

# **The Role of College English Textbooks in the Teaching of Culture in China**

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## Abstract

The teaching of culture is one of the most important parts of English Language Teaching. It is unavoidable and necessary because English and culture are closely related and communication in English requires intercultural competence. The Chinese government sets up requirements for College English teaching in China through regularly adjusted curriculums. In the 1999 and 2004 curriculums, the requirement is for College English teaching to focus on communicative competence and intercultural competence. However, some of the requirements themselves are found to be ambiguous and confused. Chinese teachers and learners all agree that the teaching of culture is very important in English teaching and learning, but it seems that the teachers do not really know how to teach culture, and they normally rely on textbooks for guidance and instructions. This research aims to investigate how culture is taught and what cultures are taught in College English teaching in China. Because College English teaching is greatly influenced by *College English* textbooks, these books are actually the focus of this research, and they are studied to examine the extent to which they help cultural studies.

A content analysis method is applied to determine the varieties of culture taught through textbooks, and a content-based analysis, which is a series of criteria centred on the themes of recency, realism, topics, task design and extra information, is used to investigate how textbooks teach culture.

The results of the examination of the textbooks indicate that the books are not targeted at the teaching and learning of culture; neither local culture nor world cultures are given much attention in the books; tasks are not designed to teach culture, stereotypes are generally not dealt with, and ICC does not seem to be a part of English education in China. To conclude, there is a significant mismatch between the requirements of the government and what is carried out in practice, and a mismatch between the needs of English learning and the direction of English teaching in China.

A few implications are put forward as a result of this research. First, the

government might clarify its requirements about cultural studies. Second, textbooks need to develop. Recent cultural information, a variety of culture, a balanced selection of topics, helpful extra information, and activities that are designed to teach ICC and deal with the stereotypes in the texts would be useful in the books. Finally, teacher training is needed.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

- CET: College English Test  
CNKI: China National Knowledge Infrastructure  
ELT: English Language Teaching  
ESP: English for Specific Purposes  
EST: English for Science and Technology  
HE: Higher Education  
ICC: Intercultural Communicative Competence  
NCE: New College English  
NHCE: New Horizon College English  
SE: Standard English  
TECE: Third Edition of College English

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# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1. Purpose of the Study

After learning English in a university in China for four years, I formed a particular picture of American culture and British culture (*Culture* is normally singular throughout this dissertation, and the term *cultures* refers to a few varieties of culture) on the basis of what I learned from textbooks. I was so impressed by what I learned in the four years that the picture did not change much for several years until I finally lived in the UK for six months as a visiting lecturer in 2006. I discovered that actually foreign culture is not that different from my own, and that it is understandable within its own social context. However, when I was an undergraduate, interesting cultural information was just left there like a myth without helpful explanations. Foreign culture and foreign people were then very mystical, different and strange for me. From my English classes, almost the only culture I learned was American because the teaching relied mostly on textbooks which were mainly about America. Listening to English spoken on Voice of America was one of the most important parts of English learning for my classmates and me when we were undergraduates, because it was part of the national test for English majors. I thought that if I could understand English spoken on Voice of America then I could understand ‘English’ in general, and that if I could use English in an American way, then I could communicate in English. That is the feeling which I got from English learning and teaching: no-one actually talked about World Englishes and world cultures. When I finally started to use English for the purpose of communication, I used it to talk to people of different nationalities. I felt that I was so ignorant of their cultures, and that they also did not know much about my culture. Different cultures, accents and use of the language caused difficulties in our communication. Their language and cultures were at first strange for me and then I realized they were as normal as American culture and American English. I was just unfamiliar with them and I had never related them to the English language.

After I noticed that what I learned about culture from English classes was not up-to-date and not very helpful for real intercultural communication, I started

to doubt whether American culture really symbolizes world cultures and whether English is supposed to be used in an American way and express mainly American culture. I wondered how English language teaching (ELT), almost the only place where culture is taught and learned systematically in higher education in China, helps intercultural communication for learners today. What is the purpose of English teaching and why is American English and culture the focus of English teaching and learning in China? The teaching of culture is an important part of English teaching in China. Teachers do talk about culture in classes because an introduction to culture is always suggested as a most important thing in an English class; but is the culture taught helpful for intercultural communication? Does the teaching of culture shorten the distance between different cultures or does it lengthen it? I was an English-major, but most university students in China are not. The non-English-majors are the largest group of people who may need to use English for intercultural communication in the future. Therefore, with all these questions in mind, I decided to investigate what varieties of cultures are constructed and how intercultural understandings are promoted for non-English majors in ELT in China.

## **2. A Brief Introduction to the Research Context**

In China, English teaching at higher education level is called College English teaching and it is a very important part of the education system. For non-English majors, there are at least two two-hour English classes a week in universities. There used to be only reading classes, but since the beginning of the twenty-first century, most universities have started gradually to offer two hours of a reading and writing class and two hours of a listening and speaking class per week.

English learning is very important for students. The academic reason for this may be that they learn English to pass examinations and one of the most important tests for university students is a national English test. The practical reason seems to be simply that they need English to communicate. English has become an unavoidable part of people's life. It is embedded in entertainment, technology, business, education and politics. For all university students in the non-English-speaking world, English is important because they may need it for the purpose of communication with people of another language in the future at

home or abroad.

Since communication often takes place between people of different cultural backgrounds, it is then intercultural. Linguistic competence on its own does not really help communication because communication can also fail for cultural reasons. The lack of intercultural competence may lead to failure and frustration in communication. Therefore, intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is one of the ultimate aims of English teaching. College English teaching, then, plays a very important role in the teaching of culture in China. However, like most teachers of English, Chinese teachers are not trained to teach culture: when I interviewed some Chinese teachers (see Appendix A), they said that they thought the teaching of culture was very important in English classes, but that they only taught the culture which was available in the textbooks and they followed the textbooks for instructions. English teaching and the teaching of culture is therefore greatly influenced by textbooks.

Whether and how the teaching of culture is covered in ELT in China also depends on the requirements of the government. The Chinese government gives requirements for College English teaching in the form of a College English curriculum. This is a document issued every few years by the Ministry of Education. It provides requirements for teaching aims, teaching hours, vocabulary lists and teaching methodology. The compilation of textbooks abides strictly by the requirements of the curriculum because it is the representation of the curriculum (Gu, 2007; Mao & Wu, 2007). Consequently, the design of a textbook is guided by the curriculum in principle.

In a nutshell, the teaching of culture in ELT in China relies mostly on textbooks, but English teaching, the teaching of culture in ELT and textbooks are all guided generally by the requirements of the curriculum. Consequently, whether and how culture is taught, the varieties of cultures which are taught and how students are trained in ICC in College English teaching in China all depend largely on both the requirements of the government and the content of textbooks.

### **3. Research Questions**

Based on the situation in China and all the puzzles I had, the research questions in this dissertation are as follows:

- a) How is the teaching and learning of culture stipulated at the Chinese government level and how do teachers and students understand it?
- b) What varieties of cultures are taught through textbooks in ELT and how can culture taught through College English textbooks be characterized?
- c) To what extent do textbooks help the teaching and learning of culture and ICC training in ELT?

#### **4. Importance of the Study**

This research is important in three ways. First, this research studies, in depth, the development of the teaching of culture in China and the understanding of the teaching of culture from three levels: the government, teachers and students. It shows that studies of culture are relatively late, and that culture is sometimes misunderstood and ignored in the field of English teaching in China. The government requires the teaching of culture, but the requirements themselves are confused. The research reveals a mismatch between the requirements of the government and their implementation and a mismatch between the purpose of English learning and the lack of the teaching of culture and ICC training in ELT in China.

Second, this research clarifies the relationship between English language, culture and ELT and applies it to the study of the teaching of culture in China. A common problem in ELT in China is the almost absolute limitation of ELT to Anglo-American English and an emphasis on cultural knowledge rather than on intercultural competence. However, English is now an international language. It is a carrier of world cultures, not just Anglo-American cultures, because English communication often takes place between non-native speakers. ICC is the ultimate goal of the teaching and learning of culture. This research focuses on the variety of culture taught and ICC training in ELT in China and seeks to ascertain how significant the limitation is in China and how to improve it.

Third, textbooks are the centre and sometimes the only focus of an English class in China. There are many studies involving the cultural evaluation of textbooks in China, but most only lay emphasis on the variety of cultural topics in textbooks, which may restrict the development of these books. This research develops a set of comprehensive criteria for a cultural analysis of textbooks with a consideration of the complex nature of the English language and ICC.

## **5. Organization and Design of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is made up of nine chapters. Chapter Two and Chapter Three provide a theoretical background to the subject. In Chapter Two, the relationship between language and culture is first confirmed to be inseparable and then the relationship between English language and culture is analysed. English is an international language and it is used to express world cultures. The relationship is examined from three aspects: English and Anglo-American cultures, English and world cultures and English and internationally shared culture. Based on the theories explored in Chapter Two, Chapter Three points out that it is problematic to teach only American or British English, World Englishes, one International English and any of their respective cultures. To solve these problems, ICC is suggested. This chapter examines the teaching of culture from four aspects to examine how feasible they are in ELT: teaching Anglo-American cultures, teaching World cultures, teaching internationally shared culture and teaching ICC. Theories about ICC such as the concept of ICC, the relationship between communicative competence and ICC, the teaching of ICC, the assessment of ICC and problems of ICC teaching are also introduced in this chapter.

Chapter Four is the methodology chapter. Four methods are used and all of them, therefore, are discussed in this chapter. The first and second methods consist of using questionnaires and interviews respectively. The questionnaires and interviews were used to investigate how teachers and students understood and reported their performance in the teaching of culture. The third and fourth methods are those applied to the analysis of the textbooks. A content analysis method, which is “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21), was applied in order to identify the varieties of cultures taught through textbooks, and a content-based

analysis method, which is an analysis of the content in the books, including text, vocabulary and tasks from several points of view, was used to determine the extent to which textbooks teach culture. These two methods were integrated together and applied in order to draw up of the following analytical criteria: recency, realism, topics, task design and extra information.

The results of the questionnaires and interviews are listed in the appendices, and their results will primarily be used in the discussion in the two subsequent chapters: Chapter Five and Chapter Six. The other two methods (content analysis and content-based analysis) will be applied to the analysis of textbooks in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight.

Chapter Five provides background knowledge about the teaching and learning of culture in ELT at higher education level in China through the study of curriculums. Five curriculums: the 1980 curriculum, the 1985/1986 curriculum, the 1999 curriculum and the 2004 and 2007 curriculums, are studied respectively to investigate the focus of ELT in China and how the teaching of culture is stipulated by the Ministry of Education. From the study, it can be seen that grammar teaching and a focus on reading is the tradition of ELT in China, and communicative language teaching and ICC are considered important only from the late 1990s onwards. However, although the teaching of culture is given importance, the requirements about it are ambiguous and teachers do not really understand what it means.

