons for links with communication are well explained

- awareness of the specific conditions in which culture is taught (as recommended by Byram)

- syntactic consideration of the role of comparison and contrast (as Lado suggested)

3.5.2 Factors influencing the choice of methodology

Some scholars have suggested different approaches to the teaching of culture as well as activities and techniques associated with them. However, it is important to remember that choice depends on many factors, the most important being:

▪ the situation in which the language is taught;

▪ the learner's age and command of the foreign language;

▪ the teacher

Stern (1992 p.223) distinguishes between three situations in which the teaching of culture can take place:

Culture is taught in language courses, where students are physically and often psychologically removed from the reality of the second culture. In this case culture teaching provides background and context and helps the learners visualize the reality. This seems to be the most common situation for teaching culture in many countries, including China.

Culture is taught in situation, which prepares a student for a visit or work in a new environment. Even though the student is physically far away from the culture, he/she is psychologically prepared and also motivated to learn. There are more opportunities for young people to study and work abroad than there used to be at the time of Stern's writing.

Culture is taught in culture setting (e.g., to immigrants, students studying in a target language community). In this case, students may need more help to come to terms with the foreign environment to avoid cultural misunderstandings. Brown (2000:189) considers this situation the best for second language and culture teaching. It is clearly becoming far more common because of the major phenomenon of migration.

The question arises whether there are new factors which these authors did not (or in Stern's case could not) take into consideration. One of the factors is clearly the effect of modern communications and the internet. Another is the impact of internationalization of societies even when students do not travel - for example the effect of the Olympic Games in China.

Each situation determines the aims of culture teaching and the range of topics that are considered important to teach. When the main aim is to provide cultural knowledge, as is commonly the case in situation (i), as in China, the most suitable activities might be, watching videos and films, reading and discussing literary and newspaper texts. In situation (ii) or (iii), learners need various skills and cultural practices. These can be best developed through role plays, dialogues and drama.

At all times, one has to bear in mind students' age, maturity, command of language and educational level. Byram (1997a: 55-56) emphasizes that 'teaching and learning aims which include 'understanding', 'tolerance', 'empathy' and related notions presuppose a psychological readiness in learners which may be age-dependent, may be influenced by social factors, may be furthered or even inhibited by exposure to a foreign culture and language.' In a similar vein, Durant (1997:31) adds that 'enhanced language proficiency is essential', especially when learners wish to continue their studies independently outside the classroom. And finally, the choice of an approach and a method depends on the teacher and his/her preference as well as the level of preparation.

Teachers must be prepared to deal with students learning facts or opinions that may conflict with their own or what they regard as natural. Byram (1997a: 62) states that 'the teacher should be aware of the nature of the challenge to learners' understanding of their culture and identity'. Relevant to this is Sercu's (2005) summary of the main characteristics of teacher qualifications for intercultural foreign language teaching. These include teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills. Among other things, Sercu stresses that if teachers want to educate learners towards intercultural learning, they have to be intercultural learners themselves. In order to achieve best outcomes all the factors have to be considered.

In the light of this discussion the following factors need to be taken into consideration in

the region under study in this thesis:

a) Owing to the fact that multiple languages are used interchangeably in English class in my region (students' own language, Chinese and English), the teaching context must be taken into account as was suggested by Stern.

b)   Learners' age and their English proficiency should be considered. I would add that learners' life and learning background are other factors to consider because these factors may also affect their learning in an ethnic area.

c)   Teachers, among other factors, are the most important element in this new situation in terms of cultural teaching in language classroom (as suggested by Byram and Sercu). Their beliefs, their understanding, and their willingness are decisive factors to culture teaching, which will be one of the major concerns in this study and I will elaborate this issue in the section 3.6 afterwards.

3.5.3 Methods versus approaches

It is important to distinguish between 'method' and 'approach' in culture teaching. Knowing the differences between these two commonly confused terms can help language teachers select appropriately i.e. non-idiosyncratically from among the many practices available for culture teaching, which is related to the general point made above by Yang 2005.

The research literature contains many definitions of these terms. Particularly helpful is Brown's (2002:9) clear explanation of method, citing Anthony as follows:

> More than three decades ago, Edward Anthony (1963) gave us a definition that has quite admirably withstood the test of time. His concept of method was the second of the three hierarchical elements, namely, approach, method, and technique. An approach, according to Anthony, was a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning and teaching. Method was defined as an overall plan for

systematic presentation of language based on the selected approach. It followed that techniques were specific classroom activities consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well.

In Brown's words the differences between 'approach', 'method' and 'technique' are succinctly and usefully defined. However, twenty years later, Richards and Rodgers (1986:29) define the 'method' in a more detailed way and also disrupt the schema put forward by Brown:

Method (in language teaching) is a way of teaching a language which is based on systematic principles and procedures, i.e. which is an application of views on how a language is best taught and learnt. Different methods of language teaching such as the direct method, the audio-lingual method, the grammar translation method, the silent way and communicative approach result from different views of the nature of language, the nature of language learning goals and objectives in teaching, the type of syllabus to use, the role of teachers, learners, and instructional materials, the techniques and procedures to use.

It can be seen that what constitutes teaching methods have changed in these two views. For hundreds of years the teaching profession has been searching for the optimal teaching method for foreign languages (Brown, 2002; Byram, 1999). An old Chinese saying '   ' suggests that there is no fixed method to follow and no method for all. Perhaps for this reason there is endless discussion and searching for ideal teaching methods. In recent years the predominant teaching method in language acquisition has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities (Nunan, 1991:28), at least as far as TESOL is concerned. The task-based *approach* is being introduced into Chinese language classrooms. The move from general methods to an approach has emerged from the realization that 'designer methods were not leading to effective teaching'

(Brown 2002: 11). According to Brown, the definition of an 'approach' to language pedagogy is:

> not just set of static principles 'set in stone'. It is, in fact, a dynamic composite of energies within a teacher that changes (or should change, if one is a growing teacher) with continued experience in learning and teaching.

Pedagogy is a dynamic process and the students' needs must be met by taking into consideration the character and dynamics of the learning process. Teachers become aware of the need to consciously blend designed tasks and techniques based on how they approach their teaching of language rather than by inventing new methods. Therein lies the effectiveness of relying on a principled approach. In short, a method implies that a methodology needs to be applied to one's class. A principled approach demands that one's classroom practice be relevant to a particular class of learners. In other words, an approach is always subject to change based on what the teacher senses, observes and experiences in his/her language class.

Considering what is happening in China, I may say, approach is often mentioned in recent years as suggested by Yang 2005. Therefore I decided to use 'approach' to be consistent in this study.

The next section will first review the assumptions underlying approaches to culture teaching held by some scholars and then look at particular techniques which are workable in the classroom.

3.5.4   The most common approaches to the teaching of culture

There are many different approaches in the history of culture teaching. In very broad terms, they can be divided into two: those which focus only or mostly on the culture of

the country whose language is being studied (the mono-cultural approach) and those which are based on comparing learners' own and the other culture (the comparative approach).

The mono-cultural approach is typical for courses like *Landeskunde*, area studies, and British Life and Institutions. In general, this approach is considered inadequate nowadays because it doesn't consider students' individual or personal culture while the comparative approach is related to students' culture. Buttjes and Byram (1991:13, cited in Edginton 2000:136) claim that instead of providing learner with 'one-way flow of cultural information', they should be encouraged to reflect on their own and foreign culture.

The comparative approach aims to correct their deficiency of 'one-way flow', drawing on learners' knowledge, beliefs and values. Byram and Morgan state that learners can not shake off their own culture and simply step into another. For learners to deny their own culture is to deny their own being (Byram and Morgan, 1994: 43).While the essence of the comparative approach is to provide a double perspective it does not mean that learners have to evaluate which culture is better.

Instead, students learn that there are many ways of doing things and their way is not the only possible one. So the comparative approach does involve evaluation but not in terms of comparison with something which is better, but in terms of improving what is all too familiar. Comparison makes the strange, the other familiar, and makes the familiar, the self, strange—therefore easier to re-consider (Byram & Planet, 2000:189).

The comparative approach may begin either with the strange or the familiar. Traditionally, the primary focus in the foreign language classroom is given to the target language. However, some scholars emphasise the need to deal with the familiar first.

And then move to the strange (ibid).

Comparison gives learners a new perspective on their own language and culture and questions their 'taken-for-granted nature' (Byram, 1998: 6). Through comparison learners discover differences and similarities of their own and other cultures. This, in turn, can lead to increased knowledge, understanding and acceptance.

Lessard-Clouston (1996) identifies three major approaches in relation to the foreign language and culture teaching curriculum. The first is an *eclectic* one, where culture is only incorporated into the curriculum as desired or needed (also see Rivers, 1981; Morain, 1987). The second is an *integrated* one, where culture is explicitly incorporated into the curriculum through a cultural syllabus (also Stern, 1983, 1992; and Hammerly, 1982). The third approach is *cultural studies* in the foreign language curriculum, where a separate part of the language course is dedicated to a cultural or intercultural studies programme (also Murphy, 1988; Byram, 1988, 1989; and Shotton, 1991).But Lessard-Clouston says little about the last two approaches and thinks the eclectic approach is not appropriate because 'a learner's ability to understand, recognize, and address the sociocultural issues in communication is fundamental to his/her communicative competence, and it is therefore crucial for teachers to be much more deliberate in what and how teach culture in second language or foreign language education' (ibid. : 199).

Risager (1998: 243-252) describes four approaches to culture teaching: the intercultural approach; the multicultural approach; the transcultural approach and the foreign-cultural approach. I will discuss them in more detail.
The Intercultural approach is based on the idea that comparison is used to teach culture. The focus is on the target culture, but the relationship between the learner's own country and the country/countries where the language is spoken is dealt with. Thus comparisons

of the two cultures may develop learners' understanding of both. The aim is to develop learners' positive attitudes and to promote intercultural communicative competence, which would enable them to function as mediators between the two cultures. The approach has been increasingly recognized since 1980s. But this approach seems inadequate as it is 'blind to actual intercultural characters of almost all existing countries and states' (Risager, 1998: 246) and that teachers should use the multicultural approach is suggested.

The Multicultural approach draws on the idea that several cultures may coexist within the boundaries of one and same society or state. The multicultural approach includes focus on the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the target country/countries as well as on the learner's own. This approach emphasizes the principle that cultures are not monolithic (Risager, 1998: 21). The main disadvantage with this approach is that the target is hard to identify. There is no one foreign culture, nor is there any definite pairing of cultures as sometimes is done in the intercultural approach (Yin, 2006: 103).

The Transcultural approach: the idea behind this is that in the modern world cultures are interwoven due to extensive tourism, migration, a world-wide communication system, economic interdependence and globalization. It is also reflected in the fact that many people speak foreign languages as lingua francas. The transcultural approach, therefore, deals with the foreign language as an international language. The aim is to teach learners to use the language for international communication and if it could be argued that the language ceases to be tied to any specific culture. However, Byram (1997:55) contends that although it is possible to introduce topics which are of universal significance in all cultures, such an approach leaves learners without topics which are characteristic of a particular country, which is the one which 'characterizes the uniqueness for the language learners'. Such an approach also runs the risk of denying enduring links between language and culture.

The mono-cultural approach in Risager's list is represented by what she calls the *foreign- cultural* approach. This is based on the concept of a single culture corresponding to a single nation and focuses on the language/culture link. It does not deal with the learner's own country nor with relations between the two. The teaching aim is to develop so-called native speaker communicative and cultural competence. This approach was dominant until 1980s but is criticized nowadays because of its lack of relationship between cultures and the unattainable and unnecessary goal of native competence (Byram, 1997a, 1997b).

In addition to the above and within these general frameworks, there are some other approaches to cultural teaching in foreign language teaching, which centre on various aspects of a given culture or concentrate on developing certain skills in learners.

The theme-based or thematic approach, mentioned earlier, to the teaching of culture is based on identified themes, such as *value, ceremony, love, honour, beauty, family, living, and religion and education , etc*, which are considered as typical of a culture. Though it is mono-culture in nature, it shows the relationships and values in a given culture and, therefore, helps learners to understand it better. Nostrand (1974, cited in Seelye 1993: 133) argues that relationships in a given society can be best taught when grouped under main themes. Learners who are aware of underlying the themes of another culture are thought to react appropriately to stimuli like jokes, cartoons, television programmes, and films (Nostrand 1967, cited in Valette 1986: 194).

The topic-based approach focuses on more general and cross-sectional topics which involve various cultural issues. According to Mclean (1994) a 'topic-based approach can provide an oblique yet original encounter with British life and culture..' Wisniewska-Brogowska argues that the topic-based approach to the teaching of culture

brings life to class and develops a more holistic and integrated view of the target culture. She goes on to say that 'knowing about the people who use the language, understanding their behaviours, beliefs and customs increases cultural awareness and promotes greater personal interest both in the language and culture.' Durant (1997:31), who is also in favour of the topic-based approach, stresses that learning should take place 'on the basis of analytic and comparative methods.'

The problem-solving approach aims at getting learners interested in the other culture and encourages them to do some research on their own. This is a means of involving students in the development of skills in presenting ideas, explaining positions and arriving at solutions. As students will encounter many practical problems in every day life when interacting with another culture, effectively this approach seems to hope that students will acquire their own problem-solving strategy since teachers can not provide examples of every conflict in the classroom that students will experience. As long as students have certain underlying knowledge and skills to cope with conflicts, they will be better prepared to handle the problems for themselves.

After reviewing the common approaches to cultural teaching, I assume the multicultural approach and topic-based approach appear to be the most applicable in my teaching context. Xinjiang is an ethnically diverse place in terms of linguistics and cultures. There are Ugyur, Kazak, and Hui people----in total thirteen ethnic groups. In the language classroom there are at least three or four ethnic group students studying together with Han students who are the majority. Each has their own language and culture. Language teaching involves at least three languages 1) English-Uygur 2) English-Chinese and 3) Chinese-Uygur-English. How can the language teaching programme foster Han and other ethnic students to gain intercultural communicative competence through English language teaching and learning with the target language culture and mainstream Han culture acculturation to eliminate cultural barriers in communication? This is a major

challenge.

The topic-based approach, I think, is also applicable in my context because this approach to teaching culture can bring life to class and develops a more holistic and integrated view of the target culture. Knowing about people who use the language, understanding their behaviours, beliefs and customs increases culture awareness and promotes greater personal interest both in the language and the culture (Wisniewska-Brogowska, 2004) and learning can take place 'on the basis of analytic and comparative methods' (Durant,1977:31).

If the multicultural approach is to be adopted in the language teaching in Xinjiang, there appears a gap in teaching methodology for school teachers because they were trained to acquire cultural knowledge through the mono-cultural approach based on existing cultural knowledge in their university or college education. The earlier review of approaches needs to be applied in the realization of the goals of language teaching. Methodology courses already have a set of beliefs about language learning, and these beliefs are formed by the 'internalization of how they were taught and their perceptions how they learnt' (Leloup, 1995: 137) and in turn affect everything teachers do in the classroom, whether these beliefs are implicit or explicit (Williams and Burden 1997). The situation I face now strongly suggests that teachers need training in how to teach culture in terms of culture teaching theory, teaching contents and teaching methodology in order to meet with the new requirements in the new situation.

3.5.5 Techniques and activities for teaching culture

There is a great variety of techniques and activities developed for integrating culture into language teaching. Different scholars group them according to different principles. Stern (1992: 223-232) writes about *techniques* of culture teaching and presents them in eight groups according to what he calls different approaches. These are:

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▪ creating an authentic classroom environment (techniques include, for example, displays and exhibitions of realia);

▪ providing cultural information (for example, cultural aside, cultural capsule and culture cluster);

▪ cultural problem solving (for example student research);

▪ behavioural and affective aspects (for example drama and mini-drama);

▪ cognitive approaches (for example student research);

▪ the role of literature and humanities (for example, literary readings and watching films);

▪ real-life exposure to target culture (for example, visits to the class by native speakers, pen-pals and visits to other countries);

▪ making use of cultural community resources (for example, when a foreign language learning takes place in the target-language community, the everyday environment can be used as a resource).

In a similar vein, but with a different characterization, Hughes (1994: 167-168) lists techniques for teaching cultural awareness including eight 'vehicles' which he considers the most practical. Chastain (1988: 308-315) titles the chapter where he describes methods of teaching culture *Modes of presenting culture*, using the terms *approach* and *technique* interchangeably. He makes a distinction between the in-class and out-classes situations.

The following list of techniques and methods is compiled from various sources and are mostly meant to be used in class. The sources given in brackets are not the only ones that mention each particular technique. They, however, are the ones which provide useful examples or insights, and the original terminology has been retained.

The cultural aside (see, for example, Stern 1992; Chastain 1998; Henrichsen 1998)

It is often an unplanned, brief cultural comment. Nostrand (1974: 298) calls the technique an *incidental comment*). Its advantage is that it helps to create a cultural content for language items as well as helps learners to make mental associations similar to those that native speakers make. The disadvantage is that the cultural information presented to students is likely to be disordered and incomplete.

This technique of teaching culture is also mentioned by some Chinese scholars (Shu and Zhang 1996; Liu 1999; Yang 2005). Textbooks widely used in China adopt this way of *cultural aside* to introduce cultural knowledge. The authors or compilers of the textbooks add some cultural notes in texts which may be predicted to be difficult for students to understand, for example some words and difficult sentences with cultural connotation in them. Teachers explain cultural phenomena according to the notes provided by the textbook. Its advantages are that it is easy for teachers to pick up the cultural knowledge related to the text they are going to teach and more flexible because they are no fixed topics of culture. The disadvantage is the lack of systematic presentation of cultural content.

Culture capsules: (developed by Taylor and Sorensen 1961; also referred to by Chastain 1988; Stern 1992; Seelye 1993) These are short explanations of differences between two cultures, which are usually done orally with the teacher giving a brief lecture on the chosen cultural point and then leading a discussion about the differences between cultures. In this technique students are required to answer questions relating to the material, which is about a typical incident or event in the target culture. The main advantage of using a culture capsule is its 'compactness and practical manageable quality' (Stern 1992: 240). Another advantage is that learners become involved in the discussion and are drawn to consider the basic characteristics of their own culture (Chastain 1988: 310). The problem is that there is no principle of selection - how does the teacher decide what the focus should be?

Culture clusters (first suggested by Meade and Morain in 1973; also referred to by Chastain 1988; Stern 1992; Seelye 1993) is a combination of two or more culture capsules, which can form a cluster. Parts of a cultural cluster can be presented in succeeding lessons. In the final lesson an activity is carried out where the set of capsules is integrated into a single sequence. The advantage of a culture cluster according to Stern (1992: 226) is that besides introducing different aspects of culture it 'lends itself well to behavioural training'. But this technique is difficult for Chinese teachers to use because a cluster activity is usually conducted by some sort of activity, for example a dramatization and role-play. The class-size and time-constraint problems would probably prevent Chinese teachers from using this technique.

The audio-video unit (see, for example, Chastain 1988 :311, Stern 1992: 226, 241, Shu and Zhuang 1996: 151). This was first developed to provide practical listening comprehension and to enliven the listening situation. Now it has been extended to involve visual support for students to understand what they are listening to and watching. The popular video in China 'The Album of U.S.A' is widely used in nearly all universities or colleges as visual teaching materials. It is a vivid and good way to introduce the target culture to students who can indirectly experience everyday life in the U.S through the video (Zhang 2003).

The micrologue (see, for example, Chastain 1988: 312) is a technique where culture is made the focus of language teaching. The teacher chooses a cultural passage that can be read out in class. Students listen to it and then answer the questions asked by the teacher according to the passage. After that students are asked to give an oral summary and, finally, to write the material as dictation. The advantage of this technique, according to Chastain, is that teacher does not need to have any special cultural expertise and it takes only a small amount of time. This method of teaching language in terms of cultural

aspects of teaching is still commonly used by Chinese teachers.

The culture self-awareness technique (see Chastain 1988:311) aims to raise students' consciousness of basic beliefs that govern their own values, beliefs and actions. Teachers may use sensitivity exercises, self- assessment questionnaires and problem solving. This is supposed to be for experienced or advanced students. Chinese students are generally unfamiliar with other cultures, and it must be difficult for them to evaluate and assess themselves in the early stages. After being trained through case studies, comparing and contrasting, culture capsules and clusters, however, they will be more aware of their own culture and other cultures. The teacher should guide them in developing self-awareness.

The quiz or multiple-choice (see, for example, Cullen 2000) can be used to test materials that the teacher has already taught, but it is also useful in learning new information. Cullen stresses that it is not important whether students can get the right answer or not, but by predicting or guessing, they will be more interested in finding it out. The right answer will be provided by the teacher, through reading, by watching video etc. Quizzes are high-interest activity that can keep students involved. But this cannot be taken to extremes. For example, multi-choice exercises are used excessively in language learning in China. Students are busily involved doing many kinds of multi-choice exercises in order to pass exams. One Chinese scholar has criticized this by saying that through doing multi-choice exercises to learn English language can not develop students' communicative competence (Cheng 2001).

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So far I have discussed techniques and activities of teaching culture. Some techniques used by teachers such as drama, webquest, problem solving that have not been discussed. The list cannot be exhaustive. Through the flexible use of these techniques, students can learn about cultures holistically. Plenty of information enables students to be aware of specific characteristics of their native culture and of other cultures. An effective

technique helps students to develop understanding and empathy about different cultures. Students can learn background knowledge of the target culture by means of these techniques. In this study, I have investigated what common techniques teachers are using to teach culture in classrooms and I want to know if there is any difference between techniques recommended by scholars and those used by teachers. The detailed discussion will be presented later in the data analysis chapter.

Summary

In this section, I have reviewed the literature on cultural teaching methodology from approaches of their underlying assumptions to particular teaching techniques applicable in the classrooms based on these approaches. The major division in approaches is between *mono-cultural* (foreign-cultural) focused on the target language culture and the *comparative-approach* centred on both target-language culture and learner's own culture. The advantages and disadvantages of each approach were analyzed. I also discussed the inter/multi/trans-cultural approaches proposed by Risager which all involved elements of comparison of differences between the target culture and learner's own culture. The most common techniques and methods to teach cultures were reviewed which would provide strong support to the future teacher training on cultural teaching. Some other issues such as factors which may influence the choice of teaching methods and some basic principles were also discussed. In the next section, I will discuss teachers' roles in cultural teaching and what can be done with/for them.

3.5.6 Teacher roles

In the previous sections, I have discussed what cultural contents should be taught and what techniques should be used to teach culture. Now I will focus on what teachers should do to have students appreciate different cultures and expand their views without risking their identity and without oversimplifying or over-generalizing their ideas towards different cultures.

Trends in educational pedagogy have traditionally contributed to the definition of roles and responsibilities of language teachers, and these have usually been linked to specific learning contexts. In the twenty-first century, it is necessary for teachers to understand the full complexity and interrelatedness of their roles and responsibilities. Social and political changes, the need for intercultural cooperation in the global village, the information and communication explosion and the changing views on language teaching and learning, with the emphasis on constructivist and lifelong autonomous learning, are all factors that contribute to the definition of language teacher's role today (Sturtridge, 1997; Byram & Risager, 1999). Under this new situation I need to consider what the role(s) of teacher should be and I will have brief review of literature focusing on teachers' role from two perspectives of western and Chinese scholars.

The role image of teachers held in China

In China, there are some metaphors to depict the role of teachers. To name some in the following:

The candle-image of teacher: the role of teachers is compared to a candle, burning itself (imparting knowledge) and shedding light to others (to students). This role-image of teacher is questioned because if teachers burn out of themselves without learning anything new, this does not match the concept of life-long learning. Therefore this role should be changed into the altar lamp which burns day and night. It implies that teachers are not only casting light to students but also refilling themselves at the same time (Han, 2002)

The bucket-theory-image of teacher: It is accepted that if a teacher wants to give students a bowl of water, he/she must have a bucket of water to give. Again the quality of the water in the bucket may be questioned; is it fresh water (updated knowledge) or stale water (out of date); on the other hand, is it the right portion (method) to give, if the

position is not proper (slant or askew), students may possibly not get it into their bowl; if the portion is too much or too less, they may not well digested or well fed (ibid., p. 4).

The engineer of the human-soul: The teacher is compared to be an engineer who designs and plans for a particular product. It is an industrial image in a sense. The factory is like school; factory workshop----classroom; purchase of materials----enrolment of students; draw a blueprint for a product---design a syllabus or a plan; inspection of the product---examination of students; mass production---graduation of students. If this is the case in the factory, no slight deviation of the product is allowed or it must be degraded to secondary product or even reduced to sell. Can this industrial image apply to school where students are different individuals and they have different needs which can't be ignored? The learners' needs must be taken into consideration. So an agricultural image comes out.

The hard-working gardener: This role image of teachers seems to be better compared because the gardener has to water, trim, and cut in terms of different plants. For example a particular plant likes more water while others don't. Some need trimming while others don't. The differences have been considered. But students are not plants. They have their own thinking and their own emotion which, in turn, may affect their growth (learning) (ibid, p.4).

The above images of teachers in the new innovation of education in China are discussed more than used to be. The traditional teachers' roles as instructors and knowledge-transmitters are challenged in this new situation though they are still held high. In reality learning by the teacher's instruction is still the preferred way for students. Probably this is due to the deep-rooted Chinese educational philosophy and the long tradition of the teacher-centred approach in the Chinese classroom. This assumption may further be supported by the research findings by Liu (2002), who investigated the

learning model preferences of student teachers. The findings showed that student teachers don't like to study English by themselves indicating that the teacher-centred approach is more preferable. This also reveals that Chinese learners, under the influence of the traditional teacher-centred approach, have not developed self-directing, autonomous learning. This corroborates the general belief that Chinese learners are passive and teacher-dependent, having little autonomy and not receiving much training in learning how to learn. They like to be told what to do and how to do it. The conclusion Liu has drawn from the research is that teacher learners have authority-oriented learning styles and view teaching as a matter of transmitting knowledge rather than as a process of developing learners' skills and helping them gain learning autonomy. Those views of teacher learners, I may predict, may influence their own teaching in the classroom. The teacher's role as knowledge-transmitter or knowledge-instructor is still in a dominated position even if the new roles of teachers are expected by the new curriculum which requires teachers to be changing their roles and adapting their identity to the new situation. They should be a planner, organizer and provider of the lesson/course/knowledge before the class; they should be the instructor, monitor, supervisor and participant in the class and they should also be the evaluator after the class (Curriculum, 2001). Students will be growing in the course of teachers' professional development and teachers are improved in the course of students' growth.

From the above images of teachers' roles understood in China's teaching and learning context, I can see that the role of teacher is given more meaning, changing from mainly a provider of knowledge to multi-roles of being a teacher in the reformed curriculum. There will be more expectation of teachers. The new curriculum in China puts forth new requirements for teachers (see chapter 2 on curriculum). One of the requirements is teaching cultural awareness in English teaching as one of the objects in English course. Hargreaves (1989: 54) strongly believes that change in the curriculum is not effected without some concomitant change in the teachers, because it is the teacher who is

responsible for delivering the curriculum at the classroom level. What the teacher thinks, what the teacher believes, what the teacher assumes---all these things have powerful implications for the change process, for the ways in which curriculum policy is translated into curriculum practice (Richardson & Placier 2001). Carless (1998) also points out the need for teachers to have a thorough understanding of the principles and practices of proposed changes in order to achieve successful implementation. He emphasizes that teachers need to understand and value the theoretical underpinnings of the innovation. Next I will move to the views of western scholars on teacher's role issue.

The role of teachers as understood by Western scholars

The literature suggests that language teachers need to be equipped with complex skills in order to competently carry out multiple educational, psychosocial, technical roles. The main roles of language teachers on educational aspect are providers of accurate language models, materials developers, evaluators, communicators, and analyzers (Richards, 1990; Stanley, 2004). On the psychosocial front the language teacher is required to be caterer, motivator, coach guide, counsellor, friend, organizer and controller of behaviour, advisor, as well as supporter of students' work (Richards, 1990; Sheerin, 1997; Voller, 1997; Lieberman, 2003). From a technical point of view the language teacher is expected to be resource, resource manager, consultant, facilitator, monitor, coordinator, among other things (Hammond & Collins, 1991; Lixl-Purcell, 1996; Sturbridge,1997; Voller,1997; Roberts, 1998). Linked to the intercultural dimension, teachers are asked to be mediators, interpreters, cultural workers (Byram, 2002; Guilherme, 2002), dialectologist and value clarifier (Altman, 1981); anthropologist and ethnographer, intercultural educator (Kane, 1991). Sercu (2005) has coined and makes a consistent use of a new composite term '*foreign language and intercultural competence teachers*'. The objective of language learning is no longer defined in terms of the acquisition of language competence, then communicative competence. Teachers are now required to teach intercultural communicative competence (p.2). Byram and Risager (1999) think that the role of

teachers should be the *language teachers as teachers of culture*.

The importance of this new teacher's identity is further stressed from the empirical literature on teacher roles in teaching culture. Byram (1991) reported that trips abroad for 10-12 years olds more often than not resulted in negative stereotyping, after only one encounter with members of the host culture, when the students were left to themselves and when they lacked previous knowledge to use in interpreting intercultural encounters. Without the teacher's active involvement, students become more rather less ethnocentric in their attitudes toward the target culture. Robinson (1981) concurs with this view when she suggests that mere exposure to a foreign language will not automatically promote favourable attitudes toward the culture, nor will positive attitudes toward a culture necessarily facilitate the acquisition of the language. She found that the goals, attitudes, and priorities of the foreign language teacher are as important consideration.

The above reviews of teachers' roles from perspectives of Chinese and Western scholars show that they have some similarities in terms of pedagogical aspects. The commonly accepted roles of teachers' are knowledge-provider, supporter, controller and organizer etc. Further to identity transformations, incorporating the cultural dimension as an integral part of foreign language teaching raises the question of the multitude of demands put on the teachers' competences and performance. Chinese scholars, though they realize the importance of culture teaching in the language education, haven't clearly identified the new roles as Western scholars have. For example, intercultural educator (Kane, 1991), mediators, interpreters, cultural workers (Byram, 2002; Guilherme, 2002), language teachers as teachers of culture (Byram and Risager, 1999) are clearly identified by these scholars. To some point it implies that the cultural teaching in language education in China is still treated like a second cousin (Lange & Paige, 2003) Therefore it opens up many issues to do, among others, with the status of language teachers in society, their political and cultural consciousness, and most of all - teacher education and training.

In the next section I will focus on teachers' thinking on cultural teaching since I have analyzed the cultural contents, cultural teaching approaches in general and techniques in particular in the previous sections. I have also discussed the role of teachers related to the culture teaching. Now I want to know whether the 'implementers' of the cultural content and culture teaching method are interesting in teaching culture and what teachers think about the cultural teaching; whether their perception of language and culture teaching influence their teaching practice etc., all of which will be discussed in the next section as part of the context for my own empirical study in later chapters.

3.6 Teachers' beliefs

Introduction

In 1999, the Ministry of Education in China released an Action Plan for Rejuvenating Education in the 21st Century. This is an overall, guiding and operational plan for national educational development in China. Its implementation requires a new round of reforms in the English curriculum for primary and secondary schools. The implementation of these reforms commenced in 2001. A key component of this programme of educational improvement concerns the professional development for practicing teachers. This will impact on more than 550,000 secondary teachers of English, and millions of students learning English at the secondary level in China (Liu & Gong, 2000). Upgrading the subject and pedagogical knowledge of this enormous number of teachers will be a daunting challenge for Education Colleges and Teacher Colleges across the country.

One of the goals in the renewed English curriculum for secondary education is to develop students' cultural awareness and communicative competence. This new emphasis on the cultural dimension in language teaching is a demanding challenge for

school teachers. In the context of the newly emphasized aim of communicative competence, teachers are expected to use a task-based approach in language teaching, which it is completely different from the more familiar grammar-translation method. Textbooks are being produced which follow this communicative ethos. The new curriculum also sets attainment targets which, alongside the new teaching approach and the new textbook philosophy, mean that teachers are expected to cope with great change in several areas. They are probably far from understanding the concepts and face many difficulties. They may feel at a loss as how to be involved in terms of the attempt to comply with these changes ushered by the Action Plan and how to adapt their classroom practice. In this new situation of education reform, can classroom practice techniques for achieving culture and communication goals change from the traditional perspective on teaching characterized by a transmission orientation to ambitious new goals set by these reforms? Can teachers' past beliefs about teaching be modified to take account of the new priorities? Apart from this, I wonder how much teachers even understand the concept of culture and its significant role in language teaching; and whether they have a common or shared framework for deciding what is an appropriate concept of culture for their specific teaching context since there is no discussion of what concept of culture and culture content should underpin the new curriculum.

This unsatisfactory situation invites teacher trainers as well as school teachers to reflect on the existing training model. It is clear that it had become inadequate for contemporary notions of good language education, and the current pedagogical content required by Chinese EFL school teachers leaves them unprepared to cope with change. In addition, a basic disciplinary knowledge of second language acquisition research, psycholinguistics, bilingualism, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and knowledge of learners and context appear necessary for all language teachers. To teach students to achieve communicative competence in English and to raise students' cultural awareness, teachers themselves will need to be equipped with the relevant competence and cultural knowledge. Given that

now the new requirements set by the national curriculum mandate such expectations Education College and Teacher College must make teacher training reform a priority.

The core part of my empirical study is to investigate Chinese teachers' opinions and beliefs about the place of English cultural teaching in EFL context; their beliefs about goals of language and culture teaching and what culture content they think should be taught. In addition, the study examines related practices in the classroom at the secondary level context, as reported by teachers in the survey which will be conducted. Research on teachers' beliefs has shown a strong correlation between beliefs and teaching practice. Beliefs directly affect teaching practice and teaching practice reflects teachers' beliefs (Calderhead, 1996; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). It is clear from the research literature that these beliefs determine which content teachers select and how they approach the micro level of teaching in the classroom. In the present study, I want to build on these findings to see what schoolteachers' beliefs are in Chinese EFL teaching and thereby to document instructional practice in the classroom in the new situation that is emerging under current education reforms. The purpose of this part of the literature review is to profile the beliefs of language teachers in teaching EFL context. The review of the literature in this section will focus on the following areas:

Teachers' beliefs about subject matter

Teachers' beliefs about the goals of language education

Teachers' beliefs about culture and language

Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning

In order to appreciate the place and role of teacher beliefs in the teaching of English, it will be necessary to consider the nature of beliefs themselves, their definition and relation to other constructs such as that of knowledge. This review will begin therefore by defining the concept of beliefs and building a theoretical framework which will be used throughout the study. Following the review of the literature on beliefs, will be a discussion concerning the relationship between beliefs and change.

3.6.1 Definition of belief

In order to understand the role of teachers' beliefs in innovation in education, it is important to define the concept itself. Defining beliefs is not easy. Pajares refers to beliefs as a 'messy construct', which 'travels under the alias' of 'attitudes, values, judgments, axioms, opinions, ideology, perceptions, conceptions, conceptual systems, preconceptions, dispositions, implicit theories, personal theories, internal mental processes, action strategies, rules of practice, practical principles, perspectives, repertories of understanding, and social strategy, to name but a few that can be found in the literature' (Pajares, 1992: 309 cited in Sercu 2007). It is clear from the above that beliefs are not only considered to have an affective, attitudinal component, but also to impact on perceptions, and inner world of teachers, and their thought processes. Moreover beliefs link to personal theories and have knowledge components. Pajares explains that confusion with the concept centres on the distinction between knowledge and belief. However, as many researchers have found, it is not so much that knowledge differs from beliefs, but that beliefs themselves constitute a form of knowledge.

In his attempts to characterize beliefs, Nespor (1987) provides some distinctions between the two. He singles out four features of the construct previously identified by Abelson (1979) and considers them in relation to teachers. Existential presumptions or personal truths are generally unaffected by persuasion and are perceived by the teacher as being beyond his/her control or influence. These types of beliefs would include a teacher's beliefs about students' innate abilities or characteristics. Alternatively is a feature of beliefs that would include situations such as when teachers attempt to establish an instructional format of which they have no direct experience but which they might consider ideal.

Nespor theorizes that it is in this respect that beliefs 'serve as a means of defining goals

and tasks, whereas knowledge systems come into play where goals and the paths to their attainment are well defined'. (p.310) Belief systems can be said to rely much more heavily on affective and evaluative components than knowledge systems. For this reason, knowledge of a domain can be distinguished from feelings about a domain such as a subject area taught by a teacher. Teachers' values and feelings often affect what and how they teach and may conflict with their knowledge:

Belief systems are composed mainly of episodically stored material which is derived from personal experience, episodes or events which continue to influence the comprehension of events at a later time. Whereas beliefs reside in episodic memory, knowledge is semantically stored (p.310).