Chapter Six gives a contemporary study of cultural studies in ELT in China and leads the research to the study of textbooks. As discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the focus of the dissertation is to explore how Anglo-American cultures, world cultures and internationally shared culture are balanced in ELT and how ICC is taught. Therefore, Chapter Six first examines whether the teaching and learning of culture is important for students and teachers, and then a complementary research is reported to show how ICC is understood and assessed in ELT in China. Following this, the variety of culture taught in College English teaching in China is investigated, according to the answers given by the teachers and students in a survey. Finally, given that the teaching of culture in China is in fact significantly influenced by textbooks, so this chapter leads to an

analysis of textbooks used in ELT in China.

Chapter Seven shows the results of the evaluation of the textbooks. The reading and writing books are first examined in Part One and then the listening and speaking books in Part Two of the chapter. Three different series of books are evaluated according to the criteria mentioned above in Chapter Four, applied, in order, to the *New College English* (NCE) series, the *New Horizon College English* (NHCE) series and the *Third Edition of College English* (TECE) series. Chapter Eight is a discussion of the results. Chapter Nine is the conclusion and summarizes the problems and good practices of the teaching of culture in ELT in China. It then offers implications for cultural studies in China and finally it summarizes the limitations of the research.

## **Chapter Two: English Language and Culture**

In this chapter, the relationship between language and culture will first be analysed to show that they are inseparable and interdependent, and then the concepts of the key terms used in this chapter, such as SE, English as an International Language, One International English, American English, British English, World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca will be defined. Finally, the relationship between English as an International Language and culture will be analysed from three aspects: English and Anglo-American cultures, English and World cultures and English and internationally shared culture.

### **1. Language and Culture**

#### **1.1 The Concept of Culture**

Many researchers suggest that culture is ubiquitous, multidimensional, complex and all-pervasive, that it is something all humans share and that it distinguishes us from the animal world (Duan, 2006; Saluveer, 2004). Because of this complexity, the word ‘culture’ is very difficult to define, as Hinkel points out: “there are as many definitions of culture as there are fields of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviors and activities” (1999, p. 1).

According to Wang (2005), culture has six components. They are materials or tangible substances, social principles and organization, science and art, language and other communicative systems, customs and models of behaviour and, lastly value systems, world views, racial features and thinking models. He suggests that the term ‘small culture’ should refer to social principles and organization, language and other communicative systems, customs and models of behaviour, and that in the field of English teaching, ‘small culture’ should be the ultimate purpose.

It may be true that culture in ELT should be different from culture in other fields of study, because ELT may not be able to cover all aspects of culture. It may have to give up a few components, and choose the ones that are closely related to intercultural communication. Scollon (2001) notes that in studies of intercultural

communication, ‘culture’ refers to anthropological culture, which means “the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organization, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a person which set that group apart as a distinctive group” (Scollon, 2001, p. 139). In this dissertation, ‘culture’ mainly refers to small culture, or anthropological culture as Scollon (2001) calls it. It includes basic cultural knowledge, custom and habit, belief, morals and values. ‘Knowledge’ here refers to the basic knowledge of the world concerning language, geography and history. ‘Custom’ and ‘habit’ refer to something which is done by people in a particular society because it is traditional. ‘Belief’, ‘morals’ and ‘values’ are what people think or feel.

## **1.2 The Relationship between Language and Culture**

Language and culture are interdependent and they are widely believed to be inseparable (Byram, 1989; Fanon, 1967; Fishman, 1996; Gupta, 1999; Hantrais, 1989; Kramsch, 1998; Lund, 2006; Pfister & Borzilleri, 1977; Pulverness, 2003; Risager, 2007; Saluveer, 2004; Wang, 2006; Whorf, 1956). Jiang holds the view that “language and culture makes a living organism; language is flesh, and culture is blood. Without culture, language would be dead; without language, culture would have no shape” (Jiang, 2000, p. 330). It seems that the relationship between language and culture is deeply rooted. This relationship will be analysed next from the following three aspects: a language maintains and conveys culture; it is used to express the culture of a social group; and it is also shaped by the culture of social groups.

To begin with, a language maintains and conveys culture. It is a carrier of culture. “It points beyond itself, the meaning it carries often seems more important than the language itself, and a language cannot be used without carrying meaning and referring beyond itself” (Byram, 1989, p. 41). It seems that language can stand alone, but in fact at the same time it transmits cultural information through vocabulary, grammar and the meaning it carries. Therefore, it is the means of transmitting culture. For instance, as Wierzbicka (2006) shows, the three causative words, *have*, *make* and *get* have different connotations in English, but in some other languages, for example Russian, there is only one word for all the three connotations. The expression ‘Person X had person Y do Z’ does not imply

that the causee Y did not want to perform the action nor does it imply the causee Y had to do it. It implies something like a hierarchical relationship, within which the causer can say that he or she wants the causee to do something, and the causee cannot say in response, I do not want to do it. While the ‘make’ construction is “quite compatible with exercises in arbitrary power, deliberate cruelty, malice, punishment and so on” (Wierzbicka, 2006, p. 177). The ‘get’ construction (‘person X gets person Y to do Z’) implies that Y is willing to do the action, but X manipulates a little bit, because the action is actually brought about by X but not by Y. Wierzbicka calls this a “cultural elaboration in grammar” (Wierzbicka, 2006, p. 178), because the cultural emphasis on personal autonomy, characteristic of modern Anglo society in modern English, is no doubt closely related to the expansion of causative constructions in modern English. Enfield sums things up thus:

Grammar is thick with cultural meaning, encoded in the semantics of grammar we find cultural values and ideas, we find clues about the social structures which speakers maintain, we find evidence, both historically relevant and otherwise, or the social organization of speech communities. (Enfield, 2002, p. 42)

Furthermore, a language reflects the culture of a social group. Kayman (2004) and Fanon (1967) believe that to speak a language is to assume a culture and to support the weight of a civilization. That is to say, when a person speaks a language, he or she will automatically reflect the culture of a social group, because the language one uses expresses the culture. For instance, when a person speaks Chinese, he or she may greet someone else in a Chinese way, saying “Have you eaten?” or “Where are you going?” When a person says “Your necklace is beautiful”, the Chinese way of answering is ‘na li, na li’ meaning ‘not really beautiful’. The Chinese way of speaking reflects traditional Chinese culture. The use of the language in that way more or less supports that culture.

Finally, a language is also influenced by culture. People of different cultures can refer to different objects while using the same language forms. Nida states that “Language and culture are two symbolic systems. Everything we say in language has meanings, designative or sociative, denotative or connotative” (Nida, 1998, p. 29). The same word in a language may symbolize different meanings.

For example, according to a survey carried out by Jiang (2000) among native Chinese people and native British people about their perception of the word *food*, for the Chinese people, food items refer to *steamed bread, noodles, meat, rice, jiaozi*, and so on, which are the typical food of Chinese people. For the native British people, *hamburgers, ice-cream, pizza, dessert*, and so on are the representative food items (Jiang, 2000).

To summarize, language and culture cannot be separated. Language transmits culture, reflects the culture of a social group and at the same time is influenced by culture.

## **2. English Language and Culture**

The fact that language and culture are inseparable and interdependent makes English very special due to the fact that it is used by people all over the world and is influenced by people all over the world. This makes the relationship between the English language and culture more complicated. Before embarking on an analysis of their relationship, definitions will be provided of the key terms used throughout the chapter: SE, English as an International Language, one International English, American English, British English, World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca. Then, the complexity of the English language itself will be addressed, and finally its relationship with culture will be discussed.

### **2.1 Concepts of Key Terms**

#### **2.1.1 Standard English**

There are many definitions for SE. According to Hughes and Trudgill (1979), SE is the dialect of educated people throughout the British Isles. It is the dialect normally used in writing, for teaching in schools and universities, and heard on radio and television (Hughes & Trudgill, 1979). Crystal (1995) defines the SE of an English speaking country as a minority variety which carries most prestige and is most widely understood. Trudgill's (1999) definition seems more specific. He believes that "Standard English is that variety of English which is usually used in print, and which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speakers learning the language. It is also the variety which is normally spoken by

educated people and used in news broadcasts and other similar situations” (Trudgill, 1999, p.265). As agreed by most researchers mentioned above, SE normally refers to the variety of language used in print, education, radio, television and other public situations. Trudgill (1999) further explains that SE is not a language, only a variety of language. He claims first that SE is not an accent and has nothing to do with pronunciation. Second, SE is not a style, it is not about levels of formality. Third, SE is not a register: ‘register’ refers to a variety of language determined by topic, subject matter or activity, such as the register of mathematics. Finally, it is not a set of prescriptive rules: it can tolerate certain features (Trudgill, 1999). A problem in the definition of SE may be the question of who decides what is right or wrong in writing and printing. Normally it is quite localized, because a British publisher may require the language to be written in a British way. It is even hard to define British English, because of its varieties. A different individual may be an owner of a different English. Consequently, SE is non-existent in that respect. However, no matter whose norms are acceptable in SE and no matter what it is, the fact seems to be that SE in ELT normally refers to a variety of native speakers’ English with American English and British English as front-running representatives (Lund, 2006; He & Li, 2009).

### **2.1.2 English as an International Language, One International English, American English, British English and World Englishes**

English as an International Language “is indeed generally interpreted as the distribution of native-speaker Standard English rather than the way English has changed to meet international needs” (Seidlhofer, 2009, p. 237). The term ‘One International English’ in this dissertation refers to the variety of English that people of the world are sharing no matter where it originates from and how it has been changed by speakers in the world. It is not a language. It is only a variety of English which is similar to SE, but is also different from SE, because it is used not just in writing, education, media and other similar situations, and contains other non-standard rules that seem to be accepted worldwide. It is only a variety of English that is generally used and shared by people throughout the world.

Although countries in Kachru’s (1986) Inner Circle include not only America and Britain, but also Canada, Australia and New Zealand, it is America

and Britain which seem to be the representatives of the Inner Circle in ELT (Lund, 2006; He & Li, 2009). In this dissertation, British English and American English will be taken separately as representative of native speakers' English for analysis, because they are normally the centre of ELT. When other native speakers' English is involved in English teaching in this research, it will also be discussed. 'World Englishes' in this research refers to the varieties of English excluding native speakers' English in Kachru's (1986) Inner circle, such as American English, British English, Canadian English, Australian English and New Zealand English. Native speakers' English is certainly a variety of world Englishes. It is excluded from World Englishes in this dissertation so that a comparison between native speakers' English and other Englishes can be better conducted and native speakers' English can be analyzed in a separate part since it plays a very important role in ELT.

### **2.1.3 English as a Lingua Franca**

English as an International Language refers to the ownership of English; SE refers to the recognition of one variety of English; One International English refers to the variety of English which is used and distributed internationally; World Englishes refers to the varieties of English excluding native speakers' English; English as a Lingua Franca refers to the function of English.

In its purest form, English as a Lingua Franca is defined as being used only among non-native speakers (Berns, 2009). Even today, Jenkins (2009) still insists that "in practice English as a Lingua Franca often means English being used among non-native English speakers from the expanding Circle, simply because these speakers exist in larger numbers than English speakers in either of the other two contexts" (p. 201). But she further explains that speakers in the Outer or Inner Circle are not excluded from that definition: it can include all English users.

Seidlhofer (2004, 2009) strongly supports the view that English as a Lingua Franca refers to all Englishes which are used as means of communication among people who do not have any native language in common. It is not only used in the Expanding and Outer circle, but also in the Inner Circle (Dyrvold,

2007; Berns, 2009; Kachru, 1996; Pakir, 2009).

Simply put, because English is a global language, it is used as a Lingua Franca. When people use English to communicate with other people all over the world, English is a tool of communication. English language with this function is called English as a Lingua Franca.

## **2.2 English as an International Language**

For historical, internal political, external economic, technological and entertainment reasons, English is becoming more and more international. It is used all over the world and nobody can deny its international status. People in the Expanding Circle, the Outer Circle and the Inner Circle (Kachru, 1985) all use the language to communicate. Therefore, it could be said that the owners of the language are people all over the world. English has become an unavoidable part of people's life through business, the internet, science, education, films, music, travel, radio and television. It has become a global language of our time. As observed by Hasman:

When Mexican pilots land their airplanes in France, they and the ground controllers use English. When German physicists want to alert the international scientific community to new discoveries, they first publish their findings in English. When Japanese executives conduct business with Scandinavian entrepreneurs, they negotiate in English. When pop singers write their songs, they often use lyrics or phrases in English. When demonstrators want to alert the world to their problems, they display signs in English. (Hasman, 2000, p. 1)

English is widely believed to be an international language. It is just the process of developing into an international language that makes the English language extremely complex. The history of English and the current popularity of English determine its complexity. There are three issues that seem to need attention. The first is the influence of British English and American English on the internationalization of the language, the second is the influence of World Englishes on it, and the third is the notion of one International English.

### **2.2.1 British English and American English**

The influence of British English and American English cannot be ignored in any study of the language. The past seems to give British English the absolute superiority. English originates from England, and the language developed into a language of the world through dispersals from England to America and Asia and then to Australia and Africa, and finally it became international. Meanwhile, the rise of American economy, technology and politics is making English more and more American (Anchimbe, 2006). “The economic power of US has ensured the continuing influence of English throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 34). Therefore, the economic and political effects of America and the colonial past of Britain are key causes of the globalization of English. That may be also why their English is often considered as SE. The influence of their English is still evident in the use of English. Many people would still like to sound British or American when they use the language because they assume their English is the most standard. As Bolton and Lim suggest, to speak like a native speaker of English was and still is by no means the obvious target for foreign learners (2000, p. 431). Kachru (1986) divides World Englishes into three concentric circles, the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle is said to be ‘norm-providing’, the Outer Circle to be ‘norm-developing’ and the Expanding Circle to be ‘norm-dependent’. In other words, the English of the Inner Circle is still SE (Kachru, 1986). Although Kachru advocates the equivalent of different varieties of English, his circles further prove the assumed superiority of British English and American English. In spite of the fact that the concept of the circles was put forward in the 1980s, and they have been redrawn several times, the three circles are widely referred to and quoted in current works because they still reflect perceived truth (Melchers & Shaw, 2003).

The problem is that SE is not a language (Jenkins, 2003). As Trudgill (1999) claims, SE is not a register, a style, an accent or a set of prescriptive rules. The inner circle provides the norms, and the standards are the norms that are agreed by the inner circles with America and Britain as the centre. SE may just be a variety of language that people are seeking to exist with agreed standards by the inner circle, but it seems that the agreement has not been established.

### **2.2.2 World Englishes**

Because of the international nature of English, the superiority of English-speaking countries is considered unfair to non-native speakers by many people (Hughes & Trudgill, 1979; Jenkins, 2003; Kachru, 1992). English is used all over the world, so all the people who use it are owners of the language. They also apply different standards to the language. Therefore, there may need to be a range of Standard Englishes such as Chinese English, Indian English and Japanese English in the world. In addition, English has already become a communicative tool between people of different languages. It is now used as a Lingua Franca. English as a Lingua Franca contains linguistic forms which it shares with native speakers, that is the SE norms or American English and British English norms, but it also contains forms that are different from their English originals and that have arisen from non-native speakers during communication through the influence of their first languages (Jenkins, 2009). English has become a language of world features.

The problem of World Englishes may be that although the owners of the language are people all over the world, the establishment of different standards for the languages does not seem easy. Even the current English testing system favours the concept of SE but not that of World Englishes. “The increasing use of international tests of English proficiency (e.g. TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS, MELAB), indicative of the continuing worldwide spread of the English language, has been condemned on the grounds that such tests are biased or unfair” (Hamp-Lyons & Davies, 2008, p. 26).

Even so, there is still a long way to go to establish standards for World Englishes (Hamp-Lyons & Davies, 2008). Although Kachru’s circles were proposed in the 1980s, it continues to be true today that the Inner Circle is still providing the norms and the Expanding Circle still relies on the norms it provides to some extent. A Japanese person or a Chinese person is still likely to say that he/she would like to speak good British or American English, but not good Japanese or Chinese English.

### **2.2.3 One International English**

English has become more and more international. People may be able to assume that no matter whose English it is, there is only one International English without

any nationality, because it is used by people all over the world to communicate, and they all share something common in the language such as grammar, vocabulary and even pronunciation. This variety of English is called one International English in this dissertation. Although the English language carries native-speaker and non-native-speaker features, the fact is that people are still able to communicate using the language as a Lingua Franca. This may be because, first, people tend to accept certain common norms on how to use the language to make themselves understood. For instance, they greet each other with the expression ‘How are you’ in English, but not with any other greeting patterns which they use in their own language. Second, due to the process of globalization, the world shares more and more in common, such as Coca Cola, rap and hip-hop. It may be unnecessary to consider whose norms they are using when they speak the language, because the norms have been internationalized.

The problem of the idea of one International English is that there are still parts of the language that have not been internationalized. For example, when two native speakers of any language (they can be two native speakers of Chinese, Malay, Indian, Thai or English) talk in English, speakers of another language may feel it difficult to understand them. This is because not all local features of a language have been internationalized. English, as a World language, has many linguistic forms that are not shared worldwide.

To sum up, English is a complex language. First, although it is widely agreed to be an international language, it cannot be totally detached from British English and American English because of its history and process of development. Second, with the spread of English as an International Language, those people who use it will decide its future features. Therefore, it also becomes more and more different from the old language that was owned by the ‘native speakers’. Finally, in spite of the fact that people who use the language give it a distinct feature, the language is still working as a Lingua Franca because there are more and more things in common owing to globalization. All three of these aspects exist and develop at the same time. Since language and culture are interconnected, these three aspects will also influence culture and be influenced by culture. This interaction with culture will be explored in the next section.

## **2.3 English Language and Culture**

Language and culture are interconnected. The three key issues about the English language mentioned above also raise cultural concerns. Therefore, the interaction between the English language and culture will also be studied from same three aspects which formed the sequence of the previous section: Anglo-American cultures, world cultures and internationally shared culture.

### **2.3.1 Anglo-American Cultures**

English has become an international language and America and Britain are key countries in the globalization of the English language. As mentioned in Section 2.2.1, the Inner Circle, with Britain and America as its centre, contains the norm-providing speakers and what is considered Standard English. Since language and culture have a significant impact on each other, Anglo-American cultures will consequently become norm-providing cultures, because a language reflects its culture. People tend to accept their cultures as standard culture while assuming their language as a standard language (Byram, 2002). For instance, with the spread of the word ‘Christmas’, the associated festival culture has become more and more international.

The influence of America and Britain on the language is huge, so is their influence on world cultures. The world is standardized by American and British ways of talking, thinking and behaving. As Anchimbe claims, English today is “overwhelmingly adopting a predominant American touch, given the pride and prestige of the American lifestyle and pop culture” (2006, p. 3). Although some are aware of this problem, English globalization tends more to be Americanization rather than the acceptance of World Englishes (Anchimbe, 2006). The superiority of American and British English will more or less cause cultural assimilation. As Steiner observes:

English and American-English seem to embody for men and women throughout the world – and particularly for the young – the ‘feel’ of hope, of material advance of scientific and empirical procedures. The entire world image of mass consumption of international exchange of the popular arts, of generational conflict, of technocracy, is permeated by American-English and

English citations and habits. (as cited in Anchimbe, 2006, p. 3)

The impact of American and British cultures, through the language, on world cultures is strong, and they have become more and more dominating in the world. The harm of this homogenization is that it makes culture less colourful and it may damage home culture to a greater or a lesser extent.

Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous section, although British and American English play an important role in the English world, SE does not exist as a language. Because English is used globally, people give the language various features while using it. It sounds not possible to standardize language use. Similarly, it is impossible to standardize world cultures (Kachru, 1986). The non-Anglo-American cultures grow alongside the development of Anglo-American cultures, because language is also influenced by culture. For instance, although the ‘standard’ English expression for the best and most important time of the day for television broadcasting is *prime time*, the Chinese continue to use the term *golden time* instead of *prime time*. This is because, in China, gold is precious and regarded as the finest, and the Chinese expression for it is *golden time*. It is difficult to force people to change their beliefs or traditions; therefore it is inevitable for people of different cultures to use English in different ways.

In a nutshell, with the spread of the English language as a SE worldwide, Anglo-American cultures are also spreading out globally. Their influence on world cultures is huge, and has caused cultural homogenization to some degree. However, given that the language is also influenced by other cultures, English users of various world cultures give the language a cultural clothing of their special social groups. As with the English language, it is impossible to standardize culture.

### **2.3.2. World Cultures**

Language and culture are interdependent, and a language is a carrier of culture. When English is used worldwide, it is also given different features by people of different cultures. For example, some simple words such as ‘friendship’ and ‘family’ may carry different meanings and importance to people of different

cultures. When a person speaks English, he or she will definitely give the language a cultural clothing of his or her special social group intentionally or unintentionally. English therefore carries the cultural meaning of the world, because it is used by many social groups all over the world as an international language.