A further distinction between beliefs and knowledge, notes Nespor, is that, while knowledge often changes, beliefs are 'static'. Knowledge can be evaluated or judged. This is not the case with beliefs as there is usually a lack of consensus about how they are to be evaluated. Furthermore, there do not appear to be any clear rules for determining the relevance of beliefs to real world events.

While there are no doubt other distinctions that could be made between the two constructs, a better understanding may be gained by exploring the relationship between the two and by considering beliefs as a form of knowledge. This form of knowledge could be referred to as personal knowledge. Kagan (1992) refers to belief as a 'particularly provocative form of personal knowledge' and argues that most of a teacher's professional knowledge can be regarded more accurately as beliefs. In this view beliefs are often considered as being a type of knowledge and knowledge as a component of beliefs.

According to Kagan, this knowledge grows richer and more coherent as a teacher's

experience in classrooms grows and thus forms a highly personalized pedagogy or *belief system* that actually constrains the teacher's perception, judgment, and behaviour. In terms of beliefs as being personal knowledge, Kagan explains: 'A teacher's knowledge of his or her profession is situated in three important ways: in context (it is related to specific groups of students), in content (it is related to particular academic material to be taught), and in person (it is embedded within the teacher's unique belief system)' (1992: 74).

Like Clark (1986) who equates 'implicit theories' with beliefs, Nespor (1987: 324) explains how beliefs become personal pedagogies or theories to guide teachers' practices:

> teachers' beliefs play a major role in defining teaching tasks and organizing the knowledge and information relevant to those tasks. But why should this be so? Why wouldn't research-based knowledge or academic theory serve this purpose just as well? The answer suggested here is that the contexts and environments within which teachers work, and many of the problems they encounter, are ill-defined and deeply entangled, and that beliefs are peculiarly suited for making sense of such contexts.

Based on these common elements described in this review of the nature of beliefs, I can derive a definition of beliefs applicable to teachers, which will be used in this study. Teachers' beliefs represent a complex system of personal and professional knowledge that serves as implicit theories and cognitive maps for experiencing and responding to reality. Beliefs rely on cognitive and affective components and are often tacitly held.

3.6.2 General beliefs and context-specific beliefs

With understanding of the nature of beliefs, researchers usually make a distinction between teachers' *general beliefs* and *context-specific beliefs*. The former refers to the concepts of teaching and learning, concepts of subject matter and concepts of the

teaching context; while the latter concerns pedagogical content knowledge or professional knowledge gradually built through the accumulation of teaching experience. I will analyze these two general bodies of literature below.

General beliefs of teaching and learning

This body of literature on teachers' thinking usually centres on general conceptions of teaching and learning, subject matter and teaching context. Teachers' general conceptions regarding teaching have been investigated extensively (see for example, Shavelson & Stern, 1982; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Fang, 1996).

(1) Concepts of teaching and learning

Conceptions of teaching and learning held by science teachers investigated by Prosser and Trigwell (1999) and Prosser et al (1994) have been identified as (1) the transmission of the concepts of the syllabus; (2) the transmission of teacher's knowledge; (3) helping students acquire the concepts of the syllabus; (4) helping students acquire the teacher's knowledge; (5) helping students develop conceptions, and (6) helping students change conceptions).

In 1999, An Shuhua, a Chinese-American, and her colleagues were invited by the Ministry of Education in China to present mathematics teaching methods to a group of Chinese educators and researchers. This provided the opportunity for investigating Chinese teachers' views in the teaching and learning of mathematics. Their study combined qualitative and quantitative research methods in the form of interview, observation of classroom teaching and survey of teachers and educations at different levels. They found that Chinese teachers' beliefs concerning mathematic education have a strong impact on their teaching practice. The majority of Chinese teachers in their study believed that basic knowledge of mathematics is critical for students to develop

thinking ability, to help students to solve real world problems, and to correct their errors (beliefs of learning from errors and errors caused by the lack of prerequisite knowledge---blind point of knowledge). As for classroom instruction, An Shuhua and her colleagues found that Chinese teachers instil knowledge into students and require students to do many exercises to achieve entrance examination success. In addition, the researchers found that teachers devote much attention and time to preparing instruction in order to understand the subject and its requirements fully. Teaching plans nearly for all teachers include, i) content,. ii) the objectives, iii) materials, iv) procedure (a) review of previous lesson, (b) new lesson, (c) reinforce practice, (d) summary, (e) homework.

From such research on general conceptions, we can see the range of conceptions of teaching and learning and note some distinctive differences. In Prosser and Trigwell's findings, teachers devote considerable attention on 'concepts' of transmission to the students, of acquisition by the students and of change in the students. Students are placed in the centre of learning. On the other hand, Chinese teachers focus on knowledge instruction and rely on exercises to consolidate what students learn. The teaching is more teacher-centred, often ignores students' role and neglects the development of individual personality. Moreover such teaching fails to cultivate creative ability and disconnects learning with students' real life overlooking the potential of a more interactive relationship between teachers and students.

This tradition of teaching and learning which can be traced to teachers' teaching plans though at different levels, exposes a similar formula, indicating lack of individual creativity possibly not developed in the teachers' previous education. These general beliefs of teaching and learning in relation to science teachers encourage me to review research literature on beliefs of foreign language teaching and learning.

Wang (2002) investigates English teachers at tertiary level in China to uncover the extent

to which English teachers have employed the key innovative practices associated with communicative language teaching. The findings identify which teachers adopted a more communicative-oriented teaching style. However, the results also indicate that traditional classroom features, such as teaching focused on the textbook and transmitting knowledge or explaining new words in vocabulary lists, are still very common. The findings also show that it might not be the training respondents received but the type of students they teach that determined the extent to which they applied innovative practices in their teaching.

In a similar empirical study in an Asian context, Li (1999) investigated the communicative language teaching of English in Korean middle school classrooms. The purpose of the survey research was to explore Korean teachers' beliefs about the main objectives of English teaching and their practices in classroom. The result shows that Korean EFL teachers' beliefs about the language teaching and learning are (1) developing communicative classroom environments that blend the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, (2) providing appropriate, meaningful and comprehensive input to learners, (3) using motivational activities such as games and songs, (4) using audio-visual materials in language classroom, (5) using learner-centred activities, and (6) teaching grammar in a communicative way. Despite the teachers' beliefs, however, they report that their teaching practices are still largely teacher-centred, teacher-dominated and drill-driven rather than learner-centred. From above findings I can see Korean teachers' beliefs and practice appeared to be contradicted with the literature reviewed earlier saying that beliefs determine practice. Teachers reported using a teacher-dominated-drills-driven approach in the classroom but they believe that they should use learner-centred activities through the communicative method. My argument is that teachers' beliefs were not deeply held and their classroom practice was still guided by their previous deeply-rooted concepts, which was hard to change.

These beliefs on language teaching and learning were shared by the Chinese teachers in EFL investigated in this study as we shall see in Chapter Five.

(2) Concepts of subject matter

Many studies investigating teachers' conceptions of subject matter have focused on teachers of mathematics and physics. Several studies have found that there does not appear to be a link between teachers' conception of the nature of the science and their teaching behaviour (Bell, Lederman & Adb-El-Khalick, 2000; Brickhouse & Bodner, 1992; Hodson, 1993). Teachers who hold clear and consistent beliefs about the nature of science don't appear to plan activities consistent with those views. Instead, they are more concerned with issues of classroom management and course content coverage (Hodson, 1993).

There is however some important evidence to suggest that teacher perspectives on their subject matter influence their teaching practices. Pajares (1992) conducted a review of the research literature and found that teachers' beliefs strongly correlate with their behaviour, particularly with respect to choices and decisions they make about instructional practice. For language teachers, subject matter is mainly concerned with a knowledge of English as a linguistic system at the sentence level and largely ignores knowledge of language use at the level of pragmatics and discourse (Brown, 2000). There is no explicit attention to culture knowledge as a learning goal which constitutes a key component of contemporary approaches to cultural understanding and communicative competence. Instead, such knowledge is assumed to be obtainable through reading English literature and attending lectures on the political systems, economic structures, history and geography of the UK and the US (Paige, 2003). It is difficult to see how this body of knowledge can contribute to effective language use (Stern, 2000).

The respondents in this study conceive the subject English as one of the three important subjects next to mathematics and Chinese. They invest more time in developing linguistic competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The detailed discussion will be presented in Chapter 5.

(3) Teaching context

Teachers' perceptions of the teaching context cover many aspects, for example, class size, students' motivation and ability, control over teaching methods, teaching content, their perceptions of self-efficacy, demands of the teaching workload, and standard of school facilities etc. Prosser and Trigwell (1999) identified several teaching context variables that were related to approaches to teaching. They carried out a survey on Australian college physics and chemistry teachers and found that 'a conceptual change/student-centred approach to teaching is associated with perceptions that workload is not too high, the class sizes are not too large, that the teacher has some control over what and how he/she teaches and that the variation in student characteristics is not too large' (Prosser & Trigwell, 1999: 156). They also report that 'an information transmission/teacher-focused approach to teaching is associated with the perceptions that the teacher has little control over how and what he/she teaches and that there is little commitment to student learning in the department' (ibid).

In the EFL teaching context in China, especially at secondary level, class sizes are very large. There are 65-70 students in each class on average, which indicates that student-centred approaches are severely limited and task-based teaching which is advocated inevitably turns out to be teacher-centred transmission of knowledge provided in the textbook. The perceptions of teaching are very direct and practical articulated in terms like 'content to be covered' for 'desirable examination results' (Liu, 2001). The commitment to students' learning can't be satisfactorily made in such big classes and the high teaching efficiency is very hard to achieve.

As for a choice of teaching approach, the research shows that this depends on both the teacher's previous experience and his/her perceptions of the compatibility between the approach and teaching situation (teacher's control of content, teaching methods, class size etc. (Trigwell and Prosser, 1997). For example, these researchers argue that a teacher will adopt a conceptual change/ student-centred approach only if the teacher has sufficient prior experience of such an approach and perceives it to be effective for the intended teaching situation. If Chinese teachers' prior experiences of teaching are of the grammar-translation approach, they may feel their experience of task-based approach is not sufficient and be at loss how to apply the task-based approach in the classroom.

Teachers are not very good at perceiving students' interests and motivation in learning (Cater and Doyle, 1995) although they perceive that students are an important contextual variable. Teachers often use their judgment on how students respond to their instructional practices and their teaching content. For many language teachers, an important reason for bringing culture into classroom has been the hope that the study of culture will increase student motivation in language learning (Byram and Morgan, 1994).

In the present study, it has been found that teachers believe that cultural anecdotes, cultural facts related to daily life and cultural background knowledge are taught because they can interest students' learning of English. This is one of the purposes of teaching culture in English language classes.

Context-specific conceptions

Research into teacher's thinking has shown that teachers also have context-specific conceptions which can gradually develop in the course of teaching (Counts, 1999; Grossman, 1988; 1995; van Driel et al 1997). Context-specific conceptions are experience-based and help teachers relate their past experience to current problems, they

also help to define problems, and test out possible solutions to problems (Calderhead, 1996). As a teacher's experience in classroom grows, his or her professional knowledge grows richer and more coherent, forming a highly personalized pedagogy---a belief system that constrains the teacher's perception, judgment, and behaviour. This knowledge base for teaching has long been recognized by teacher educators and has received much emphasis recently (Bullough, 2001). Shulman (1986) made a compelling case for a solid knowledge base as a precondition for effective teaching. The knowledge base for teaching, as Shulman has conceived it, is an amalgam of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that underlie the capacity to teach effectively. The knowledge base content is classified by Shulman into seven categories: subject matter knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, the remaining three categories of knowledge concern learners and their characteristics, educational contexts, and educational purposes. Over the years, Shulman's conceptual framework has stimulated much research efforts to identify a general knowledge base for teaching, to define the nature of relevant knowledge, and to design curriculum that can help pre- and in-service teachers develop an adequate knowledge base (e.g., Calderhead, 1991; Fradd & Lee, 1998; Freeman, 2002; Grossman, 1990; Grossman & Richert, 1988; Richards, 1998).

The framework has been largely supported by empirical research across diverse subjects. Nonetheless, a number of researchers have found it necessary to modify the framework to remove overlapping among the categories of knowledge. Grossman and Richert (1988), for example, revised the framework to yield a four-part knowledge base: (a) subject matter knowledge; (b) general pedagogical knowledge and knowledge of educational theories and philosophy in Shulman's framework; (c) pedagogical content knowledge, which subsumes Shulman's category of curricular knowledge; and (d) knowledge of learners and context. A similar framework is conceptualized by Elbaz (1983) as practical knowledge. She identified the content of practical knowledge as

'knowledge of self, the context of teaching, subject matter, curriculum development and instruction' (p. 45).

In order to use this knowledge base that underlies teaching, a teacher must use his or her personal value judgments (Wilson, Shulman, & Richert 1987). It is generally acknowledged that such judgments depend on three factors: the particular class of students a teacher faces; the kind of academic material to be taught and the teacher's prior experiences and related beliefs. Thus it can be said that a teacher's knowledge of his/her profession is situated in three important ways: in context (related to specific groups of students), in content (related to particular academic material to be taught), and in person (embedded within the teacher's unique belief system). Research in language classroom shows those teachers' feelings, values, needs and beliefs, combined with experience and theoretical knowledge; usually guide their language instructional practice. Teacher perceptions regarding how language is learnt also play crucial role in that they determine a teacher's willingness to experiment with new approaches (Li, 1998).

3.6.3 The connection between beliefs and behaviours

As pointed out in the introduction to this section, many researchers tend to show that the individuals' beliefs may influence their behaviours (Abelson, 1979; Clark & Peterson, 1986; 1988; Nespor, 1987; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1986). By exploring the relationship between the beliefs and behaviours, these researchers have examined the mental constructs underlying behaviour before seeking to explain behaviour. Although the connection between teacher belief and teacher behaviour may seem self-evident, on some occasions beliefs can't be inferred directly from teacher behaviour, because teachers can follow similar practices for very different reasons. Moreover, teachers are unaware of their own beliefs and what they know or believe about their profession is often tacit. Beliefs can orchestrate the recall of memories, retrieving material selectively so as to confirm prior preconceptions (Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

Some research on the association between language teachers' beliefs and instructional practice has been conducted. In Europe, Byram et al (1991) found that the methodological approach adopted by teachers appears to have a causal relationship with a teacher's beliefs. Based on extensive classroom observations and interviews with teachers and students, the respondents to their study indicated that teaching culture was a *pedagogic device* that makes lessons more interesting, contextualized language teaching, and filled in 'lessons where language-learning ability is believed to be limited' (p.111). This set of beliefs was reflected in the way culture was found in language teaching through teachers' use of cultural facts, cultural artefacts and cultural anecdotes. When students were interviewed, they said that the teacher 'supplements the textbook….but also improves on the textbook' and 'can provide experience which the textbook cannot' (p.113). Cook (1996) investigated first year university students' cultural understanding. In her findings she concluded that students valued teachers who possessed French language and culture expertise. When these culture teachers were allocated to them, students considered their teachers to be an important source of culture information.

The key instructional activities are the vehicles that translate teachers belief into classroom instruction, thus I can say that teachers' beliefs are mirrored in their teaching practice. In this study the activities used by teachers /trainers are discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5 which I will see how teachers' belief influence their teaching. Teachers' beliefs on culture teaching are decisive variables in the practice.

3.6.4 Teachers' beliefs regarding the goals of language education

In 1981 Robinson conducted a large-scale investigation of perceptions held by teachers, students and parents concerning the sociocultural goals of foreign language study at the primary level. The notable findings regarding foreign language study in this research were first and foremost that the principal aims of foreign language teaching were for

'understanding people', 'general enjoyment' and 'language enrichment' (Robinson, 1981: 22) These reasons, the researcher pointed out, reflect the 'collective justification for including foreign language study in the school curriculum at primary, secondary and tertiary levels' (p.33). Although set in Australia over twenty year ago, these findings are applicable to the situation in China today. The new Chinese curriculum (2001) states in the introduction that '….learning a foreign language will broaden students' horizon, cultivate students sensitivity towards other people and cultures of English-speaking countries in order to develop students' ability of evaluation and judgement of our own culture based on better understanding of foreign cultures …'. This assertion echoes Robinson's statement that 'foreign language study will give one key to another culture, will lead to an awareness, understanding and sensitivity towards other people and their way of life' (p.24).

Similar investigations were carried out by Byram and his colleagues between 1985 and 1988 in UK. The goal of their project was to investigate 'the effect of language teaching on young people's perception of other culture' (Byram et al., 1991, p. 13). The major findings regarding teachers were, first, that teachers had similar objectives for and beliefs about the value of foreign language. In particular, they felt that culture promoted gains in personal development in the form of learning about others as well as promoted openness and tolerance. Second, there was great variation in style or approaches to teaching about foreign culture and teachers frequently used culture as a pedagogic device for capturing student interest, or for contextualizing language teaching. Third, teachers in this study generally had limited experience with the target culture. Finally, instruction was dominated by the textbooks, which were used extensively and determines the topics as well as the sequence of instruction (cited by Paige, et al 2003: 193). The difference between Robinson's teachers and the teachers interviewed by Byram and his colleagues is that teachers' perception of goals of language learning in Australia were more general while UK teachers, apart from sharing the general objectives of language teaching with

their Australian counterparts, also revealed an emerging awareness of culture in the curriculum, such as teaching approaches to culture teaching, the domination of textbook in instruction etc. Through their extensive classroom observations, Byram and his colleagues draw a conclusion that culture remains didactic and oriented toward the transmission of information (ibid, 118). It could be argued that this transmission of information was guided by teachers' mental constructs of experience often condensed into schemata or concepts that guided their behaviour. If so, teachers' perception of cultural aspects of language teaching was that they should impart this cultural information, believing that students' competence in skills, attitudes and awareness would be promoted and developed.

In my data analysis chapter, teachers' concepts on language teaching objectives are analyzed and I will see what they think about language teaching objectives and see if there any different opinions on this issue. Now back to my discussion and I will continue to discuss a research project done by Chinese scholars on this issue.

There is some research showing that what students want and what teachers provide do not match. For example, in 1998, Liu and Gao's China nation-wide study on student attitudes toward foreign language at tertiary level showed that 63% of students thought that there should be more emphasis on culture comparison and contrast and expressed dissatisfaction with the approach of 'culture information book knowledge feeding', which they were required to memorize and on which exams were set. Although their survey did not probe for deeper representation of culture concepts in teachers and students' minds, they hint at the lack of understanding nature of culture teaching in the language education.

Relatively speaking, apart from this research, little has been studied in Chinese teacher's beliefs in ESL/EFL by Chinese scholars and even less among teachers of English at

school level. However, I found some research on mathematics teachers' beliefs and their impact on the practice in China. In her report (2002), referred to earlier, An Shuhua investigated how Chinese teachers viewed the general goals of education, especially goals of mathematics education; how Chinese teachers prepared lessons, how they taught in classroom etc. The results indicated that teachers' beliefs about mathematics and its teaching played a significant role in shaping the teachers' modes of instruction, and cultural and social context affected teachers' belief system. In Shuhua's findings, the majority of Chinese teachers believed that the goal of education in China is to cultivate people and increase the quality of the whole nation. Specifically, the goal of education was thought to foster students' development in five areas: moral, academic, physical, aesthetics, and work; while at the same time focusing on the expansion of the students' creative ability. This is probably reflective of views of general education held by language teachers to certain extent even though these research findings on the goals of education are from Chinese mathematics teachers. This is because Confucius' philosophy has played an important role in Chinese education. For example, moral education is the or one of the foundations of Confucianism such that various codes of moral life, rules of propriety, patterns of behaviour and guidelines for social and daily life were produced and enhanced (Yao, 2000). Therefore the moral goal is placed above general education goals in China.

3.6.5 Teachers' beliefs regarding culture and language

A major area of foreign language research involved in the study of language has been the study of the relationship of language and culture. Discovering teachers' beliefs about culture is a principal research goal.

In Europe, Byram and Risager (1999) explored teachers' views about cultural dimensions in language teaching and its effect on secondary school students' perceptions of other cultures. The researchers traced and analyzed definitions using a grid with two

dimensions: thematic (such as a way of life/ objective structure/norms and values/art and literature) and societal (such as international, national, group, individual) (Byram & Risager 1999: 105). Their findings showed that teachers' understandings of the concept 'culture' concentrated on *national culture* and little attention being paid to aspects culture beyond those already found in textbooks. The definition provided by teachers appeared to be lacking in the depth and complexity for language teaching. When students were interviewed they were interested in interpretation of cultural dimensions in language teaching. They also concluded that teachers were often frustrated in their attempts to treat the cultural dimension seriously because of pressures to produce measurable results and to focus on linguistic competence (ibid).

Knox's Report on the Teaching of French civilization (1984) contained responses given by French secondary and university teachers about how they came to teach civilization, how and what they taught. In both settings, teachers' understanding and beliefs about French civilization primarily were: current events, history, literature and the fine arts, cultural values and customs, and French-American contrasts. As for instructional contents there were some slight differences. College teachers tended to emphasize small c culture (daily life), while secondary school teachers focused more on the topics of current events, history, and geography.

In Mexico, Ryan (1994) explored the relationship between foreign language teachers' perceptions of culture and their instructional behaviour. Ryan categorized their culture filters into six basic beliefs in accordance with Keesing's categories of meaning:
(1) culture is knowledge gained through reading; (2) culture is institutions which should be analyzed; (3) culture is the daily way of life; (4) culture is transmitted from one generation to another; (5) culture means having a critical attitude toward the world; (6) culture is lived and experienced. During the observation, Ryan noticed how teachers handled information about English-speaking cultures. Linguistic analysis and practice

dominated instruction and culture aspects and linguistic practice were carefully distinguished (Ryan, 1994: 230). She reported that insertion of information about the target culture was done in several ways. In addition to the three ways reported in Byram et al (1999) (culture anecdotes, facts and artefacts) Ryan identified another two forms: cross-cultural comparisons between native culture and foreign culture; and 'brief, encapsulated cultural statements often seen as talking off the subject' (p.231). On the basis of these findings Ryan drew a conclusion that there is 'some degree of relation between teachers' filters and corresponding teacher behaviour' (p.231). For example, if a teacher's filter was 'culture is the daily way of life', he/she may instruct students in cultural anecdotes based on her/his own personal experiences. Therefore Ryan found that in general teachers are teaching culture as facts, rather than for cultural understanding and intercultural competence, a finding which is important in shedding light on how teachers are teaching about culture.

In another international setting, Lessard-Clouston (1996a) investigated Chinese teachers' views of culture in their EFL learning and teaching in a survey about their interpretations of culture teaching. The study confirmed that teachers, when asked about culture and language, gave very broad definitions that included all aspects of daily life, and said they taught culture both explicitly and implicitly in their classes (ibid).

So far I have reviewed some literature regarding teachers' beliefs on culture teaching. This body of literature was based on investigations conducted in different countries where teachers' concepts about culture teaching were different in a sense. The concept of national culture should be taught by UK teachers, the civilization of current events, history, literature and fine arts by French teachers, observable and non-observable culture should be taught by American teachers and to teach culture as facts by Mexican teachers. Therefore I am very interested to find out how school teachers in my region understand the culture teaching. In this empirical study, I explored 400 school teachers'

beliefs about the nature of culture and their classroom instruction. For some teachers it was difficult to express their ideas and explain how they define culture. Some were perplexed at first by the complexity of the abstraction and its elusive character. Their definitions were rather broad, embracing many aspects of daily life. I will discuss my findings in detail in a chapter 5.

3.6.6 Change of teachers' beliefs

Many definitions of beliefs also attach a value dimension to the concept of beliefs (Borg, 2001). In Chinese the two words 'beliefs and values' are linked together indicating that they are inseparable. Beliefs involve classifying life as we experience it into certain categories. This is one of the most fundamental ways in which humans understand the world and give meaning to their experiences (Brislin and Yoshiba, 1994). We define what aspects of life are valuable or worthy and put price tags on many components which make up our everyday lives by referring to our beliefs. Pajares (1992) provides insight into how beliefs function and how this functioning actually contributes to their resistance to change:

Beliefs provide personal meaning and assist in defining relevancy. They help individuals to identify with one another and form groups and social systems. On a social and cultural level, beliefs provide elements of structure, order, direction and shared values. From both a personal and socio/cultural perspective, belief systems reduce dissonance and confusion, even when dissonance is logically justified by the inconsistent beliefs one holds. This is one reason why beliefs acquire emotional dimensions and resist change. People grow comfortable with their beliefs, and these beliefs become their 'self' so that individuals come to be identified and understood by the very nature of the beliefs, and habits they own. (p. 317)

The significant role that beliefs play enables teachers to make value judgments relating

to teaching and learning, act as filter and define what they consider to be important or less important information to teach and which way to conduct teaching through their belief system. The empirical studies have yielded quite consistent findings in this value dimension. First, teacher's beliefs appear to be relatively stable and resistant to change (Brousseau, Book, & Byers, 1988; Herrmann & Duffy, 1989). Values embedded in beliefs are very loyal to the personal inner world, and deeply-rooted beliefs are especially hard to change. Second, teachers' beliefs tend to be associated with a congruent style of teaching that is often evident across different classes and grade levels (Evertson & Weade, 1989; Martin, 1989). Beliefs, as Pajares assets, 'tend to self-perpetuate, preserving even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience' (Pajares, 1992). He continues to say that the earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter; newly acquired beliefs are most vulnerable to change; if we apply this insight to beliefs about teaching, it seems that the more important a particular aspect is in the teacher's mind, the more difficult it will be to change. These well-established beliefs affect the way in which teachers perceive their own teaching situation. In this way, beliefs seem to be equipped with a built-in security system which frames and filters new information in order to minimize the impact of any challenge to their own survival (Sercu, 2007).

Nespor (1987) argues that instructional change is not a matter of abandoning beliefs, but of gradually replacing them with more relevant beliefs. Dwyer et al. (1992) concur with Nespor when they argue that implementing change in education must include changing teachers' practices and beliefs by gradually replacing them with more relevant beliefs shaped by experiences in an altered context. They argue that it is this altered context that may make the difference in terms of impacting on the beliefs. They found that 'teachers' beliefs may be best modified while they are in the thick of change, taking risks and facing uncertainty' (Dwyer et al., 1991: 52). Confronted with change, teachers are forced to re-evaluate their beliefs about learning and instruction and only by changing these

beliefs can instructional change take place. Though beliefs may be hard to change, they do change over time with growing expertise and may even change through reflective teaching practice (Sercu, 2007).

(1) Beliefs change during teaching experience

Research on teachers' thinking has been concerned with the development of teaching expertise (Berliner, 1987; Berliner, 1988; Carter & Doyle, 1987; Dunkin & Precians, 1992; Kwo, 1994). Teaching experience is an important factor in the development of context-specific conceptions because teachers with accumulated experience know what decision to make without having engaged in conscious thought (Berliner, 1987) while teachers with little experience have to make decisions based on their general conceptions. Going through this process leads to the context-specific conceptions. Experienced teachers' thought processes are highly automated.

How teacher's teaching expertise can be developed, is shown by Kwo (1994) who describes five stages of skill development in teaching as follows:

Stage 1: *Novice*. At this stage, a teacher is labelling and learning each element of a classroom task in the process of acquiring a set of context-free rules. Classroom-teaching performance is rational and relatively inflexible, and requires purposeful concentration.

Stage 2: *Advanced beginner*. Many second-and third-year teachers reach this stage, where episodic knowledge is acquired and similarities across contexts are recognized. The teacher develops strategic knowledge and an understanding of when to ignore or break rules. Prior classroom experiences and the contexts of problems begin to guide the teacher's behaviour.

Stage 3: *Competent*. The teacher is now able to make conscious choices about actions, set priorities, and make plans. From prior experience, the teacher knows what is and is not important. In addition, the teacher is able to manage the areas of timing and targeting errors. However, performance is not yet fluid or flexible.

Stage 4: *Proficient*. Fifth-year teachers may reach this stage, when intuition and know-how begin to guide performance and a holistic recognition of similarities among contexts is acquired. The teacher can now pick up information from the classroom without conscious effort, and can predict events with some precision.

Stage 5: *Expert*. Not all teachers reach this stage, which is characterized by an intuitive grasp of situations and a non-analytic, non-deliberate sense of appropriate behaviour. Teaching performance is now fluid and seemingly effortless, as the teacher no longer consciously chooses the focus of attention. At this stage, standardized, automated routines are operated to handle instruction and management (cited in Sercu, 2007).

It is clear that teachers' beliefs can indeed change with growing of teaching experience. As teacher's teaching experience accumulates, teachers' context-specific conceptions become more stable and fixed and thus teachers are less open-minded towards innovation or change (Beijaard, 1996).

(2) Beliefs change over reflective thinking approach

In recent years, the increasing emphasis in teacher professional development has been on a critically reflective approach. Gaye and Gaye (1999) see reflection as thinking about what you do; and Farrell (2001) sees it as thinking *critically* about what you do, and involves recall, consideration, and evaluation of experiences as a means of improving future ones. Elder and Paul (1994), and Halpern (1996) also point out that reflective teaching which involves teachers' willingness to reflect on themselves critically, to question their own convictions, to challenge their own assumptions, to take risks in learning, to try out new strategies and ideas, to seek alternatives, to take control of learning, to use higher order thinking skills and reflect upon their own learning processes. Thus it can be seen that a common feature of the reflective process is the questioning of 'self', that is, one's belief, values, assumptions, context, and goals, in relation to such actions, events, or decisions, as outlined by Cruickshank (1987) and Zeichner and Liston

(1996).

Zeichner and Liston (1996) put this in practical terms when they point out that reflective teaching involves teachers in examining, framing and attempting to solve dilemmas of classroom and schools, and asking questions about assumptions and values they bring to teaching. It also involves attending to the institutional and cultural context in which they teach, taking part in curriculum development, being involved in school change and taking responsibility for their professional development.

In the light of this, Cole (1992), Coyle (2002), and Calderhead (1992) point out that reflective teachers develop and use self-directed critical thinking and ongoing critical inquiry in their practice, initiated by them and not administratively decreed. In other words, critical thinking can only emanate from within those for whom the change is intended and change can't be implemented top-down (see Van Esch & St. John, 2003). It is very difficult to achieve top-down effects because top-down decrees may not trigger a personal recognition of the need to change or enable those it is intended to serve to realize its benefits. Reflective teaching built on professional development is only something done *by* teachers, not done *to* them (Kerry & Wilding, 2004). It must involve an inner mental willingness to change for improvement. Reflective teaching implies that change necessarily involves cognitive renewal---a change of mind---where new perceptions enables an individual to move beyond existing thinking and construct deeper understanding (cited in Sercu, 2007). The constructive spiral of professional development should never stop during a teacher's whole career.

How to make 'a change of mind' happen, the willingness to reflect on what teachers believe and on how they teach is one of the distinguishing marks of open minds. According to Dewey (1993), open-mindedness is 'to recognize the possibility of error even in the beliefs which are dearest to us.' The assumption recognizes that 'the

alternative beliefs may be held by others' (Borg, 2001) and some of our own cherished, deeply-held beliefs may be erroneous and in need of revision. Without such an essential attribute, teachers will not be able to reflect on themselves and interpret evidence with balance or impartiality.

The second important factor in changing thinking and beliefs is that the felt-need for change must be accepted by teachers. If teachers are unaware of need for change in particular areas of their lives, they don't have much incentive to make an effort to change. Therefore it is vital to get a fuller picture of current realities so that relevant aims can be set and responsible action can be taken (Baylis, 2004).

Apart from the need for change, teachers must foster the ability to challenge their own beliefs. To question their own convictions implies an awareness of their own beliefs and the ability to distinguish between those beliefs that are reliable and those less reliable in the evidence-informed ideas and professional practice (Sercu, 2007). To achieve this, teachers must be determined and willing to pursue intellectual integrity constructively in a radical revision of belief systems.

Reflective practice is a key component within effective teaching and professional development (Ferraro, 2000). It comprises a deliberate act of reviewing and critically thinking about practice with the purpose of increasing learning opportunities for students and teachers: 'teachers need to learn how to analyze practice — both other teachers' practice and their own' (Willis, 2002: 34). Reflection on practice can lead to self-generative change. It is a collaborative process where colleagues enter into a reflective dialogue about practice and/or student achievement data, promoting a shared focus and negotiated understanding within a school. Sharing and comparing personal beliefs in the company of others enables individuals to see their own beliefs from the viewpoint of others and to examine them critically. Learning with others, where

colleagues and their ideas are treated seriously and respectfully, boosts the confidence of each teacher's sense of self which, in turn, fosters openness and willingness to respond to the challenge of change (Pollard, 2002).

Summary

I started this section with a definition of the concept of 'teacher's beliefs' and reviewed what the connection between teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching practice. I analyzed the literature regarding foreign language teachers' perceptions particularly on beliefs regarding the goals of foreign language education, beliefs of culture and language; beliefs of teaching and learning. Those will form the theoretical framework for my data discussion.

I discovered that the research findings from literature investigating foreign language teachers' beliefs largely coincide with those of studies inquiring into teachers' beliefs in other subjects. The body of research into teachers' beliefs suggests that teachers' conceptions, to a certain extent, shape their teaching practice, although this is not always the case as some research has shown.

Teachers' general conceptions help the shaping of their context-specific conceptions, which directly influences their choice of classroom activities. General conceptions and context-specific conceptions are tacitly held and derived from their experience both as a student and as a teacher. Mismatch of beliefs and practices sometimes occurs. It is not clear how these conflicting beliefs influence teacher's instructional decision making. But studies suggest that as teachers' experience grows they can develop their instruction with little awareness of decision-making and conscious thought.

The studies also tell me that beliefs, once established, are not easy to change. Only through consistent reflective teaching practice and strong willingness for personal,

professional development, can the change occur.

The research and thinking on teachers' beliefs discussed in this section provides me with a perspective on how teachers may respond to cultural dimension teaching in language education. Their conceptions of culture's role in language teaching influence their choice and decision of teaching content and teaching activities. From this discussion, it is clear that to teach cultural awareness and communicative competence, teachers' conceptions must be changed from traditional transmission of knowledge to a new educational agenda. The teacher as an agent of change plays a very important role in educational innovation. This research offers me a threshold of understanding for enhancing approaches to teacher development in future. The findings have helped me outline what preconditions need to be met in terms of teachers' beliefs, attributes and actions before the innovation can be successful.

The changing definition of professional performance, which can come into conflict with the daily practices and professional orientations of teachers; reforms requires the amount of time and energy, and the resulting impact on the emotional lives of teachers (Veen & Sleegers, 2006).

3.7 A summary of the chapter

At the beginning of this chapter, the relationship between language and culture is reviewed and the implication for language and culture teaching is discussed briefly. Then from the chronological aspect traces the development of culture study in China, and Chinese scholars and western scholars' concepts on cultural contents which should be included in language teaching are analyzed. The basic principles and factors affecting culture teaching and methods/techniques for culture teaching are also discussed. Finally teachers' beliefs regarding language and culture teaching and its connection with their practices are analyzed, and this provides a basis for the empirical study which follows in the next two chapters, fits with an explanation of the methodology in the next chapter and then with the analysis of data in Chapter 5.

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

Introduction

In previous chapters I have relied on the conceptual analysis of existing literature concerning culture teaching and the governmental documents of three countries' language curriculums in terms of cultural aspects. It can be seen that cultural aspects in the three countries' language curriculums are given different emphasis. Since the English curriculum is now touching upon the 'cultural awareness' for the first time, which was discussed in Chapter Three, I want to see how school teachers perceive this issue, having reviewed the relationship between teachers'' beliefs and practices in Chapter Three which suggests that what I can find out from teachers about their beliefs will give some insight into their practice. Having also reviewed in Chapter Three the literature on methodology for teaching cultural awareness, I will in future – after the completion of the thesis – plan teacher training according to what the teachers believe and do and in relation to what I have learnt about methodology.

Therefore I want to investigate school teachers' and teacher trainers' views about cultural teaching in the language classroom in Xinjiang to see if they understand the integration of language and culture teaching in practice, and the purpose of this chapter is to explain how I decided to collect the views of language teachers and what data collection methods I decided on and why I chose the methods. To be more exact, in this chapter on the research methodology, the following questions will be answered:

What are major research methods in social science, especially in education?

Why is a survey method chosen to conduct the study?

What techniques or procedures are used to conduct the research?

What reliability and validity should be considered in this research?

What are the limitations of this research?

What ethical issues should be considered in this research?

Each question will be discussed in a corresponding section. Section 4.1 will focus on the discussion of the nature of the research and its main features of quantitative and qualitative methods in education. Section 4.2 will explain why the quantitative research method was chosen to conduct this survey study. Section 4.3 will explain the techniques and procedures of collecting data in this study. They include the designing of the questionnaire, pilot study, research samples, administration of data collection, procedure of data collection, treatment of data. Section 4.4 will deal with the reliability and validity that was considered in doing the questionnaire survey. Section 4.5 will discuss the limitations of this research which must be considered. In section 4.6 the ethical issues will be taken into an account while conducting this study. Finally, a summary of the main content of the chapter will be given at the end of the chapter.