English is an international language, so it is often used intentionally to express the cultures of various social groups. In other words, the culture it carries is international because it is used as a vehicle of expression by people all over the world. “It is not the vehicle of a single culture. It becomes the vehicle of any culture to which a user applies it” (Bryan, 1994, p. 101).

Consequently, the language cannot be bound to any one culture. People give the language more cultural meanings than it has ever had. English can express a cultural identity which is not that of an ancestral English setting. As Kachru has put it, “English is now the language of those who use it; the users give it a distinct identity of their own in each region. As this transmuting alchemy of English takes effect, the language becomes less and less culture-specific” (1985, p. 20).

The problem is, as mentioned in Section 2.2.2, that in spite of the existence of World Englishes, there is still a long way to go to set up standards for those Englishes. There are still neither Chinese English standards nor standards of many other Englishes. As a result, the Anglo-American cultures are still playing a dominant role by means of their particular forms of English. For example, although as already observed a Chinese person may call *prime time golden time*, most Chinese people will start using *prime time* instead of *golden time* once they have learned that the ‘right’ expression is *prime time*, and that there is no such an expression as *golden time* in English. For another example, an obvious phenomenon is that people tend to greet each other with the sentence ‘How are you?’ when they speak English. When people of different nationalities meet, they often use this greeting pattern to greet each other, no matter what they normally say when they speak to people of the same native language as their own. It is regarded as a safe and widely accepted way of greeting, and different ways of greeting in English are somehow regarded as improper and seem to be dying out.

To sum up, there are world cultures in the same way that there are World Englishes. World cultures are embedded in the English language and the language is also used to express world cultures. The problem is that alongside the development of World Englishes and world cultures, Anglo-American English and their cultures still play a dominant role.

### **2.3.3 Internationally Shared Culture**

The term ‘international shared culture’ in this dissertation refers to the variety of culture that the people of the world are sharing and which have become a part of local culture, such as some varieties of pop music and fast food, no matter where they originate from and how they have been changed to fit into local culture. With the globalization of the English language, culture is more and more international, or *vice versa*. It seems unnecessary to trace the origin and changes of any new world culture now. As Pennycook (2007) observes, to assume that globalization is only caused by American and western imperialism falls into a narrow view of global relations.

The very point about globalization is that it is global, and thus is inevitably caught up in multiple influences. Indian call centres, indigenous education conferences, Japanese animated cartoons, anti-globalization networks, fast-moving fashions, gay and lesbian travel organizations, the ubiquity and similarity of urban graffiti are all parts of globalization. (Pennycook, 2007, p. 25)

Globalization is everywhere. Pennycook (2007) uses hip-hop as an example, stating that hip-hop is the culture of an African-American minority which has become an international language which symbolizes countless teenagers. He claims that although it originates from America, the development of the culture has no relationship with America. The hip-hop culture has been embedded in and influenced by local culture. It has become a vehicle through which local identity is reworked.

This idea here is not to reject the fact that American and British cultures have a strong effect on world cultures through the English language. It is saying that the internationally shared culture is so popularly embedded into people’s lives in all parts of the world that there is no point emphasizing the dominating role of

Anglo-American economic relations. For instance, coffee and tea have become part of the internationally shared culture. It is not necessary to stick to the cultural impact of the west on the east or *vice versa*, because they have become a part of local culture, and the culture has been reshaped by local culture. Even such a simple word as ‘tea’ does not have the same meaning for people of different cultures. Chinese people never put milk into tea, but in some cultures people do not drink tea without milk.

It seems that this view has solved the problem of the previous two issues. People with this view do not have to worry about the homogenization of cultures and they accept a standardized culture with local identities. However, it is only a new way of looking at internationally shared culture. Not all cultural elements which have been affected by the spreading out of the language have been so globally acknowledged, such as ‘western’ festivals like Easter and Halloween. If no attention is paid to the domination of ‘western’ culture, world cultures, including home culture, can be devalued. Christmas trees can now be seen almost everywhere in the world on 24<sup>th</sup> December. If cultural imperialism continues, children all over the world will be dressing as wizards or ghosts and standing in the street at night saying ‘trick or treat’ on 31<sup>st</sup> October. Western ways of thinking and behaving are affecting local culture, and this seems unfair to local culture because it seems that other cultures do not have an equally predominant position.

It may be reasonable to look at internationally shared culture as a new variety of world culture. However, this is not true of all cultures. More protection may need to be given to world cultures, including home culture, in cultural internationalization. The fact is that English as an International Language does not only express the cultures of ‘native speakers’ but also world cultures.

### **3. Conclusion**

Language and culture are interdependent and inseparable. A language transmits culture, reflects the culture of a social group and is at the same time influenced by culture. This relationship is made very complicated when it is applied to the English language and culture, because English is a special language. It originates from England but has developed to be an international language and a *lingua*

*franca*. Although it is widely agreed to be an international language, British English and American English still play a dominating role. At the same time, however, World Englishes have started to become popular. Finally, One International English seems to be established with the development of the language. All three of these facts exist with problems and conflicts, and this also leads to a problematic situation when the language is connected with culture. Although world cultures are inevitably influencing the English language, Anglo-American cultures seem to be over-acknowledged and causing cultural homogenization. International shared culture with no clear national boundaries seem to be gaining favour with the development of this international language, but it is still only a part of world cultures and cannot avoid the effect of the superiority of Anglo-American cultures. Since all the language and culture issues are problematic, the teaching of them seems to be very hard. The next chapter will investigate ways of integrating culture studies into English language teaching and learning.

## **Chapter Three: Cultural Studies in ELT**

### **1. Introduction**

Chapter Two sought to show that language and culture are interdependent: a language is a carrier of culture and it reflects the culture of a social group, so English teaching and learning are the teaching and learning of the culture carried by the language. That is to say, when teachers teach the language, they are teaching the culture conveyed by the language at the same time, so culture is inevitable and very important in ELT. A most important point of the teaching and learning of culture perhaps is to understand that English is an international language and that it is closely related with not only Anglo-American cultures but also world cultures. ELT is one of the most important places where English and therefore culture can be taught and learned systematically. It would therefore be very helpful if ELT can inform students of the special nature of English as an International Language and its complex relationship with culture.

As discussed in Chapter Two, English as an International Language is connected with not just one culture, it is also a cultural medium of global cultures such as Anglo-American cultures, other world cultures and internationally shared culture. The restriction of the English language to any one of these cultures may be problematic. The teaching of only American or British English, World Englishes, one International English and any of their cultures therefore sounds problematic. To solve these problems, the relatively new concept of ICC will be brought into focus. This chapter will examine the teaching of culture from four aspects to find out how feasible they are in ELT: teaching ‘SE’ and Anglo-American cultures, teaching World Englishes and world cultures, teaching one International English and internationally shared culture, and teaching ICC, which will be analysed in detail from several angles.

### **2. Teaching ‘SE’ and Anglo-American Cultures**

So-called SE, mainly refers to American English and British English, and it has always been the favourite of ELT. As stated in Chapter Two, to consider that English refers only to American and British English may be problematic. People

use English to communicate with both native speakers and non-native speakers. If learners only learn American and British English, they may feel it is difficult to understand and accept other Englishes. The concept of English as an International Language is often not taught to learners in ELT. Chapter Two sought to show that language and culture are interdependent. The teaching of the language is also the teaching of the culture it carries. If English teaching is limited to SE only, then merely American and British cultures are taught, and even home culture is somewhat banned in this case.

Because of the emphasis on SE and Anglo-American cultures, a ‘deficit’ approach is often used to categorize learners as deviant if they cannot use English perfectly without committing pragmatic or grammatical ‘errors’. Consequently, individuals who are able to use American or British English correctly are praised as successful language learners (Nault, 2006). This approach then further consolidates the teaching of SE and Anglo-American cultures.

On the other hand, although a great deal of effort has been made on the teaching of SE and its two cultures, mistakes are still inevitable; one of the reasons for this is that it is difficult to get away from the influence of one’s mother tongue and culture, so it is not possible to standardize language use. For example, although some learners have learned how to use ‘get’, ‘make’ and ‘have’ separately, they might keep on making mistakes because in their cultures they do not have so many causative words, they may only have an equivalent of ‘make’ or any other of them in their own language and culture. Many learners still cannot avoid the process of translating during which one’s home culture will also be translated through the language.

To summarize, if the teaching of English focuses only on SE, the culture taught may also be limited to Anglo-American cultures. This ignores the fact that English is also used by people of different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, the teaching of English solely as a native speaker’s language not only denies the nature of English as an International Language, it may also cause the devaluation of home culture and other cultures. At the same time, however, the influence of a learner’s home language and culture also plays an important role in the process of learning, because it is not really possible to standardize language use and culture.

### **3. Teaching World Englishes and World Cultures**

One solution to the problem outlined above might seem to be the teaching of World Englishes and world cultures. Crystal (1997) suggests that teachers should prepare students better for World Englishes and cultures expressed by the language. Proper preparation will be likely to involve exposing learners “to as many varieties of English as possible, especially those which they are most likely to encounter in their own locale” (Crystal, 1997, p. 17). This means if the learners are going to work mainly with Indians, for example, then Indian English should be given more attention. In ELT, however, it may be hard to say which variety the learners will need most in the future. The problem is also that there are many World Englishes. As demonstrated in Chapter Two, there are no established standards for every kind of World English, and the recommended standards of English language in ELT are still American and British standards (Kachru, 1986; Nault, 2006). English teaching cannot really teach all kinds of World English because there are no standards for most varieties of English and there are too many varieties of English. So preparing to encounter different varieties of English does seem very important, or students may reject other Englishes because they only learned American and British English.

English is used by people all over the world and it is also used to express world cultures. Communication in English is often between two interlocutors who are non-native speakers. In ELT, therefore, more attention needs to be given to the diverse cultures carried by the language. However, there are as many varieties of culture as there are varieties of English. It is difficult to teach or learn so many World Englishes, so it is also impossible to teach or learn so many world cultures in language classes. The point that a feature of English is the fact that it is used to express world cultures needs to be addressed in ELT.

### **4. Teaching One International English and Internationally Shared Culture**

As suggested in Chapter Two, one International English and internationally shared culture, the language and culture shared by people across the world, might seem to be able to solve all the above problems. The idea suggests that it is unnecessary to stress the nationality of the English language and the culture it

carries because they are internationally shared and have become part of world cultures. In fact, however, the English language shared by the entire world is most likely to be American and British English, and even for American and British English, people across the world do not share all their features. Few language learners can be 100% American or British because of the influence of their first language.