4.1 The nature of research in education

I didn't understand the real meaning the word 'research' until I came to Durham in 2000 as a visiting scholar. To my knowledge at that time, doing research was the business of scientists and was a big word. I, as a teacher and teacher trainer, never thought about it. When I was in Durham I often heard people saying 'I have researched this problem,' 'my research experiment will run for another two weeks'. 'PhD students' were called 'research students' and some scholars were addressed as 'research fellows' etc.' the word 'research' could be heard everywhere. During my stay in Durham, I came to understand that research can be conducted in a host of situations by a variety of individuals and the research can take a variety of forms depending on the unique characteristics of the subject or topic under investigation (Wiersma, 1980).   Research is one of many different ways of knowing or understanding and it is a process of systematic inquiry (Mertens, 1998: 2). After reading some literature, better understanding of research was acquired and my own research project reinforced my comprehension of what the nature of

research is.

Research is the formal, systematic application of the scientific and disciplined inquiry approach to the study of the problem (Gay, 2003: 3). Research is to discover the truth which has been defined by Kerlinger (1970) as the systematic, controlled empirical and critical investigation of hypothetical propositions about the presumed relations among natural phenomena. Kerlinger clearly states research has three characteristics. First when events occur in a haphazard manner, research is systematic and controlled because operations are based on inductive-deductive reasoning. Second, research is also empirical because scientists turn to experience for validation. And third, research is self-correcting. Scientific methods have not only built-in mechanisms to protect scientists from error, but also their procedures and results are open to public examination by professionals. With this view, research is a combination of both experience and reasoning regarded as the most successful approach to the discovery of truth, particularly in natural science (Borg, 1963).

It is also believed that educational research is the systematic application of a series of methods employed to provide trustworthy information about educational problems, issues and topics. (Gay & Airasian, 2003: 3). Most researchers, including educational researchers, undertake inquiry to gain understanding about some problems or topics that they don't fully understand. The general procedure or system they followed to gain their understanding and improvement of their teaching is: 1) identification of the problem: the researcher must understand the nature of the problem to be studied; 2) review the related information: the related area of knowledge must be identified and literature is the source of obtaining such information; 3) data collection; of course data can't be collected in any available haphazard manner. It requires proper organization and control so that the data will enable valid decisions to be made about the research problem at hand; 4) data analysis; it must be analyzed in a manner appropriate to the problem and 5) drawing

conclusions; these conclusions or generalizations should be based upon the data analysis within the framework of the research study. In order to implement this systematic approach some scientific methods must be employed in doing any research. Different writers use different terms for methodological classification. Methodology is an umbrella word describing the different methods used in any research. It refers to knowledge about methods and a very general approach to studying research topics (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:22; Silverman, 2000:77). Within any social science, there are usually two major research methods often referred to: quantitative and qualitative research. In the following, the features of quantitative and qualitative research will be discussed.

4.1.1 Quantitative or qualitative research

It was argued above that the fundamental purpose of educational research is to increase our understanding of educational processes, practice, topics, and issues. For much of the history of educational research, the topics or problems will be defined, the research process will be carried out, data will be analyzed and results will be produced; finally the quality of the study and its conclusion will be verified. For the most part, these research procedures were based on scientific methods from the natural sciences for conducting and obtaining educational understanding. Quantitative research methods are based on the collection and analysis of numerical data, usually obtained from questionnaires, tests, checklists, and other formal paper-and-pencil instruments (Gay & Airasian, 2003:8), aiming at assessing and analyzing the relationships between certain variables (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). It also involves stating both the hypotheses to be examined and the research procedures that will be carried out in the study (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Qualitative research methods are based on the collection and analysis of non-numerical data such as observations, interviews, focus groups and videotaping (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Researchers seek understanding by observing phenomena in their natural settings

rather than those set up specifically for the purpose of research and provide insights not available through research such as an experiment or a test (Hammersly, 1998; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

Though many efforts have been done to define the quantitative and qualitative research, it does not seem easy to make a clear distinction between them .The two approaches are complementary in research and even indistinguishable in many respects. How the two research methods are conducted reflects their different perspectives on meaning and how researchers can approach it. The basic differences between the two types of research lie in the nature of the data, in the methods for collecting and analyzing it. In other words, the process of measurement has been at the centre of debates between exponents of the two approaches (Punch, 1998:61). The decision on whether to have quantitative or qualitative data or the combination of two types of data is not a matter for rules. The type of data we end up with should be determined primarily by what we are trying to find out; what are the context, circumstances and practical aspects of the particular research project.

4.1.2 Choice of research method

Although the National Curriculum of China requires the inclusion of culture into the English language syllabus, it doesn't explicitly say how it should be done. Neither does it give a very detailed description of the content of culture in English classes. Therefore the purpose of this research is to investigate how school teachers and teacher trainers perceive the cultural dimension of English language teaching, how they perceive the objectives and aims of language teaching and cultural teaching; what the daily practices and activities used in teaching cultures of English speaking countries are; how they allocate their time in their teaching of culture in the English classroom; what their attitudes towards the intercultural understanding and awareness are.

In the light of the very nature of the questions given above, which directly ask the informants to give information in relation to their perceptions towards the issues in question, I decided to employ a survey based on the primary goal of obtaining basic information from a larger number of school teachers dispersed over a wide geographic area in the secondary English language education in Xinjiang, in the northwest part of China. The detailed reasons why I chose a survey will be explained in the following section. As far as the methodology is concerned, this research is to investigate a quantitative, comparative study that comprises questionnaire answers gathered from the school teachers and teacher trainers in Xinjiang and I decided to focus on quantitative data as part of the decision to carry out a survey rather than observations in classrooms, for example.

4.2 Survey study

Of all the research methods, survey research may be the most practical and usable in one sense: it relies more on common sense and less on complex statistics. Often results reported as percentages and averages are sufficient to explain the results of a survey research project (Brown, 2001:15). Surveys are used to collect data information in many fields, including political science, sociology, economics, and education. It is particularly useful in language research because of the many types of data that can be gathered using survey research, which can describe, explore, or explain physical characteristics, phenomena, behaviour, attitudes, and so forth.

Surveys are usually conducted in the form of a questionnaire or interview, or a combination of the two. Questionnaires and interviews share many of the same characteristics. For example, they rely on directly asking people questions to get information, but the questions are asked orally in an interview while the questionnaire is in a written form. This is one of the distinct differences between the two methods.

However there are also some differences between the two approaches, which have been discussed by many researchers such as Seliger & Shohamy (1989) and Sapsford (1999), among others. According to Seliger & Shohamy (1989):

Interviews are personalized and therefore permit a level of in-depth information gathering, free responses, and flexibility that can't be obtained by other procedures. The interviewer can probe for information and obtain data that have not often been foreseen. Much of the information obtained in an open/unstructured interview is incidental and comes as the interview proceeds. There are disadvantages, however. Interviews can be costly, time-consuming, and often difficult to administer. They depend on good interviewing skills that might require extensive training. They may introduce elements of subjectivity and personal bias, and rapport may cause the interviewee to respond in a certain way to please the interviewer. (p.166)

Questionnaires on the other hand, according to Seliger & Shohamy (1989), are self-administered and can be given to large groups of respondents at the same time. They are therefore less expensive to administer than other procedures such as interviews. When anonymity is assured, respondents tend to share information of a sensitive nature more easily. Since the same questionnaire is given to all respondents, the data are more uniform and standard. Since they are usually given to all respondents of the research at the exactly the same time, the data are more accurate.

However, one of the main problems with questionnaires is the relatively low response rate (especially with mailed questionnaires), which poses questions about the reasons why certain people respond and others do not. A low return rate may therefore influence the validity of the findings. Another problem with questionnaires is they are not appropriate for respondents who are unable to read or write. This is especially relevant to research in a second language, as people very often have problems reading and providing

answers in L2. Thus there is no assurance that questions used in a questionnaire have been properly understood by the respondents and answered correctly.

Considering the above mentioned advantages and disadvantages of both questionnaires and interviews identified by Seliger & Shohamy, among others, a combination of the two methods would apparently work together. However, taking into account the disadvantages of the interview, which are difficult for me to overcome, in terms of time, cost, the training of interviewers in my case, among other things, and in the light of the information required to be elicited from the informants, I think a questionnaire survey is sufficient enough and the only practical and the most appropriate means, in my case, to get the needed information in response to my research questions:

1) What are the existing cultural elements in the curriculum in terms of ICC?

2) Is it necessary to teach culture in language education?

3) What are the school teachers' perceptions of culture/intercultural teaching in the classroom in the aspects of:

___How do school teachers of English define culture?

___How do they understand the language and culture teaching objectives?

___what are their favourite cultural topics to be taught in language teaching?

___What methods or approaches do they think should be used in teaching culture?

___How much time is distributed to teach culture in the language classroom and what is the percentage of cultural content included in the exam?

___What roles do teachers play in language and culture teaching in their classroom?

4) Are teachers' perceptions an encouraging basis for introducing change in their teaching?

Thus, I decided to use a questionnaire as my instrument to elicit the data information needed and tried as much as possible to reduce and avoid some of the above-mentioned problems derived from the approach.

4.3 The techniques and procedures of the questionnaire development and administration

The procedures followed in the development of questionnaires and descriptions of their contents will be the main topic of this section. Firstly, I will present an account of the preliminary idea on which the questions will be developed and secondly, I will give the procedures that were followed to implement the approach and administer it, including piloting , sampling technique, data collection and treatment of data.

4.3.1 The preliminary idea of a questionnaire and its possibilities

While doing the literature analysis, I noticed that some surveys on teachers' perceptions of cultural teaching in language teaching have been conducted in a European context. For example, the researchers of CULTNET, a network of researchers of interculture in foreign language education conducted an international survey in 2001, involving foreign language teachers in seven countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Mexico, Greece, Spain and Sweden. The aim was to define the mainstream of attitudes to the cultural dimension of language teaching among the ordinary teachers. Another research project led by Michael Byram and Karen Risager between 1992 and 1994 in England and Demark explored the teachers' views about culture, their preference for cultural topics in language teaching and what they see as the aims of foreign language teaching in general as well as how they view the purposes of the cultural dimension in particular. These two projects were conducted with very similar purposes for investigating the teachers' views of the cultural dimension in foreign language teaching. Inspired by their research findings, I found that the research or investigation into teachers' perceptions on similar issues as mentioned above is rare in China. Empirical research on school teachers' and teacher trainers' views towards cultural teaching in foreign language teaching are hardly made, though there have been more and more discussions about teaching culture in foreign language teaching in recent years in China, as we have seen in earlier chapters.

Thus, I want to carry out a similar survey on teachers' perceptions of cultures, the cultural dimension in language teaching, the objectives of language teaching and cultural teaching, what cultural topics they would prefer to be taught and how to teach the culture in which the language is taught in Xinjiang, Northwest part of China.

I decided to use some questions from the survey conducted by the CULTNET and by Byram and Risager. As I understand most surveys are not just about describing populations, but are to be used to test some conclusion or at least to find out how one group differs from another. The prime purpose of a survey is to make planned conclusions and comparisons (Sapsford, 1998), and therefore I want to compare some findings of the CULTNET, and Byram and Risager's findings with mine, trying to see if there are any differences or similarities on teachers' perceptions in language teaching in different contexts: European countries and Asian country, Xinjiang of China.

4.3.2 The items of the questionnaire

As mentioned above, I have adopted some questions from the CULTNET project and Byram and Risager's projects for the purpose of later comparison. These questions are rephrased to be suitable for my research. Some sentences have been paraphrased and simplified for easy comprehension by teachers. However, the core concepts remain unchanged for later comparative validity.

The questionnaire consists of 6 parts in which 26 questions are asked (see appendix 3). The first part is about how teachers perceive the objectives of foreign language education and culture teaching and culture teaching time. There are 8 questions in the first part. Q1-2 asks the teachers whether their students and they are interested in learning/teaching about cultural matters. The purpose of asking the school teachers/teacher trainers this question is to find out how confident the teachers might feel about teaching culture and whether their students, from the teachers' perspective, might accept or resist them in

transmitting culture while teaching the English language in the classroom. Q3 asks how the teachers understand the concept of 'culture' in their teaching of English, which is an open-ended question. The intention of this question is to elicit their initial definitions of culture. Freedom will be given to teachers to let their thoughts roam freely and be expressed spontaneously. Sometimes this spontaneity is extremely worthwhile as a basis for new hypothesis (Oppenheim, 1966: 41). Overall information of teachers' understanding of cultures from the instant responses to this question can be obtained.

Based on their answers to Q3, then teachers are asked in Q4 how important they think teaching cultures is in English language teaching, from which the basic information data might be obtained about their attitudes towards cultural teaching. Then in Q5 and Q6 I want to get information about teachers'/trainers' understanding of the objectives of foreign language education and cultural teaching respectively. There are 6 sub-items in Q5 indicating the objectives in language teaching. The first 4 objectives are taken from our National New English Curriculum (NNEC) and the last two are borrowed from Byram and Risager's project (see Byram and Risager, 1999). In Q6 11 objectives of cultural teaching are provided; the items of objectives 8, 9, 10, 11 are taken from the National New English Curriculum (NNEC) and the other 7 objectives are borrowed from the CULTNET project (see Sercu et al., 2005). As I discussed in the previous chapter about the curriculum reform in China, the National New English Curriculum was adopted from 2001. The phrase 'cultural awareness' has been introduced into the English curriculum for the first time. I want to investigate through Q5-Q6 whether this new change has influenced their language teaching and what they see as the aims of foreign language teaching in general and how they view the purposes of the cultural dimension in this context in particular. This is because teachers have always been regarded as one of the most important factors that ensure a successful reform in the rapidly changing trend of language teaching. The transmission of cultural knowledge in the classroom depends largely on the teachers' own cultural awareness and understanding of and willingness to

accept this change and to what extent.

Q7 is intended to find out the allocation of time distributed to language and culture teaching. And Q8 is about whether they want to spend more time on cultural teaching, and if not, what the reasons may be for that. Teachers are invited to write the reasons in the space provided, which, I hoped, may shed additional light on the way in which they perceive the objectives of foreign language education and in particular on the importance they give to culture teaching. Those two questions (Q7 & Q8) are taken from the CULTNET project with some revision and paraphrasing. I want to find out whether there exist common problems in foreign language education in terms of cultural issues in two different contexts.

In part two, only two questions will be asked. Q9 is about a list of 19 possible cultural topics to be offered in English language teaching. The teachers will be asked to choose 10 topics which they prefer to teach at secondary school level. Some of the topics are taken from Byram and Risager's (1999) questionnaire and some are from the CULTNET questionnaire (see Section 5 in Sercu et al., 2005). Teachers are asked to suggest other topics as well if they wish and they are encouraged to write one or two sentences to explain why they choose that way. I want to their free views again on their understanding of cultures.

Q10 asks teachers whether they think it necessary to provide a list of cultural topics as appendix to the English curriculum to guide them in their teaching. Here some explanation is needed to make this point clear. In this new curriculum there are six appendices attached :1) a phonetic list ; 2) grammar list ; 3) vocabulary list ; 4) functional topics; 5) teaching skills references ; 6) teachers' classroom language, which teachers can follow as a guidance in their teaching. However, there are no cultural aspects or cultural topics in relation to language teaching included in the English curriculum appendices.

Therefore I want to see what teachers think about the necessity of including possible cultural topics as one appendix which may help to guide them in their teaching.

In part three only one question about cultural teaching activities (Q11) is asked of teachers in order to find out their cultural teaching practices. They are required to indicate for a number of possible cultural teaching activities how often they practice them. The purpose is to explore the relationships between the culture teaching beliefs (in Q6) and culture teaching practice (in Q11) used by teachers.

In part four there are five questions related to the English teaching materials. Q12 asks who chooses the textbooks for teachers and whether they are free to use additional materials for cultural teaching in their classroom in Q13. And then I ask in Q14 whether the textbooks they use contain enough information about English language culture. Q15 asks them to estimate what percentage of cultural knowledge is included and finally Q16 asks whether the cultural content of the textbooks can meet their expectations. These five questions are asked to find out, to what extent, cultural content is contained in the textbook, one of the means for realizing the culture teaching objectives.

Part five is about intercultural foreign language teaching and 21 sub-items of choices in teaching intercultural competence are given in Q 17. The 18 items concerning ICC are borrowed from the CULTNET and the other three are added by me. The purpose of this question aims to investigate teachers' general disposition towards the teaching of intercultural competence in a foreign language. I might obtain some potential information data showing teachers' favourable or unfavourable disposition towards the integration of intercultural competence teaching in foreign language education. I hope some potential light might be thrown on the research questions from different angles.

The last part asks for teachers' personal information, concerning their age, amount of

years of teaching, their educational background, which grade they are teaching and where they are teaching and how many hours they are teaching etc. All together there are nine questions included in part six. The purpose of asking these questions is to get general information on the current situation for school teachers in Xinjiang. Their educational background, their teaching load, their training on a new curriculum etc. may provide some information for future teacher training programme development.

4.3.3. The design of the questionnaire

The design of the questionnaire is one of the most important elements in research through survey. The success or failure of the questionnaire as a research method depends heavily on the thorough preparation of questions and understanding of subject topics (Hook, 1981). Questions should elicit the essential relevant information and direct the focus to the research questions.

All survey questions can be classified into one of two general response formats based on ways that respondents are required to answer the questions. Simply, some questions require closed responses, while others require open responses (Mertens, 1997: 115). Open response and closed response each has advantages and disadvantages.

Open-response has a number of advantages. According to Brown et al (2001:36), open-responses can give respondents a great deal of flexibility in answering, which can result in a wide range of possible answers and sometimes some unexpected answers may be found. The possibility of unexpected answers, in turn, makes it useful to explore the dimensions of the issue. However there are some disadvantages. Open-questions are relatively difficult and time-consuming for the respondents to answer. Thus respondents may skip such questions. In addition, open-questions are relatively difficult to codify, analyze, and interpret. Some answers may turn out to be irrelevant to the purpose of the survey.

The disadvantages of open-response questions can be made up by closed-response questions as closed-response questions can provide more uniformity across questions in terms of types and specificity of data that are obtained. They are easy for respondents to answer and easy to codify, analyze and interpret for the researcher because the data can readily be expressed numerically. The potential for numerical analysis of closed-response questions also lends itself to easier demonstration of the reliability of the method as a whole. However, closed-response questions have their own disadvantages. They provide a fairly narrow range of answers and some potential responses may possibly be overlooked which are in fact important. Survey designers may be more likely to find what they are looking for in closed-response questions, rather than finding unexpected responses as they might do in open-response questions. Finally, clear, concise, closed-response questions are relatively difficult to write.

The choices made between open response and closed response questions are not easy ones. Considering the pros and cons of closed and open response discussed above, I can see there are more disadvantages to open-questions and more advantages to closed-questions which invite me to use more closed-response questions as the major format in this survey. There are only three open-questions designed in Q3, Q9 and Q18. Apart from the consideration of its strengths and weaknesses in each format on which the questions are formed, I would also make the choices based on a theoretical point of view. Questions in survey projects can serve three primary purposes: descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. According to Brown (2001):

> Surveys provide relatively efficient tools for gathering simple demographic or other descriptive information, and also provide tools for in-depth investigations of people's ideas, attitudes, perceptions etc. Surveys can also lead to inferences that help to explain what is observed in the process. In the case of closed-response

questions, which can easily be analyzed numerically, descriptive and inferential statistics may help investigating any existing patterns, similarities, difference, and so forth.

In my case I asked teachers about their educational status, age, teaching materials used, internet access, teaching hours, grades they teach etc. I thought closed-response questions are more suitable for me to get descriptive information. And in order to get teachers' opinions about cultural teaching in language education, I also used the closed-response category in the different forms of checklist questions, alternative-answer questions, Likert-scale questions and ranking questions that I think can serve my purpose because 1) Checklist questions present a list in which the respondents are required to indicate as many descriptors as possible as to their attitudes towards the issues investigated in Q5, Q6 for example. 2) Alternative-answer questions are used to get teachers' views at the beginning of the questionnaire (Q1-2) in a general and less direct way so as not to exert pressure on them (see Brenner, 1985:152). 3) Likert-scale questions are used in Q4, Q10, Q11, Q17 to gather teachers' views, opinions, and attitudes toward the issue investigated which is a very effective approach (see Brown, 2001; Cohen, Manion and Morrison; 2000, Wiersma, 1980). 4) Ranking questions are used to ask teachers to rank cultural topics in order of importance in Q9 to show their understanding of the culture issue. At the same time I want to explore the in-depth opinions of teachers on this issue I will use three open-response questions to the key research questions in the approach to achieve the research purpose in this study.

Once the choice of question types has been made, I will have to consider some other aspects of problems when the questionnaire is designed. The form of questions, the clarity of the meaning and the respondents who will fill it out should be considered.

1) Thinking about the form
As a rule of thumb, short questions are desirable for two reasons. First, the respondents

may find it easy to finish the questionnaire and not feel discouraged. Second, teachers in schools are very busy and may think their time is valuable, so they may want to read and answer the questions quickly. I will also make sure that questions are clear and unambiguous. Furthermore, I am trying hard to avoid the appearance of negative questions, incomplete questions, overlapping choices and questions across the pages in the final questionnaire.

2) Thinking about meaning

The first issue related to thinking about meaning is to avoid double-barrelled questions (Brown, 2001). I should not ask two questions at the same time and multiple purposes make the question difficult to answer and certainly make accurate interpretation impossible. Some other questions like leading and jumping questions must be avoided when the questionnaire is designed.

3) Thinking about the respondents

The language level of teachers has to be taken into account. If the language structures are too complicated or long sentences are used to form the questions, respondents may feel threatened, thus not understand and be unable to answer the questions. I have to consider the right level of language so that it was neither too high nor too low.

The last issue considered when I design the questionnaire was to arrange a series of questions in sequences, each concerned with a different variable, and the order in which these sequences should appear on the final questionnaire (Oppenheim, 1992: 109).

4.3.4 The Pilot Study

The aim of a pilot study, according to Seliger and Shohamay (1989), is to assess the quality of the method 'while it can still be revised and improved and before it is used with the actual subjects in the research' (p.195). Two types of information were collected in the pilot phase. One related to practical aspects of administering the data collection

tool; the other related to the reliability and validity of the method. The pilot study of this research was conducted in Xinjiang and in Durham for the following purposes: (1) to examine the reliability and validity of the questionnaires, (2) to verify the testing procedures; (3) to determine the testing time required to administer the questionnaires; and (4) to assess the clarity of the instructions.

Dornyei (2003: 64) points out that it is particularly valuable to include two formal trial runs in the pre-testing stage (initial piloting of the method and the final piloting of the method) and for this reason both are conducted in the present study.

1) The initial pilot study
As Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) suggested, in pretesting a questionnaire, if the respondents were selected from a homogeneous group, the pre-test sample did not need to be large, as few as 20 individuals was often sufficient.

The preliminary set of questionnaires was piloted by e-mailing a small group of local teachers in Xijiang: fourteen school teachers and six teacher trainers were involved. Then I decided to send it to the Thursday Group members, the research Ph.D. students in the School of Education Durham, UK, the easiest group to reach because I was in Durham at that time. Another reason to invite Ph.D. students in Durham is that they are doing their own research closely linked to intercultural studies and they are experts in this field to an extent. Their expert comments and critique were of a great help in revising the final version of the questionnaire. Eight Ph.D. students were involved in the pilot test and five of them sent the feedback to me. The response rate was only 62% despite the follow-up emails to express my thanks for the valuable time they contributed to the pilot questionnaire. Attached to the first draft was a separate feedback form on which respondents could critique the questionnaire and make suggestions before it was revised and sent to the intended group of respondents. Due to the reasons presented above, the feedback from respondents in China and the feedback in Durham were

different.

As far as the length of the questionnaire was concerned, the respondents in China said that it took them 55 minutes to answer it, which was almost equal to one school lesson. They had never answered such a long questionnaire before. Some English sentences were too complicated and long and would need to be simplified and made shorter and clearer. It was suggested the final version of the questionnaire should be translated into Chinese because school teachers might lose patience in comprehending the English language and their true opinions may be affected by some language obstacles such as the words 'identity, stereotype etc.' which might be new words to them. Apart from this, they commented that some questions were repeated and overlapped and that redundancy should be removed (some items in Q 17).   On the other hand the feedback from Ph.D. students in Durham University said that the length of the questionnaire was appropriate and fine because this research project, they think, was a quantitative one in which the survey would be used as a main research method from their professional point of view. They also suggested that the Likert Scale used in the questionnaire should be kept consistent, which made me realize that Q7 had four point scales and Q 17 had five point scales out of my carelessness. The initial part four concerning the familiarity and contacts with foreign cultures was considered irrelevant to my research questions, which was critiqued by both Chinese respondents and Durham respondents and deleted in the final version of the questionnaire. Q9 was about the possible cultural topics which might be taught at middle schools level. All together 19 topics were given and teachers were asked to rank the order of the topics according to their importance from number 1 the most important to number 9 not important at all. From the initial pilot test, Q9 turned out to be the most problematic. Some said the list was too long and should be shortened. Some commented whether the ranking order from 1-9 should possibly be reduced to 1-5 for the sake of later analysis convenience.

I decided to do the final pilot study on the comments and critiques described above and mainly to focus on Q9 which was supposed to answer my second research question: What are teachers' favourite cultural topics in relation to language knowledge in secondary level education?

In short, the comments collected from the pre-test participants studying at the University of Durham and local teachers in Xinjiang of China were considered particularly suitable for use in the main study. Comments from them were valuable and led to some changes of format; modifications of the wording; simplification of the English language; and reconstruction of some questions. However, the basic content remained unchanged.

2) The final pilot study

Before the second stage of the pilot study was conducted, the questions were translated into Chinese as suggested by respondents in the initial pilot study. In order to validate the authenticity of the translation, I sent the translation work in the format of two languages (English and Chinese) to two experts in China for their corrections and comments. One is from Hunan University and the other is from Xiamen University, which are two prestigious universities in China. The two professors were assigned to work for my college in 2004 under a five-year plan of education made by the central government with the purpose of promoting the development of the western part of China. These two professors' research interest happened to be in translation. They helped me with some corrections of my translation. In the second stage of the pilot study the number of the participants was relatively small. There were 4 head teachers and 3 teacher trainers participated in the final pilot study. The main objective of the second stage of the pilot study was to allow for a final piloting of the research method, and, in particular to discover whether the comments made by the informants in the initial pilot study in the construction of the questionnaire were also clear and meaningful for new informants.

4.3.5 Learning from the pilot study

Throughout both pilot stages, a great deal of useful information was obtained with regard to the reliability, validity and practicability of the research method. In addition to generating a clear and logical questionnaire in the main study, a number of alterations were made to the design of the research approach following the completion of both stages of the pilot study. First, following comments from participants involved in the initial pilot study, a number of changes in the wording of the questions were made. These alterations were made in order to ensure greater clarity and comprehensibility for the informants recruited for the main study. Secondly, as mentioned already, it was initially envisaged in part four that information should be collected regarding the informants' familiarity and contacts with foreign cultures, as a result, the entire section was subsequently deleted from the final version of the research method .Thirdly, the list of 19 cultural topics in Q9 was still kept but the ranking order of importance from 1-9 was reduced to 1-5. The respondents would be asked to choose 10 possible topics and specify briefly the reasons for their choices. In addition, as a number of the informants in the pilot study had identified that the English version may be potentially confusing, it was agreed that Chinese translations would be provided as part of the research method itself. Finally, some informants had commented on the lack of space provided to write responses. Thus, wider spacing was provided for comments to be made throughout each part of the method.

4.3.6 Population and sample

Sampling procedures are necessary in survey research because the groups of interest are often large. A population is the entire group of people who are of interest in a particular survey. In most research, it is not feasible to collect data from every individual in a setting or population. Therefore sampling is used for every practical reason. Sampling involves selecting a small group of subjects from the overall population in such a way

that a subgroup is representative of the large population (Brown, 2001:71; Mertens, 1997: 253).

The quality of any research is determined not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instrument but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Morrison, 1993: 112.). Among the strategies for survey sampling such as a probability sample and non-probability sample (Cohen and Holiday 1979; 1982; 1996; Schofield 1996, Henry, 1990; Conley and Fink, 1992, Mertens, 1997), I have decided to use stratified random sampling, one of the strategies for probability-based sampling. Stratification is a means of using the knowledge of the population to increase the representative and precision of the sample (Moser, 1958: 78). Then the population is divided into a number of subgroups or strata and a random sample is selected within each stratum. The different strata in the population are represented in the sample (Brown, 2001).

As far as the knowledge of population and practicability are concerned, I chose Xinjiang as my sampling site. This is simply because of the financial considerations and other practical difficulties such as lacking time and possible local help and cooperation if an unfamiliar area is to be selected. For example, if a sampling site is to be selected outside of Xinjiang, where I live and work, it will produce some problems. They might include: if I travel there to conduct the survey, to get from one place to another in China would take time, even several days and nights by train. And it would be difficult to obtain local help and co-operation for any research that is not locally officially organized in an unfamiliar area. If I do it by post, I am sure that the return rate would be very low, which would also reduce the validity of the research results.

Owing to the above mentioned practical reasons, the target population, about whom generalization will be made in this study, is basically that of English language teachers in

middle schools and teacher trainers in Xinjiang.

The whole population is stratified into four groups: the urban area (school teachers in Urumqi, the capital city), regional area outside of the capital city (school teachers in Shawan region), the rural area (teachers in village or in Tuanchang schools) and teacher trainers in the capital city. The reason why the population is targeted in these areas will be given below.

The capital city Urumqi has been chosen for two reasons. One is that Urumqi is a tourist city and it attracts more and more foreign visitors, which might imply that students and teachers might have more opportunities to experience and perceive foreign culture and a foreign way of life. The other reason is the easy accessibility to the schools either by official and personal relationship which enables me to conduct the survey according to my time schedule. I also decided teacher trainer samples would be done in Urumqi because there are five teacher training colleges/universities; four of them are in Urumqi. The other one is over 1000 thousand kilometres away from me. It is not easy to get access there. I think teacher trainers from these four colleges/universities can represent teacher trainers' opinions because most of the training tasks have been done by these colleges/universities.

The region Shawan has been selected for three reasons: 1) Shawan is a relatively large region and Han people are in the majority. When I think of the region stratification, I have to take into consideration that Xinjiang is a multi-ethnic area. There are 13 minority groups co-existing together with Han nationality people as the majority. Some regions are mainly minorities-dominated in terms of the population and the schools in such regions don't offer any English courses, and it is impossible for me to conduct a survey in minority-dominated regions. 2) The director of Shawan regional education administration is the researcher's personal friend who promised to arrange an agreed

time for all schools in this region to participate in this research, which enables me to get efficient data in a short time. 3) Due to financial and time considerations: Shawan is only over 240 kilometres away from Urumqi with cheaper tickets when the journey is more than 3 hours.

The rural area is very difficult either to locate or get sufficient samples for. It may take one day or more to get from one village school or Tuanchang school to another by bus. They are sparsely located within Xinjiang. If I needed to find village schools in one area like Tacheng, and suppose there are 20 village schools in that area, it means I can get no more than 20 responses because usually there are only one or two English teachers in each village school and I may need to travel days by bus from one school to another to collect data. In this case it is not practical. Due to this problem I had a discussion by phone with a person who is in charge of middle schools English teaching and researching for advice. I was told that the internet has been connected with nearby regions like Kuitun, Shihezi and Yili even to the big villages and Tuanchang in those places financially supported by the central government with the intention of developing the Western part of China. She suggested the possibility of using an internet survey often used in commercial fields. She was willing to help me to involve teachers in this research .She thought it is a good thing to do research in my own area, but she didn't know how to help me. Encouraged by her suggestion, I decided to use mixed modes of operation (paper-based and web-based versions of the same questionnaire) (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2007:227). According to Cohen et al., there are several claimed advantages to using an Internet questionnaire in comparison to a paper questionnaire (e.g. Watt 1997; Dillman 1999; Dillman and Bowker 2000; Roztocki and Lahri 2002; cited in Cohen et al 2007: 229):

·It reduces costs (of postage, paper, printing, keying in data, processing data, interview costs).

· It reduces the time taken to distribute, gather and process data (data entered onto a

web-based survey can be processed automatically as soon as they are entered by the respondent rather than being keyed in later by the researcher).

· It enables a wider and much larger population to be accessed.

· It enables researchers to reach difficult populations under the cover of anonymity and non-traceability.

· Respondents can complete the questionnaire from home, i.e. in self-chosen and familiar settings.

· Responses in web-based surveys show fewer missing entries than paper-based surveys.

· Greater generalizability may be obtained as Internet users come from a wide and diverse population.

With these advantages in mind, I decided to choose Kuitun, Shihezi and Urumqi county as my rural sampling place because the Internet has been connected to those areas. I am endeavouring to receive equally good feedback from the electronic questionnaire as the paper-based version and put it on the Durham website. A major problem for the web-based questionnaire, according to Cohen et al. (2007: 237) is estimating the size and nature of the population from which the sample is drawn. Researchers have no clear knowledge of the population characteristics or size. The problem of population in my case can be overcome and controlled. The population characteristics are still English teachers in middle schools in Xinjiang. The valid representativeness of the sample population can be guaranteed. The purpose of using web-based questionnaires is to reach village or Tuanchang school teachers who are difficult to access. But the size of sample is beyond my control in a sense. In order to get the expected sample size, I tried a snowball sampling strategy to find out who has the information that is important to study and to increase to a larger population (Mertens, 1997:263). I started with two key informants who used to be my in-service students who are viewed as knowledgeable about the programme and the community (Cohen et al., 2007: 263). Through email contact and telephone calls to two students who work in Kuitun and in Shihezi where

Tuanchang schools are densely located in Xinjiang. I explained the research purpose and asked them to help me find the potential participants. They replied to my email at once expressing their willingness to offer their help. I told them how to log on the website and how to do it. The two students used their personal network to try to roll the snowball as big as they can. They worked very hard to tell their friends who worked in Tuanchnag schools by emails and phone calls and at the same time asked their friends to recommend other school teachers with whom they can get in contact. Although I started with a relatively short list of participants, the list grew through the referral of other participants. (Cohen, 2007:231).

Beyond my expectations there are not only teachers from village schools or Tuanchang schools that are involved in the questionnaire answers Some teachers either from city schools or from regional schools filled it out online as well with their help. 210 respondents answered the questionnaire online.

4.3.7 Administration of the questionnaire and data collection

When it comes to the administration of the questionnaire, two approaches are often used. The first one is the self-administered questionnaire which is often mailed out and filled in by the respondents whenever and wherever they like, and then returned by mail (Brown, 2001). When this type is used, there are three major inherent problems to take into consideration :a) the possibility of low return rates of questionnaires. Even if the original sampling procedures were excellent in the sense that the sample drawn is either randomly or as a stratified random sample, the generalization of the project's results can be severely undermined if only a small proportion of those in the sample actually returned. b) the questionnaire must be finished completely individually and therefore needs to be self-explanatory because it is impossible to give an on-the-spot clarification (ibid: 6). In addition, language competence among respondents may be different or

uneven when they comprehend and fill in the questionnaire. There is no opportunity to offer additional explanations if needed. c) the conditions is not clear under which the questionnaire is filled out. The second type is group-administered questionnaire, which is given to groups of individuals all at one time and place (ibid: 6) and may solve the above mentioned problems which may occur in self-administered questionnaires because the respondents will be a captive audience, who will generally feel obliged to fill out the questionnaire. Thus the return rate will be high. The second and third problems may be solved because any ambiguities or confusion in the questionnaire can be explained on the spot. Therefore I decided to use the second type of approach to administrate the questionnaire in this research.

Before making the decision on how to administer the questionnaires, I was informed by one of the colleagues in Xinjiang that there would be a one-day training session for school teachers in the capital city of Urumqi on 22nd March 2007. I took advantage of this teachers' gathering to distribute the questionnaire to them on the spot for the advantages mentioned above.

First, I had to contact the person who was in charge of this training programme and fortunately this person had once worked together with the researcher. She was willing to offer her help to arrange the time before the training course started. I decided to ask one of my colleagues to take the copies of the questionnaire and go there to distribute them. The colleague had to understand the purpose of this survey and the amount of time needed for the respondents to fill it out. Some specific directions may be provided when necessary, which may help the respondents to understand what is required, so there will be less 'spoiled' responses, and an unknown amount of wrong information due to misunderstanding (Cohen, et al., 2007: 109). I assumed that face-to face completion of the questionnaire would be much more difficult to refuse than a postal questionnaire and a higher returned rate of responses can be guaranteed in a sense. The validity of

information I received can be guaranteed. 102 teachers attended the training course and 102 copies were distributed. 78 responses were collected and the return rate was 76%.