In spite of the fact that the idea of one International English and internationally shared culture is sometimes problematic, it has gained much attention. Since it seems not right to teach only Anglo-American cultures, and since it seems impossible to teach all world cultures, why do not teachers choose to teach the culture that the world shares, exemplified by hip-hop music, coffee drinking, uniformity in casual dress? In fact, many English language teaching materials have started to focus on international cultural topics which do not have a clear boundary between countries, for example topics about tourism and sport, because people of different languages are more likely to get involved in those issues. However, this also has problems. First, cultures are many and various. There are only a small number of common cultures that can be considered international compared with the whole range of cultures. When a conversation or communication goes further, cultural differences may occur, so internationally shared culture may be helpful in short-term communication but not long-term communication. For example, when a person goes to another country to undertake businesses or study, knowing only some internationally shared culture may not be enough, because local culture, which is not shared worldwide, may also become important. Although the world has many cultures in common on the surface, people of different cultures often behave and think in different ways. The learning of some internationally shared culture may help to avoid cultural problems sometimes, but it also has limitations. Second, as mentioned in Chapter Two, most internationally shared culture is American culture because of that country's economic, technological, entertainment and political impact on the world. As a result, the teaching of internationally shared culture only may still lead back to Americanization.

## **5. Teaching ICC**

All three ideas explored above about English teaching are problematic: it seems that a focus on any particular culture is not sufficient. So instead of teachers paying all their attention to the varieties of culture that are related to the language, teaching the ability to deal with a range of cultures might seem to be more feasible and important. It is not possible to master all World Englishes and then all cultures in the world. So a more useful teaching point might focus on how people understand complex cultural situations, how they can form a positive attitude towards other cultures and how they deal with these cultures. In other words, the ultimate goal of the teaching and learning of culture might be not only to acquire cultural knowledge, but also to learn the skills to deal with complex cultural situations and form a positive attitude towards other cultures.

These areas of interest, knowledge, attitudes and skills are considered as the ultimate goals of the teaching of culture in ELT by many scholars. For instance, Byram summarizes three broad goals of language learning as follows: “Developing communicative competence in any situations learners might meet; Developing an awareness of the nature of language and language learning; Developing insight into the foreign culture and positive attitudes toward foreign people” (cited in Cortazzi & Jin, 1999, p. 197). These goals need to be achieved step by step. People first learn the language to communicate in reading, speaking, listening and writing, but none of these can be done very well without an understanding of the culture which a language carries. The ultimate goal also encourages positive attitudes towards foreign people through the learning of other cultures in language classes.

Risager (2007) also puts forward three main objectives of culture learning in a foreign language classroom. The first has to do with students’ cognitive development, and the focus has been on providing students with information about the country or countries where the language is spoken. Another objective has to do with the development of students’ foreign language skills. Here, the main concern has been to provide students with insight into the foreign culture so that they will be able to communicate in an appropriate way in new cultural contexts. A third objective has been to develop students’ attitudes towards other countries and cultures. Risager thinks highly of the role of foreign culture in

language teaching but does not mention the significance of the local culture of the learners. Because of the status of English as an International Language, as mentioned above, people have started to realize the risk of cultural homogenization. More and more efforts are expected to focus on protecting one's own culture and it has also been an important part of the aims of English teaching. However, Risager does consider knowledge, skills and attitudes as very important in foreign language teaching.

Byram and Esarte-Sarries (1993), Kramsch (1993), Seelye (1993) and Stern (1992) all list goals of English teaching in their works. They all encourage an interaction, an awareness of cultural issues and a positive attitude towards other societies. Aarup, Jaeger and Lorentsen add that "It is debatable whether it should be an objective to promote empathy with the foreign culture, but certainly, a reduction of ethnocentrism and an increased understanding of others are relevant and recommendable goals" (1995, p. 38).

The ultimate goals of the teaching of culture in ELT as discussed above are knowledge, attitudes and skills which are important components of ICC. Therefore, it could be proposed that the ultimate goal of cultural studies in ELT is actually ICC, an idea which will be studied in detail in the following sections. In the next part, the concept of ICC will first be introduced, and then its relationship with communicative competence, which is widely considered to be the ultimate goal of ELT all over the world, will be investigated. The teaching and assessment of ICC will also be examined and finally the difficulties of ICC teaching will be listed.

## **5.1 The Concept of ICC**

The concept associated with the term 'ICC' has been defined by scholars all over the world in recent decades (Aarup et al., 1995; Byram, 1995; Byram, 2002; Chen, 1989; Fantini, 2000; Hymes, 1972; Kim & Hubbard, 2007; Sercu, 1995). There seems to be no agreed definition of the term up to the present.

Byram (1995) summarizes ICC in ELT as *savoir-être* (attitudes), *savoir* (knowledge), *savoir-comprendre* (skills to interpret and relate), *savoir-s'engager*

(critical cultural awareness) and *savoir-faire* (ability to interact and discover). Byram defines cultural knowledge as “knowledge about social groups and their cultures in one’s own country, and similar knowledge of the interlocutor’s country on the one hand; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels, on the other hand” (1997, p. 27). For learners of English, the interlocutors can be people all over the world because of its lingua franca nature. Therefore, while dealing with English teaching, the knowledge in this definition can firstly refer to different cultures and languages between people of different countries or even people of different social groups in the same country. Second, English is a global language. People use English to communicate with other people of different cultures. These cultures are not confined to any one country, such as America or Britain. Third, it might be possible for some people to focus on the cultures of some countries that they often deal with. For example, if a person works in a small company with colleagues from India, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia only, then that person can pay special attention to their cultural knowledge. This may help when they communicate in their daily working life.

On the basis of Byram’s *savoirs* theory, Sercu (2005, p. 3) summarizes the concept of ICC as knowledge, skills and attitudes. *Knowledge* in his definition refers to specific culture and general culture, knowledge of self and other, and knowledge about the language and its relationship with culture. *Skills* mainly refers to the ability to interpret, relate, discover, interact and acquire knowledge and to strategies to direct one’s own learning. *Attitudes* mainly refers to the attitude towards relativizing self and valuing others and a critical engagement with the foreign culture under consideration and one’s own. Sercu’s definition not only covers most aspects of Byram’s definition, it also strongly stresses the role of home culture or local culture.

The definition given above has attracted great attention and has been quoted by many scholars (Alptekin, 2002; Duan, 2006; Huang, 2006; S. Li, 2002; Sercu, 2005) worldwide. Although other definitions of ICC have also been voiced (Alptekin, 2002; Risager, 2007), almost all the definitions contain the three aspects outlined above. As Fantini (2000) suggests, the three principle themes stay the same. Fantini (2000) himself describes ICC in a different way with a variety

of traits, in at least five dimensions, which may be viewed as a developmental process. The traits include respect, empathy, flexibility, patience, interest, curiosity, openness, motivation, a sense of humour, tolerance of ambiguity and a willingness to suspend judgment, among others. The five dimensions are awareness, attitudes, skills, knowledge and proficiency in the host tongue. This is a developmental process because once it has begun, ICC development is an on-going and lengthy, often lifelong, process (Fantini, 2000). Fantini's explanation is detailed and clear but also complex. The point he makes in his definition sounds very important, which is that there are degrees of ICC during the lengthy process, and it may take one's whole life to develop ICC to a certain degree. It helps people to realize that degrees of ICC exist, and that ICC requires a long learning process.

This dissertation will explore how ICC is taught and learned through ELT textbooks in China; most Chinese authors (Duan, 2006; Han, Lu & Dong, 1995; Huang, 2006; S. Li, 2002; Xiao, 2005; Y. Li, 2002) regard Byram's, Sercu's and some other experts' ICC theories listed above as authorities. To summarize their concepts of ICC, a person with a high degree of ICC is someone who:

- a) has other cultural knowledge and is also fully aware of her/his own culture;
- b) has insight into the relationship between cultures;
- c) has the skill to mediate between cultures and interpret culture;
- d) has the ability to learn new cultural knowledge fast, enabling rapid, successful interaction in an unfamiliar cultural situation; and
- e) is able to integrate all the knowledge and skills to act appropriately in an intercultural situation.

This research will adopt the definitions of ICC put forward by those cited above. The concept of ICC in ELT adopted in this dissertation further contains the following three elements. The first is knowledge, referring here not only to basic cultural knowledge, but also to knowledge about the international nature of the language and the connection between the language and culture. Without understanding that English is a global language and that learners themselves are owners of the language, it is hard to teach world cultures and home culture through the language. Learners may believe that English is the carrier of

Anglo-American cultures only. Due to the fact that the English language cannot be bound to any one of the cultures which it carries, knowledge here refers to a combination of cultures which include Anglo-American cultures, other world cultures and internationally shared culture. In addition, as Kramsch (1993) suggests, foreign culture should also be put in relation with one's own. Proper topics and content need to be selected under the consideration of one's own culture in ELT. The second is skills, referring to the skills to observe, interpret, analyse, evaluate, relate and interact with other cultures and one's own culture (Byram, 1997, 2002; Sercu, 2005). The third is attitudes, which may more or less be formed through the learning process of linguistic points, knowledge and skills. Attitudes in ICC are primarily about openness, respect, curiosity and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2002; Jordan, 1997; Risager, 2007).

## **5.2 The Relationship between Communicative Competence and ICC**

As discussed above, ICC is agreed by many people to be the ultimate aim of the teaching and learning of culture. Its significance in ELT will also be investigated through its relationship with communicative competence.

Not many people doubt the importance of communicative competence in ELT, and it is widely believed to be the ultimate aim of ELT in many countries in the world (Aarup et al., 1995; Alptekin, 2002; Corbett, 2003; Ellis 1996). For example, the Chinese government has stated since 1999 that communicative competence is the ultimate goal of language teaching and learning (Department of Higher Education, 1999). For most learners, the main purpose of learning English is also to communicate in speaking, listening, reading and writing. However, language and culture are closely related. Successful communication also requires ICC, but it is often called a hidden curriculum in ELT, because its significance is still not acknowledged.