As far as the data from regional schools are concerned, almost the same approach to the data collection was adopted. Shawan was chosen as the stratified sampling area for regional school teachers (see previous section). One of my colleagues went to Shawan by bus. Through the help of the regional education bureau, the teachers' meeting time was used to collect the data on the spot. 90 copies were distributed and 86 were collected. The return rate was 95%.

As for village school teachers, it was impossible for me to use the same methods to collect data as it is done in city and region. The reasons are explained in the previous section. The modern technology of the Internet was used to reach the population which is hard to reach. The web-based questionnaire with the same value as the paper one was put on the Durham university webpage to be filled out online by the target respondents. Among 210 online-answered respondents, there were 101 respondents from village schools which was quite satisfactory coverage, i.e. 48%. Moreover there were 98 city school teachers and 37 regional school teachers who answered the questionnaire online as well. Thus total respondents of school teachers I got from the paper-based and web-based are 400 in number, 176 from city schools, 123 from regional schools, and 101 from the village or Tuanchang schools.

The data from the last group will be teacher trainers from four different teachers' universities or colleges. The same strategy was used as in city and regional schools to collect the data on Wednesday afternoon used for all staff to attend a meeting (called political study). Two colleagues used their meeting time to distribute and collect them with the permission of the dean of the English department agreed in advance. 63 respondents out of 90 answered the questionnaire and the return rate was 70%.

Clearly, the group administration strategy and web-based questionnaire offered me a relatively efficient way of administering the questionnaire and collecting data either from the practical or economical reasons which proved to be more suitable in this research.

4.3.8 Data Treatment: Statistical Procedures

In the process of the data collection, I was considering how to compile the data being collected. The purpose of compiling the data is to put it into a form that will later be useful for storing, accessing, sorting and analyzing it (Brown, 2001: 93). Since the questionnaire had been conducted in Xinjiang by two colleagues, it was impossible for the researcher to get all the copies back in Durham University to compile them. In order to be efficient, I decided to ask my colleagues who had helped me with the questionnaire to enter all the responses for me. The following steps were used:

1. Dealing with closed-response questions

I decided to use Excel (2000) to set up a rows-and-columns form to record all closed-response questions. Each row represented a respondent's answers to all the questions, while each column represented all the respondent's answers to a particular question. The table below shows how I did it.

Table 4.1.The example of recording data in rows and columns

ID	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q5-1	Q5-2	Q5-3	Q5-4	Q5-5	Q-6	etc
1	1	1	2	3	2	1	2	2	…	
2	1	1		2	4	1	1	3	…	
3	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	…	
4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	…	
5	1	1	2	2	2			2	…	

6	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	…	
7	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	…	
8	…	…	…	…	…	…	…	…		

The headings across the top begin with the first column of identification numbers for each person (ID). It can be easily seen how each of the rows represents the data for a single respondent. The remaining column has labels for each of the questions on this survey. Question 1-2 and 4 (Q1, Q2 and Q4) are coded numeral 1 for 'Yes', 2 for 'No' . The remaining questions are coded on a 1-5 Likert scale. I transfer 'Very important 'into 1, Important 2, Undecided 3, Less important 4 and Not important 5. There are five sub items in question 5 and they are coded as Q5-1 indicating the first item in question 5 and the same way of coding is adopted in Q6, 9, 11 and Q17 respectively.

When the data were coded I found some respondents had not answered some particular questions. Those missing data have also been coded as blanks in the correct column. It can be seen from the Table 1 that the second respondent left one blank and the fifth respondent left two blanks.

The most important point during the data entry is that accuracy is essential; as is said in the computer world: Garbage in, garbage out. Put another way, the results will never be any more accurate than the data on which they are based (Brown, 2001: 98). In order to be as accurate as possible with the data coding, one colleague read the data out loud and the other recorded it. And at the same time the colleague who was reading could check accuracy of what was being recorded.

2. Dealing with open-response questions

Since the nature and purpose of open-response questions are quite different from those of closed-response questions, I dealt with them differently. In the questionnaire there are

three open-response questions in Q3, Q8 and Q9. The data from open-response questions can't be coded but transcribed. Transcribing means making a copy, arrangement, or record of the data (Brown, 2001: 99). The computer word processing programme was employed (Word, 2000) to have all of the answers for Q3, Q8 and Q9 typed. Before doing it, I made three files for each question, which would enable me to read through these filed data with relative ease (see Table 2 Transcribing open-response questions).

Table 4.2   The example of transcript of open-response questions

ID	
76	
77	
78	
79	
80	
81	
82	
83	
84	
85	
86	
87	

When the data were transcribed, I was aware that accuracy is important with open-response transcription, just as it is for closed-response coding for the reasons mentioned earlier. The two colleagues were asked to transcribe exactly what each respondent was writing, including wrong spelling (of course the computer can help to correct them), ungrammatical sentences, punctuation etc. This exact transcription is done so that an accurate record would exist of the actual responses.

3. Dealing with paper-based and web-based questions

My original purpose in using web-based questionnaire was for village school teachers who are not easy to access. However, when the survey reached its deadline I noticed that there were some city and regional school teachers also involved in the online survey. Therefore I had to single out those who were from village schools and those who were from city and regional schools by looking at the 22nd question 'your school is in city, region, town, village and tuanchang'. The five choices were coded in number. '1' stands for city school and '2' for regional school etc. The work turned out to be very time consuming. After I finished this job I combined the data from the paper-based and web-based questionnaires together because they have the same value with the same population. In order to be accurate in coding the web-based data, I did it once and asked my two colleagues to enter the data again to double check. In the end I received 463 responses, of which there were 176 respondents from city schools; 123 from regional schools; 101 from village schools and 63 from teacher trainers.

4.4 Survey reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are two very important criteria for assuring the quality of the data collection procedures in social sciences empirical research.

As far as survey reliability is concerned, according to Brown (2001: 171): 'Survey reliability is the consistency with which a survey measures whatever it is measuring'. What is meant by consistency in this definition is that when the procedure is repeated on a population of individuals or groups, the responses should be the same – this is test-retest reliability – and if several people were reading the responses they would interpret them in the same way: inter-rater reliability. Reliability is usually tested by statistical operation, indicated by the reliability coefficient, alpha. DeVellis (1991) described alpha as 'an indication of the proportion of variance in the scale scores that is

attributable to the true score' (p.83). Ideally there should be no variance but a score of higher than .70 is suggested by Nunnally (1994) and Litwin (1995) as acceptable. Theoretically, the higher the coefficient, the more reliable the method is. I therefore fed the data from 90 items in the 26 questions included in the questionnaire into the SPSS test for reliability which yielded alpha coefficient of .93. Since this exceeded the lower acceptable value of .70 for alpha, I was satisfied that the questionnaire used in this research is reliable.

In addition to this, it should be noted that the current questionnaire is a lengthy one, including many items (90 items), and that this in itself increases the reliability of the methods according to Hatch and Farhaday who state that: 'The longer the test, the more reliable it will be.' (1982:246).

Validity is the touchstone of all the types of educational research a researcher will try to ensure (Cohen, et al., 2007). In qualitative research, validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and objectivity of the researcher (Winter, 2000 cited in Cohen, et al, 2007), while in quantitative research, validity might be improved through careful sampling, an appropriate method and appropriate statistical data analysis.

As for this case, the study is quantitative in nature. I used a survey method to find out what I intended to discover. In other words, a survey method should be measuring what it claims to be measuring (Brown, 2001:176). In establishing the validity of a survey method in the form of questionnaire, I had to consider its sampling, content and construct, which some researchers called content validity and construct validity (Nunan, 1992:16; Seliger & Shohamy, 1985:27; Punch, 1998:101; Brown, 2001:177). According to Brown (2001), one way to defend the content validity of the items is to explain how you planned the questions, which I did in section 4.3.2. And constructing validity, as Seliger and

Shohamy (1985) stated, is to examine whether the data collection procedure is a good representation of and is consistent with current theory underlying the variable being measured, which I explained in section 4.3.7 .Nunan (1992) explained the term in an even more accessible manner, maintaining that construct validity has to do with the formulation of the question: Is the question actually addressing the concept it is supposed to be investigating? In order to achieve this kind of validity, in addition to the explanations just mentioned, I consulted my supervisor and other experts like Prof. Wu Yangcai of the University Hunan and Prof. Zhangbin of the University of Xiamen in China to seek their expert views on whether the objectives of my research were covered by the survey questions. They confirmed that the survey questions did indeed meet my research the objectives. Thus I feel my claim for the construct validity of my survey is strong.

Finally, I have to be sure that it is the target respondents who fill it in rather than someone else and they were asked to do it in front of the researcher's colleague. The validity of information is dependent on the honesty of the respondents (Mertens, 1997:105). I also looked at the responses from the respondents, and feel sure that the data collection procedure measures are what need to be measured.

The sampling is central in ensuring the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. As discussed in section 4.3.6, the stratified sampling strategy was used by which I stratified the population into four strata. In each stratum the samples were chosen in order to achieve a truly representative sample but in practice a snowball sample process had to be used for practical reasons as explained above.

Finally, as it is mentioned in section 4.3.1, I want to compare the findings with CULTNET's and Byram and Risager's study. If such an external check is corroborative it may be justifiable to say that the external validity can be ensured.

4.5 The limitations of this research

To have good and valid research, apart from its strong basis of theory and appropriate research methods, research funding and time are considered necessary factors in conducting any research. As a teacher-researcher in a north-western part of China, an underdeveloped and multi-ethnic area, working without any research funding, is surely restricted in terms of time and money available for the research. I could not reach more places in China to get a larger number of samples, but the sample from more various places in Xinjiang might offer some significant findings in this research.

Another limitation of this research lies in the fact that only a questionnaire is used as the main research method. If I had financial means and time, I would like to conduct interviews as other researchers usually do after a questionnaire survey. The constraints would have made the process of the interview data collection impossible for me. However, in working through the data, I found that due to the careful design of questionnaire I have obtained the relevantly valid and enough relevantly valid information to achieve this research purpose. The best piece of research 'make[s] a lot out of little' (Silverman, 2000; cited from Yuweihua 2001). That is why I decided not to use other varieties of research techniques.

The last difficulty associated with this study is the fact that the concept of 'cultural awareness' has been introduced into the English curriculum for the first time in China. Under the exam-oriented educational context in which linguistic competence is still strongly stressed in language education, especially in the basic education, it is hard to predict how this new change in curriculum reform, will influence teachers' perceptions and whether this change arises due to teachers' awareness of cultural teaching. However, in China little research of this kind has been carried out, and how much this research

could be considered by the curriculum designers is unclear because this research is a drop in the ocean, even if the findings of this research are significant and valuable.

4.6 Ethical issues

First of all, an approval from the ethics advisory committee of the School of Education, University of Durham had to be gained before conducting the survey research.

Secondly, when I designed this questionnaire, I had to show my great concern for the respondents from the following aspects (Berg, 1995, Fetterman, 1989, Delamont, 1984). The respondents must be treated with respect, using clear easily understood language to inform them of the nature of the research, the time that is involved, the methods to be used and the use of findings. A clear explanation of the research purpose was provided and the respondents were informed that the research was to be carried out by a teacher-researcher in language education as an individual and not in any official capacity with the intention of improving future teaching. They were advised that they should not feel threatened or challenged by the researcher. All these points were explained in a cover letter either on the paper-based or online survey (see Appendix 2).

Their opinions on the questions were of great help to the research studied for the following reasons:
The respondents voluntarily answer the questions without involving any relationships of power which make them consent to do it.
The contents of the questionnaire are closely related to language and culture teaching rather than private or intrusive information, which may make respondents feel uneasy about responding. .
The respondents' anonymity is assured and their true answers will do no harm to themselves but will contribute to the true findings of the research.

In the cover letter I expressed my sincere thanks to the respondents and also expressed my wish to establish a rapport with them for the future discussion of any problems related to the issues in the questionnaire by providing my email if they would like to contact me. Thus they would not feel that they are being exploited.

Thirdly, since this research requires the other two colleagues to distribute the questionnaire and enter the raw data into the computer, they were doing it willingly and publicly without any pressure and deception when collecting and recording the data. Both of them said they had learnt a lot through practice. The researcher promised to send the research methodology chapter based on theory to both of them to read.

Lastly, as mentioned before, this research is inspired by the CULTNET and Byram and Risager's projects and some questions are adopted from the two projects, and when I compare the variables measured, report the research findings and draw the conclusions, I will try to be as objective and truthful to the findings as possible.

4.7 A summary of this chapter

In this methodology chapter, I began the discussion of the nature of the research in social science especially in education. Some research methods were analyzed with the purpose that I can make the decision which research method will be used to conduct this empirical study. The reasons why the questionnaire was used in this research and how I used this instrument to collect the data were explained, including the phases of questionnaire development, pilot study, administration of the questionnaire and procedures of data collection, sampling strategy and the treatment of data. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were also discussed in relation to this questionnaire survey.

As a novice researcher, I became intensely aware that what I tried to investigate by means of a particular research method which I read about in some methodology books for guidance is far from enough. The research methodology in social science or in education is multidimensional and powerful. Therefore I acknowledge that this study must have its flaws and limitations. Nevertheless, I hope that analysis resulting either from relevant curriculum documents, literature, or from the questionnaire survey will be considered valid enough to reflect the true reality I studied and to have some significance as a contribution to the development of English curriculum in China's basic education.

Chapter Five

Results of the Survey and Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 4 provided a detailed description of both the research approach and the methods employed in this study in addition to a justification of their selection. This chapter presents the results of the study and I will use the term 'teachers' to cover all respondents including trainers unless there is a need to distinguish the two groups. The chapter is in nine sections: (1) the basic information of school teachers' profile in secondary school; (2) descriptive analysis of the language and culture teaching objectives; (3) teachers' definition of culture; (4) teachers' favoured cultural topics; (5) techniques teachers used in classroom; (6); teaching time allocated to culture teaching ;(7) teachers' perception of cultural teaching materials in the textbooks; (8) teachers' understanding of intercultural teaching; (9) a summary of the chapter

Before the analyses of the data are provided, an explanation of the informants is needed. A total of four hundred school teachers and sixty-three teacher trainers took part in the study. Teachers are from schools in different regions and teacher trainers are from the four teacher training colleges in the capital city Urumuqi.

5.1 The basic information on English teachers and trainers' profile in Xinjiang

The data collected in this study provided me with the general information about school teachers/trainers in language education in Xinjiang. From their personal profile macroscopic information can be obtained in terms of their age, education background, teaching hours etc. Therefore the sample composition will be presented in the following

Table 5.1 by age, years of teaching, grades they teach, education backgrounds, hours they teach etc. in order to have a whole picture of the current situation of the teachers structure in Xinjiang.

Table 5.1 the general information of English teachers/trainers

	Number/ Percentage	
By age	Teachers	Trainers
20-39	292/73%	42/66.7%
40-49	77/19.25%	19/30.2%
Over 50	13/3.25%	2/3.1%
Missing data	18/4.5%	0
Total	400	63
By years of teaching	Teachers	trainers
1-10	224/56%	41/65.1
11-20	94/23.5%	13/20.63
Over 21	65/16.25	9/14.29
Missing data	17/4.25	0
Total	400	63
By grades they teach	Teachers	trainers
Grade7-9	216/54%	
Grade10-12	154/38.5	
University	63/100%	
Missing data	30/7.5%	0
Total	400	63
By records of Formal Schooling	Teachers	trainers
2-year diploma	60/15%	2/3.17
4-year diploma	277/71.9%	26/41.27
B.A	39/9.27%	17/26.98
M.A	9/2.25%	17/26.98
Ph.D.	1/1.59	
Missing data	15/3.75	0
Total	400	63

By teaching hours	Teachers	trainers
1-10	142/35.5%	5/7.94
11-20	232/58.9%	56/88.9
Over 20	10/2.5%	2/3.17
Missing data	16/4%	0
Total	400	63

From the above table, it shows the age group from 20-39 of school teachers (292/73%) and trainers (42/66.7%) are the majority who are in their younger-middle age full of vitality and energy and they are sure to accumulate considerable teaching experience through years of professional practice. The data show that majorities of teachers (224/56%) and trainers (41/65.1%) have teaching experience of 10 years. It may be ascertained that they must become the major teaching backbones in their schools.

In China, the age division line is a very clear and sensitive issue. People at the age of 30-40 are considered to be at the best time in their career. After 40, especially women are losing their compatibility in job employment if they don't have higher degree background. After 45, chances are even less for them to get a decent job or chances for professional development. In schools, if teachers are over 40, they are usually considered too old to be given chances for further training or going abroad. The results show that only two out 10 are over 40. The majority of teachers who replied to the questionnaire are the main teaching force in their own schools taking up the most of heavy teaching loads.

The data show that a majority (232/58.9 %) of teachers have to teach 11-20 hours per week. Compare with European teachers: British teachers have to teach 20 hours/week; the Poles, Mexicans and Bulgarians teach 23 hours/week, the Swedes teach 15 hours, each teaching hour lasting a full hour, not 50 or 40 minutes, (Sercu, 2005) Chinese teachers don't seem to have more teaching hours from the Table 5.1 shown above.

However, if the class-size in secondary schools and other factors are considered in China, the teaching load of 11-20 hours is much higher for teachers. There are usually 65-70 students in each class in China (which may be two or three times the class-size in Europe). Each English teacher usually teaches at least two or four hours a day in two parallel classes. What is more, the English teacher must be a class advisor in one of the classes she/he teaches. Every day the class advisor must look after the class she/he is in overall charge from morning when students come until they leave school. The English course is one of three major courses (along with mathematics and Chinese) in the whole process of secondary learning and the teachers who teach these three courses must take the class advisor post as obligatory responsibility. Teachers who teach school courses designated in the curriculum have to assign an amount of homework for students every day and on the following day the homework will be collected and marked. Every week the three major courses will be tested as weekly records which will be counted at the end of each term. So apart from actual teaching hours in the classroom, teachers have to mark at least 120 copies of homework every day and testing papers every week. The real meaning of heavy teaching load for school teachers in China appears to be clearer. As for trainers, most of them (56/88.9) also teach 11-20 hours a week. This is a lot for university or college teachers because, apart from teaching, they are required to finish their academic tasks like publishing papers and doing projects etc. If they are unable to finish what they are asked to do academically, their yearly evaluation and professional promotion will be affected. Teaching and research are equally counted. This is even harder for language teachers to balance the two. In my area the number of language teachers is far from being sufficient either at the schools or at the universities/colleges. They have to complete a certain amount of teaching tasks first and then try to find time to do research.

As for grades teachers teach, the data show that most teachers (216/ 54%) are teaching junior middle classes and (154/38.2%) are teaching senior middle classes. This coverage

of respondents is good for the present research to obtain a relatively complete picture of teacher' views both from junior and senior school teachers who possibly hold different views towards some questions with respect to students' age, language competence and some other factors. Thus the information of respondents provided can be objective and well-covered.

In terms of their education background the data show that 17/26.98% trainers have B.A and 17/ 26.98% have M.A degree which does not meet the local government requirement that university/college teachers must at least have their M.A degree if they are born after 1970. There is no strict rule to those who were born before 1970. But the recent situation is that if you don't have M.A degree, you can't become a college or university teachers. Therefore I will say that there is long way to go to have trainers/ teachers with PhD degree. How much education the teacher/trainer receives may directly influence the quality of teaching and research.

As for teachers, the data show that 337/ 86.9% teachers have got their teaching certificates either 2-year or 4-year diploma, not B.A. degree. Only 39/ 9.27% teachers have got their B.A degree, not to mention to M.A degree, which is only 9/2.25% in total. This shows that most of teachers are graduates from teachers' colleges rather than formal universities. There are some differences of the qualification system between teachers colleges and normal universities, which it is necessary to explain in brief because this may affect their responses in a sense.

The teaching certificates are two types; two-year training certificate (called Zhuanke), another two-year training certificate (from upgraded Zhuanke to Benke, equivalent to B.A).With the first two-year teaching certificate obtained, most graduates will have to go to teach for some time and then possibly they will have another two year's further training if they are allowed by their schools. But what they have got is not B.A degree

though equivalent to four years of formal university education. This is because they don't take part in the national entrance examination for university. They only participate in the national adult entrance examination or self-taught examination though which is easier to be admitted by universities or colleges for adults. Therefore the quality of their qualification is often said to be problematic and the graduates from adult colleges or universities are often considered inferior to those who graduate from formal universities in job markets. Those who graduated from the adult colleges usually are not offered any degree.

With regard to their age, years of teaching, the grades they teach, teaching hours and educational backgrounds, the general information from the teachers/trainers' profile in Xingjian has been obtained. It shows that most of teachers/trainers are in their middle-age and have accumulated some teaching experiences. The majority of teachers have obtained their teaching certificates which have fulfilled the government's requirement that those who teach middle schools must have Benke teaching certificates (four year). English teachers have to teach large classes requiring them to take the heavy teaching loads which are far beyond European teachers. Thus, in turn, the heavy working pressure they withstand may affect their professional development in a sense.

5.2 Descriptive analysis of teachers' and trainers' beliefs about language and culture teaching

The teachers' and trainers' basic beliefs on language and culture/intercultural teaching will be investigated and results will be presented in this chapter .I hope the findings may answer my second and third research questions 'Is it necessary to teach culture in language teaching' by looking at questionnaire questions: Q1, Q2, Q4, Q10); 'What are the school teachers' perceptions of culture/intercultural teaching in the classroom in the aspects of ':

How do they understand the language and culture teaching objectives? (Q5 Q6)

How do school teachers of English define culture? (Q 3 open-question)

What are their favourite culture topics to be taught in language teaching? (Q9)

What methods or approaches do they think should be used in teaching culture? (Q11)

How much time is distributed to teach culture in the language classroom? (Q7 Q8)

What is the percentage of culture content included in the exam? (Q15)

What are the teachers' perceptions of cultural teaching materials in the textbook? (Q12 Q13 Q14)

The above questions will be answered and discussed in the following sections.

5.2.1 Teacher's and trainers' attitudes towards culture teaching (Q1, Q2, Q4, Q10)

According to Gay's view (1976: 223) 'The first step in data analysis is to describe, or summarize the data using descriptive statistics. In some studies, such as certain questionnaire surveys, the entire analysis procedure may consist solely of calculating and interpreting descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics permit the researcher to meaningfully describe many sources with a small number of indices.' Therefore descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentage were used to compute on the questionnaire items of questions (Q1), (Q2), (Q4), and (Q10) to address the second research question: 'Is it necessary to teach culture in English language teaching'?

The question 1 and question 2 ask teachers and teacher trainers 'Are your students interested in learning culture(s) of English speaking countries?' and 'Are you interested in teaching culture(s) of English speaking countries?' .The first one is from teachers' perspective to look at student' curiosity towards cultural learning and the second one is

about teachers themselves, to show their own attitudes towards cultural teaching. The scale range is 'very interested, interested, uncertain, less interested and not interested'. If I combined 'very interested' and 'interested' together to show their positive attitudes towards the culture teaching and 'less interested' and 'not interested' to indicate the negative attitudes towards this issue, and keep 'undecided' as it is, the results obtained from these two questions are presented in the Table 2 below:

Table 5.2 Teachers' and teacher trainers' interest in culture teaching

Interest in teaching culture		Teachers			Teacher trainers		
		F P	M SD		F P	M SD	
Q1	1	276 71.	1.38 655		58 92.1	1.08 272	
	2	73 18.7			5 7.9		
	3	40 10.3					
Total		389 100.			63 100.		
Q2	1	326 83.8	1.21 508		59 93.7	1.08 326	
	2	45 11.6			3 4.8		
	3	18 4.6			1 1.5		
Total		389 100.			63 100.		

1+2 =Very interested; 3=Undecided, 4+5=Not interested; F= Frequency; P=percentage; M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation

It can be seen that either from teachers' or teacher trainers' everyday teaching in the classroom, most teachers/trainers say that their students (276/71.5%; 58/92.1%) are interested in learning cultures of English speaking countries. Teachers/trainers themselves are also interested in teaching cultures in language teaching. For teachers themselves I could say that this may be due to the reason that 310/ 80.5% teachers have received the new curriculum training shown by the data in the Q 26. The concept of 'cultural awareness' has been introduced for the first time into the English curriculum in 2001 as it was discussed before (in chapter 3). Teachers are sure to have got some understanding of integration of language teaching with cultural teaching and gradually realized the importance of raising students' cultural awareness in language teaching. As

for why students are curious about the foreign cultures and what is their motivation in learning language in terms of culture, it is very hard for me to speculate. This is not the topic for this research.

The data also show that there are some teachers /trainers (73/18.7% ; 5/7.9%) who are not sure whether their students have any interest in cultural learning or not and are not clear whether they themselves (40/10.3%) are interested in teaching foreign cultures. The uncertain and even negative opinion towards this new dimension of language teaching could be regarded as normal and acceptable in such a large area. Teachers can't be expected to digest the new concept just with the few training courses to reach common ground of understanding towards this rather complicated issue of culture teaching.

In order to get further understanding of teachers'/trainers' general opinions towards cultural teaching, I continue to ask another question (Q4) 'Do you think culture teaching is important in English teaching', using a five-point scale: 'Very important, important, undecided, less important and not important'. I combine 'Very important and important' together to indicate teachers' positive attitude towards the cultural teaching and 'less important and not important' to indicate teachers' negative attitudes towards this issue. The neutral one 'undecided' is kept as it is. The result is shown by the Table 3 below.

Table 5.3 Teachers'/trainers' opinion on the importance of culture teaching

Q4	Teachers			Teacher trainers		
	F P	M SD		F P	M SD	
1	72 18.5	2.10 .840		21 33.3	1.76 .640	
2	251 64.5			37 58.7		
3	28 7.2			4 6.4		
4	33 8.5			1 1.6		

5	5	1.3				
Total	389	100.		63	100.	

Note: 1=Very important; 2=Important 3=Undecided; 4=less important; 5=Not important

F=frequency; P=percent; M=mean; SD=standard deviation

I am convinced again by the results shown above that teachers/trainers have positive opinions about cultural dimension of language teaching. If I put answers 1 and 2 together, over 83% teachers and 92% teacher trainers think that teaching culture is important and only less than one out of ten feel it is not important in this aspect.

Therefore it is evident that teachers on the whole show great interest in teaching culture in language teaching and accept the significance of the cultural dimension of language teaching. The concept of 'cultural awareness' which appeared in the curriculum probably exerted some potential influence on teachers' thinking.

In question 10, the teachers/trainers are asked if it is necessary to have a cultural appendix included in the English curriculum, using a five-point scale: 'Very necessary, necessary, undecided, less necessary and not necessary'. The same way is used combining 'Very necessary and necessary' together to indicate teachers' positive attitudes towards the cultural teaching and 'less necessary and not necessary' to indicate teachers' negative attitudes towards this issue. The result is presented as follows:

Table 5.4 The necessity of having a cultural item in the curriculum

Q10	Teachers			Teacher trainers		
	F	P	M SD	F	P	M SD
1	68	17.5	2.55 1.108	11	17.5	2.03 .671
2	137	35.2		39	65	
3	112	28.8		9	14.3	
4	47	12.1		4	3.2	
5	25	6.4				

Total	389 100.0		63 100.	

Putting answers 1 and 2 together, I can see that most teachers (205/52.7%) and teacher trainers (50/82.5%) expressed that it is necessary to have a culture appendix included in the curriculum to guide their teaching. In the new curriculum (2001), there are five items as appendixes: phonetic list, vocabulary item, functional topics, grammar items and teachers' classroom language. Those five appendixes are guidelines of teaching contents in each aspect. Teachers are clearer about what is to be taught, for example, with respect to vocabulary item; they are informed how many words should be acquired in junior and senior level. Since cultural awareness appears as one of the language teaching and learning objectives, teachers think that there should be culture guidance for them to follow.

From the above presentation of the results obtained from Q1, 2, 4 and 10, it can be seen that most teachers/trainers are interested in teaching culture and their students are also interested in learning culture. The importance of teaching culture in language classroom and the necessity of having a cultural item are expressed by the majority of teachers. The answer to the second research question is clearer. Teachers/trainers think it is necessary to teach culture in English language teaching. Then how teachers/trainers understand the objectives of language teaching in terms of culture teaching interests me. In the next section I will focus on the analysis of teachers' thinking about language teaching objectives.

5.2.2 Teachers' perceptions of language teaching objectives (Q5)

From the preceding section, it is clear to see that teachers are interested in teaching culture and their attitudes towards culture teaching are positive. The majority of teachers/trainers are in favour of cultural dimension in language teaching. The question now arises as to why they think there should be a cultural dimension in their teaching, what its purposes are. In this section I will look at teachers' perceptions of aims of English teaching.

In order to find out how teachers define the aims of English teaching, they are asked 'How do you perceive the objectives of English teaching?' by doing a Likert Scale question in Q5 from 'very important to not important'. This question contains six statements regarding the objectives of English teaching. The first four statements are taken from the new English curriculum with the expectation that they are familiar with the aims of FLT and the last two were borrowed from CULTNET addressing either linguistic or culture/ cultural learning skills objectives. The six statements of objectives of FLT appeared in the questionnaire in random order (See questionnaire Q5). The table below has been rearranged here according to three aspects: culture learning objectives, language learning objectives and general language education objectives.

Table 5.5 The list of objectives in English language teaching

Cultural learning objectives
1. Promote students' familiarity with the culture, the civilization of the countries where the language which they are learning is spoken.
2. Raise students' awareness of openness and willingness to accept the world culture.
3. Assist students in developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture.
Language learning objective/skills
4. Assist students to acquire a proficiency of English language which will enable them to meet their future needs in their learning, work and life .
General language objectives/learning skills

| 5. Develop students' long-lasting enthusiasm for learning, good learning habits and self-confidence in learning English well. |
| 6. Let students experience the learning process, acquire the learning methods of scientific research and promote awareness of cooperation |

Table 5.6 The result of teachers'/trainers' beliefs on objectives of English language teaching

School Teachers				Teacher trainers			
Item	N	M	SD		N	M	SD
Q5-3	369	1.42	.676	Q5-3	60	1.38	.580
Q5-1	361	1.61	.750	Q5-1	54	1.65	.765
Q5-4	362	1.62	.731	Q5-2	55	1.70	.733
Q5-2	338	1.85	.819	Q5-4	54	1.79	.744
Q5-6	308	1.99	.937	Q5-5	55	1.97	.647
Q5-5	316	2.02	.863	Q5-6	49	2.00	.803

Note: N= Number; M=Mean ranging between 0.00 and 5.00.; SD=Standard deviation

It is noticeable that school teachers showed a clear preference for general language learning objectives: to develop students' long-lasting enthusiasm for learning, good learning habits and self-confidence in learning English well (Q5-3); to let students experience the learning process, acquire the learning methods of scientific research and promote awareness of cooperation (Q5-1) and help students acquire a proficiency of English language(Q5-4), which are placed in a key position by school teachers (M.1.42; M1.61 and M1.62). It could be interpreted that school teachers still considered language teaching as their important aims to be achieved. This result is related to many factors in the current situation of language teaching in China. First, language knowledge and language skills are two of five objectives in English education contained in the new English curriculum. They are the core parts in linguistic competence development. The

acquisition of English can help students use the language for practical purposes for their future needs. A good command of English may bring good luck to students like entering good universities, finding a good job, going abroad, getting M.A or Ph.D. degree etc. The acquisition of a foreign language and the purpose of the language education in China can be perceived as largely being pragmatic-oriented in the first place.

Second, the examination does not include much culture content (see section 5.7) and teachers were directed by what is going be tested is what should be taught; and last teachers were under the heavy pressure of students' entrance rate to the universities.

This finding also indicates from a different angle that teachers have received the new curriculum training and they were familiar with language teaching objectives designated in the new curriculum and they have realized that more attention should be placed on students' learning process; on students' interest in learning English, which was stressed in the new curriculum and to a certain extent influenced teachers' concepts. Language teaching in cultural dimensional objectives (Q5-2.-6,-5) were ranked high with mean scores (M. 1.85, 1.99 and 2.02) showing that culture teaching was less important than language teaching though they expressed their interest in teaching culture (See 5.2.1).

Teacher trainers also put general language teaching objective Q5-3 and Q5-1 in the first two places (M.1.38, M 1.65) but they placed cultural teaching objectives (Q5-2,) in the middle showing that they were more aware of the importance of culture teaching than school teachers. This might be due to the reason that teacher trainers have less practical pressure of examination than school teachers do. Teacher trainers also consider that language proficiency is more important because this will enable students to meet the needs in their future work and life.

It is interesting to discover that both school teachers and teacher trainers put language

teaching objectives in cultural dimension (Q5-6-5) at the last two places which were borrowed from the CULTNET. These two objectives are about promoting students familiarity with the foreign culture and developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture (M.1.97, M.2.00). These findings possibly indicated that their understandings of culture teaching haven't reached that high level and how to achieve this goal remains uncertain. And this also suggests that both teachers and teacher trainers need conceptual and practical training on cultural dimension teaching.

These findings show that teachers/trainers perceive the objectives of English language education more in terms of general language learning objectives: to promote students' motivation and sustain their interest in English learning; to develop their confidence in learning a language, which is addressed in the new curriculum as one of the five objectives (attitude and empathy) and should be considered the first aim to work for (English curriculum, 2001). The new curriculum proposes that language learning is considered to be an essential part of secondary education for all students. One of the principal justifications for this is that language learning is a beneficial experience and influence on students' development, in preparing them for a living in future.

The language learning objective regarding the language competence is put in the next important position to general language objectives. This also reflects the new change in the general education reform. The language learning objectives used to put language proficiency in the first place but now place students in the centre of language learning, caring more about their emotions and attitudes in learning process. Regarding cultural learning objectives, teachers rank them after general language objectives and language learning objectives. I think this is not surprising since it is the first time to include 'cultural awareness' into the curriculum. It must take time for teachers to digest these new ideas and also indicate that they need professional training /help in understanding the cultural dimension in language teaching. It is natural for teachers to rank in this way

because they are asked to prioritise all the objectives of English language teaching. In order to further investigate teachers' perceptions of objectives of cultural teaching, they are asked to rank 11 possible cultural teaching objectives in order of importance, which will be discussed below.

5.2.3 Teachers' perception of objectives of cultural teaching (Q6)

In the previous section, teachers are asked to identify the aims of English teaching. I also want to go beyond the question of general aims and further investigate teachers' perceptions of their understanding of cultural teaching in more detail. A list of 11 objectives is suggested within the cultural dimension in which teachers are invited to indicate ones which best represent their opinion. The first seven objectives are borrowed from the CULTNET and the last four are taken from the curriculum (See questionnaire Q6). The scale ranges from 'very important, important, undecided, and less important to not important'. The list of 11 cultural teaching objectives appears in the questionnaire in random order. The table below has been rearranged here according to four aspects: general objectives, skills dimension; the knowledge dimension and the attitudinal dimension.   The analysis will follow the four dimensions.

Table 5.7 Culture teaching objectives in four dimensions

General objectives of cultural teaching
Q6h   Make language teaching more interesting and motivating.
Q6i   Widen students' horizons on the world.
Skills dimension
Q6f   Promote increased understanding of students' own culture.
Q6g   Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations.
Q6j   Promote students' ability to evaluate and their sensitivity to different cultures.
Q6k   Promote students' awareness of similarities and differences of English speaking

countries.	
Knowledge dimension	
Q6a Provide information about the history, geography and political system of the foreign culture(s).	
Q6b Provide information about daily life and routines	
Q6c Provide information about shared values and beliefs.	
Q6d Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.).	
Altitudinal dimension	
Q6e Develop attitudes of acceptance and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures.	

Table 5.8 The result of Culture teaching objectives in four dimensions

School Teachers				Teacher trainers			
	N	M	SD		N	M	SD
Q6-h	384	1.63	.744	Q6-h	61	1.59	.588
Q6-i	386	1.65	.648	Q6-i	61	1.72	.609
Q6-f	383	1.75	.802	Q6-g	60	1.72	.640
Q6-g	383	1.82	.870	Q6-f	60	1.73	.733
Q6-b	388	1.88	.805	Q6-d	61	1.85	.792
Q6-k	384	2.07	.913	Q6-k	61	1.89	.733
Q6-j	382	2.13	.945	Q6-e	59	1.90	.759
Q6-e	383	2.16	.941	Q6-b	60	1.92	.829
Q6-d	386	2.17	.935	Q6-j	61	1.97	.795
Q6-a	387	2.36	.954	Q6-a	59	1.97	.694
Q6-c	384	2.38	1.045	Q6-c	61	2.03	.802
Total	389			Total	63		

Note: N= Number; M=Mean ranging between 0.00 and 5.00.; SD=Standard deviation

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Table 8 shows the results of teachers' and teacher trainers' perceptions of culture teaching objectives in English language education. Mean scores range between 0.00-5.00.