However, given that language is in culture and culture is in language and that language teaching is also the teaching of culture, intercultural competence and communicative competence are inseparable. Successful communication also requires intercultural competence. Communicative competence alone is not sufficient any more. As Sercu suggests:

Communicative competence refers to a person's ability to act in a foreign language in a linguistically, socio-linguistically and pragmatically appropriate way. Intercultural communicative competence, then, builds on communicative competence and enlarges it to incorporate intercultural competence. (Sercu, 2005, p. 3)

According to Canale and Swain (1980), Orwig (1999) and Byram (1995), *grammatical competence* or *linguistic competence* mainly refers to the ability to use linguistic knowledge to communicate. The term *sociolinguistic competence*, coined by Canale and Swain, refers to the ability to use the language to express oneself and respond properly. *Strategic competence* or *pragmatic competence* refers to the ability to be aware of and to repair the situation when a communication becomes stuck, and the ability to enhance the effectiveness of a communication. As discussed in Chapter Two, none of these three aspects can be understood without any cultural influences. Grammar embeds culture; sociolinguistic competence certainly cannot be restricted to the communication between people of the same language background. The response therefore has to be culturally proper. The ability to repair communication also requires intercultural competence, because communication often becomes stuck for cultural reasons rather than linguistic reasons. The ability refers to skills and attitudes, and not just to knowledge (Byram, 1995; Sercu, 1995). It is hard to say whether ICC is built on communicative competence, but they are definitely bound together and develop together. Byram suggests that "Intercultural competence together with learners' linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence form intercultural communicative competence (ICC)" (1997, p. 71).

In short, communicative competence could be considered to be the goal of English teaching, and English communication is in fact intercultural communication. As a result, ICC is surely an indispensable part of and a goal of ELT.

### **5.3 ICC Teaching**

ICC training seems to be becoming a popular subject nowadays. Many people (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Byram, 2002; Corbett, 2003; Gudykunst, Guzley & Hammer, 1996; Jordan, 1994; Korhonen, 2010; Neuliep, 2006) have produced

books and papers suggesting approaches to ICC training. Gudykunst et al. (1996) and Neuliep (2006) suggest a variety of activities to be used in intercultural training. They recommend that lecture/discussions, self-assessment instruments, case studies, and simulation role-plays and videos should be used in cross-cultural training programmes (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Neuliep, 2006). Although when they study intercultural training, they look at the training as a separate programme rather than a part of ELT, the approaches they suggest may all be integrated into ELT in practice. As Corbett (2003) shows, in ELT, “the classroom activities adopted in an intercultural approach do not very often stray from those activities familiar from much communicative teaching and learning: role-play, simulation, project work, debates and questionnaires, with attendant reading, listening and viewing tasks” (p. 210). Therefore, the teaching of ICC seems quite applicable in ELT if the activities are available. In other words, the teaching of ICC needs to be conducted through activities, because it involves skills and attitude training and development which cannot be carried out by lecturing alone. Since ICC is a part of ELT, it needs to be integrated into the teaching process, so the activities may need to be a part of the speaking, listening, reading and writing activities in ELT.

Activities that are often used in ELT such as discussions/debates, role-plays and presentations can all be used to teach ICC if they are designed for that purpose, because “intercultural tasks, like communicative tasks allow for a range of settings: from individual work, pair work and group work to whole-class activities” (Corbett, 2003, p. 43). Presentation and discussions/debates can be used for cultural knowledge learning and reviewing. In discussions, the trainer presents and discusses the similarities and differences between cultures, and this format is easy to organize in a college classroom context. Role-play can be used for skills and attitudes training and can also strengthen knowledge learning. Role-play exercises typically have trainees actually engaging in intercultural communication.

The problem is whether the activities put learners into an intercultural scenario and encourage cultural comparison and studies. Practising normal language expressions such as ‘... how are you?’, ‘... I am fine, thank you’ may not play an effective role in ICC training. Consequently, a critical incident approach is strongly recommended by many people (Brislin & Yoshida 1994; Jordan, 1994; Neuliep, 2006; Williams, 2001) in ELT. According to Wight (1995),

critical incidents were first used in a cross-cultural context in the 1960s. “Critical incidents are short descriptions of contexts in which there is a problem arising from cultural differences between the interacting parties, or where there is a problem of intercultural adjustment” (Korhonen, 2010, p. 38). This approach allows trainees to indirectly observe intercultural communication and empathize with the people involved. For example: the cultural incidents used on the ESLGO website illustrate the need for knowledge, skills and attitudes in an intercultural situation, as is demonstrated by the following example.

**Korean:**

You are a Korean language teacher who lived in the Philippines for two years and then moved to Japan where you lived for five years. You have just returned to the Philippines for a new teaching position and an old Filipino friend meets you at the airport. After you greet your friend (you bowed and then shook hands), your friend seems to get angry. You are not sure why your friend is angry, but you need to find out. (ESLGO website)

**Filipino:**

You are picking your Korean friend up at the airport. You used to be great friends but you haven't seen him in five years so you expect a warm welcome. However, when your friend arrives all you get is a cold bow and a quick handshake. You were expecting an embrace and then a little chat with your friend's arm around your shoulders. You would like to find out why your friend is acting so coldly. It may be a cultural conflict but then again, it may not be; your friend did live in the Philippines for two years. (ESLGO website)

This is an example which requires intercultural competence which is not just knowledge but also skills and attitudes. To solve the conflict in the example, both parties need to explain what they find unusual about the other's behaviour and each needs to realize the other's cultural perceptions and to be aware of the changes and likely reasons for them. To be able to explain and to be willing to explain is a key skill of intercultural communication, as is the ability to realize others' cultural perceptions and how they may contrast with their own. Each person also needs the right attitude about how people greet each other in the other's culture and, in this case, in a relevant third culture (Japan). The guidance for such a discussion or role-play is also very important. It needs to lead learners

to ICC learning. For example the guiding questions given in this activity are as follows:

1. Both people explain what they find unusual about the other's behaviour.
2. Each person realizes the other's cultural perceptions.
3. Each person learns how the problem would be handled in the other's culture.
4. Together, the two people develop conflict solutions. (ESLGO website)

This sets up a process for skills and attitudes training and it encourages learners to learn how to deal with cultural conflicts. If this kind of activity is designed and used in the teaching materials for speaking, listening, and even reading and writing activities, ICC training and development are more likely to be embedded in English teaching and learning. To conclude, ICC can be taught in ELT, but it requires attention so that the activities or even the content of the teaching material are designed with ICC in mind.

#### **5.4 The Assessment of ICC**

If ICC is very important in ELT, its assessment also needs exploring. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are all tested all over the world through all kinds of testing systems. If ICC is going to become a part of ELT, its assessment will also become an issue. The assessment of ICC has not been specified in the curriculums, but some commentators have suggested that it should be considered in the future (Byram, 1997; Ellis, 1996; Wang, 2005). Many scholars have suggested ways of assessing it. Their suggestions will be examined in this section so that a solution can be reached.

Some intercultural specialists have worked on the design of ICC assessment since 1976. Ruben (1976) identifies seven elements and creates a general model for intercultural communication competence. His Intercultural Behavioural Assessment Indices (IBAI) is an instrument to measure ICC.

Communicative competence is defined by Ruben as “the ability to function in a manner that is perceived to be relatively consistent with the needs, capacities, goals and expectations of the individuals in one's environment while

satisfying one's own needs, capacities, goals, and expectations" (1976, p. 336). The seven elements of his IBAI that make individuals function effectively in intercultural settings are "display of respect, interaction posture, orientation to knowledge, empathy, role behaviors, interaction management and tolerance of ambiguity".

Chen (1991) finds that Ruben's instrument is mostly reliable. He further examined the seven elements of IBAI by conducting a survey among 149 foreign students enrolled in a large midwest university in the United States and 129 Americans identified by the foreign student subjects as persons who knew them well. The foreign students were asked to complete five questionnaires to measure the above-mentioned elements that are related to communication competence. Ruben used the 31-item general disclosure scale developed by Weeless (1978), the 23-item self-consciousness scale developed by Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975), the 18-item interaction involvement scale, developed by Cegala (1981), the 20-item communicative adaptability scale developed by Wheeless and Duran (1982) and the 26-item social situations questionnaire developed by Furnham and Bochner (1982). Finally, the 129 American raters were asked to rate the foreign student subjects on the seven items of IBAI. Overall, the result of this survey showed that Ruben's (1976) IBAI is a reliable instrument for measuring ICC. Chen observed there are disadvantages as well, in that the instrument is too lengthy and imprecise.

Although the IBAI system has been proved to be generally reliable by Chen, in fact Chen and Ruben suggest that the assessment of ICC be carried out by some Americans or maybe other native speakers. The method which they propose is to ask native speakers to assess the ICC of international students. This seems to be a good idea because, sometimes, people themselves cannot assess their own ICC; also, because ICC shows an interaction with others, very often, the interlocutor is the best choice to carry out the assessment. On the other hand, this method also reveals its limitation: being able to communicate with Americans does not mean being able to communicate in English with all the people who use English as a Lingua Franca. This method can only persuade people to give priority to American culture and ignore the fact that English is used internationally.

Furthermore, as observed by Chen (1991), the method is too lengthy and imprecise.

A YOGA form designed by School of International Training has been recommended by Fantini:

The term “YOGA” stands for “Your Objectives, Guidelines, and Assessment” form. This form may be used as a self-evaluation guide. It is designed to help you examine the development of your intercultural communicative competence. This pilot form should help you to critically examine your intercultural objectives, serve as guidelines while undergoing an intercultural experience, and provide an assessment tool at various stages of intercultural development. (1995, p. 2)

The form has five parts: awareness, attitude, skills, knowledge and language proficiency. Each part incorporates assessment content at four levels.

Level I: Educational Traveller — participants in short-term exchange programmes; 4-6weeks.

Level II: Sojourner — longer cultural immersion, interns and participants in college semester abroad programmes and intercultural internships of long duration; 4-8 months.

Level III: Professional — staff who work in an intercultural or multicultural context; School for International Training and World Learning employees, alumni, project staff, EIL national directors.

Level IV: Intercultural/Multicultural Specialist — individuals involved in training, educating, consulting and advising international students, overseas directors and cross-cultural trainers. (1995, p. 2)

Fantini also mentions that it is useful to have a native of the host culture to rate as well. This will provide learners with not only their own perspective, but that of their hosts as well. However, the YOGA form is mainly used for self-assessment. As mentioned above, one may not know exactly about one’s ICC. For example, one criterion in level one of the skill section is ‘I use models appropriate to the culture and I avoid offending my hosts with my behavior, dress, etc’ (1995. p. 3). Very often, one does not know what is appropriate and one cannot realize the offence until a few years later. Sometimes, only the interlocutor can feel the offence and the reasons for being offended immediately or soon after

the moment. Consequently, many questions in this method are difficult to answer and their reliability is questionable.

Byram (1997) lists detailed ICC teaching, learning and assessment objectives from the four *savoir* dimensions referred to earlier. He suggests that assessment of ICC should address those four aspects. Byram states that assessing levels of *savoir* is less problematic. He thinks that it is possible to quantify the knowledge retained from a course or the knowledge acquired at a given point. Deep learning should be assessed through techniques such as essay writing. He also suggests that it is almost impossible to measure precisely someone's *savoir comprendre*. The learners might be assessed on the "frequency of success, documented over time, since the complexity of the mediation process militates against the possibility of assessing *savoir comprendre* on one occasion only" (1997, p. 76). In terms of *savoir faire* and part of *savoir s'engager*, Byram (1997) writes that "there is no guarantee that success on one occasion means success on a later occasion which might be more complex" (1997, p. 77). He suggests that the assessment of *savoir faire* should be done through analysis of performance by the learners themselves retrospectively. *Savoir apprendre* is parallel to *savoir comprendre*. It can be assessed in terms of the degree of comprehensiveness of the learner's explanation and interpretation. The assessor should decide which references are crucial to understanding and which are complementary.

It can be seen from Byram's suggestions that ICC is an ambiguous concept, because it is related to people's skills and attitudes which can be ambiguous and difficult to describe. The assessment of it therefore is very difficult. It requires a long observing period and much effort. It is not easily possible to assess someone's ICC by using multiple-choice questions and short-answer questions, so it is also impossible to give a definite mark for a learner in this assessment. All the above reasons make the assessment very difficult in ELT. However, the purpose of assessment is only to encourage learning. As Byram says:

When assessment recognizes all aspects of ICC, even if they cannot be quantified and reduced to a single score, then the learner can see their efforts rewarded, and the teacher and curriculum planner can give full attention to the whole phenomenon of ICC rather than only that which can be represented statistically. (1997, p.

If any conclusion can be drawn, it is that the assessment of ICC is not the same as the assessment of linguistic competence, which has clear marking criteria. It is something much more complex. The purpose of this assessment is to stimulate people to learn ICC and pay attention to it in the process of language teaching and learning. In terms of assessing methodology, there are many choices and, very often, one choice or even a combination of some methods may not work. ICC assessment may need to be conducted in various ways. Approaches to assessment should consider direct and indirect indicators, quantitative and qualitative information, and discrete and global information. They may include self-evaluation and peer evaluation, as well as staff evaluation of participants (Fantini, 2000). No matter what the method is, the process of developing assessment methods is significant, because it encourages the development of ICC in foreign-language teaching. However, a wrong assessment can also cause misunderstanding of ICC. Therefore, the assessment of ICC needs to be approached with careful design and research.

### **5.5 Difficulties of ICC Training**

As discussed above, ICC is one of the ultimate goals of the teaching of culture and ELT, and it seems to be the only solution to all the problems put forward in Sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. In this solution, the ownership of culture does not matter. The point is the teaching and learning of knowledge, attitudes and skills. However, there are many difficulties in ICC teaching.

First, although ICC can be taught and integrated in ELT, it needs a group of experts who are able to design materials for ICC training and a group of teachers who understand what ICC is and are able to teach ICC. However, most language teachers are not trained in the area of cultural studies (Aarup et al., 1995; Byram, 1989). Aarup et al. (1995) suggest that most language teachers rely totally on their students' cognitive skills and ability to acquire, preserve and transfer the information presented into useful knowledge of the foreign culture. Their comments show teachers' fear when facing the requirement of teaching culture in their classes: they are afraid of not knowing enough of the foreign culture, so the

teaching of culture is often ignored by teachers, intentionally or not. To solve this problem, more training and well-designed teaching material is needed. Byram also says that “The first and most obvious problem is how to construct curriculums that can be taught by ordinary teachers or ordinary students and at the same time reflect clearly the basis or underlying principles of various fields of inquiry” (1989, p. 46). To summarize, trained teachers and experts in this area are still needed in ELT.

Second, although culture is very important in language learning and teaching, the linguistic part has always been the focus. It is not possible to spend the majority of the time on the teaching of culture, so cultural studies that can be conducted in English classes are limited. Third, it is hard to teach attitudes and skills. Although certain degrees of success can be achieved from discussion, role-play and activities that can put learners into an intercultural situation, the activities that focus on intercultural competence sometimes require special design and teachers’ and students’ full awareness. Finally, all three aspects of ICC are difficult to assess. Teaching, learning and assessment seem to be a whole unit in ELT. Assessment encourages teaching and learning, but the assessment of ICC still needs more exploration.

Although ICC teaching is difficult, it is still the ultimate goal of the teaching of culture and one of the objectives of ELT. Its significance outweighs its difficulties, so many scholars all over the world are seeking ways to improve ICC teaching and assessment.

## **6. Conclusion**

The teaching of culture in ELT is problematic because the English language itself is not straightforward, as argued in Chapter Two. The ownership of the language and the culture it carries becomes hard to define. Although in ELT, British and American English is considered standard, the focus on Anglo-American culture denies the fact that English is used internationally. The solutions to this problem, which are teaching world cultures and internationally shared culture, are not perfect, so ICC is brought into focus. Although ICC teaching also has its own difficulties, cultural knowledge of all the above cultures, skills and attitudes are all

suggested to be important aspects of the teaching of culture in ELT.

## Chapter Four: Methodology

### 1. Research Questions

The teaching of culture and ICC is an indispensable part of ELT. This thesis has College English teaching in China as its main focus and three aspects of this will be studied: teachers, students and textbooks. The first question which this research addresses is how teachers and students understand the teaching of culture. Their perception of the teaching of culture, the importance of culture in ELT and their interface with the requirements of the government might all influence the teaching and learning of culture.

As demonstrated in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, English is a carrier of world cultures, and it may be used to express all varieties of culture. Therefore, ELT should, logically, be about native speakers' cultures, world cultures and internationally shared culture. Because a textbook is one of the most important sources of cultural studies in College English teaching in China (Duan, 2006; Gao, 2005; Yang, 1998), the second research question is: What varieties of culture are taught through textbooks in ELT in China?

The final question is about the extent to which *College English* textbooks teach culture and ICC. Although variety of culture is a significant aspect that the teaching of culture in ELT needs to consider, there are also many other aspects that the teaching of culture may involve, for example, up-to-date and realistic information, stereotypes and how ICC is cultivated through activities. These are also issues that have attracted much attention in the study of the teaching of culture in ELT. This research will also examine other aspects that the teaching of culture involves in order to analyse the extent to which the textbooks help the teaching of culture and ICC training.

To summarize, the three research questions are:

- a. How do teachers and students understand the teaching of culture?
- b. What varieties of culture are taught through textbooks in ELT and how can culture taught through College English textbooks be characterized?

- c. To what extent do textbooks help the teaching and learning of culture and ICC training in ELT?

## **2. Research Methods**

Clearly, different methods were required to obtain answers to these questions. Questionnaires were conducted among teachers and students, and interviews were conducted among teachers. Content analysis was applied to determine the varieties of culture taught through textbooks, and a content-based analysis, which is also an analytical tool in the development of textbook analysis, was used to find out how textbooks teach culture. An introduction to each of the four methods used will be provided in the following sections.

### **2.1 Questionnaires and Interviews in the Teachers' Survey**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

“Interviews and questionnaires together make up the survey method, which is one of the most popular techniques of social research” (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 268). Questionnaires are a quick and straightforward quantitative method of obtaining facts and demographic information (Fowler, 2002). Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences. In spite of the possible bias associated with interviews, an interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic, so interviews may be useful as a follow-up to certain respondents’ questionnaires (McNamara, 1999). In interviews, researchers can not only obtain detailed answers, they can also clarify an interviewee’s meaning when ambiguity occurs (Foddy, 1993; Sarantakos, 2005; Shrivastava, 2007). In this research, questionnaires were used to collect some demographic information such as the age of the interviewees and the names of their universities. They were also used to collect the English translation of the key terms used in the curriculums. The interviews were semi-structured and, as such, conducted with a fairly open framework which allows for focused, conversational and two-way communication (Case, 1990; Sarantakos, 2005) (see Appendix C for the interview questions). In the interviews, the participants were asked to explain terms and their translations of them, and their own understandings of the teaching of culture.

### **2.1.2 Research Purpose**

Many key terms used in the curriculums may need clarification, because first, the terms used are not explained in the curriculums and their meanings might be obscure; second, there are different ways of translating the terms; and third, the translations given in the English version of the curriculums might be arguable and need further explanations. The four key terms are: *yu yan zhi shi*, *yu yan neng li*, *kua wen hua jiao ji* and *wen hua su yang*. In the questionnaire (see Appendix B for the questions), the respondents were asked to translate these four terms.

In the interviews (see Appendix C for the questions), there was an exploration of the extent to which teachers understood the terms while using them as guidance and referring to them as requirements. The textbooks are full of culture, but teachers may need to be aware of the cultures and be able to teach them. The interviews were also intended to find out, in practice, how teachers understood and performed the teaching of culture.

### **2.1.3 Participants**

Forty-one Chinese teachers of English from eight universities and five provinces answered the questionnaires, and 23 of them were interviewed. Of the teachers who participated in this research, only the survey for the teachers in an Engineering University in Heilongjiang province of China was conducted in China. The others were all conducted in a university in England while the participants were in England for short-term teacher training. The teachers were from different age groups, and they had all worked for at least two years as teachers of English. For ethical reasons, the exact names of the universities are not mentioned in this research. Table 4.1 shows some detailed information about the participants.

**Table 4.1. Participants in the Teachers' Survey**

University and Province	Number of teachers	
	Questionnaire	Interview
An Engineering University, Heilongjiang province	15	8
A Science and Technology University, Zhejiang province	14	8
A Foreign Language College, Guangzhou province	3	3
A Normal University, Jiangxi province	2	2
A Medical University, Shandong province	1	1
A College of Education, Shangdong province	1	1
A Local University, Jiangxi province	2	-
A Normal University, Jiangxi province	3	-
<b>Total:</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23</b>

**2.1.4 Data Collection**

The questionnaires were handed out to the teachers in offices and classrooms and then collected individually after completion. For those who accepted the interview, interviews were conducted face-to-face individually in offices, café areas or classrooms. Each interview took about twenty minutes and all the interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder, with the permission of the interviewees. Before the interview, the interviewees were asked to write their names on the questionnaire, so that the translations in the questionnaires could be referred to and queried where appropriate.

**2.1.5 Data Handling**

One of the main purposes of the questionnaire was to check whether the teachers were appropriate interviewees. The intention was to see whether they had taught College English to non-English majors in universities. The answers revealed that they had all taught that course for at least two years, so this piece of information was not analysed quantitatively. The translations collected through the

questionnaires were categorized by question. That is to say, all possible translations for each term used in the curriculums were collected and put together for further analysis.

The interview data were transcribed and saved in Word documents (see Appendix G for sample transcripts). They were finally categorized by interview question. All the answers to one question were put together for further qualitative analysis. Because the answers are needed in the discussions in different parts of the dissertation, they are presented in Appendix A in the order of the interview questions, and are also used in the section in which they are needed.