It is interesting to discover that both school teachers and teacher trainers shared very similar understanding about culture teaching objectives. They both chose item h, i, f, and g as the major objectives of culture teaching and ranked them on the top of the list .It can be seen that a clear tendency was given to the general objectives of culture teaching (Q6-h, i) as they did in defining general objectives of language teaching shown in the previous section. They believe that the purpose of culture teaching can make language teaching more interesting and motivating and culture teaching can widen students' horizon on the world supported by school teachers (M. 1.63 ; M.1.65) and by teacher trainers (M.1.59; M.1.72) respectively. In their opinions, a cultural dimension could ensure great effectiveness of language learning. To bring students to a foreign language and its culture is to open up a pass way for them to the outside world which they are fascinated about.

As for skill dimension of culture teaching, there are four regrouped skills related to culture teaching seen from the Table 7. It can be seen that school teachers and teacher trainers believed that the purpose of culture teaching is to promote the understanding of students' own culture (Q6-f) and to promote students' ability to handle intercultural contact situations (Q6-g), which were ranked nearly at the same place. This shows that teachers/trainers are aware that to help students understand their own culture, to give them something of their own cultural identity through the teaching of English are what they aim to achieve in language teaching. Surprisingly, teachers/trainers put 'promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations' on their second priority of skills development. The result surprises me because this idea 'intercultural' is quite new in secondary language education and also because students don't have more chances for

intercultural contacts through English (although the multi-ethnic nature of the region could be an opportuntity). Therefore it may suggest that culture teaching could contribute to communication, could help students learn to communicate with people from different cultural background in future if they have opportunities for well-equipped preparation in their language education. Another interesting finding is that school teachers and teacher trainers give the same ranking of the objective of promoting students' awareness of similarities and differences of English speaking countries (Q6-k) in the middle (M.2.07; M 1.89), which is clearly designated in the new curriculum. But they held different views about promoting students' ability to be sensitive to different cultures'. School teachers placed this objective in higher position than teacher trainers did. To raise students' awareness to differentiate what we have and what we don't have through English learning by comparison, to enable students to be sensitive to different cultures, in teachers' opinions, are fairly important.

Regarding the knowledge dimension, school teachers put a priority on 'provide information of daily life and routines' higher (Q6-b, M 1.88) while teacher trainers believed that 'to provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre and film etc.)'(Q6-d, M1.85) is more important. The former is focusing on small c while the latter is on big C culture. The implication of this result could be in three aspects. First, this part of culture teachers may be familiar with and they may feel confident to teach. Second, teachers would possibly link cultural information of daily life with something 'close to students' life', 'something students may be interested in', 'something which may be within student's cognitive domain' expressed by them in the section (5.3) when asked to define what culture is. Third, the contents concerning small c culture appear more often than big C culture in the textbook which suggests the knowledge of small c culture could be possibly used more in daily communication with people of different cultures, especially in secondary language education. However, teacher trainers still think literature, music etc are the channels to

learn culture in language teaching. This also implies that there is a disconnection between teacher training course and teachers practice in the classroom. It also indicates that teacher trainers themselves lack the training on the new curriculum and there are many changes of teaching concepts they are not very clear about.

It is surprising to discover that both school teachers and teacher trainers put Q6-a and Q6-c at the bottom of the list concerning information about the history, geography political system and values and beliefs. This suggests that teachers are not very interested in teaching the big C culture about foreign history and geography. This ranking is very interesting if looking at the definitions of culture in section 5.3 where teachers put history and geography quite high next to daily life and customs. Here when they are asked to define the objective in terms of culture teaching, they seem to give less support to it. It shows clearly that the knowledge they favour is 'providing information about daily life and routines' rather more than big C culture, implying the objectives should be linked to the development of students' ability of communication.

The knowledge of 'providing shared values and beliefs' is placed in the last among 11 culture teaching objectives, which is justified by the internal validation of the data when they are asked to define their understanding of the culture in section 5.3 and the topic of beliefs and values are less suggested by teachers. I am not sure about the reason why teachers/trainers don't support this objective and it is hard to speculate either, and this will be a topic to be investigated in future.

As far as the attitudinal dimension is concerned (Q6-e), teachers/trainers don't seem to strongly support this objective (M.2.16; M. 1.90), and it is put in the eighth and seventh place by teachers /trainers. The possible reasons might be, first, they are not sure about the terms 'tolerance' and 'acceptance' in defining the objectives of cultural teaching, why to tolerate and what to tolerate and accept may confuse them. Second, this attitude

is considered as the foundation of intercultural competence in language teaching aims, to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators (Byram, 2002), and this seems too far from their understanding of cultural teaching. This finding gives me more to think about language teaching aims in China, and I will discuss this in more detail below.

In summary, in this section I have looked at the teachers' perceptions of cultural teaching objectives and notice that the broad agreement teachers reach is inclined to emphasize the overall objectives of cultural teaching. Major concerns are centred on students and purpose of teaching culture understood by teachers/trainers is to raise and maintain learners' lasting interest and motivation in language education and to widen their world view through the language the students are learning. It is encouraging that the skills dimension are better supported than knowledge dimension by teachers, which gives me a hint of conceptualization changing from the traditionally knowledge-based, cultural information-input to skills-oriented theoretically. It also leaves me with some thinking about cultural teaching objectives set in curriculum for the secondary education and teacher training programme development in this aspect i.e. that there seems to be some disparity between the two. This is an issue to which I will return in the concluding chapter when I discuss a possible action plan for training.

5.2.4 Analysis of different groups of teachers' beliefs about language and culture teaching

The analysis of teachers' beliefs on language and culture teaching so far in previous sections has been done by considering the school teachers as one group with the intention of obtaining a whole picture of their thinking related to language and culture teaching in Xinjiang. Now in this section, I want to know whether there is a difference among three groups concerning language and culture teaching objectives. As it was mentioned in methodology chapter, the sample was chosen from three groups of teachers who are

teaching in city schools, region schools and village schools. The purpose of this is (1) to cover wider areas in order to be as much representative as possible; (2) to see if there are any differences in their beliefs influenced by the locality where they are teaching. To test the three different group variables, the One Way-Anova analysis will be used. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to compare two or more means in order to estimate the significance of the differences between them. ANOVA does this by comparing the variance within samples and between samples. The advantage of employing ANOVA is that it allows for the simultaneous comparison of more than two conditions (sets of means). The means and standard deviations of each group and as well as analysis of variance summarized will be presented in Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 5.9 Means and standard deviations for three groups of language/culture teaching objectives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Q5	city	169	1.7730	.57461	.04420
	region	121	1.7485	.50688	.04608
	village	98	1.6772	.51701	.05223
	Total	388	1.7412	.53990	.02741
Q6	city	151	1.9636	.56811	.04623
	region	120	2.0675	.62159	.05674
	village	99	2.0129	.59084	.05938
	Total	370	2.0105	.59201	.03078

The above table displayed descriptive statistics for each group: teachers in city, region and village schools and for the results of Q5 and Q6 concerning the language and culture teaching objectives. The means showed that the average values in Q5 (city 1.77; region 1.74 and village 1.67) are very close and in Q6 (city 1.96, region 2.06 and village 2.01) and there were no significant difference between them..

Table 5.10 ANOVA results of three groups on Q5 and Q6

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q5	Between Groups	.578	2	.289	.992	.372
	Within Groups	112.228	385	.292		
	Total	112.806	387			
Q6	Between Groups	.722	2	.361	1.031	.358
	Within Groups	128.602	367	.350		
	Total	129.325	369			

The results of the analysis are presented in an ANOVA table. The total variation is partitioned into two components---between groups and within groups. The variation of the group means around the overall mean in Q5 between groups and within groups are.289 and.292.while in Q6 the means are.361 and.350 respectively. It shows there is no significant difference.

Table 5.11 Multiple Comparisons of three groups on Q 5 and Q 6

Dependent Variable	(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Q5	city	region	.0245	.06430	.930
		village	.0958	.06855	.378
	region	City	-.0245	.06430	.930
		village	.0713	.07337	.624
	village	City	-.0958	.06855	.378
		region	-.0713	.07337	.624
Q6	city	region	-.1039	.07239	.358
		village	-.0493	.07655	.813
	region	City	.1039	.07239	.358
		village	.0546	.08037	.794
	village	City	.0493	.07655	.813
		region	-.0546	.08037	.794

The result shows that the figures of significance among three groups of teachers are higher than .05 indicating that there is no significant difference concerning their understanding of objectives of language and culture teaching. Thus I may conclude that teachers have the same views wherever they teach. The geographical location doesn't affect their views on cultural teaching in language classroom. This suggests that there is no need for training to be different in different regions. This will be further talked about in a proposed action plan on teachers' training in Chapter 6.

5.3 Analysis of the teachers' understanding of 'Culture' (Q3)

Having examined teachers' perceptions of language and culture teaching objectives, I can see that teachers have strongly supported the general objectives in language and culture teaching showing their perceptions in a broader scope. In their understanding, to teach culture is to enhance students' interest and motivation to learn language well; to promote their language ability in order to meet the needs in their future life and work. I want to know further how teachers understand the concept of culture and especially how they interpret the concept of culture.

The teachers were given an open-ended question by asking 'Which part of the culture(s), do you think, it is most interesting in teaching about English language countries, in other words, how do you perceive the concept of culture?' This open-ended question appeared at the very beginning of the questionnaire with an intention to invite them to express their current understanding of 'culture' with little influence of this research as they moved on with the questionnaire. They were expected to voice their views freely and openly.

Since it is an open-ended question, the response rate to this question is my major concern. Among 400 informants of school teachers, 341 informants answered it occupying the

percentage of 85% among the total. There are 42 teacher trainers out of 63 in all who answered this question. The answer rate is 67%. Both rates of 85% from schoolteachers and 67% from teacher trainers to this open-ended question are very satisfactory and this may enable me to seek for more information or understanding from their responses to this question. One thing must be made clear that these two response rates refer to all answers completed, including either irrelevant answers or answers like 'I don't know, or I am not sure' as well. The remaining percentage of 15% schoolteachers and 33% teacher trainers are missing data referring to those who have not produced a single word on the space. The possible reason will be discussed later.

To analyze question three, it is important to elicit those school teachers' open-ended definition of culture. I read all definitions of 'culture' carefully and noticed that the responses cover a wide enough range of cultural aspects to include almost all aspect of the life of a people (see Appendix 4). Under this circumstance, I thought it is better for me to group the similar phrases or words of their answers together into certain categories expecting to get a general impression of teachers' understanding of cultural dimension in their extensive answers; to see if there is any common ground in their views; to use this classification as a means of quantifying the responses for easy analytic references later. Here I am not suggesting that the concept of culture can be divided into a number of categories on a theoretical level. The classification is simply an operational instrument enabling me to get an overview of some important dimensions with which I am dealing. Thus each definition can be allocated into a number of categories in order to present the richness of the data; rather than a reduction into one category, which would destroy the value of this kind of qualitative data (Byram & Risager, 1999). Based on respondents' answers I worked out nine categories all together (see below):

Table 5.12 Categorization of Chinese teachers' definitions of 'culture'

1.culture understood as people's way of life or habits---their daily life, life style,

living conditions, routines, people's hobby, weather and so on;

Schoolteachers 112/15.2%   trainers 11/9.9%

2. culture understood as tradition, folklore and customs----social customs/habits, local conditions & customs and morals of people, communicative rite, social protocol, social convention, popular practice, culture customs and so on;

Schoolteachers 215/29.1%   trainers 25/22.4%

3. culture understood as history, geography, -----all cultural activities in human society, history of characters/words, proverbs, idiomatic usages, slang, great /famous men   and so on;

Schoolteachers 169/22.9%   trainers 28/25%

4. culture understood as products of all kinds-----literature, art, music, architecture, films and so on;

Schoolteachers 31/4.2%   trainers 14/12.5%

5. culture understood as values, beliefs and behaviour----behaviour patterns, ways of talking/expressing, interpersonal relationship, the ways one gets along with others and conduct oneself in society, religious belief and so on;

Schoolteachers 9/2.1%   trainers 5/4.5%

6. culture understood as education -----British /American education

Schoolteachers 52/7.1%   trainers 3/2.6%

7. culture understood as political and economic systems

Schoolteachers 48/6.5%   trainers 9/8%

8. culture understood as science, technology and environment

Schoolteachers 12/1.6%   trainers 1/0.9%

9. others------irrelevant answers or other uncertain ones

Schoolteachers 90/12.2%   trainers 21/18.7

Total   738 for schoolteachers   112 for teacher trainers

Each answer from informants is attributed to one or more of these categories and, in this

way, there is a corpus of 738 definitions from the school teachers, 112 from the teacher trainers. The figures are total responses for each category. The percentage figures are percentages of the total responses in all categories 1-9 and I therefore describe the data according to 9 categories statistically on one hand, and on the other, in the discussion of the categories, I use direct quotes from the respondents if needed, since I have their written text to work from. I have attempted, as far as possible, to use the words of the respondents (or careful translation) in the discussion rather than trying to interpret underlying intentions.

It is evident from the above Table 12 that both school teachers and teacher trainers have understood culture mainly as traditions and customs (29.1% and 22.4%) in category 2. In their perceptions , traditions and customs include in their written texts are as follows:

      'social customs and habits'   ;

      'local conditions and customs and morals of the people''

      'table manners'; 'communicative rite ';'social protocol';

       'social convention'; 'popular practice'; 'cultural customs';

It can be observed that those Chinese expressions are in four characters, which are commonly used together when the concept of 'culture' is talked about. Those are social and cultural outcomes settled in the process of development of a nation (R35) (R35: R stands for respondent and 35 refers to the number of the respondent) and they are classics and essences of a nation's historical development (R68).

History and geography 22% and 25% are in category (3), which holds relatively higher percentages next to category 2 traditions and customs. This shows in teachers' mind that 'culture' may be associated with history, geography and political issues. As one of the teachers put it:

I think, 'culture' is in broader sense; it includes history, geography, politics, and customs

and the morals of people. (R74)

It can be seen that 'history and geography' are put first in relation with other aspects mentioned indicating their understanding that to know a culture of a country is first to know the geographical shape of this country and its history , especially '   ' as some teachers say, which means 'history of all cultural activities in human society'. Apart from this they also mention '   ' which means 'history of words or language' like proverbs, idioms and slang which have cultural connotations.

Their understanding of culture as daily life, living habits (1) is also presented by these two groups 15.2% and 9.9%. Some specific words related to daily life are used by teachers, for example,   Again this four-word combination of set-phrase in Chinese language linked to daily life is idiomatic usage to show their perception of culture as part of people's way of life, habits and customs of daily life and trifling matters of every day life and so on.

In category 4, the teacher trainers have a view of culture, which is more oriented toward literature, art and music (12.5%) than school teachers have (4.2%). This may be because as mentioned before (see Table 1), 83.5% school teachers don't have B.A degree indicating these teachers were graduates from the adult colleges rather than universities. In China adult colleges, especially the teacher training colleges don't offer a literature course for two-year students and even some teacher training colleges do offer literature courses. Thus it is reasonable for school teachers not to define culture as literature and art while teacher trainers understand it in the way they were taught through literature as a major channel to get to know the foreign cultures when they were in universities.

From the category 5, it is surprising to find that none of teacher trainers understand culture as values, beliefs and behaviours and school teachers give little weighting:

1.2% only. The real reason behind this result, why both groups don't define culture as the norms and values and social behaviours, is not certain. Perhaps it is because most Chinese do not have beliefs apart from in the communist party or it is because Chinese people have decreasing beliefs in communist party in terms of corruption, bribery, etc. They think the relevant cultural knowledge of the target language they are teaching should be linked with of history, geography, traditions, customs etc. They don't reach that deeper understanding of culture as values, norms and people's behaviours, which are the deepest part of culture (Prosser, 1978). It may indicate that the concepts of social norms, beliefs and values are too abstract to understand if they are not well trained in this respect. Or it may be possibly speculated that they are not clear about what purpose of acquiring a foreign language is, for examinations, or for communication. If they think in terms of communication, they don't seem to understand what role values, norms and social behaviours play in the communication. In order to go into more depth to answer such questions, it would be necessary to carry out in-depth interviews. This was not possible in this research, as explained in Chapter 4, and it is an issue for future research.

There are some limited numbers of respondents from both school teachers 7.1% and teacher trainers 2.6% who understand culture as education system in English-speaking countries. Statistically it shows that teachers' perception of culture in terms of education is not well presented in this way. The educational system and professional or school life in English-speaking countries in very few teacher' views, should be a part of culture in the target language they are teaching, while teacher trainers don't define culture much in this respect. I wonder what may be the reason since this part of cultural knowledge is included in the course of 'Brief Introduction to Britain and America', in which there is a chapter about British and American education system. I may say they should be familiar with the concept of culture in terms of education. A small number of teachers understand this possibly because the concepts of culture the teachers have are still affected by the

conventional way of understanding of culture as traditions and customs etc.

As for understanding culture as political system and economy, both groups of school teachers and teacher trainers give a quite low percentage 6.5% and 8%. This result surprises me because this part of knowledge as mentioned before is also included in the course of 'Introduction to Britain and America' offered to pre-service or in-service student teachers at college level. Yet they don't define this as a part of culture, which could be due to the possibility that the school teachers may think 'culture' is more related to the traditions and history evolved or passed down from generation to generation while politics and economy are more contemporary focused issues to deal with. Or it might imply that the courses on teacher training offered by colleges at the present don't help teachers much in terms of acquisition of cultural knowledge. Teacher trainers are not sure what school teachers need since the materials of English speaking countries are compiled in the textbooks which they have to finish during the course lecture. It seems that there is a kind of disconnection between the training course the teacher education colleges offered and what the school teachers need in their practical teaching.

The last but one category 8 is about science, technology and environment which both groups give little attention to as part of their understanding of culture: (1.6% and 0.9%). It is not surprising because this part of culture is not within traditional concepts of understanding culture among Chinese people. Furthermore this part of cultural information or cultural knowledge doesn't appear in the textbooks. It is not likely to make any connection for teachers with 'culture' in this aspect. .

The last category 9 is grouped as 'others' referring irrelevant and uncertain answers which I will discuss later.

So far I could say the common ground of cultural concept the teachers have are more focused on traditions, folklore and customs; history and geography and people's daily life. This could be due to the fact as I mentioned before that nearly all universities or colleges offer a course named 'Brief Introduction to Britain and America' through which the cultural knowledge regarding history and geography, traditions of major festivals, people's way of living, daily practice, weather, political system of the English-speaking countries, Britain and America in particular, are introduced to make students familiar with this factual knowledge as cultural background information. So I can see that teachers' understandings of culture might be based on and reflected by the textbook materials and also influenced by the Chinese way of defining culture in four-character-set-phrases. As for norms and values, perhaps they think they are in more abstract sense and feel them difficult to define. Cultural products like literature, arts and music are so artistic-oriented that they may not be able to understand the complex concept of culture in this direction.

Apart from this analysis of 8 categories, I want to present some definitions given by a few teachers independently which are not easy to put in any category. These definitions are so insightful, so profound in understanding culture. Though there are only a very few teachers who understand the culture in such an interesting and nuanced way and thus they can't represent the majority of teachers' perceptions, they do step towards integration of language and culture in language education.

As one teacher put it:

Culture is something like making bread with butter in. It is named as butter Bread. If butter is spread on the top of bread, it is not butter bread.

Another teacher said:

Culture and language are twins, look very much like each other. People can't easily distinguish who is who.

I am so impressed by these definitions which are simple in diction but profound in

meaning. After all, the definitions and understanding of the culture provided by the majority of teachers still remain quite superficial and imply that there has been very little professional training on cultural teaching and discussion of what culture is. When teachers are asked to define the concept of culture they must find it difficult to do it or even some of them define it in ways which are quite irrelevant to the question. I will illustrate this in the following part.

As mentioned previously, the last category 9 refers to irrelevant and uncertain answers regarding defining concept of 'culture'. I think it is very necessary to deal with this category because it hints at some potential problems in teachers' understanding of culture. Teachers are asked 'how do you understand the concept of 'culture', they gave answers like:

1. I think, it is important to enhance and strengthen students' language competence in English class (R30).

2. The big problem for students now is to acquire grammar knowledge. English, I think, a foreign language which students should learn is its structure, namely grammar. I don't like exam-driven education. For my students, being able to use it and communicate with people is enough. (R37).

3 First, we should develop students' lasting interesting in learning, good learning habit and confidence. Let them experience the joy of learning English (R43).

….

Statement 1 is talking about the development of students' linguistic competence not the understanding of the culture; statement 2 is mentioning the importance of mastering grammar, the sentence structure, still focused on the form rather than meaning. When they say 'Being able to use the language and communicate with people is enough', this implies what they teach now in language classroom is enough, no more than that. The underlying meaning tells me they do not understand why they are asked to define the culture if their students can talk to people and can use it with no grammatical problems. I

may argue that some students can speak grammatically correct English but pragmatically improper in a certain context. The statement 3 is talking about motivating students' interest to learn English, to experience the joy of learning process which is right but nothing to do with the definition of culture.

Those answers give me evidence that either they misunderstood the question or their comprehension of culture is just like this. This group of irrelevant responses I quantified as 32/3.5%, and though occupying a very small figure, it makes me think that it is necessary to develop, together with teachers, a concept of culture which is appropriate for language teaching, and this is an issue for the planning of training which I will discuss in the final chapter.

I notice that some teachers directly express their uncertainty in terms of culture, for example :

a) I have no idea about what is culture (R56).

b) I don't know how to define it (R67).

c) It is too big to say it (R129).

Those short but very explicit utterances show that they have no idea about what culture is or how to define it and they don't know how to make such a big issue teachable in the classroom. The feeling of uncertainty and puzzlement (in a, b and c statements) are clearly expressed. The understanding of culture is really complex not only for teachers if they have not trained in the handling of the concept; but also for teacher trainers.

The data show the uncertain answers teacher trainers gave are higher than those of teachers, reaching 18.7% as opposed to 12.2%. It is arguable that if teacher trainers themselves don't know the basic concepts of culture, how they can offer training course to school teachers. Similarly, if school teachers don't know what culture is in general, how they can develop students' cultural awareness and cultural understanding in the

integration of language teaching, how can they fulfil the objectives in the curriculum? The implementation of the new concept of the curriculum in the classroom will become an empty talk. The results urgently suggest that targeted training of teachers in terms of understanding of culture be very necessary and important issue to deal with.

I can also sense a kind of dilemma teachers have under this new situation. Some teachers mentioned testing and examining, which is so much the concern of teachers.

d) Why to teach culture in English since it is not tested (R121).

e) Cultural teaching doesn't help my students to pass the university entrance examination (R97)

f) Culture is very important in language learning. We are all getting to know this. Who can or dare not follow 'the baton of examination' (R231)

This clearly indicates the examination-oriented education guides teachers' concept of pedagogy. They think what they teach must centre on final outcomes of learning: 'pass the university entrance examination'. If cultural contents or cultural knowledge are not tested and can't help students pass the examination, teachers don't feel responsible to teach them even though the majority of students 71.2 % are interested in learning culture as shown in section 5.2.1. The students are said to have an interest in learning foreign culture but are under the pressure to enter university; the majority of teachers 84.3% are interested in teaching culture shown by the second question data but are under the pressure to help students pass the entrance examination; interest vs. pressure become contradictory. They feel it is really hard for them to decide what they should do in the new situation and they can't, even 'dare not', be deviated from the conducting baton of examination.

This conflicting emotion is illustrated by one teacher's utterance:

Cultural awareness is a new concept in the curriculum. But I don't know how to do it in

the classroom since culture is everything, and what is more, students will be opposed to the idea of culture teaching if it is not tested. Why to ask for trouble (R23).

Obviously this teacher received the new curriculum training. She/he considers this as something new ('new concept'), which she/he may accept possibly. The word 'but' she/he used indicates the change of attitude from the positive acceptance to uncertainty. She/he feels somewhat lost not to know how to teach cultural awareness in the classroom since culture is everything. This indicates that it is a hard job for teachers to deal with culture in any case and the implication I get is that they may need help in new teaching approach, which is different from the traditional grammar teaching methods.

On the other hand, I can sense her/his hesitation again. Suppose she/he is willing to teach cultures in the language teaching in order to raise students' cultural awareness in accordance with the requirements of the curriculum; she/he must take students' attitudes into the consideration. Do they like it or not if it is not tested in the examination? The students may be opposed to the idea of culture teaching, (then why ask for trouble) so it is safer to be back where they are.

From the analysis of teachers' uncertainty of what culture is and their dilemma of how culture is coped with, I want to speculate about those who didn't complete this question and I think it is necessary to take the missing values into the consideration. 15% school teachers and 33% teacher trainers didn't complete this question in the questionnaires. Of course they are entitled not to answer it in the first place. Behind the missing data, one plausible explanation for blank answers may be attributed to

1) either school teachers or teacher trainers of this group feel defining 'culture' is a real tough job beyond their knowledge or they never think of this problem of what culture is in the context of language teaching in their previous teaching experience; when they are asked to define culture they think the better strategy is to leave this question blank rather

than to give an explicit answer 'I don't know'.

2) This group of teachers may know so well what culture is that they don't bother to answer this rather complicated question in a short time, if they do, they may think poorly-organized conceptual framework for culture in a short time may blur their understanding of this big question. Then they decide to leave it unanswered.

No matter what kind of explanation there might be of these missing data, a sense of uncertainty and lack of engagement with this question plus general expressions or definitions provided by the teachers suggest that much remains to be done in terms of developing operational definition of culture in the language teaching setting.

Thus from the category 9 I could also see that some teachers are still not sure about the new dimension of culture teaching in the language teaching. They express, to a certain extent, their uncertainty and dilemma of understanding what culture is and how to deal with it in the classroom especially under the pressure of exam-driven situation in Chinese foreign language context.

In order now to have a whole picture of teachers' views of culture I will go back to the same question again. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, the question I ask teachers 'Which part of the culture(s), do you think, is most interesting in teaching about English language countries, or how do you perceive the concept of culture?', some teachers answered the first part of the question and do not give the definitions of the culture or the other way round. I have so far dealt with the definitions of culture provided by teachers and now I want to further look at the same issue from different angle to see teachers' views on which part of culture is most interesting to teach in the English classroom.

With a careful reading of the answers, I notice that there is a widespread use of a word 'culture' with a modifier in front of it in their responses, for example, 'world culture, British culture, British & American culture, Western culture, Chinese culture, national culture, regional culture, modern culture, advanced culture, religion culture, fashionable culture' etc which they may think interesting to teach. Among those broad descriptions, the general impression I got is of the popularity of British and American culture (Anglo-American culture), Western culture as well as Chinese culture (381 responses 52%).

Why British and American culture? This could be due to one or more factors. First, this could have something to do with the language teachers are teaching as a target language and then they think target culture(s) should be interesting to be taught. Second, there is a widespread feeling among Chinese students that British and American English are purer, more refined form of English (The BBC and VOA are highly recommended for students to listen to for enhancing their listening comprehension). Third, the predominance of TOEFL and IELTS examination in China may be the plausible explanation. There may be a reflection of the fact in teachers' minds that they may help students in a way if they know about British and American culture whose English is being taught. In the case of Western culture, I am not sure what teachers refer to, but in China setting, it is possible they refer to American culture because there are lots of TV, radio programmes talking about the Western food influence on youngsters, usually referring to American food, which suggests an attractive marketing factor. Therefore I may say Western culture may refer to the same thing as American culture.

Despite the tendency to teach Anglo-American culture, some say that Chinese traditional culture should be taught as well. As one teacher put it:
Every nation has its own history and its own unique culture. We have our own culture which has five thousand years' long history. In order to understand other culture, we will

have to know our culture better (R12).

The concept of 'own /our' and 'other' is stressed by the teacher. 'Culture' doesn't have a distinction between the good and the bad. Every nation has its own unique culture. This 'uniqueness' of the culture reflects a nation's characters. The approach from our own culture is implied to develop students' awareness of their own cultural identity and others; to put students in a position to reflect on their own culture and perceive and understand it from the viewpoint of others. This is the ability to reflect on one's own culture through outsider perspectives, able to mediate between cultures to see differences.

Similar perceptions are presented, though very limited number (29 out of 341 respondents 0.8%), and by teachers who say that the difference between Chinese culture and Anglo-American culture is what should be taught in the English class:
In language teaching, to compare the differences of East and West is very important', one teacher says (R109).

Although only 0.8% teachers realized the importance of teaching cultural differences between our own and target language culture, this does not necessarily mean it is not important and we should ignore it. On the contrary, it means the new understanding of cultural teaching in language education emerges and it is useful to think how we should employ it in training as discussed in the final chapter. We have a saying in Chinese 'single and small spark can start a prairie fire.'

The following statement makes the idea more directly but not clearly:
Only on precondition of understanding similarities and differences of other cultures by contrast and comparison, we are enabled to know the target language more, to use it flexibly and then reduce the cultural misunderstanding. Accepting others' essence, we

can make our country strong and powerful (R32).

The differences and similarities of other cultures could be understood by comparative and contrastive perspective but from which culture, is not clear. It might mean understanding of our own culture and cultures in which language is being taught and learnt. Though not clearly expressed, it still suggests that teachers begin to be aware of the importance in developing cultural awareness with which language can be used 'flexibly'. In my understanding it may mean 'appropriately', particularly from the perspective of involving comparisons between students' culture and other cultures, which I think, is a first starting step towards intercultural communication approach.

I noticed that some teachers wrote things like: 'In terms of culture we should teach something which students are interested in, something can sustain students' interest; something close to students' life, something relevant to language knowledge contained in each unit;' etc. What is this 'something'? What can activate students' learning interest or motivation and maintain their interest? What is close to their life? These answers tell me that they have some ideas there in general but they don't know exactly what they are or what they should be in terms of culture teaching. Perhaps they refer to four F's (i.e., food, festivals, folklore and facts) and intend to interest and motivate students, the possible motivational value (Schulz, 2005), which reflects the reality of culture teaching in the classroom in China and which are indeed close to students' daily life. In the text book used by Grade 7, for example, Unit One 'A School Day'; Unit Five 'Healthy Food', Unit Nine 'Christmas and Spring festival' are using cultural information as content to teach language skills. Apart from this, what else do the teachers mean? I am not very sure but there is further internal validation of the data from Q9 'Please prioritize 10 possible cultural topics out of 19 at the secondary school level' , the top priority topic they give is 'daily life and work' 87%. I will discuss it below.

In summary, the interesting parts related to cultural teaching, in teacher' views, are focused on Anglo-American cultures in that the language is being learnt and taught. Chinese traditional cultures with a long history should be interesting to be taught as well by comparing and contrasting the differences with other cultures. Teachers also say that something interesting or close to students' life should be taught, which indicates teachers' concepts of this aspect is too general to demonstrate their true understanding in cultural dimension.   It hints that the teacher training programme should be developed in this aspect to help teachers look at the language teaching with a new sight.

If Chinese teachers' perceptions of culture are placed in the global context I am very interested in discovering what it will be. I decided to compare the findings on teachers' concept of culture with Danish and English teachers' understanding of culture.

As mentioned in Chapter 4 section 4.3.1 Byram & Risager did an empirical study on teachers' definitions of culture in England and Demark between 1992 and 1994. There were 653 teachers from Denmark and 212 teachers from England involved in this investigation. The teachers were asked to present their understanding of the concept of culture. All together they got 630 definitions from Denmark and 162 from England. They classified the definitions into 4 groups shown below:

A. culture understood as people's way of life or traditions----how people live in concrete terms, their activities, and their way of living together and so on;

B. culture understood as the objective structures people live in, the social, political and economic institutions for example;

C. culture understood as the norms or values characterizing people's lives---the ideas people have about their life , behaviour, mentality, consciousness and so on;

D. culture understood as valued products or artefacts: as artistic life and artistic products of different kinds, for example literature, music, art and so on.

Their findings are shown below:

Table 5.13. Categorization of Danish and England teachers' definition of culture

Category	Denmark Teachers (N/%)	England Teachers (N/%)
A	470/31.9	78/45
B	444/30.1	40/23
C	258/17.5	44/25.4
D	303/20.5	19/11

For easy reference, the categorization of Chinese teachers' definition of culture will be shown again below:

Table 5.14. Percentage of Chinese teachers' definition of culture

Categories	School teachers (N/%)	Teacher trainers (N/%)
1	112/15.2	11/9.9
2	215/29.1	25/22.4
3	169/22.9	28/25
4	31/4.2	14/12.5.
5	9/1.2	
6	52/7.1	3/2.6
7	48/6.5	9/8
8	12/1.6	1/0.9
9	90/12.2	21/18.7
Total	738	112

Note: The numeral is used to indicate the categorization of Chinese teachers' definition of culture while letters are used to indicate English and Danish teachers in the following comparison.

I categorize the definitions of culture into 9 groups as shown above while Byram and

Risager categorized into 4 groups. I recognize that the way of categorization I use and the contents in each grid are more or less the same as Byram and Risager's. Mine is more detailed in 9 categories, for example, grid A and grid 1 in both findings is about people's way of life, life style etc. The figures reveal significant difference in teachers' concepts of culture in the three countries. Obviously Danish and England teachers understand culture more oriented towards daily life, 31.9% of Danish teachers and 45% of England teachers, which are much higher than 15.2% of Chinese teachers' understanding in this aspect. As for traditions and social structures in grid B and in grid 2, there is no substantial difference in this aspect shown by 30% for Danish teachers, 23% for England teachers and 29% for Chinese teachers. It suggests teachers from different teaching contexts hold nearly the same understanding of culture as traditions, social customs because this is a part of a nation's heritage and an important part of culture which should be taught in the language classroom.

If I continue to look at the results in category C and category 5 regarding norms, values and behaviours etc, I notice that teachers in England have a view more towards this direction than Danish teachers do: only very small percentage 1.2% from Chinese teachers. This also shows perhaps there is belief crisis existing in China. Why is there a big gap between European teachers' concept and Chinese teachers' in this respect? Again this is a topic for further investigation.

In conclusion, this section deals with the data around one question but from two angles: aspects of culture taught and definitions of culture given by teachers. It provides me with extensive perceptions from teachers and teacher trainers. I could see the concepts of culture which popped into teacher' minds according to Table 14 are the following: first traditions and customs, second history and geography, last the way of people's life which thus can be considered as leading concepts of their understanding. It is these which first come to mind and which seem to guide the individual teacher's thinking.

With Danish and English teacher' views, I can see from the Table 13 that way of life/traditions and social structures are well represented, which shows uncontroversial common understanding of culture is reached no matter it is West or East. Both Chinese teachers and English and Danish teachers show little attention to the cultural products or artefacts. The obvious findings lie in the difference of norms, values and people's social behaviours where Danish and English teachers demonstrate their understanding in this aspect while Chinese teachers don't seem to understand it at all. This leaves me an issue for future research using interviews or similar methods which would allow me to probe the reasons behind these differences in more depth.

It is important to point out that this part of definitions of culture is only one aspect of a full understanding of culture. Another aspect of understanding shows that some Chinese teachers think Anglo-American culture should be taught together with Chinese traditional culture, while others focus on cultural differences of our own and other cultures by comparative approach in order to reach better understanding of our own through viewpoint of others. However, some teachers fail to define the culture or misunderstand the question; some express their uncertainty and dilemma, and some feel much confused to say this or that when they are asked to do so. I must admit that to formulate the definitions of culture is absolutely difficult for teachers in a short time in a coherent way especially when they lack of training on this aspect.

However, it is encouraging that teachers can present independent views on the concept of culture. Though talk about culture teaching in language classroom still remains superficial, still in the stage of teaching the cultural phenomena, I feel it really significant to know how much understanding of culture teachers have in the setting of language teaching.

5.4 Possible topics in cultural teaching (Q9)

Having examined teachers' definitions of culture, I can see that teachers understand 'culture' mainly as customs and traditions; as history of language (proverbs, idioms etc) and as a daily life, which were discussed above. I am very much interested to look at what part of culture or what culture topics teachers think should be touched upon in the classroom.

I have an insight into what underlying conceptualizations teachers have. As it was mentioned in previous section, the open-ended question of asking teachers to define their understanding of 'culture' is placed at the beginning of the questionnaire in order to invite teachers to voice their opinions as freely as they can. They may not be fully conscious of this question because it is not their daily teaching practice. However, when they are asked to make choices about what topics they will like to teach in language classes, the issues will be more conscious and clear. Question nine asks teachers 'What part of culture associated with the English language you think should be taught at the middle school levels'. 19 possible culture topics are suggested, which are borrowed from the Byram and Risager project (Byram and Risager, 1999) for the purpose of comparison in teachers' preferences of culture topics in three countries. Some changes of topics were made out of piloting experience, for example, 'stereotype' 'ethnic relations, racism' which were not included and topics 'body language' 'values and beliefs' 'our own culture and identity' were added (see Chapter 4).

Teachers were asked to identify the ten most important ones they think should be taught in the classroom. They were encouraged to give other topics if they wish, but few of them offered their suggestions. At the same time they were asked to write one or two sentences to tell us the reason why they identify their choices in brief. The following list are the 10 most favourable topics teachers chose which will be presented by frequency and percentage ranging from the highest percentage to lower one. See the Table 15 below. The complete list of 19 possible culture topics is included in the questionnaire.

(see Questionnaire Q9).

Table 5.15. Possible culture topics

	teachers		Trainers
Daily life	339/87%	School and education	54/88.1%
Festivals and customs	295/77%	Festivals and customs	52/85.2%
School and education	300/78%	Daily life	51/83.5%
Shopping, food and drink	282/73%	Our own culture &	48/79.4%
Environmental issues	274/72%	Shopping, food and drink	46/76%
Body language	273/72%	Environmental issues	42/74%
Our own culture& identity	254/68%	Values and beliefs	40/72.4%
Values and beliefs	242/64%	Social and living	39/72.2%
Social &living conditions	240/63%	Religious life & tradition	37/66.7%
Tourism and travel	234/61%	Youth culture	36/64%

The 10 most favourable topics the teachers and trainers choose are surprisingly similar except that teachers choose 'body language' and 'tourism and travel' while trainers think 'religious life and tradition' and 'youth culture' should be taught. This difference might be caused by the understanding of the culture and by the books they are using. For example, the 'religious life and tradition' is not included in the textbooks used by the teachers but touched upon in the training textbooks. Apart from this, both teachers and trainers share very similar ideas about the culture topics though the emphasis is a little different. That is to say the order of their choices is placed differently. To be more exact, they all put 'daily life'; 'festivals and customs'; 'school life and education' on the first three topics of their choices but with different order. Teachers placed 'daily life' first while trainers put it on the third place. This does not affect my discussion. My major concern is what the 10 cultural topics they favour in their teaching and the result is clear.

They both think the topic of 'environmental issues' should be included, placed somewhere in the middle of the list of topics indicating that the issue of protecting the

environment where we are living is becoming a universal concern and students should have some knowledge of this.

Interestingly the topic 'body language' is given relatively important emphasis by teachers which gives me some hints that teachers are becoming aware that gestures, expressions, body movements have messages to convey when people converse. However, not all body language means the same thing in different culture. Different peoples have different ways of making nonverbal communication. It is part of culture. Therefore, body language, in teachers' opinions, like verbal language, should be taught. However, trainers don't mention 'body language' but this doesn't mean that this is not important .I assume they might have taken it for granted to be included in the culture teaching. Due to different position of teaching, trainers choose 'youth culture' as one of the 10 topics.

It is also noticed that the topic of 'values and beliefs' is among the ten important ones. But in the section where they were asked to define what culture is, they give less support to this point (Schoolteachers 9/2.1% trainers 5/4.5%). The interpretation of this result may be attributed to the consciousness aspect. They are more conscious about what is happening in the classroom than to give definitions of culture, which is so abstract in conceptualization.

It is also noticeable that topics like history, political system, literature and film, family life, gender and roles are not included. This shows both teachers and trainers are not interested in big C.

As mentioned before, similar research done by Byram and Risager (1999) investigated English and Danish teachers on what aspects of culture they feel should be included in foreign language teaching. They offered a list 20 themes of culture related. I want to see what English and Danish teachers' preferences of culture topics are and whether there is

any common standpoint in European and Chinese teachers' perceptions. Their choices of culture topics and Chinese teachers' will be presented in the rank order (see below).

Table 5.16 Possible culture topics or themes given in three countries

Chinese teachers	English teachers	Danish teachers
Daily life & routine	Daily life & routine	Social and living
Festivals and customs	School and education	Daily life & routine
School and education	Shopping, food and drink	School and education
Shopping food and drink	Family life	Family life
Environmental issues	Youth culture	Youth culture
Body language	Festival sand customs	Shopping food and drink
Our own culture and	Geography and regions	Ethnic relations and
Values and beliefs	Social and living	History
Social and living	Tourism and travel	Festivals and customs
Tourism and travel	Working life and	Political system

The table shows that there are some common views shared by three groups of teachers in terms of culture topics which they are not interested in introducing into the classroom, for example, 'literature' 'film, theatre and art' 'religious life and traditions'. This implies that all three groups of teachers give less attention to big 'C' culture and more support to small 'c' culture. In addition to this, none of the group draws any attention to 'gender roles and relationships' which might suggest sociological analysis.

There are some interesting differences among Chinese, English and Danish teachers. Chinese teachers don't include 'family life' and 'youth culture' in the 10 topics while English and Danish teachers rank these two topics in the exact the same places among the 10 topics. Apart from this, Chinese teachers consider 'environmental issues' and 'our

own culture and identity' as part of culture topics to teach while neither English nor Danish teachers think as such.

It is also observed that Danish teachers put more emphasis on 'history' 'ethnic relations and racism' and 'social and living conditions', and much less on 'tourism and travel' and 'working life and employment' which are not included in their first 10. By comparison, English and Chinese teachers don't include 'history' or 'ethnic relations and racism' in the first 10 topics.

From the table above, it can be interpreted that foreign language teaching, in a global context, bears more similarities than differences in terms of cultural teaching topics from teachers' point of views. The differences might result from different situations, for example, 'religious life' 'ethnic relations and racism' are too politically sensitive in the China context and different topics might also lead to different methods of teaching, depending on learners' age, language competence and other factors such as motivation or degree of first-hand experience of other country and society. Nonetheless, I have got some insight to what teachers' understanding of culture topics.

5.5 Teaching techniques for culture teaching (Q11)

In the previous section, what culture topics Chinese teachers prefer to teach have been investigated and comparison of Danish and English teachers' with Chinese teachers' preference has been made to help me understand what teachers thinking is through their choices of culture teaching to realize the objectives of language and culture teaching. In this section I want to find out what activities teachers employ in the classroom in. Q11 asks teachers to indicate for a number of possible language/cultural teaching activities how often they practice them in the scale of 'very often, often, sometimes, seldom and never'. From these indicated possible teaching practices and activities I intend to

discover (1) which cultural teaching activities teachers appear to prefer and to what extent they prefer: teacher-centred or student-centred. What I mean by teacher-centred is the teacher who decides on cultural activities or topics dealt with in the classroom. Student-centred is when students start to choose what topics and activities they want to learn or practice. 2) Whether teachers practice only teaching activities that target cognitive objectives, or whether they also use activities that address the attitudinal or skills dimensions of intercultural competence.

A list of possible cultural activities appeared in the questionnaire in random order but here it will be presented in percentage with which they appear to be most often used.

Table 5.17 The activities from most often used to less often used presented below:
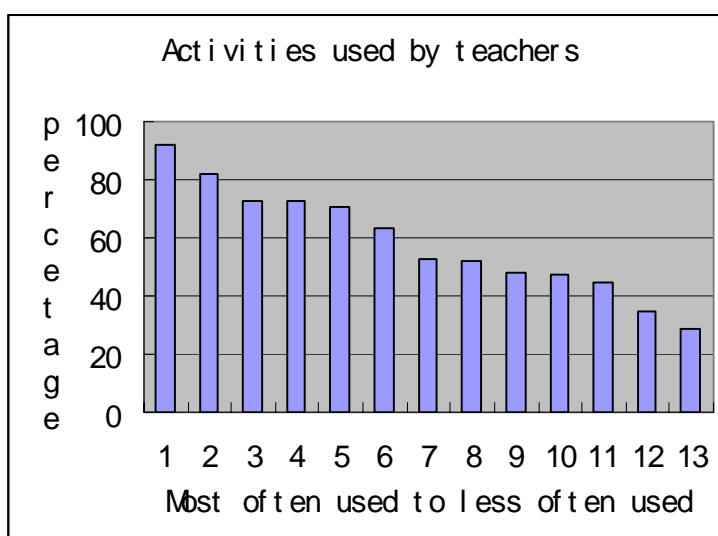
1. I teach culture in English class based on the textbook I am using.	368/92%
2. I ask my students to recite some dialogues.	327/81.75%
3. I use audio tapes in my class and ask them to mime according to what they hear.	291/72.75%
4. I focus my attention on some culture-loaded new words teaching	290/72.5%
5. I tell my students what I heard or read about the foreign country or culture	284/71%
6. I teach them some English songs or poems to let them experience the different cultures.	254/63.5%

7. I ask my students to act out what they learn in terms of culture learning	212/53%
8. I ask my students to compare their own cultures with foreign cultures.	209/52.25%
9. I ask my students to discover the aspects of the foreign culture	192/48%
11. I ask my students to participate in role-play activity in which people from different culture meet.	179/44.8%
12. I download some pictures or cartoons having cultural images and let them discuss them.	138/34.5%
13. I show them film videos and discuss what they watch.	115/28.75

I combine the activities 'very often used' and 'often used' together and the result clearly shows that the technique teachers often used to teach culture is through the textbook (368/92%) while teaching English. This is the situation in China where the textbook is the law code for teachers to follow and examinations are taken from it (Wang, 2003). This also means it could be assumed that it is the teachers who plan and decide what should be taught and how fast they should move to next unit.

Asking students to recite some dialogues turns out to be the second very often used technique (327/81.75%). This may be due to the fact there is no real language circumstance to involve students to use the language they are learning. Therefore memorization of short dialogues and some useful expressions can enable students to use what they have got in mind and also are helpful for students to have good marks in an examination. These two activities are obviously teacher-centred and address the cognitive dimension in language education, which is still the main teaching approach in Chinese classroom.

Audiotapes played in the classroom and students asked to mime what is heard (291/72.75%) and teaching cultural-loaded vocabulary (290/72.5%) are comparatively very often used activities to teach culture. This shows that to improve students' listening comprehension is considered as an important part in language teaching because listening

comprehension will be included in the test occupying 20% out of 100 scores in any examinations in secondary level. This part of listening practice goes together with each unit content. Teachers may sometimes use this listening activity on one hand to train students' listening ability and on the other hand to ask students to do role-play based on their listening content. The intention may be to motivate students' learning interest and to involve more students in taking part in the classroom activities. Teaching cultural-loaded vocabulary appeared in the text or in the dialogue through teacher's explanation, and illustrations with examples are employed showing that vocabulary learning in the language is one of the ways to learn culture. Learning and memorizing new words are seen to be the most difficult part for students to learn language. And how to enlarge students' vocabulary becomes teachers' major concern in language teaching. From this result it can be seen that they are still teacher-centred and cognitive oriented though sometimes students are involved to do miming.

Some activities like telling students what teachers heard and read about the foreign country or culture (284/71%) and others like using songs and poems to let students experience different cultures (254/63.5%) are also often used because what they have heard and read about foreign culture through other channels became one of sources for students to know foreign cultures. Most teachers don't have the first hand experience of other cultures and have little chance to go abroad to experience foreign cultures themselves. It can be imagined that they don't have much to tell students and they don't have more time spent to teach something out of the textbook.

The activities of asking students to play cultural roles (212/53%), to ask students to compare their own culture with foreign cultures (209/52.25), to discover the aspect of the foreign culture (192/48%) and to describe cultural phenomena (190/47.5%) are clearly less often used activities, which are more student-centred and skill-developed approach. This again supports the fact that teacher-centred approaches are still more

common than student-centred ones which is possibly due to the reason that student-centred autonomous learning has only recently been introduced into the schools since the new curriculum started to be applied in pioneering schools in 2001 and widely used in schools in 2005.

The last two activities mentioning additional cultural teaching materials like using cultural images, (138/34.5%) film videos and multi-media (115/28.75%) used to teach culture are not often employed. I may say that the current situation in teaching culture is basically relying on the textbook in use. And teachers do not have easy access to multi-media materials to teach cultures of English speaking countries owing to lack of enough finance to buy video teaching materials.

The feeling I got from the result is that teachers are trying to find the balance between the teacher-centred and student-centred teaching approach; knowledge-based instruction and skill-oriented development in the English language teaching. They want to involve students to participate in the classroom activity and they intend to develop students' skills to use the language they are learning and discover the differences of our own culture and foreign cultures, but it is the teacher who still controls the teaching process and teaching content most of time in the classroom. As for the attitudinal dimension of cultural teaching, it is not the focus of teachers' practices in the classroom at the present which suggests teachers' beliefs in intercultural communication teaching is falling behind their beliefs in language competence development.

Next I want to examine what activities the trainers most use in the classroom and if there is any difference with teachers' choices of activities often used in the classroom. The same way is used to combine 'very often used with often used' and the result is shown as follows:

Table 5.18   Comparison of activities used by teachers and trainers
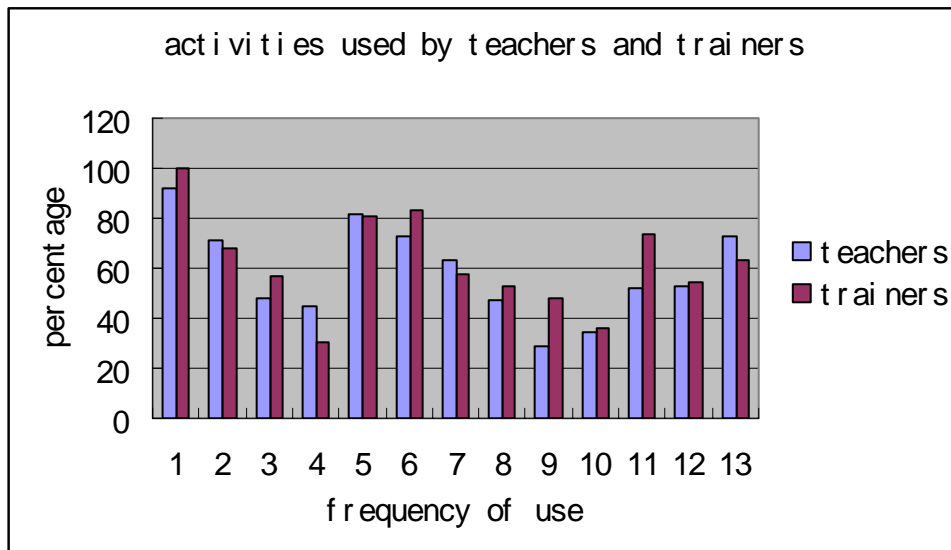
The table above shows clearly the same tendency towards the activities used by teachers and trainers. The most often used activities are activity 1 using textbooks to teach language/culture; activity 5 asking students to recite some dialogues and activity 6 teaching culture-loaded words, which reflect the reality of language teaching in my region. Textbook is a main channel to learn language and culture. Recitation is one of the ways to check learners' mastering language knowledge. This finding further confirms the current practice in teaching and learning language which has been dominated for a long time in China.

The activity 10 'using pictures with cultural images' and activity 12 'asking students to act out what they learn' in terms of culture learning are ranked the same indicating there is not any difference between teachers and trainers by using these two activities. The difference between teachers and trainers are particularly salient in activity 9, 11, and 4. The activity 9 and 11 trainers use more film videos to teach culture and do more comparison of differences between students' own cultures with foreign cultures implying college teachers are more free to use additional materials because of less tight teaching tasks and they are more aware that the comparison of one's own culture with

others' culture is one of the effective ways to learn culture. However, in activity 4 school teachers involve students to do more role-play activity in which people from different cultures meet. This is because students in schools are younger and more active while students in colleges are adults and they are not willing to do activities which might show them up before the class.

To sum up, in this section the cultural teaching practice teachers/trainers employ in the classroom has been discussed. The findings show that the most frequently used practice to teach culture in English class is through the textbooks. The other sources of cultural teaching materials, like pictures and multi-media are less frequently used by teachers. The textbook is still the source to provide either culture content or language knowledge for teachers to teach. The activities could be centred on the textbook. The list of activities practiced by teachers/trainers are most linked to teacher-centred and cognitive dimension, aiming at achieving acquisition of language and culture knowledge more than attitudinal and skills dimensions of intercultural competence. The traditional language teaching approach 'teach and listen' and deep-rooted learning style of 'read and memorize' could be felt in a certain way but at the same time I could also feel some changes occurring in the classroom, for example the activity of role play preferred by teachers. In general, looking at the activities teachers often practiced in the classroom shown by mean scores, the frequency of activity practice in the classroom might reflect teachers' perceptions of language teaching and learning beliefs and understandings from another aspect. In other words, what they believe in language teaching and learning might influence their practice as I argued in Chapter 3 section 3.6.3. It is also true for culture teaching and learning beliefs.

I have to point out that these findings discussed above are not as indication of extensive culture teaching in every lesson. In the light of what is going to be discussed in the next section regarding the balance between time devoted to language teaching and culture

teaching. I can merely interpret this finding as a sign of teachers practicing some culture teaching activities more often than other language teaching activities.

5.6 Teachers' perceptions of time they devote to culture teaching (Q7 & Q8)

Before beginning to look at teachers' perceptions of time devoted to culture teaching in the classroom, it seems necessary to remind the reader what has already been discussed and where the discussion has come to so as to link the previous sections with the present one.

In the previous section teachers' preferred activities in terms of culture teaching in the classroom has been examined. And in section 5.4 what culture topics teachers think should be taught in language classroom is analyzed. In order to better understand teachers' perceptions of the cultural dimension in language teaching teachers' opinions about how they perceive the objectives of English teaching and cultural teaching are investigated in section 5.2.2 and section 5.2.3

The present section will then provide an analysis and interpretation of teaching time teachers devote to the culture teaching in the language classroom (Q7); and whether they are willing or unwilling to spend more or less time on culture teaching (Q8) and what the reasons might be for this willingness or unwillingness (open-ended answers). Information regarding these issues will, I hope, shed additional light on the way in which they perceive the objectives of English teaching and, in particular, on the importance they give to culture teaching.

In the questionnaire, teachers are asked 'How is your teaching time distributed over 'language teaching and 'culture teaching''? Teachers will decide the one which is best to

present their practice in the classroom. The results will be presented by frequency and percentage. See the table below.

Table 5.19 Distribution of teaching time over English teaching and cultural teaching

Q7	How is your teaching time distributed over	F/P teachers	F/P trainers
1)	100%language teaching - 0% culture	9/2.3%	0/0%
2)	80% language teaching - 20% culture	206/53.1%	34/55.74%
3)	60% language teaching - 40% culture	99/25.53%	18/29.51%
4)	40% language teaching - 60% culture	174/38%	2/3.28%
5)	20% language teaching - 80% culture	4/1.03%	0/0%
6)	100%integrationof language-and-culture	53/13.66%	7/11.48%
		388/100%	61/100%

F=frequency   P=percentage

The above Table 19 provides an overview of teachers/trainers' perceptions of the percentage of their teaching time they devoted to either language teaching or culture teaching. It can be noticed that the majority of teachers/trainers dedicate more time to language teaching than to culture teaching. 206/53.1% teachers and 34/55.74%trainers tick the option 80% language teaching - 20% culture teaching. This finding shows both teachers and trainers spent more time on language teaching than culture teaching because 1) the EFL lessons in China are text-oriented and the contents of examination are taken from the textbook focusing on language knowledge; 2) the acquisition of English knowledge is still considered important and the proficiency of English is decisive factor for jobs, study and promotion; 3) culture contents estimated in the exams by teachers (315/82.68%) and trainers (49/77.8%) are about 20% (see section 5.7). So it confirms what teachers said in relation to the objectives of their teaching, clearly for language teaching rather than culture or skills teaching , which was discussed in section 5.2.3 of this chapter

It is somewhat surprising that there are 174/38% teachers who give 60% time to culture teaching. I may wonder whether this finding shows the true facts teachers are actually doing in the classroom in terms of time distribution in language teaching, or whether these are only their perceptions which may not correspond with the facts. With this enquiry in mind, what I can do is to investigate teachers' willingness and attitudes towards whether they want to spend more time on 'culture teaching' or not. If they want to devote more time on culture teaching, they are encouraged to give their brief reasons and visa versa. The results will be shown in the following table by percentage and frequency.

Table 5.20 Teachers' degree of willingness to devote more time to culture teaching

Q8	Do you want to spend more time on 'culture teaching' during your English teaching	F/P teachers	F/P Trainers
(1)	Yes, very much so	53/ 13.55%	9/14.5%
(2)	Yes, up to a certain extent	225/57.54%	46/74.2%
(3)	No, not particularly	74/ 18.9%	1/1.6%
(4)	No, not at all	5/ 1.28%	6/9.68
(5)	No opinion	34/8.73%	0/0%
		391/100%	62/100%
If you choose 1 or 2, please tell us why you want to spend more time on 'culture teaching' , if you choose 3, 4 or 5, please tell us why you don't want to spend more time on 'culture teaching' ?			

F=frequency   P=percentage

The table shows a clear willingness of teachers/trainers to devote more teaching time to culture teaching. If 'yes, very much so' and 'up to certain extent' group are combined

together, there are more than 7/8 out of 10 teachers/trainers who express their willingness to spend more time on culture teaching while 20.18% teachers and 11% trainers don't want to give more time to culture teaching and 8.73% teachers remain neutral neither willing nor unwilling attitudes are expressed.

In order to find out why they are willing to dedicate more time to culture teaching or not willing do so, in the open question, teachers are asked to mention any reasons for their willingness or unwillingness (see Appendix 5). The analysis of reasons will be dealt with in two parts; first I want to explore the reasons for positive attitudes of their willingness and then unwillingness separately. In this part of data, teachers and trainers are taken as a whole to see their general attitudes towards this issue. I again use letter 'R' stands for a 'respondent' either representing a teacher or a trainer.

When looking at the reasons teachers give again and again, trying to find out common utterances or statements teachers wrote, I found their written texts are constructed around some common themes which pertain to their willingness to devote teaching time more to culture teaching. The general picture gradually emerges by frequent use of some key words. In fact there is also a characteristic order which appears surprisingly often in the material. Thus there can be seen a logical link of thoughts, which seem to indicate their willingness to touch upon the cultural teaching. See the following expressions:
Interesting__helping___enriching___benefial___broadening____inseparable___develo ping___ arousing___
These key words can be treated as a series of thematic structures for the majority of teachers' voices. Each key word is embedded in their written texts expressed by a large number of teachers showing their attitudes towards this issue. Some typical examples will be given to show how these key words are related to the specific theme.

1) Making students and classroom teaching *interesting*

I can see that teachers' primary willingness to spend more time in terms of culture teaching is to enhance and motivate students' *interest* in learning English in the first place; to make language class more *interesting*; to teach culture out of individual teacher's own *interest*.

Thus there are three layers of the 'interesting' theme are expressed (the italics added by the researcher).

Teaching culture is helpful to ***enhance students' interest*** in learning English and to ***raise their awareness of English learning*** (R187).

Language learning is boring. If ***culture teaching is added*** to certain extent, I notice that it can make the language classroom teaching more ***interesting and vivid***. (R 247)

Myself is interested in ***British culture*** all along (R56)

The chief reasons to spend more time are to enhance students' interest and motivation which is in line with their understanding the general objectives of language teaching and culture teaching showed in section 5.2.2 and 5.2.3.

2) ***Helping*** students understand the language and culture better

Respondents say that teaching culture can help students understand the language better they are learning; can help students to understand the cultural differences; can be contributive to memorization of language points easily. Without the understanding of the culture where a language is spoken, it is not easy for students to know the meaning behind the language.

The reason to teach English is to get students to know not only language knowledge but also culture knowledge of English speaking countries, which may ***help students remember what they learnt easily*** (R311).

It is ***helpful for students to know the differences***. For example, some English words are different from Chinese words in meaning. Some histories of festivals students are not sure about. If only some words of their dictionary meaning are taught, it is very superficial. Only by comparison of differences between cultures, can help students get to know the language better (R234).

It is only on the precondition that students get to know something about cultural knowledge, which then can ***help them understand why they learn this language*** and the function of learning this language (R58).

3) ***Enriching and beneficial*** for both teachers and students

Some teachers say that the reasons they want to teach cultures of English speaking countries are that it can enrich students' knowledge of English language, especially the knowledge beyond of the textbook because sometimes they like to ***supplement additional materials concerning cultural information*** used in the English classes (R80).

Students' can learn more not only the English language itself but people's way of life, different customs and traditions, major festivals in other cultures etc. It is a ***kind of live language*** not deaf-mute language we are teaching (R203).

In addition the process can be enriching for the teachers and not just the pupils:

The process of searching for cultural information is a process of ***learning for ourselves*** (R12).

Some cultural knowledge we don't know as teachers and we ***must consult some guide books*** to make clear before we teach to our students (R45).

It can also help them to improve and enrich their own teaching methods:

We have to think about how to use the additional materials in our class and in what way to integrate with language teaching which can enable us to enrich our teaching experience and *improve our teaching methods* (R341).

Therefore 'culture teaching and learning is like taking *self-advanced course of study*' '(R 111) and 'it can *benefit teachers* ourselves as well as students'(R3).

So the thematic structures of enriching cultural knowledge of students and teachers and of being beneficial to learners and teachers in the process of language education are well illustrated.

4) *Broadening* student's views
They want to spend more time on cultural teaching because they think to learn a foreign language is a way to broaden students' horizon on the world:

Students' thinking and views can be *widened and their comprehensive ability of language can be developed* only they have some knowledge of culture where language is learnt. (R116).
To acquire some knowledge of culture can *broaden students' view*. Their interest in learning English can be enhanced and in turn it can promote teaching of language (R137).

Some teachers link this broadening view of the world with a better understanding of one's own country:

The purpose of teaching language and culture is to let students have the whole world in view and have their own country in mind   ' (R142).

This reason sheds additional light on their understanding the general objectives of language teaching, which will broaden students' horizon (see section 5.2.2).

5) Language and culture *inseparable*

The connection between language and culture becomes increasingly realized. Teachers express their desire to dedicate more time to cultural teaching because language and culture are inseparable, some teachers say. For example:

I always think language and culture can't be *separated*, they *complement* each other (R23).

Without knowing a country's culture, it is *difficult to learn this language well* (R34).

Learning a country's language, its culture must *be learnt at the same time*. Using the language which students are learning to know the history and civilization of different countries (R16).

Language and culture *can not be separated*. I want very much myself to teach language and culture as *water and milk well-blended* (R265).

The metaphor used by the teacher encapsulates the views about the relationship of language and culture in a particularly clear way.

6) *Developing* communicative competence and intercultural competence

Teachers realize that teaching English is for the purpose of using the language to communicate with people from a different cultural background. The ability of

communication is what they are willing to teach and invest time in. They see the teaching of culture and the development of a broad view as a pre-condition for good communication: ***Develop student's open-mindedness and acceptance of other nations and peoples***; ability of tolerance, which enables them to adapt to future work and learning (R5).

Only having some knowledge of culture, can students express or ***communicate*** with people ***appropriately*** (R20).

To teach culture can promote students love of the language they are learning, can ***develop*** their communicative competence (R165).

Not only ***develop*** students' language ability but also ***intercultural competence***. This is what I am trying to do (R44).

Though very few teachers mentioned that a language teaching objective is to develop students' intercultural communication ability, the mere realization of importance of developing students' communicative or intercultural competence rather than knowledge transmission is encouraging. It may lead to my thinking about the future training course for teachers in this aspect which will be addressed in the section of action plan in the last chapter.

7) ***Arousing*** cultural awareness

From further examination of their written texts, 'sensitivity', 'cultural awareness' and 'new challenge' appear with regard to willingness for culture teaching. Such as:

Learning a language is to know the cultural similarities and differences of others. We should let our students be ***aware of these differences*** (R4).

Be *sensitive to different* cultures is what we want to teach by comparison with our own culture (R230).

Teachers may realize that comparison and contrast of different cultures is direct way of developing students' 'cultural awareness' to be sensitive to how we are different from others in terms of cultures and visa versa.

The open attitude towards another culture is what they may try to develop in the language classroom. Teachers say 'Develop students' ability to differentiate foreign cultures and to be *open to accept* it '(R 165).

Arouse students' cultural awareness and broaden their views can lay a foundation for their possible going abroad to study' (R123).

Cultural awareness is one of the objectives in language teaching and what proportion should be given to this specific objective in terms of cultural teaching is one of the things which they think about:

But I tried very hard to *squeeze time* out of 50 minutes to let my students know as much as I can give them'(R86).

How much time should be given to the cultural teaching is not certain to achieve the objective of cultural awareness. However, the willingness to teach this way can be felt by this teacher's effort to squeeze time out of 50 minute of normal language teaching time.

The curiosity of students for something foreign and new may arise through the language

they are learning:

My students are very ***curious about the culture*** of English speaking countries and they often ask me some questions which I myself am not sure which make me lose face in front of them'(R1).

I strongly feel students in 21st century ***can not be satisfied with only textbook knowledge***. The channel of acquiring knowledge used to be from the textbooks only but now from different sources like Internet is a big challenge to us to face our students. We teachers must be responsible to meet their curiosity and needs for their knowledge thirst. It is a ***big challenge to be a teacher*** in 21st century (R301).

The curiosity of students is thus a challenge to teachers and the role of always teacher's asking questions will be replaced by student's turn of asking questions which teacher isn't prepared to be asked and possibly he/she doesn't know the answer. In particular, if some questions asked in terms of culture of English speaking countries and teachers themselves don't have first-hand experiences of contact with that culture, students' curiosity and thirst for what they want to know couldn't be met and will feel disappointed. This is a new challenge for teachers in the new century. They have to learn what they don't know to update their knowledge of language and culture which could be shared in the classroom with their students.

From a rich variety of expressions above when teachers talk about the reasons why they would like to spend more time on teaching culture, their strong desire to teach language in cultural dimension to meet this fast changing situation can be seen. A kind of strong sense of mission teachers would like to take in the new century can be felt, which makes our teacher trainers think what we should do to help teachers in the front line and what responsibilities we should take in the 21st century in this profession. This remains a

question to answer in future study.

Difficulties to handle the cultural teaching in the classroom

So far the findings tell me that majority of teachers are willing to give more time to teach culture in the language classroom. However there are still 29%/103 teachers who feel it difficult to teach culture in the language classroom. What might be the reasons will be discussed in the following.

Lack of time

The most frequently mentioned reason is 'lack of time' owing to overloaded curriculum and heavy teaching tasks to the fact that there are not enough teaching periods to cover both the language curriculum and teach culture, and to the fact students need a lot of time to practice in order to acquire proficiency in the foreign language. The quotes below illustrate this point of view:

Spending more time on cultural teaching absolutely ***hinders the regular progress*** of teaching(R 92).

This is made clearer in the following by the emphasis on practice time:

If we spend more time on cultural teaching, we ***can't finish our teaching tasks*** and students are surely not having enough time to practice their English. Therefore, we have to reluctantly part with teaching culture we love to do   no culture teaching or less culture teaching (R57).

This point is then further refined by the reference to the number of pupils in a class:

In more than 60 students in a language class, it has been already difficult to let most

students have chance/time to practice their English. How can it be easy to teach culture? ***Impossible!!***(R321)

Then this is also seen in terms of the effect on assessment of themselves as teachers:

Our work achievements will be ***quantified***. We ***don't have enough time*** to deal with cultural teaching (R211).

Whether we have time to do something else totally depends on whether we can ***finish the teaching tasks*** required in the curriculum (R8).

Some teachers say that they don't have enough time to prepare for culture teaching implemented into the language teaching even though they want to do so:

Sometimes ***I do have some ideas*** to teach culture which takes time to design and plan my lessons but I don't have enough time. *So **I give it up*** (R245).

For some this is a matter of regret and self-criticism:

Involving students to do tasks, like role play and pair work for culture teaching is time consuming and energy consuming. Some vocabulary used as prompts have to be prepared and then provided in the class. I do f*eel **my ability falls short of my wish***

    (R88).

Examinations

The second major reason mentioned by teachers is curriculum restrains and examination-driven language education:

Our education is *for marks of students* not for their quality (R15).

The remark here brings the key issue of education objectives onto the table and implies the complaint and dissatisfaction of current assessment system in basic education even though it is undergoing educational reform.

This point is even made explicit by the following:

We must give students real benefits (   ) to *pass the university entrance exam* , which means that students at least can be guaranteed to find jobs and be enabled to survive after graduation in future. Why to spend time on culture, which are not included in the fate-deciding examination' (R222).

The final destination of language teaching is to help students *to enter university* which is considered to decide student's fate in future. The teacher has to follow the baton of examination as shown below:

The application of new concepts will lose all the possibilities under the conducting *baton of examination* and ranking of students' final score of examinations (R10).
Apart from this, there is no standard for assessing cultural teaching objectives:

The curriculum *doesn't include cultural evaluation standards* and cultural teaching objectives are not explicitly stated. We don't know this aspect much (R97).

In short, teachers feel it difficult to implement cultural dimension in practice.

Lack of knowledge or interest
A small number teachers express their negative attitudes towards cultural teaching in the

language classroom and an equally small group of teachers are not aware of this cultural dimension at all.

Cultural teaching plays only small subordinate role in the whole process of language teaching and learning. ***Unnecessary*** to talk about it (R304)

The teachers who hold this sort of opinion show that they still think language teaching is the dominating task while culture plays a subordinate role in the process of language learning. Cultural teaching should not be dealt with in the class and it is not realistic in current situation. This can be seen in the following:

Cultural teaching should be dealt with ***after class*** not in the class (R256)
Far from teaching reality of classroom (R112).

Some teachers even strongly oppose teaching foreign cultures in the class. This shows on one hand they are not clear about cultural importance in the language teaching and they don't have this awareness themselves. On the other, they want to maintain their national identity:

Our own culture has not been learnt well. ***Why foreign one***? (R259).

There are some teachers who think teaching culture is not their business in secondary level. At this stage their major business is to help students acquire language knowledge in order to pass the university examination. Culture can be learnt after students enter the university. It is not late to learn it at the university level:

I am not aware of this. I think secondary level teaching should always ***focus on language teaching*** (R19).

Our primary task is to guarantee high rate of entering university for students (R107). Students in secondary level should lay solid language foundation. As for cultural learning it is ***not late for them to learn when entering universities*** (R298).

This part of negative reasons can't be ignored and they do reflect the reality of language education in Xinjiang. This small group of teachers is very brave to voice their true feeling, which doesn't mean the majority of teachers express their willingness to spend more time on cultural teaching are not honest. I infer that the reformed curriculum has exerted great impact on a large number of teachers and they would like to more as the first batch of pioneers towards the cultural dimension of language teaching. They have made the first significant step forward while a few teachers are not ready or not well prepared mentally to move towards this direction implying they need help and training conceptually.

Summary

In summary, the findings show that teachers appear to devote more time to language teaching than to culture teaching in spite of the fact they also express a clear willingness to devote more time to culture teaching. The impression gained from the results is that, to a certain extent, teachers feel frustrated that they can't devote more time to culture teaching. They mention overloaded curriculum and curriculum restraints, lack of time, being driven by examination, and their own lack of familiarity with foreign cultures. A small number of teachers express their negative attitudes towards cultural teaching in language classroom.

The frustration and difficulties mentioned above are truly reflective of the current situation in language education in Xinjiang in spite of the fact that a large number of teachers express their willingness to spend more time on teaching. It could be felt that

the willingness to teach culture and frustration to realize their willingness make teachers stuck in a dilemma. They find it difficult to go either forward or back. The new concepts on one end drag teachers forward and the current situation on the other blocks teachers. Educational reform is not always easy. Nonetheless, the findings are encouraging that large number of teachers has realized the necessity and importance of language teaching in cultural dimension and willingness to devote more time to culture teaching.

In the next section I will look at the textbooks teachers are using to investigate whether they have freedom to choose what they need; whether there is enough cultural knowledge or information in the textbook; whether teachers are happy with the textbook which can meet their expectation in terms of cultural teaching etc.

5.7 Teachers' perceptions of Cultural teaching materials in textbooks (Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16

In the previous section, the results have shown that teachers are willing to devote more time to culture teaching though the fact is teachers spent far more time on language teaching. In this section, the views of English teachers with regard to the cultural dimension of textbooks they use in class will be examined; for example, any freedom of choice of materials; having enough cultural contents available from the textbooks or not; satisfaction with cultural contents in the new textbook or not; and to what percentage the cultural knowledge included in the examination, will be analyzed and discussed from the data in order to answer my sub-research questions 'What are the teachers' perceptions of cultural teaching materials in the textbook ?'

The textbook has traditionally been the crucial guiding principle of subject courses in China. It has the characteristic of being authorities, academic and informative. It provides for information, learning processes at school and for teaching processes in

instruction. It can support the teacher's decisions in relation to what and how to teach, it can support the interaction of the teaching-process, it can codify certain types of knowledge and educational ways of working and it can qualify the learning of the student as a constructive learning process.

Despite their convenience, textbooks have often been criticized for being too rigid, not being able to cater for students' needs, imposing particular teaching approach onto teachers and learning styles onto students, allowing insufficient space for teacher and learner creativity (Sercu, 2005).

The new English textbooks, which came into being under the circumstance of basic education reform in China in 2001, started to be used all over China in 2005. With this background, teachers are first asked 'who chooses the textbook(s) for you' because I want to find out whether the new guiding concept of 'one curriculum and multi textbooks '(New English Curriculum, 2001) give teachers more freedom to choose more than one textbook to attain the goals set in the curriculum. The finding is shown below by frequency and percentage.

Table 5.21 Textbook choice

Q12 Who chooses the textbook(s) for you?	F/P teachers	F/P trainers
You yourself	9/2.39%	8/12.7%
The school/college	138/36.7%	54/85.7%
The bureau of local education	98/26.06%	0/
The bureau of provincial education	100/26.6%	0/
Don't know	31/8.24%	1/1.6%
	376/100%	63/100%

F=frequency   P=percentage

The table shows that teachers/trainers don't have any freedom to choose textbooks for themselves. Only 2.29 % teachers and 12.7% trainers say they can choose for themselves. The right to decide what textbook(s) should be used is in the hands of schools, the bureau of local education or the bureau of provincial education. The point must be made clear here. The textbook chosen by schools or the educational bureau must be used by teachers in order to deal with the unified examinations at provincial-level based on the textbook. This fact implies that teachers are asked to use selected textbooks, confirming that the textbook presents an important constituent of the teaching /learning process. It can therefore rightly be assumed that the textbooks can significantly impact on the techniques with which culture is taught in the English language classroom. The textbook is the means to reduce teachers' preparation time, and guarantee that teachers can approach the teaching of the English language in a systematic way, and guarantee that all levels of unified examinations can be carried out based on a unified textbook. The good wish 'one curriculum and multi-textbooks' stressed in the curriculum can't be easily realized in practice. This is the case at least in Xinjiang. As far as I know, the textbook used in schools in Xinjiang is 'Go For IT' published by People's Education Press, one of the biggest teaching materials publishers, dominating the teaching materials and textbook market for basic education. The use of the unified textbook gives me a sense of the culture agenda and orientation teachers follow. This result also reveals a picture of students being presented with similar information and approach to culture learning through the textbook.

As for trainers, the textbooks are usually chosen by the department where they work, not by local or provincial bureau of education. At this level, there is no unified examination as schools do. Therefore the colleges or universities can decide which textbooks they want to use according to trainers' preference. To be more specific, a textbook for a

certain course taught by a certain trainer will be chosen by that trainer. But this trainer has no right to order the book directly from the bookstore. She /he has to submit the title of this textbook to the department and then to the textbook section of the college or university to order it from the bookstore or publishing press. So 85.7% trainers think the colleges chose the textbooks for them.

Apart from the restriction of free selection of textbooks, I want to know whether teachers/trainers are free to use additional materials they think useful or they think necessary for cultural teaching in their class. The result is shown by frequency and percentage. See the table below.

Table 5.22 Freedom of using additional materials

Q13 Are you free to use additional materials you think useful for cultural teaching in your class?	F/P teachers	F/P trainers
Yes, I can.	173/46.01%	51/81%
No, I can't.	144/38.30%	10/15.8%
I don't know	59/15.69%	2/3.2%
	376/100%	63/100%

It is clearly shown that nearly half the teachers (174/46.01%) are free to use additional materials relevant to cultural teaching. This may suggest the possibility of supplementing inadequacy of cultural contents offered by the textbook if teachers think it necessary to add something to language contents even though they are confined to one textbook. They may make free decision on what should be taught in terms of culture knowledge. But I may argue that 'free to use' doesn't necessarily mean 'actual use' of additional cultural materials in the classroom. The findings in a previous section showed that the additional cultural teaching materials like film videos, pictures or cartoons are

not very often used by teachers in the classroom. They rank using additional culture materials the last (see section 5.5). From this I can say that teachers primarily rely on the textbook to teach language and culture. However, there is at least half majority of teachers who enjoy the freedom in a sense to decide what should be used in the class. As for trainers, it can be seen that the majority of them (51/81%) can use additional materials in their teaching. Thus I may say they have more freedom in using additional materials than school teachers do. This may be due to the reason that colleges or universities don't have the provincial-level unified examination and have a less tight curriculum to deal with. They are more flexible in their daily teaching control.

It is also noticeable that quite a number of teachers (144/38.30% in Table 21) say that they can not use additional materials for their teaching. This fact may suggest the teachers have so many teaching contents in the textbook to deal with that they have no time to use additional materials beyond the textbook as it has been discussed before when talking about teaching time distribution to cultural dimension (see section 5.6).Or it may mean that they have to pay for photocopies themselves and students have to pay the handouts as well which recently the government stressed that schools can't charge any extra fee from students. The table shows that 10/15.8% trainers say they can't use the additional materials. Perhaps they think there is enough cultural information or knowledge in the textbook and they don't need to use additional materials in terms of culture teaching. Compared with teachers, trainers have more freedom to control the use of additional materials in their teaching.

Only a small amount teachers (59/15.69%) and trainers (2/3.2%) say that they have no ideas about the issue to use additional materials in the class. In my interpretation it perhaps indicates this small group of teachers/trainers likes to remain neutral or they may think the textbook is still their 'code' to abide by. They don't want to cross the boundary of the textbook.

In order to further examine this issue, a follow-up question is asked 'How much cultural contents are included in the text book you use' to see if there is any connection between freedom of using additional cultural materials and to what extent there are cultural contents included in the textbook. The result will be presented in the table below.

Table 5.23 Percentage of cultural contents in the textbook

Q14 How much cultural contents are included in the textbook you use?	F/P teachers	F/P trainers
A lot	25/6.51%	6/9.68%
To certain extent (bits here and there)	259/67.45%	39/62.9%
Undecided	12/3.13%	1/1.61%
Little	86/22.40%	16/25.81%
Not any at all	2/0.52%	0/0%
	384/100%	62/100%

The table shows that only 25/6.5% teachers and 6/9.68% trainers considered the cultural contents in the textbook a lot and another small group of teachers (86/22.40%)and trainers(16/25.81%) say that the amount of cultural information are inadequate. The majority of teachers (259/67.45) and trainers (39/62.9%) think the amounts of cultural contents in the textbook are to certain extent enough though there are bits here and there in the textbook. Thus I can say that teachers/trainers don't think they need to use additional cultural materials since the textbook provides enough in amount even though 46% teachers and 81% trainers say they can be free to choose cultural teaching materials. Therefore it confirms the assumption that 'free to use' doesn't actually mean 'actual use' if they think it is enough in cultural contents.

Then I may wonder if a majority of teachers think there are enough cultural contents in

the textbook and whether these cultural contents in the textbook can meet their expectation or are they satisfied with the cultural contents, about which teachers' opinions are asked in our questionnaire. The result will be shown in the table below.

Table 5.24 Teachers' degree of satisfaction with the cultural contents of the textbook they use

Q 16 Do the cultural contents of the textbook(s) you use meet your expectations?	F/P teachers	F/P trainers
Yes, very much so.	17/4.46%	1/1.64%
Yes, up to a certain extent.	204/53.54%	31/50.82%%
No, not enough.	39/10.24	1/1.64%
No, not at all.	103/27.03%	27/44.3%
I don't know	18/4.78%	1/1.64%
Total	381/100%	61/100%

F=frequency   P=percentage

If 'yes-group' and 'no-group' are combined respectively, it will be clear to see that 221/58% teachers are satisfied at least to a certain extent with the cultural contents in their textbook while it is also noticeable that quite a big number of teachers (142/37.27%) are not happy with the textbook they are using because the textbook, they think, can't meet their expectation and they may want to supplement some teaching materials beyond the textbook, but for some reasons they can't as I discussed above. The reasons why teachers can't choose the additional materials for culture teaching might be due to overloaded curriculum, lack of time, under the pressure of examinations, self-payment for photocopies of materials, cultural contents not systematically presented or not well chosen, narrow selection of cultural information and theme, all of which have been discussed earlier. Compared with teachers, trainers' dissatisfaction with cultural contents included in the textbooks seems to be greater than teachers'. 28/45.94% trainers

are not happy with the cultural contents if combined with no-groups. This might be because trainers have more cultural awareness because they have more chances to attend ICC conferences, involve more academic researches in this aspect than school teachers do. Therefore it may be easy for trainers to realize that cultural contents in the textbooks are not enough to meet their needs as some scholars (Yang, 2005; Wang, 2005) suggest culture-oriented textbooks should be compiled and some have in fact been in use, for example a set of textbooks (4 volumes) named 'English Course through Culture Perspective' has been recently published for university students. In spite of this, there are still over 50% trainers who are happy with textbooks they used at present.

This enables me to say safely that on the whole teachers and trainers' willingness to resort to the use of additional materials, adequacy of cultural contents and the stated satisfaction with the textbook they have been asked to teach with can be seen. Teachers' perceptions of cultural teaching materials are fairly realistic with respect to the current situation in Xinjiang. The positive attitudes and classroom reality can be in harmony although sometimes can be in conflict. Now I want to see whether teachers' willingness to use additional materials and satisfaction with the textbook in which cultural contents are adequately provided are in harmony with the evaluation of examination. Therefore teachers were asked a question 'What is your estimation of culture proportion included in the exam' in order to make this picture clearer. The result is shown as following:

Table 5.25 Estimation of culture contents included in the exam

Q15 what is your estimation of culture proportion included in the exam	F/P teachers	F/P trainers
0%	9/2.36%	4/6.35%
1-10%	190/49.87%	32/51%
11-20%	125/32.81%	17/27%
21-30%	37/9.71	7/11%

31-40%	20/5.25	3/4.8%
	381/100%	63/100%

The prevailing majority estimated that only 1-20 percent of cultural contents are included in the exams of English language shown by teachers (315/82.68%) and trainers (49/78%). This result corresponds to the earlier data shown in section 5.6 when teachers were asked how much time they gave to culture teaching; over half of the teachers (206/53.1%) and trainers (34/55.74%) say they give 80% language teaching -20% cultural teaching. This finding may indicate if culture contents only occupy about 20% in the exam, teachers certainly devote more time to language teaching. Thus I may further infer that the new textbook. 'Go For IT' contains more language materials than culture contents from which the examinations are taken. This 20% cultural content, from the result, is considered to be enough and teachers are very happy with the amount of culture information in the text book because of their views about the exam.

In summary, the picture, in this section, was painted around cultural teaching materials used in general in Xijiang. The findings show that teachers have little freedom to select the textbooks, which are chosen by educational institutions. But many feel free to use additional teaching materials if they need in terms of cultural teaching. The findings also show that teachers think there seems to be enough cultural contents included in the textbook in use and it becomes unnecessary for teachers to use additional materials for cultural teaching. The primary means for teachers to present cultural information or knowledge, as is revealed in the survey, is through the medium of the textbook in use which teachers rely on a great deal for language knowledge far more than cultural knowledge or information.

Although, as seen from the previous sections, teachers shared the view that cultural teaching in language teaching is very important for a number of reasons, on the whole

the emphasis in the class is still towards language learning. Cultural information is only a subsidiary issue and given little weight in the language examination.

5.8 Teachers' general opinions regarding intercultural competence teaching

In the previous sections, I have discussed different aspects of foreign language teachers' professional thinking with specific focus on the teaching of culture. It has been shown how they define the concept of culture; how they understand the objectives of English language education and culture teaching; the comparison of aims of FLT and culture teaching shared by Chinese teachers and European teachers; what techniques teachers favour to use to teach culture; how much time they distribute to culture teaching and how satisfied they are with cultural dimension of teaching materials they use. In this section, I want to look at how teachers envisage intercultural competence teaching, at the level of their general attitudes and opinions toward the teaching of culture and intercultural competence teaching.

I investigated teachers' opinions by asking them to score a number of opinion statements on a scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree. There are 21 opinion statements provided in the questionnaire in random order. My purpose is to look at their general disposition of intercultural competence teaching through two different angles. First, I want to see their overall opinion toward intercultural competence teaching. Second I want to examine whether there are some factors which could affect teachers' willingness or could cause their hesitation to teach intercultural competence in English language education. As mentioned there are 21 items in Q17 (see chapter 4, 4.3.2) investigating teachers' general disposition of intercultural competence teaching. I decided to group the responses according to theme and develop an overall understanding from the analysis of the groups. The 21 opinion statements will be presented in the following.

Table 5.26   Presentation of the statements regarding intercultural dimension teaching

1.In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language.
2.Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language.
3.*Intercultural competence cannot be acquired at school.
4.*It is impossible to teach the foreign language and foreign culture in an integrated way.
5.I would like to promote the intercultural competence through my teaching.
6.*Cultural teaching has no effect what so ever on students' attitudes.
7.The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.
8.In international contacts misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.
9.Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen pupils' understanding of their own culture and identity.
10.When you only have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching has to give way to language teaching.
11.Every subject, not just foreign language teaching, should promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence.
12.A foreign language teacher should present a realistic image of a foreign culture, and therefore should also touch upon negative sides of the foreign culture and society.
13.If one wants to be able to achieve anything at all as regards to intercultural understanding one should use texts written in the mother tongue and discuss these texts in the mother tongue, even when in a foreign language classroom
14In the foreign language classroom students can only acquire additional cultural

knowledge. They cannot acquire intercultural communicative competence.
15.Only when there are ethnic minority community pupils in your classes do you have to teach intercultural competence.
16.*Language and culture cannot be taught in an integrated way. You have to separate the two.
17.Intercultural education reinforces students' already existing stereotypes of other peoples and cultures.
18.Providing additional cultural information makes students more tolerant towards other cultures and peoples.
19.I consider the introduction of 'cultural awareness' into the English Curriculum as an important reform.
20*My initial teacher training course didn't give me any help with teaching the cultural dimension.
21.In the course of teaching methods, the section of 'how to teach culture' should be added in the text book.

Note: The scores of the items 3,4,6,16,and 20 are reversed.

First, I look at teachers' general attitudes towards intercultural competence teaching in the language education. The 5th statement asks teachers whether they would like to promote the intercultural competence through their teaching. If I put 'strongly agree' and 'agree' together, the result shows that eight out of ten teachers (317/83%) and nine out of ten trainers (57/92%) express their willingness towards this issue. This encouraging finding allows me to say most teachers/trainers are aware of the importance of intercultural competence teaching in the language education in their mental pictures of pedagogy. The previous findings obtained from Q2 and Q4 showed that the teachers are interested in teaching culture and realized the importance of teaching culture. And here most of teachers would like to promote the intercultural competence through their teaching. I want to combine the three variables together to generate a new variable of teacher's overall willingness to teach cultural/intercultural dimension for the purpose of

observing if there are any factors which may affect their willingness to teach this aspect. The table will present below.

Table 5.27 Willingness to teach IC

Q17-5	Willingness to teach cultural/intercultural dimension			
	teachers		trainers	
1	74	19.20%	26	41.3%
2	242	62.4%	33	52.4%
3	38	9.1%	3	4.8%
4	18	6.2%	1	1.6%
5	5	1.75%	0	
Total	377	100%	63	100%

The links of favourable factors with their willingness are those opinion variables shown in this survey:

1) most teachers (309/82%) and trainers (53/86.9%) consider the introduction of 'cultural awareness' into the English curriculum as an important reform in the 19th statement.

2) There are 294/77% teachers and 52/81% trainers think that teaching culture is as important as teaching the English language (the 1st statement) and 247/66% teachers and 49/79% trainers disagree with the 4th statement 'It is impossible to teach the foreign language and foreign culture in an integrated way'. This indicates that in teachers' views, it is possible to integrate the language and culture teaching. The findings have been shown in the section 5.3. by teachers' own words, some repeated here, for instance:

I always think **language and culture can't be separated**, they complement each other.(R23)

Without knowing a country's culture, it is difficult to learn this language well.(R34).

Learning a country's language, *its culture must be learnt at the same time*. Using the language which students are learning to know the history and civilization of different countries,… (R16)

Language and culture can not be separated. I want very much myself to teach language and culture as *water and milk well-blended* (R265).

Again here it shows teachers' clear understanding that language and culture should be taught in an integrated way.

3) A large majority of teachers (312/83%) and trainers (58/92.06%) agree with the 9th statement that foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen students' understanding of their own culture and identity.

4) In teachers' views, every subject, not only foreign language subject, should promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence (11th statement), agreed by (300/77%) teachers and 48/77% trainers over half of our respondents. Teaching across the curriculum is relatively new development in China, but teachers tend to agree that this is not only the language teachers' responsibility but also the responsibility of joint effort devoted by other subject teachers to work for this direction.

5) Teachers (298/77%) and trainers (56/88.88%) also agree to the idea that in international contacts, misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences (the 8th statement).

The findings above revealed that these favourable factors possibly affect teachers' willingness to teach intercultural competence in the language education. In order to see whether there is any relationship between their willingness and these factors, I decided to use the statistics of Pearson correlation to test the relationship between the two.

Table 5.28 Factors affect their willingness to teach IC

		Q17-19	Q17-1	Q17-4	Q17-9	Q17-11	Q17-8
Teachers' Willingness	Pearson	.545(*)	.492(**)	.062	.344(**)	.261(**)	.273(**)
	Sig	.000	.000	.254	.000	.000	.000
	N	341	347	340	343	344	343
Trainers' Willingness	Pearson	.349(*)	.549(**)	-.220	.348(**)	.363(**)	.340(**)
	Sig	.006	.000	.089	.006	.004	.007
	N	60	62	61	62	61	62

** P< 0.01 (2-tailed) , * P< 0.05 (2-tailed)

The above table shows that the independent opinion variables (19,1,4,9,11 and 8 in Q 17) were found to co-variate with dependent variable 'willingness' (Pearson correlations). The relationship is significant (Sig. two-tailed) at the 1%(**) level except that the Q17-4 opinion variable 'It is impossible to teach foreign language and foreign culture in an integrated way' doesn't show the relationship with teachers and trainers' willingness to teach IC . Thus I may say these factors take effect on their attitudes and promote their willingness in intercultural competence shown by the result but an integrated way of teaching language and culture appeared not link with their willingness. The reason may be attributed to some factors such as over-loaded curriculum, understanding of culture and less culture content exams etc. which I have discussed before. I am sure there are some factors which may weaken teachers' willingness to teach IC. Before I discuss the negative disposition of teachers toward IC teaching, I want to see whether there are any differences in Chinese teachers' willingness and European teachers' in teaching IC since I borrowed some questions from CULTNET project as mentioned in Chapter 4. The comparison table will be presented below.

Table 5.29 The comparison of the factors affected willingness of teachers from China and some European countries

CN SEL BUL GRE MEX POL SPA SWE

#	Statement								
1	In a FL classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching FL	-492** .000 347	0.320** 0.000 151	0.130 0.494 30	0.591** 0.000 39	0.475** 0.001 43	0.022 0.884 48	0.502** 0.002 35	0.372** 0.004 58
2	It is impossible to teach the FL and FC in a integrated way	-.062 .254 340	-0.186** 0.022 151	0.003 0.986 30	-0.318* 0.049 39	-0.327* 0.030 44	-0.509** 0.000 48	-0.514** 0.002 35	-0.054 0.682 59
3	I would like to promote to ICC in my teaching	.735** .000 347	0.953 0.000 151	0.854** 0.000 28	0.763 0.000 39	0.758** 0.000 44	0.899** 0.000 47	0.932** 0.000 35	0.639** 0.000 57
4	Culture teaching has no effect whatsoever on students' attitude	-.107 .048 341	-0.384** 0.000 150	-0.068 0.719 30	-0.155 0.346 39	-0.366* 0.016 43	-0.323* 0.025 48	-0.514** 0.002 35	-0.210 0.175 58
5	The more students know about FC, the more tolerate they are.	.309** .000 343	0.345** 0.000 151	-0.268 0.153 30	0.547** 0.000 39	0.355* 0.018 44	0.429** 0.002 48	0.480 0.004 35	0.591** 0.000 59
6	Every subject, not just FLT should promote the acquisition of ICC	.261** .000 344	0.353** 0.000 151	-0.179 0.353 29	0.617 0.000 39	0.283 0.066 43	0.300* 0.038 48	0.475 0.004 35	0.362 0.006 57
7	Foreign teacher should present a realistic image of FC, therefore should touch upon the negative sides of FC and society	.374** .000 345	0.137 0.094 151	-0.397* 0.030 30	0.340* 0.034 39	0.621** 0.000 44	0.265 0.069 48	0.177 0.309 35	0.460 0.000 59
8	Only when there are ethnic minority community pupils in your class do you have to teach IC	-.068 .213 342	-0.214** 0.006 151	-0.103 0.593 29	-0.411** 0.009 39	-0.104 0.502 44	-0.511** 0.000 48	-0.380 0.024 35	-0.308 0.019 58
9	Language and culture can't be taught in an integrated way you have separate the two	-.093 .085 344	-0.229** 0.005 151	0.022 0.910 29	-0.285 0.079 39	-0.247 0.106 44	-0.528** 0.000 48	-0.496** 0.000 35	-0.268* 0.042 58
10	Providing additional cultural information makes students more	.248** .000 343	0.367** 0.000 149	-0.200 0.282 30	0.368* 0.021 39	-0.005 0.972 44	0.402** 0.005 48	0.548 0.001 36	0.392 0.003 57

tolerant forwards other cultures and people									

From the table above, some common features and observations can be made. First, the first variable 'In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching foreign language' and the third variable 'I would like to teach IC through my teaching' are significantly, strongly and positively related to the teachers' degree of willingness in teaching culture and intercultural dimensions. Secondly, I can see that some other variables affecting teachers' willingness appear to be positively related for teachers from at least four countries (variable 5, 6 ,7 and 8). Most teachers both in China and some other countries agree that the more students know about foreign cultures, the more students are tolerant which is closely linked to their willingness except teachers from Bulgaria and Spain (Variable 5).

To my surprise, the variable 6 'Every subject, not only FLT should promote the acquisition of ICC' was found to be significantly related to the degree of Chinese teachers' willingness. I can't explain this finding because teaching across curriculum is something new in China. It is often taken for granted that it is the business of language teachers' to help students acquire ICC not other subject teachers'. On the contrary, this variable doesn't show any relation to a degree of willingness for teachers from Bulgaria, German, Mexico, Spain and Sweden.

I also found that Chinese teachers agree largely with the statement that the realistic image of the foreign culture should be presented (variable 7) compared with teachers from other countries because they are largely satisfied with the way in which the textbooks approach culture teaching. The positive outcome of this is that at least those who took part in the research will have realized that there is more value in presenting a realistic image of a foreign culture than in trying to motivate students to learn the FL through presenting an overly attractive image of it. Teachers nearly in all countries

disagree to a certain extent that it is only when there are ethnic minority community children in one's class that one should try to promote the acquisition of intercultural competence.

Thirdly there are some statements of teachers beliefs appeared negatively related to a degree of teachers' willingness such as variables 2, 4, and 9 . Clearly there is negative relationship in variable 2 'It is impossible to teach the foreign culture in an integrated way' concerning a degree of willingness for teachers from China, Bulgaria and Sweden. Perhaps they think it is impossible to teaching language and culture in an integrated way which may affect their willingness to teach ICC. As for variable 4, the majority of teachers from nearly all countries disagree that culture teaching has no effect on students' attitudes showing significantly related to their willingness to teach ICC.

The variable (9) says 'language and culture can't be taught in an integrated way, but separated the two'. It was found out that teachers from China, Bulgaria, German, and Mexico hesitated to take a clear stand confirmed by the fact that the teachers didn't take extreme positions when they asked whether they thought language and culture could be taught in an integrated way.

In conclusion, I may say that teachers both in China and in European/American countries express their clear willingness to teach intercultural competence based on their understanding of this issue from other aspects presented above and reinforced in turn their desire and being willing to do in this way, which is very encouraging in the survey, especially the result obtained from Chinese teachers. Intercultural competence teaching is a new concept and the research on this area is starting recently. But I have to admit that any innovation in education is inherently threatening and can only succeed when teachers support it. To know teachers' opinions and attitudes towards this new issue will certainly help teacher trainers to work together with teachers to depart from traditional

way of teaching and build on new approaches to language education.

From the discussion above, some factors affecting Chinese teachers' willingness to teach ICC are analyzed and findings have been compared with teachers from some European countries. The findings convinced me to say teachers in China and some European countries shared very similar views towards ICC teaching and most teachers are ready to meet the new challenge of the changing views on language teaching and learning from language competence to communicative competence then to intercultural competence due to the need for intercultural cooperation in the global village.

Next I want to know whether there are some factors which may weaken teachers' willingness or may cause their hesitation to teach intercultural competence. It is noticeable that a large number of teachers (323/84%) and trainers(52/83.87%) believe that before teaching culture or anything about intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language (the 2nd statement). Students in secondary level surely can't acquire sufficient language ability, which requires teachers to devote more time on teaching phonetics, language points, new vocabularies and grammatical structures etc. Thus over half of teachers (244/64%) express their opinions that culture teaching has to give way to language teaching when only having a limited number of teaching hours (the 10th statement). This view shows clearly the priority of language over culture teaching in the classroom. However, trainers held different view from teachers'. Only a small number of trainers (19/30%) agree that culture teaching has to give way to language teaching if the teaching hours are limited. That implies that the majority of trainers would like to balance the two.

If I refer back to the finding of their teaching time devoted to language and culture, both teachers and trainers appeared to give 80% time to language and 20% to culture.

Therefore I could see their contradictory attitudes towards cultural/intercultural and language teaching. When they are asked the principle of language and cultural teaching they agree Their different opinions appear on the same survey; on one page they agree on the other they disagree to the same question indicating there is a gap between theory and practice in terms of cultural teaching. Teachers want to integrate language and culture in their language class if they know how to do it. Thus I can see contradiction and the teachers' major concern is still with the language and they see the cultural teaching as something subsidiary which has low priority in their concerns and stimulates littler thoughts about aims, methods, evaluation and assessment with respect to language teaching.

When teachers are further invited to give their opinion about the statement that intercultural competence can't be acquired at school (the 3rd statement), 117/ 31% teachers say that the intercultural competence can't be acquired at school while 133/35% teachers can't decide whether it can be acquired or not. If I combine the two percentages together, 66% teachers think it impossible or hesitating/ uncertain to develop students' intercultural competence at school. Only less than half respondents disagree with this. Similarly, only 9/14.51% trainers agree that IC can't be acquired at school and 22/35.48 trainers remain neutral. Nearly half number of trainers is uncertain about this issue.

If I further look at the 14th statement 'In the foreign language classroom, students can only acquire additional cultural knowledge. They can't acquire intercultural communicative competence'. From the data I can see that there are still (102/27%) teachers who are not sure and (95/25%) agree to this idea though almost half respondents (184/48%) disagree with this point. Compared with trainers, there are over half trainers (38/62.3%) who disagree with this statement revealing that the acquisition of culture knowledge may not promote students' ICC. But there is 14/22.6% of trainers who are not sure about this and 9/14.5% agree to say that the acquisition of culture

knowledge can't help students' acquire ICC. This again indicates those trainers and as well teachers' hesitation and uncertainty which may surely shake their willingness to teach intercultural competence in language education.

I may wonder whether these factors may affect European teachers' willingness to teach ICC. The comparison is better to be made to make this picture complete.

Table 5.30   The comparison of factors weaken willingness of teachers from China and European countries

	Bel	Bul	Gre	Mex	Pol	Spa	Swe	CN
1.A sufficiently high level of proficiency is needed before you can teach culture	2.65	2.56	2.47	2.82	2.60	3.46	3.47	4.13
2. Intercultural skills can't be acquired at school.	2.30	1.78	2.65	2.32	2.23	2.19	2.18	2.89
3. When you only have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching has to give way to language teaching.	3.78	3.39	3.62	3.49	3.45	3.46	3.47	3.57
4. Cultural teaching has no effect what so ever on students' attitudes.	1.90	1.93	2.00	2.16	1.88	2.33	1.62	2.57

The data I have from the CULTNET is mean scores. For the reason of comparison, I use the same technique to deal with the data obtained from Chinese teachers. The meaning of the scores, ranging between 0.00 and 5.00, indicating 0.00-1.00disagree completely,

1.00-2.00 disagree, 2.00-3.00 undecided, 3.00-4.00 agree and 4.00-5.00 agree completely.

From the table I can see, Chinese teachers agree (4.13) that language proficiency is needed before teaching culture or doing anything about the intercultural dimension while teachers from Spain and Swede agree to a certain extent (3.49, 3.47). Teachers from the other five countries are not decided as to whether or not one should postpone the teaching of cultural/intercultural competence until learners have acquired a sufficiently high level of language competence. Either complete agreement or hesitation from teachers indicate culture/intercultural teaching is not in the same position as language teaching because teachers in all countries except Spain wonder whether or not intercultural competence can be acquired at school (mean score arranged from 2.89 to 2,18). Further proof can be seen from the third statement .All teachers in eight countries largely agree that culture teaching has to give way to language teaching if there is limited number of teaching periods, clearly showing the high level of linguistic proficiency is a prerequisite to culture teaching.

Chinese teachers as well teachers from Poland and Spain are not certain whether or not intercultural education has effect on students' attitudes (fourth statement). Teachers of other countries are convinced that intercultural education has effect on students' attitudes.

From the comparison, I found that there are more similarities than differences between countries. If I take Chinese teachers and CULTNET teachers as a big group, it can be seen that teachers appear to be in doubt regarding at least three facets of ICT. They are not convinced of the effect ICT can have on students. They wonder whether IC can be acquired at school and are undecided as to whether or not one should postpone the teaching of IC until learners have acquired a sufficiently high level of competence in FL. Thus I can't say that these factors may not affect teachers' willingness in teaching ICC in

a sense. This is a mental picture I can draw from some favourable opinions teachers have to reinforce their willingness to teach intercultural competence and some unfavourable ones which may shake their willingness to do so, opinions regarding the preconditions that need to be met before teachers can start teaching intercultural competence.

Considering these observations together, I can say that the findings clearly point towards the existence of two kinds of teachers' opinions: positively support the view of ICC and negatively disposed toward this issue. Teachers who are not in favour of ICC teaching in foreign language education believe that it is impossible to integrate language and culture teaching. They also believe that intercultural skills can't be acquired at school. Teachers do not believe in the positive effect of ICC on students' attitudes and perceptions. On the whole they believe that high level of language competence is needed before teaching culture/interculture. By contrast, teachers who are in favour of ICC, believe that teaching culture is as important as teaching foreign language. In their opinion, intercultural competence teaching makes students' more tolerant. These teachers prefer an approach that is cross-curricular and are convinced that teachers of every subject should teach intercultural competence, not only language teachers' responsibility to do so.

At the end of this section, I have to point out that I put the last two statements in Q17 chiefly from the aspect of future training and future research.

In the last two opinion statements (20 and 21) teachers were asked whether their initial teacher training course gave any help with the teaching of cultural dimension. 127/34% teachers say it did not give any help and 76/20% teachers are not sure whether it gave help or not. Only 175/46% teachers expressed that it gave some help in teaching culture. Then I asked teachers 'whether in the course of English teaching methods, the topic of 'how to teach culture' should be added in the textbook'. The larger numbers of teachers 289/76% agree that the chapter of 'how to teach culture' should be added in the course of

teaching methodology. This shows teachers have strong desire to receive a training course of language and culture rather than training them of language. It implies that the initial teacher training course didn't adequately prepare them for teaching a cultural dimension and it also implies that they need to know how to teach this cultural dimension in language teaching. We teacher trainers and teachers are both facing the new challenge in the teaching of language and culture, in the teaching of intercultural competence in future.

5.9 A summary of the chapter

This chapter gives an analysis and discussion of the empirical data collected through the survey. The chapter aims to identify and investigate school teachers' view on cultural teaching in language teaching in Xinjiang, how they understand the objectives of language and culture teaching; their perceptions of culture, what culture topics they would like to teach, how much time they devote to language and culture teaching, what techniques they use in realization of culture teaching objectives and their satisfaction with the current materials in terms of culture teaching, and finally their general disposition towards intercultural communicative teaching is investigated.

Section 5.1 provides a general picture of school teachers' profile in terms of their age, educational background, years of teaching, teaching hours and grades they are teaching and Section 5.2 data around the school teachers' perceptions of language and culture teaching objectives, their attitudes towards cultural teaching have been presented. The data of this section show that **most teachers are interested in teaching culture** in language teaching and their attitudes towards cultural teaching are positive. **They perceive the either language teaching objectives or cultural teaching objectives more in terms of general teaching objectives:** promoting students' motivation and sustain their interest in learning English, widen students' horizon by means of cultural teaching.

Section 5.3 deals with data regarding teachers understanding of culture. The data show that **teachers give a very extensive definition of culture** but mainly focusing on small c like 'traditions and customs,' and 'the way of people's life' etc.

In section 5.4, the data concerning the possible cultural topics teachers favour to teach has been presented. **The small c culture** in terms of 'daily life', 'festivals and customs', 'shopping, food and drink' and school and education **are more supported by teachers**.

Section 5.5 deals with data concerning cultural teaching activities teachers used. It shows that the **most often used technique to teach culture is through the textbook** while teaching English. The recitation of dialogue, the use of tapes, and the instruction of cultural loaded vocabulary and teachers' own knowledge of culture transmitted to students are more used by teachers. However the **activities regarding the skills and attitudinal dimension development are not much used**.

In section 5.6, the data concerning teachers' devotion of time to culture teaching and their willingness to culture teaching are presented. The data shows that **teachers' devotion of time to culture teaching is less than the time devoted to language teaching** though they express their **willingness to teach culture** in language classroom. The reasons why teachers can't devote more time to culture teaching are provided. They mention overloaded curriculum and curriculum restraints, lack of time, being driven by examination, and their own lack of familiarity with foreign cultures.

Section 5.7 deals with the data of teachers' perceptions of materials they use. It shows that **teachers have little freedom to choose teaching materials**, which are selected by local educational institutions. The findings reveal that **cultural contents included in the current textbook are enough** at the moment and teachers think it **unnecessary for**

them to use additional materials for culture teaching because this part of knowledge is not tested in the exams. They still focus on language teaching more than cultural teaching.

The last section investigates teachers' general disposition towards intercultural communicative teaching. The data shows that **teachers are moving towards this direction willingly**. The comparison is made between Chinese teachers and CULTNET teachers as well. The result reveals that **there are more similarities than differences** between countries in ICT. The majority of teachers are willing to teach IC though they **still focus primarily and almost exclusively on acquisition of language competence.**

Having summarized the findings, I can now think about the purpose of the research as set out in Chapter One and the research questions and then consider what the implications are for teacher training. This will be the purpose of Chapter Six.

Chapter Six

Concluding Remarks

Introduction

In the beginning of the thesis, I have mentioned that the original idea of this research project was based on my personal experience living in UK. Although I was competent in the usage of the language, I could not communicate effectively in an entirely English speaking environment, not to mention adapting to the English way of life. Given my first hand experience, I have come to realize that language learning should include the cultural factor, no matter how fuzzy the term may be defined. This is because the lack of it means that language learning remains superficial and would only hinder the learner in developing a deeper understanding of self and other cultures. If the objective of learning a new language is to facilitate communication, and to bridge the chasm of cultural differences in the world, then I am convinced that without the inclusion of a cultural dimension in language learning, effective communication cannot take place.

In the previous chapters, I have traced the stages of development in English Language pedagogy and showed that the method of English language teaching has changed from the commonly used Grammar-translation method of instruction to the current rather student-centred learning approach. In an earlier chapter, I also gave a chronological description of the development of English Language teaching in China and have highlighted the change in attitude towards language acquisition by including the cultural component, may it be high culture, deep culture or popular culture, in the curriculum. The 2001 English Curriculum was a pivotal point in the history of English Language Teaching Reform; it is the first critical step towards liberalizing curriculum development by decentralizing the designing of curriculum in China. Based on the Beijing paper, the

assessment of students' language competency level is no longer determined by skills and knowledge acquisition but it encompasses a broader framework which includes three other criteria namely, learners' emotion/attitude, learning strategies and cultural awareness. The deliberate inclusion of cultural awareness in the official document is an important gesture by the Ministry of Education because on one hand, it recognizes that language learning is inseparable from cultural learning, and it also suggests on the other hand the seriousness of changing the teaching approach towards language acquisition.

From the survey conducted however, there remains a gap between the official statement and the practice on the ground – classroom teaching. The teachers responding to the survey appeared to be receptive of teaching culture in language classes, but the effectiveness is somewhat less than desirable. As discussed in the previous chapter, the lack of full integration of culture and language acquisition reduces the learning experience to either a mere introduction of cultural knowledge or a transmission of information at a superficial level – both exposing a flaw of assuming culture as a static entity. This unfortunate outcome could be due to several factors which I classify under Official Document, Teachers' Background and Institution/External climate. The curriculum lacks a full integration of culture and language acquisition.

6.1 Summary of results

As an English language educator, I am concerned about the level of intercultural competency in my teaching college. In order to identify the areas of change so as to improve the students' language competency level, my investigation began with the quest to find out the school teachers' perception of cultural teaching and their current practices in the classroom.

My hypothesis during the course of the research was that although cultural awareness

was introduced into the curriculum, the infusion of the cultural dimension is not at an ideal state in the schools in Xinjiang. I began my investigation with the teachers to understand their perception of cultural teaching and started with the following questions.

1. What are the existing cultural elements in language curriculum in terms of Intercultural Communicative Competence?

2. Is it necessary to develop cultural elements in the curriculum?

3. What are the school teachers' perceptions of culture/intercultural teaching in language teaching?

4. Are teachers' perceptions a satisfactory basis for introducing change in their teaching?

As was discussed in Chapter 5, a survey was conducted with teachers in Xinjiang with the aim to learn about the current state of Intercultural Communication competency in schools.

Table 6.1 A summary of the responses in relation to the research questions are tabulated below:

Research Questions	Summary of Survey	Remarks
What are the existing cultural elements in language curriculum in terms of ICC?	• Low level of cultural discussion • Focus on small c Cultural items like daily life and routines	This could be influenced by: • the official document which continues to emphasize language skills and knowledge acquisition • the examination culture in Chinese society
Is it necessary to develop cultural elements in the curriculum?	• The results suggested that teachers are currently teaching cultural awareness to arouse the interests of students to learn the language. • Teachers believe that the ultimate objective is to develop students' ICC • Teachers are not entirely comfortable with the teaching of culture in language classroom because teachers	This could be influenced by: • Teachers academic attainment and personal experiences • Examination-oriented environment

	themselves may not fully grasp the meaning of it. Hence the cultural element must be explicitly written into the syllabus • The lack of available additional resources that are not written for examination purposes	
What are the school teachers' perceptions of culture/intercultural teaching in language teaching	The results from the respondents highlighted the following problems: • A clear understanding of culture is an exception rather than a norm among teachers, suggesting that the definition of culture is problematic at the school level and this could be due to the educational background of teachers and their life experiences in general • The understanding of culture commonly refers to folklore, food, festival and facts (including factual knowledge of history and geography) – small 'c' culture • The curriculum on cultural awareness is based on British and American societies.	This could be influenced by: • Teachers' background • Official document • External environment – influenced by UK/USA societies
Are teachers' perceptions a satisfactory basis for introducing change in their teaching?	• There is a need to develop a revised curriculum that addresses the needs of the teachers/students in the schools	• This requires a critical review of the current text materials adopted by schools in China • To develop Cultural Intelligence (Cultural Quotient – CQ) among school teachers and students

The table above outlines the core ideas of my thesis and at the same time highlights the

main issues arising from the survey which need to be analyzed. The summary above also forms a framework for curriculum development in the future in China.

6.2 An analysis of the current situation

The responses gathered from the survey highlighted several contradictions/ dilemmas/gaps in the current climate in schools in the region. Firstly, the teachers responding to the survey seemed to understand the objective of integrating culture in language teaching yet, in practice, the time allocated for culture awareness is limited; secondly, although teachers have voiced their desire to include a cultural element in their classroom teaching, in practice the effectiveness of it is constrained by their own inadequacy; and lastly, the official document may have set the direction for schools with regard to students' ICC but the current state of affairs does not adequately prepare the students for the future. This is made worse in view of the effect of globalization that has inevitably increased the pace of change in societies and heightened the differences among human beings that increasingly have the need to create understanding, respect and tolerance.

6.2.1 The Official Document

As discussed in the previous chapter, teachers who participated in the survey showed that they understand the objective of including cultural awareness in language teaching. To a certain extent, the official document has achieved its objective in setting the direction for the schools; however this official directive may indirectly impede the teachers' creativity in their classroom teaching. This is because based on the curriculum of language teaching in China, the component in cultural awareness represents about 20 percent of the entire syllabus, hence no matter how interested the teachers may be in teaching cultural awareness, linguistic skills and knowledge acquisition take precedent, and the level of competency cannot be compromised because it will affect the career choice of the students. Hence it is not surprising that the status quo of 80/20 (80% of the

classroom time on teaching language skills and 20% on the cultural component) framework is still preferred.

It is also interesting to note from the feedback of the survey that teachers believe that an open attitude towards other cultures is a necessary condition to develop students' ICC and the development of the students' ICC should be the ultimate objective of language learning. Teachers felt that these statements of belief were not clearly spelt out or defined in the curriculum, at least explicitly. Hence, there is seemingly a gap between the official document and the beliefs of the teachers. Having said that, the purpose of the Official Document is not to be a prescriptive document to provide restricted directives to the teachers; the document should be taken as a guideline in providing direction for schools. Because of this general purpose, the ambiguity provides room for teachers to interpret and implement these new ideas into their classroom teaching. In other words, it is not uncommon to find a gap between Official Document and practices in school; rather than considering it a failure in the formulation of the Official Document, it should be regarded as a work-in-progress in crystallizing the ideas in the Official Document into classroom teaching.

One of the aims of this research report is to set the direction of curriculum development in the future. I have in the previous chapters discussed how ICC is taught in America, Canada and United Kingdom and comparison has been drawn from the official documents of these three countries. I concentrate my analysis on America and United Kingdom because of space restriction as well as, to focus on the two major western cultures from Chinese students' point of view. They are more familiar with English Proficiency Tests like TOEFL and IELTS from United Kingdom and SATs from America. However the emphasis on the diversity of Canadian society and the presence of minorities – and the effect this has on the foreign language curriculum – is an important insight for China where there is (too much) uniformity in the curriculum. This is an issue

of particular importance in the region where my work has been carried out.

In general, the American syllabus is more functional in nature whilst the UK counterpart took a thematic approach in the course design. Regardless of the differences in approaches, the crux of the matter is that strong emphasis is found in introducing cultural awareness and the integration of cultural elements in language acquisition. In comparison, the China approach takes a different form in which it is still focused on attaining certain skills or expertise in language– perhaps due to its infancy stage of English language development. Although it is indeed a huge step forward in recognizing the importance of cultural awareness in the curriculum, the implementation of the initiative has not achieved the desired outcome. This is because the teachers' survey indicated strong interest to include the cultural factor and willingness to culture teaching. For instance in the earlier chapter I have traced the logical link of thoughts among them, and the teachers have expressed understanding in teaching culture but the time constraint to complete the syllabus according to examination format becomes a hindrance for teachers to spend more time on culture teaching.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the level of cultural awareness among teachers will remain stagnant at the superficial level – small 'c' culture (referring to the products of everyday life and to the conditions of their production as mentioned in the Literature Review chapter) – if changes are not made in the syllabus and more resource materials written to address the issue. English language learning in China, as discussed before, is premised upon acquiring an international language that provides career opportunities and broadens the horizon of the students - this was also outlined in the official document of the open door policy in China in the early 1980s. Hence, English and cultural learning in China is an instrument for students to explore beyond their own geographical boundaries and perhaps cultures. This poses an interesting challenge for curriculum development because as mentioned by Crystal (2003), since the number of native speakers– referring

to British and American – has already been outnumbered by non-native English speakers in the world, there is a great likelihood of English speakers coming from countries and cultural backgrounds other than UK and USA. Hence focusing the cultural awareness on American and or British cultures may not sufficiently prepare the students for the future.

Nevertheless, the inclusion of cultural awareness is an important milestone in the language development in China. The inadequacy suggests the infancy stage of development of ELT which after all has only been a mere 30 years.

6.2.2 Teachers' Background and Experience

The current state of affairs in the classroom is very much influenced by the teachers' own academic background and experiences. As discussed in Chapter 5, the majority of the English teachers in Xinjiang is between the ages of 20 to 39 with 1 to 10 years of teaching experience and has a 4-year diploma. In other words, they are likely to be the pioneering batch of students who were taught the English Language in a new innovative way versus the Grammar-translation method as described in the Deepening Stage of Language Development discussed in Chapter 2. This perhaps explains the relative open-mindedness and positive attitude among these teachers in the teaching of culture awareness and their belief that the ultimate aim of language teaching is to develop students' ICC.

However, their enthusiasm is dampened by their own inadequacy in the subject matter due to their academic background and life experiences. Firstly, these teachers went through a less rigorous route of education and this may, to a certain extent, hinder their effectiveness in the classroom. Although this research does not reflect direct correlation between the academic qualification of teachers and teachers' level of enthusiasm in the subject, the responses collected from the survey showed a hint of teachers feeling inadequate in cultural teaching. It is interesting to note that from the data collected,

although teachers mentioned their inadequacy in relation to a lack of classroom time, more importantly, embedded in the responses was an implied message of a lack of content competency among the teachers. Part of the reason could be due to the method of instruction and the Chinese view of the role of the teacher discussed in Chapter 3. In China, teachers in general are still regarded as an authority figure in the control of information and knowledge, hence teachers are the only legitimate source in providing information and knowledge in class and this places a huge amount of burden and responsibility on the teachers. This traditional role of a teacher and the mentality that comes about remove the responsibility of learning away from the students and place enormous pressure on the teachers to achieve results. This is particularly difficult for those teachers who do not have the subject competency to excel in the classroom. Hence, this may have contributed to teachers avoiding discussion of big 'c' culture items because teachers believe that they have to be an expert in these areas before they can teach these topics in class.

The level of teachers' competency and background also affected their understanding of the definition of culture. Responses from the survey have shown that teachers do not relate culture to political/social/economic arenas and tend to think of it as traditions or customs passed down from generation to generation. Discussions on the macro themes of politics, social and economic issues are clearly more challenging compared to customs and folklore, and I suspect this could be due to the teacher's level of competency although I have no sufficient data to support it. This is perhaps an area for further research. Nevertheless, the data collected and analyzed so far provide an impetus for change in curriculum development, and it is critical in providing a package of well developed and clearly instructed teaching materials and resources for teachers.

It is also worthy to note that in China today, particularly in Xinjiang where my research project is based, the method of teaching is still fairly traditional in nature, and as such it

is not surprising to note from the survey that teachers are struggling with the idea to switch from a teacher-centred teaching approach to a student-centred one. Moreover, teachers are also at the same time, trying to find a balance in providing more skill-based learning rather than taking on a knowledge-based approach in developing students. I believe that students' ICC could be improved and developed much further through skill-based learning because the pace of learning of students should not be constrained by the current level of knowledge of the teachers. Given the skill to learn, students would be able to progress at a much faster pace than relying on teacher's ability to gain knowledge.

The teachers' life experience is important in shaping their belief and hence teaching. These young teachers could well be at the beginning stage of their career and hence generally do not have the resources to travel abroad. English language teaching in China has since progressed from the transmission of knowledge to the current comprehensive language competency model. The memorization of a list of vocabulary and grammar rules may still be necessary in grasping the nuances of the language, but such a method of teaching and learning is no longer sufficient in this new era of language acquisition. If the cultural element is transmitted in the same manner as learning the rudiments of grammar, there is then a danger in marginalizing the importance of cultural awareness in language acquisition and undermining the entire progress made so far in the English language curriculum development. The hard fact remains that these teachers are not and have not been immersed in an English speaking environment, and this lack of experience in using the English language in a different culture impedes their effectiveness in the classroom

Ideally, in order to overcome this situation it is necessary to provide immersion programmes for the English language teachers, which inevitably require a huge investment of resources. However, an alternative method is to capitalize on the wealth of resources available from the internet and other new media source to complement the lack

of real life experiences. The survey has shown that some of the teachers have already implemented these features in their teaching but there are yet others who are less receptive to implementing these initiatives on their own. A more concerted effort is needed in designing in-service programmes for the teachers in school to help them pick up the skills and competency in using resources other than the textbooks. Another way is to provide opportunities for teachers to interact and converse in English with teachers from a different country. This would require schools in Xinjiang to invite visiting teachers from English speaking countries, or from countries where EFL teaching is of a high standard so that Chinese teachers could benefit from the interaction.

6.2.3 Institution/External Environment

The discussion so far is to provide an analysis of the current status of language teaching in Xinjiang. While the teachers understand the objective of cultural teaching in language acquisition, most teachers are not willing to increase the time spent on this subject matter. This lack of commitment from the teachers could perhaps be explained by the highly examination-oriented environment the Chinese students study in. The teachers are burdened with a great responsibility to maintain high passing rates among the students, hence in a highly competitive environment, it is rational for teachers to take a pragmatic approach in teaching to secure a better academic future for their students.

Although cultural awareness is one of the teaching objectives in the current curriculum, it is also noted from the data that the weight on cultural content is a mere 10 percent of the entire language examination. Hence, in order to be successful in integrating the cultural element in language acquisition, there must be a systematic change to the entire assessment system to include cultural competency or provide a higher weigh of it in the examination.

6.3 Implications from the data and some considerations

Based on the data presented in Chapter Five, the following implications can be drawn: (1) understanding and defining culture; (2) culture's importance vs. culture in the classroom; (3) redefining the role of the teacher (4) training, support and vision .These four implications will be discussed respectively below.

(1). Understanding and defining culture

The data show that teachers have difficulty in defining culture (see Chapter, section 5.3) reflecting Street's (1993, p 35) comment that 'the problems with the concept of culture are manifold'. The complexity of the concept is rarely acknowledged in the policies or present in the objectives and textbooks for language teachers .They have to find their own stand in relation to the concept of culture in the new environment but 'teachers as a group have no common framework for deciding what is an appropriate concept of culture for their teaching context' (Byram & Risager, 1999: 83). They often find themselves sponsoring a variety of aims that they feel unable to fulfil (see e.g. Castro et al., 2004), and they feel ill-prepared, nervous and reluctant to focus beyond their linguistic competence (Kramsch & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996).

Therefore language teachers need to be trained not only to be familiar with these concepts, dealing with social and cultural values, the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity and citizenship (Kelly et al., 2004), but also with what lies behind the new skills and strategies the students are expected to learn. For this, teachers are asked to teach for cultural/intercultural awareness which means that they need to have explicit training in this aspect.

(2). Culture's importance vs. culture in the classroom;

Data have also shown that teachers have tried to identify cultural teaching objectives set in the curriculum. The purpose of teaching culture, according to their understanding, is to

raise and maintain learners' lasting interest and motivation in language education, to widen their world view through the language the students are learning, to arouse students' awareness of differences between cultures which are most acknowledged (see chapter 5, section 5.2.4). Even when cultural objectives have been clearly outlined, further decisions have to be made as to what cultural aspects should be included to enhance communication and how they can be introduced to students. There do not seem to be clear criteria that can facilitate such decisions (Met, 1993), and therefore 'language teaching is still operating on a relatively narrow conception of both language and culture' (Kramsch & Murphy- Lejeune, 1996: 105). Another view of this finding is that some teachers simply don't know how to translate their understanding of the culture objectives into action in their classes. They have to teach to the test in terms of grammar, reading comprehension, etc. This may well be, but it does not seem to concur with teachers' belief in the inseparability of language and culture. The implication here is to establish a cohesive relationship between language/culture teaching objectives and how they are reflected in the syllabus; between syllabus and course materials; and between classroom practice and the assessment of intercultural skills (Valette, 1986; Ruane, 1999; Liddicoate, 2004). And these will be my future considerations of further research and will be a part of training content.

(3) Redefining the role of teacher

Due to social and political changes, the need for intercultural cooperation in the global village, the information and communication explosion, the changing views on language teaching and learning, with an emphasis on constructivist and lifelong autonomous learning, are all factors that contribute to the definition of the language teacher's role today (Sturtridge, 1997; Byram & Risager, 1999).

As it was discussed in the literature chapter, language teachers need to be equipped with complex skills in order to competently carry out multiple roles. Traditional roles of

teachers in education as information transmitters, providers of language models, materials developers, and evaluators can't meet the changing views of language teaching and learning. Teachers are required to have multiple roles in terms of psychological, technical and ethical perspectives (see Chapter 3, section 3.5.6.). It is very clear that the role of the language teacher has expanded very much beyond its traditional boundaries and therefore the nature of teachers' responsibilities has also changed. Therefore teacher education programmes need to take into account teachers' extended roles and responsibilities not only as educators but also as learners. As Lies Sercu remarks, 'it is crucial to make teachers experience that the innovation at hand requires changes in their self-concept, in their professional qualifications, in their attitudes and skills […] teachers need to start seeing themselves not only as trainers but also as trainees' (Sercu, 1998, p. 256). How prepared language teachers are to fulfil all these new roles and to carry out the corresponding responsibilities as teachers and learners depends greatly on their training and professional development. Thus the training course is needed to make teachers realize their new roles and responsibilities as learning happens in a wide variety of settings .As Byram put it, teachers need to consider their own potential change of professional identity from being a teacher of language to being a teacher of intercultural competence. To adapt themselves to the new role, they need to enhance their own cultural awareness and intercultural competence (Byram, 1999).

(4) Training, support and vision

From the data, teachers' belief about language and cultural/intercultural teaching are related to the following areas which invite me to think about the training course. For some teachers, training is a type of support. They don't think that teacher's initial training programmes helped them a lot in terms of culture/intercultural teaching (see Q17-t). The implication here is the possibility of modifying the effect of initial training course through further, in-service education.

For other teachers, they do not have specific instructions in how to teach culture to promote students' awareness in language education. As one teacher put it 'Now task-based approach is advocated in China and I don't know how to design tasks to teach language, not mention to teach culture, impossible!'. More relevant data convinced me that they require assistance, methodology supports. The training on methodology of culture teaching is obvious. The link between training and support on one hand, and vision, on the other, comes from teacher's belief that, as part of further learning how to define culture and cultural awareness, how to integrate culture into language teaching, they need to understand why they should integrate it, for what purposes, and with what benefits. Training may help teachers understand, not only how to teach culture to raise student's culture awareness, but why to do so.

The lack of training and, subsequently the lack of knowledge of culture results in high levels of frustration for some: 'With such emphasis on learner-centred learning and task-based teaching etc. in the schools now...I am extremely frustrated as a teacher because I don't know how to teach even though I had taught for 20 years'. The frustrations experienced by some teachers may also be accompanied by certain fears about these new changes. Therefore training must take into consideration teachers' emotional response to the new change. In terms of teachers' emotional response to the new change, training may be important in order to give them the confidence needed to believe that they can effectively, comfortably integrate culture into language education. To feel comfortable teaching culture, teachers may believe that it is important that they know more than the students on the subject.

Having a vision and wanting to bring about change may require facing many challenges ahead. A major challenge I am concerned with is the difficulty in changing the way teachers' think.

6.4 An Action Plan for teachers in Xinjiang

Without a doubt teaching practices reflect the thinking and belief of teachers as was shown in an earlier chapter, and given the examination-oriented environment, it is difficult for teachers not to teach hard facts of culture instead of developing students' cultural understanding, skills of relating, interpreting, discovering and analyzing. However, it is not the intention of this research project to either change the system of assessment or to eliminate the competitive spirit in the school system. The intention of this research is to find out whether there is a need to introduce cultural element in the curriculum and implement changes in the classroom teaching. I believe there is a real need in the schools and sufficient data to provide timely support to the teachers struggling on the ground.

The formulation of an Action Plan should be firmly focused on the needs of the teachers. From the data collected in this research project, I have come to recognize the need for school teachers to receive professional development through in-service programmes conducted by my teaching college. The survey conducted in this research reflected the possible cultural topics which school teachers preferred to be included in their teachings, but this information could at best be used as a measure of preference because of the problem of asymmetric information – decisions made based on incomplete information. In other words, given the level of competency and background of the school teachers, it is likely that decisions on curriculum development based on their preferences may jeopardize real progress in language development. Nevertheless, the information provided by the teachers is useful in developing a localized curriculum and in designing the new courses based on it.

With regard to the change in the language curriculum, there is an urgency and need in helping school teachers and teacher trainers in defining or appreciating the complexity and abstractness of the term – culture. As reflected in the survey, it is indeed difficult to

teach culture when it is not well defined, and the ambiguity of the term in the official document provided an escape route for teachers from having a deeper appreciation of cultural understanding. It is not the intention in this research to ridicule the introduction of small 'c' cultural elements to the students; it is however the contention of this research to avoid reducing the teaching of cultural awareness to the transmission of cultural facts and knowledge.

There is also a need for teachers to gather confidence in moving to a student-centred, skilled-based teaching environment. The in-service programme would be an ideal platform to introduce cultural topics by way of student-centred teaching method. This is a difficult transition process because it means losing 'control' for some teachers but they can be successfully converted if they are given the first hand experience to sit in a student-centred learning environment. Hence, having experienced how a cultural awareness lesson can be taught in a different manner and with the relevant content, teachers can 'reproduce' the lessons in schools. Given time I believe a domino effect will take place in schools and the students' ICC would be substantially increased.

Although it is beyond the scope of analysis of this thesis, a preliminarily idea is to develop materials to systematically integrate cultural teaching to all levels of school. Assessment will be placed at critical stage to measure the cultural quotient of students. Although this idea may attract strong criticism by scholars because of its reductionist method of measurement, this may be a happy medium given the overall macro climate in China – in terms of constraints placed by the Ministry and the competitive nature in the school system. The idea is to design teaching based on possible desired learning outcomes with a good mixture of small 'c' and big 'C' cultural items, which will require a paradigm shift in the designing and developing of the curriculum. Nevertheless, whatever form it takes the fact remains that there is a real need to re-design the curriculum in language teaching in Xinjiang.

6.5 Limitations and the need for Future Research

The research method of this project is a survey, and as indicated in section 4.2. I was aware of the weaknesses as well as the strengths of survey by questionnaire. In the course of completing this research, it was clear that of the lack of interview data meant there were some lapses in terms of analysis. Although this has not substantially affected the results of the thesis as a report of a mainly quantitative survey, it has however prompted me to think about how a possible methodology could include focus groups or one to one semi-structured interviews to obtain deeper explanations in addition to the numerical data.

Secondly, it is clear that teaching without learning occurring is not effective. Due to reasons mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study is focused only on teachers' perceptions of culture teaching. Whether students accept the teachers' perceptions or not and what they think about this issue are not researched. It would be desirable in future research to investigate in a similar way the perceptions and wants of learners as this is particularly essential for the development of courses to meet both teachers' and students' needs.

In this analysis, I have found that culture teaching in China focuses on transmission of culture information which lacks the skills of relating, interpreting, discovering and interacting, lacks of attitude and critical cultural awareness. The Chinese language curriculum requires a change in attitude in promoting critical cultural awareness in the process of language education. It is these neglected areas, I hope to draw attention to and to extend knowledge and discussion in the English curriculum and teacher education. A possible strand of future research could be in analysing the inertia in critical thinking among teachers.

Unlike many other countries, research work anchored on intercultural approach in foreign language teaching is not common in China, but it is an essential development for language teaching in China. Hence, more research work is needed in the intercultural dimension.

6.6 Researcher's Reflections

This has been a long journey for me to get this far. I started the programme in year 2000 and I had no idea then how hard and painful this journey was going to be for me. During the course of study, I have gone through personal tragedy of losing my father suddenly and ailing physical health for myself. Being in a less developed part of the world like Xinjiang has increased the challenge of completing my PhD by a few levels – internet was not available in my early years of research. Particularly in Xinjiang, the library collection is limited and it is not easy to get access to English books, not to mention books on education. Hence, this lack of access to reading materials has been a constant struggle in my PhD journey. Financially I am only able to live at a subsistence level given my annual income as an educator in the teaching college; the financial burden is huge which has caused much stress and anxiety these few years. However, in all these personal challenges, I have learned to be strong and not to give up easily. What motivates me is this simple truth of 'never give up if your heart tells you to go on'.

Professionally, I have gained much in the process of completing the thesis. First of all, I have learned so much about research methods. Although I had heard of terms like quantitative and qualitative research, action research etc., I was not familiar with these concepts. Preparing the chapter on research method gave me the opportunity to re-visit these terms again and to read journal articles and books I have never come across in the library in Xinjiang.

Although I may have taught English for over 20 years, I think these last few years have made me a better teacher than the years combined before.   I have learned to be more understanding and observant in my teaching, this is gained through my own observation of my thesis supervisor. Because I have gained through observing others, this has influenced me in believing that the teachers in Xinjiang can also gained from observing better teachers at work through in-service training.

There is an old Chinese proverb that says success comes after pain and hard work, I have indeed tasted the sweet success of obtaining my professorship title in 2006 and in the midst of challenges and trying to meet deadlines, published over 20 papers. This will not be possible without sheer determination and encouragement from my supervisor. I have learned so much from him, not just professionally but also personally – to be a better person.

I have gone through the panic of not knowing to the triumph of gaining and understanding. And most of all, I discovered that patience is a virtue because from my own PhD experience, learning has to take its own course and it does not happen overnight.

Finally as I came to the end of the thesis and the viva examination, I have been stimulated to think about other ways of conceptualising the task I set myself in this research.   Two that have come to mind are the learning of English as a 'global core skill' rather than as a culture-laden language, and the other is learning English through a 'bilingual education' route.   Both could be seen as possible alternatives to EFL with a cultural dimension, and have been talked about by some researchers, including two from the University of Durham: *Bilingual Education in China* (Feng, 2007) and a EdD thesis whose author I met during my studies, *Content-based Immersion of English Teaching in Higher Education in China* (Yu, 2001).   Thus the future of my focus as a topic for research

might well be assured with this variety of conceptual approaches.

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Appendix 1 Attainment 2,5,8 regarding cultural awareness designated in the curriculum

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Appendix 2   A Cover Letter of the Survey

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms_____

The cultural awareness was introduced into the English curriculum as one of the teaching objectives in language education in 2001 for the first time in China. The importance of language and culture teaching has been given increasingly attention. In order to know how school teachers and trainers understand this new change, I shall be undertaking a research on Teachers' Perceptions of Culture Teaching in the Secondary Schools in Xinjiang which will be the title of my thesis studying for degree of the Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education, University of Durham.

To enable me to carry out the research, I am now asking you to spend some time answering my questionnaires. This is really helpful for me to find out what your opinions about culture teaching in the Language education. I will appreciate very much if you can tell me as much as you can. Complete confidentiality and anonymity will be guaranteed and all names disguised in my report on the research. So you can tell the truth. I would also be grateful if you are willing to assist me with my research which could prove useful not only to my personal research but also to Xinjiang's EFL education in the secondary level, benefiting students as well as the teachers' needs and interest.

I am looking forward to your answer to my questionnaires. If you have anything you are not clear about, don't hesitate to ask the person who distributes the questionnaire or contact me by email, especially for those who answer it online. My email address is hui.han@durham.ac.uk   .

Thanks in advance and best wishes

Sincerely yours,

Han Hui

Appendix 3

Survey: Teachers' Perceptions on Culture /intercultural Teaching

Part One   language and culture teaching objectives

Please choose the answers which are closest to your opinion by ticking (√) the box.

Q1	Are your students interested in teaching culture(s) of English speaking countries when teaching English as a foreign language?	Very interested	Interested	Undecided	Less Interested	Not Interested

Q2	Are you interested in teaching culture(s) of English speaking countries when teaching English as a foreign language?	Very interested	Interested	Undecided	Less Interested	Not Interested

Q3	Which part of the culture(s), do you think, is most interesting in teaching about English language cultures?

Q4	How important is culture, do you think, in teaching English language? Put a tick (√) in the box which best presents your opinion. ?	Very important	important	undecided	less important	Not important

To answer the question 4   Please check the box with a √ which best represents your opinion.   ….

√

Q5	How do you perceive the objectives of English language teaching?	Very important	important	undecided	less important	Not important

(1)	Let students experience the learning process, acquire the learning methods of scientific research and promote awareness of cooperation					
(2)	Raise students' awareness of openness and willingness to accept the excellent world culture.					
(3)	Develop students' long-lasting enthusiasm for learning, good learning habits and self-confidence in learning English well.					
(4)	Assist students to acquire a proficiency of English language which will enable them to meet their future needs in their learning, work and life .					
(5)	Promote students' familiarity with the culture, the civilization of the countries where the language which they are learning is spoken					
(6)	Assist students in developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture.					

We are very interested in your perceptions of aims on 'culture teaching' in the English language teaching. Please check (√) the option   which best represents your opinion ….

√

Q6	What do you understand by 'culture teaching' in English teaching context?	Very important	important	undecided	lessimportant	Not
(1)	Provide information about the history, geography and political system of the foreign culture(s).					
(2)	Provide information about daily life and routines					
(3)	Provide information about shared values and beliefs.					
(4)	Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.).					
(5)	Develop attitudes of acceptance and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures.					
(6)	Promote increased understanding of students' own culture.					

(7)	Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations.					
(8)	Make language teaching more interesting and motivating.					
(9)	Widen students' horizons on the world.					
(10)	Promote students' ability to evaluate and their sensitivity to different cultures.					
(11)	Promote students' awareness of similarities and differences of English speaking countries.					

Please tick (√) the option that best corresponds with the average distribution of time over 'language teaching' and 'cultural teaching'

(√)

Q7	How is your teaching time distributed over 'language teaching' and 'culture teaching'?	(√)
(1)	100%language teaching—0% culture teaching	
(2)	80% language teaching - 20% culture teaching	
(3)	60% language teaching - 40% culture teaching	
(4)	40% language teaching - 60% culture teaching	
(5)	20% language teaching - 80% culture teaching	
(6)	100% integration of language-and-culture teaching	

Please tick (√) the answer that best matches your opinion

Q8	Do you want to spend more time on 'culture teaching' during your English teaching	(√)
(1)	Yes, very much so;	
(2)	Yes, up to a certain extent ;	
(3)	No opinion	
(4)	No, not particularly;	
(5)	No, not at all	

If you want to spend more time on 'culture teaching', but somehow you do not do it , what may be the reasons for that?

Part Two Possible cultural topics

Below are some possible topics for culture teaching, please rank them in order of importance from1-5. If you assign '1' it means very important, if you assign '2' it means second important, and so on . '1'

'2'

Q9	What part of cultures associated with the English language you think should be taught at the middle school levels?	
(1)	political system, history and geography	
(2)	daily life and routines	
(3)	shopping and food and drink	
(4)	youth culture (fashion , music, etc)	
(5)	literature and art and drama	
(6)	school and education	
(7)	family life and marriage life	
(8)	film, theatre and TV programmes	
(9)	social and living conditions	
(10)	festivities and customs	
(11)	tourism and travel	
(12)	religious life and tradition	
(13)	gender roles and relations	
(14)	working life and unemployment	
(15)	environmental issues	
(16)	our own culture and identity	
(17)	values and beliefs	
(18)	body language	
(19)	international relations	

Please tick (√) your answer which best presents your opinion.

Q10	Do you think it is necessary to have a cultural item included in the English curriculum?	Very necessary	Necessary	Undecided	Less necessary	Not Necessary

Part Three   Teaching methods or approaches towards cultural teaching

We are interested in your opinion about the following statements in Question 12. Please put a tick (√) under the letter in the column (only one tick), which best presents your opinion.

A B C D E   (√)

Q11	How do you pass cultural information on to your pupils/ students if you are interested in teaching culture in English class?

A. very often   B. often   C. sometimes   D. seldom   E. never

		A	B	C	D	E
(1)	I teach culture in English class based on the textbook I am using.					
(2)	I tell my students what I heard or read about the foreign country or culture.					
(3)	I ask my students to discover the aspects of the foreign culture.					

(12) (4)	I ask my students to act out; what they learn in terms of culture learning. I ask my students to participate in role-play activity in which people from different culture meet.					
(13) (5)	I use audio tapes in my class and ask them to mime according to what they hear. I ask my students to recite some dialogues.					
(6)	I focus my attention on some culture-loaded new words teaching .					
(7)	I teach them some English songs or poems to let them experience the different cultures.					
(8)	I ask my students to describe cultural phenomena which appear in textbooks or somewhere else.					
(9)	I show them film videos and discuss what they watch.					
(10)	I download some pictures or cartoons having cultural images and let them discuss them.					
(11)	I ask my students to compare their own cultures with foreign cultures.					

Part Four   English Teaching Materials

The questions below concern English teaching materials. Please tick (√) the one that best matches your situation.

Q12	**Who chooses the textbook(s) for you?**	
1	Yourself	
2	The school	
3	The local educational administration	
4	The provincial educational administration	
5	Don't know	

Q13	**Are you free to use additional materials you think useful for cultural teaching in your class?**	
1	Yes, I can	
2	No, I can't.	
3	I don't know.	

Q14	**Does the textbook you use contain information (for example texts, pictures) about English language cultures?**	
1	A lot.	
2	Bits here & there	
3	I don't know	
4	Little	
5	Not that much	

Q15	**To what percentage is cultural knowledge included in the exams by your estimation.**	
1	0%	
2	1-10%	
3	11-20%	
4	21-30%	
5	31-40%	

Q16	**Do the cultural contents of the textbook(s) you use meet your expectations?**	
1	Yes, very much so.	
2	Yes, up to a certain extent.	

3	I don't know	
4	No, not enough.	
5	No, not at all.	

Part Five   The cultural/intercultural dimension of FLT

Please tick (√) the letter which best matches your opinion.(only one tick).
   'A.   B.   C.   D.   E.   '   (√)
A strongly agree   B agree   C   undecided   D   disagree   E I do not agree at all'

		A	B	C	D	E

Q17 To what extent do you agree with the following?

(a)	In a foreign language classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language.					
(b)	Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language.					
(c)	Intercultural competence cannot be acquired at school.					
(d)	It is impossible to teach the foreign language and foreign culture in an integrated way.					
(e)	I would like to promote the intercultural competence through my teaching. ( )					
(f)	Cultural teaching has no effect what so ever on students' attitudes.					
g)	The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are.					
(h)	In international contacts misunderstandings arise equally often from linguistic as from cultural differences.					
(i)	Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen pupils' understanding of their own culture and identity.					

(j)	When you only have a limited number of teaching periods, culture teaching has to give way to language teaching.					
(k)	Every subject, not just foreign language teaching, should promote the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence.					
(l)	A foreign language teacher should present a realistic image of a foreign culture, and therefore should also touch upon negative sides of the foreign culture and society. '					
(m)	If one wants to be able to achieve anything at all as regards to intercultural understanding one should use texts written in the mother tongue and discuss these texts in the mother tongue, even when in a foreign language classroom					
(n)	In the foreign language classroom students can only acquire additional cultural knowledge. They cannot acquire intercultural communicative competence.					
(o)	Only when there are ethnic minority community pupils in your classes do you have to teach intercultural competence.					
(p)	Language and culture cannot be taught in an integrated way. You have to separate the two.					
(q)	Intercultural education reinforces students' already existing stereotypes of other peoples and cultures. ( )					
(r)	Providing additional cultural information makes students more tolerant towards other cultures and peoples.					
(s)	I consider the introduction of 'cultural awareness' into the English Curriculum as an important reform.					
(t)	My initial teacher training course didn't give me any help with teaching the cultural dimension.					
u	In the course of teaching methods, the section of 'how to teach culture' should be added in the text book. ' '					

Part Six   Personal Data

18.Your age is
A. 20-30   B. 30-40   C. 40-50   D. 50-60

19. How many years have you been teaching English?
A. 1-5   B. 5-10   C. 10-15   D. 15-20   E. 20-25   F. over 25

20. What degree(s) did you obtain after you finished secondary school?
A. two-years Zhuanke   B. two-years Benke   C. B.A   D. M.A   E. Ph.D

21. Which grade are you teaching?
A. Grade7   B. Grade8   C. Grade9   D. Grade10   E. Grade11   F. Grade12

22. Your school is in
A. city   B. region   C. town   D. village   E. tuanchang

23. How many hours do you teach per week?
 A. 6-10   B. 10-14   C. 14-18   D. 18-22   E. 22-26

24. Does your school have internet? (Please tick √
    Yes   No

25. If yes, do you often use it to search for the information you need in your teaching?
    A. very often   B. often   C. sometimes   D. Never   E. I don't know how to use it.

26. Have you received any training on English Curriculum Standards?
      Yes   No

Appendix 4

The transcript of teachers' understanding of 'culture' in Q3

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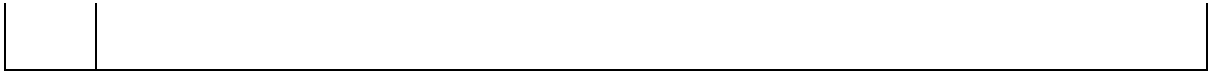
Appendix 5

The transcript of the reasons why you want (don't want) spend more time on 'culture teaching' during your English Teaching in Q8

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Appendix 6 Please give brief explanation why you chose these cultural topics in Q9

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178	The culture should contain the custom and the attiitude towords the value of life.
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