## **2.2 Questionnaires in the Students' Survey**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

Although questionnaires do not allow probing and clarification of questions, they are easy to conduct and analyse, and this is especially true for studies involving large sample sizes and large geographic areas (Sarantakos, 2005; Silverman, 2000; Walonick, 1993). This method becomes even more cost-effective as the number of research questions increases (Walonick, 1993). Questionnaires also offer greater assurance of anonymity than other research methods. They are a stable, consistent and uniform measure which offers a considered and objective view of the issue (Dickson Casey, Wyckoff & Wynd, 1977; Jones, 1979; Sarantakos, 2005). In this research, questionnaires were used but due consideration was also given to the use of interviews if the data obtained from the questionnaires proved to be hard to understand.

Learners obviously play a very important role in language teaching, and their perception of the teaching of culture may also reflect how the teaching is conducted. The purpose of this survey was to find out students' perceptions of the teaching of culture and how and what culture is taught in English classes, according to their understanding.

### **2.2.2. Pilot Studies**

#### **2.2.2.1 The First Pilot Study**

The first pilot survey was conducted in a university in England in August 2008. Thirty-six students were asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix E for the pilot questionnaire). Because of uncertainty as to whether they were an appropriate group of students for the research, not many questions about the teaching of culture and textbooks were asked in the pilot questionnaire. The purpose of the pilot study was mainly to determine whether they were appropriate students following a College English programme in Chinese universities. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire (Questions 1 to 8) included some demographic questions about students' names, gender and educational background. The questions might have to be changed when they were applied to a different group of students. For example, in the questionnaire, students were asked how long they had been in Britain, but if the questionnaire was used in a Chinese university, this question would have to be changed or deleted. The second part of the questionnaire (Questions 9 to 12) was composed of three rating-scale questions. These questions addressed English teaching and learning purposes.

By using rating-scale questions in this pilot study, only a vague idea of an English class could be obtained. For example, if a student chose to 'rarely agree' with 'The teacher organizes group or pair discussion about some cultural points in the text', it was still not clear how the teaching of culture was conducted. It was therefore decided that short-answer questions would be used in the next survey, primarily to obtain more objective answers.

The first pilot study was mainly carried out to find out how feasible it was to conduct the survey in the UK. The results showed that the students in the UK were not sufficiently typical for the research because they were from different educational backgrounds. Some had never studied in a Chinese university and many had never used any College English textbook. Most of them had come abroad through a cooperation programme and they used books specifically designed for that programme. Furthermore, they were a special group of students precisely because they were in the UK. Their purpose of learning English and their understanding about the teaching of culture might have been different from students in China. Consequently, it was decided to carry out the survey in China,

because the research is aimed at College English teaching and textbooks used in Chinese universities.

### **2.2.2.2 The Second Pilot Study**

Because the survey was going to be carried out in an Engineering University in China, the questionnaire was re-designed. The second pilot study was conducted in October 2008 in China. The questionnaire (see Appendix F) was piloted with eighteen students in an Engineering University in Heilongjiang Province. The pilot study showed that the questionnaire was easy to understand, and that it took about fifteen minutes on average to complete.

Respondents were allowed to answer the questions in Chinese if necessary, and they were given enough time to do it. They were also told to ask questions if they had any. The questions in the questionnaire proved to be easy to understand. The answers which the students provided were also detailed and helpful.

### **2.2.3 Final Questionnaire Survey**

#### **2.2.3.1 Introduction**

A large-scale survey was then conducted by means of a questionnaire (see Appendix F for the questionnaire questions) in an Engineering University in Heilongjiang Province of China in November 2008. The New Horizon College English (NHCE) textbooks were used in that university. The teaching started from Book One of that series. Because much of the background information about all the students was the same and was known before the survey, no questions about the name of university and the name of the textbook were asked.

There were ten questions in the questionnaire. The first three were used to collect some demographic information. Question 4 was a rating-scale question about students' purposes of learning English. The final six questions were all short-answer questions in which students' attitudes towards textbooks, English classes and the teaching of culture were investigated. Because the focus of the research is to find out how culture is taught in College English classes and students are the focus of a class, questions such as "Does your teacher teach

culture in classes? If yes, how and how often?”, “Are you interested in culture learning? Why?” and “Which culture are you most interested in, e.g. British and Indian? Why?” were asked to find out how College English teaching supported the teaching of culture and whether the teaching matched students’ needs.

### 2.2.3.2 Participants

In total, 202 students took part in the survey, but only 200 questionnaires were valid. The participants were students in their first year or their second year, because College English is only designed for first- and second-year students. They were chosen at random from four faculties of the university. Details about the participants are shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2. Information about Participants in the Engineering University**

Faculty	No. of Students	Level	Hours of College English classes/week	Other English classes
Naval Architecture and Ocean Engineering	50	Second year	Two: reading and writing Two: listening and speaking	No
Civil Engineering	50	First year	Two: reading and writing Two: listening and speaking	no
Energy and Power Engineering	84	First year	Two: reading and writing Two: listening and speaking	no
International Cooperation	16	First year	Two: reading and writing	IELTS English

### 2.2.3.3 Data Collection

Before the questionnaires were distributed, the participants were told that any data related to identifiable respondents were to be treated as confidential and would not be passed on to anybody without the written consent of the respondent. Furthermore, this promise was also written on the top of all the questionnaires in Chinese so that the students were fully aware of it.

Because there were many short-answer questions in the questionnaires, and a detailed answer was needed for each question, if the answers were not clear, further interviews would have to be organized. This was the reason why all the students were asked to leave their contact details on the questionnaires. To obtain high-quality answers, the participants were divided into small groups by class number with about fifteen to thirty students in each group, so that they were able to ask questions when they needed help. The whole process of the survey in each group was conducted and supervised by the researcher. The answers were easy to understand, so no more interviews were organized.

#### **2.2.3.4 Data Analysis**

Given the simplicity of the data, no software other than Excel was used in the analysis of the data. The data were collated, put into Excel software and analysed quantitatively. Figures were shown in pie charts and bar charts, and the percentage of each category was also calculated. As with the results in the teachers' interviews, the results gained from this survey were mainly to be used as evidence to support the discussion in different parts of the dissertation. The results have been put in Appendix D in the order of the questions asked (see Appendix F) and then used when needed in the discussion.

### **2.3 Content Analysis**

In this research, a content analysis method was applied to identify the varieties of culture taught through textbooks. A brief introduction to the textbooks will be followed by an overview of the method.

#### **2.3.1 Textbooks**

##### **2.3.1.1 An Introduction to *College English* Textbooks**

A textbook used in College English teaching is called 'College English' in general, its previous name being 'Intensive Reading'. Normally, there are several series of College English books on the market for universities to choose from, such as *New Horizon College English* (NHCE) which was first published by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in 2001, two editions of *College English*

(CE) which were published by the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press in 2001 and 2006 respectively, *Experiencing English* which was published in 2002 by the Higher Education Group Press, *New Era Interactive English* which was first published in 2003 by the Tsinghua University Press, *New College English* which was first published in 1999 by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and *New Standard College English* which was first published by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in 2009.

A series of textbooks used to be composed of six Reading and Writing books, which are also called Integrated Course books or Intensive Reading books in some series. Nowadays, however, most series of *College English* books are not only made up of Reading and Writing books, but also Listening and Speaking books, Extensive Reading books, Speed Reading books, Exercise books, CD-ROM, online courses, online testing banks and, in some series, even more supporting materials. However, the Reading and Writing books and Listening and Speaking books are the focus of College English teaching. Other sources are often used by students after classes. Most books suggest four hours of College English classes a week, two hours for reading and writing and two for listening and speaking. Therefore, only Reading and Writing books and Listening and Speaking books were selected for analysis in this dissertation.

The most important part of a series of books is always Book One to Book Four (band one to band four). As indicated by Feng (2002), the curriculums make it plain that the first four foundation-stage courses, band one to band four, are the required courses for the majority of students. In fact, they constitute the basic required achievement level. Feng also states that to a great majority of students, completing the College English programme means passing the College English test (CET) band four, and although some series of books also have pre-foundation stage textbooks, only a very small percentage of students with very weak English in non-key universities take those courses. Band one to band four are the books normally used in English classes in universities, and in fact the design and structure of the four bands of books is very similar. The main part of each book comprises a text, new words and some exercises based on the text.

### **2.3.1.2 *College English* Textbooks Writing**

There is no government document that gives specific requirements for textbook writing in China. The only official document about English teaching in China is the curriculum, which states clearly the ultimate goals of College English teaching and learning. All the textbook writers consider the curriculums as guidance and requirements, and this is clearly stated in the preface to each series. Feng (2000) wrote a PhD dissertation about College English textbooks in China and had the opportunity to interview a few textbook writers and some authorities in the English teaching field. He also points out that there are few documents to follow in terms of textbook writing except the curriculums. The curriculum is the only official document from which a textbook writer can obtain any guidance (Feng, 2000). It may be because of the lack of official guidance, in recent years, more and more researchers have conducted research to find out what types of English textbooks students and teachers would like to have. Many textbook writers also did research before the compilation of textbooks. For example, Zheng and Wei (1997) did some research about the 'Text as Vehicle for Information' theory and a study of the topics that teachers and students were interested in before the compilation of the NHCE series. Zhai (2001) examined the significance of up-to-date information and interesting topics in textbooks in one of his papers before the publication of his series of textbooks. Many other researchers (Duan, 2006; Li, 2002; Wang, 2008) have studied textbook samples and put forward suggestions for textbook compilation. Variety of cultural topics and student-centered activities are the greatest focuses of concern in their research.

According to the preface to most textbooks, it seems the parameter to which the textbook writers refer is initially vocabulary. In recent curriculums, there is a vocabulary list at the back of each book. The vocabulary list is said to cover the words that should be taught and tested in CET tests, and therefore in each book, the textbook writers try to adapt the text to satisfy this requirement and they also mark all the words that appear in this list. The second parameter is genres and topics. In the preface to each book, they all mention the selection of texts, which is based on a variety of genres and topics. They suggest that fiction and non-fiction texts should all be selected. The issue of topics is obviously considered very important because all the books are divided into units according to topics. Therefore, these two aspects are taken seriously by textbook writers.

The final parameter which is also stressed in the preface to most textbooks is that material should be interesting, informative and enlightening. Feng and Byram mention that “the criteria that writers of College English textbooks have so far followed most closely are the three basic principles of text selection stipulated in *College English Curriculum* (Department of Higher Education, 1985), that is, texts selected should be “interesting, informative and enlightening” (2002, p. 67). These three principles have proved to be very important up to the present because most textbooks writers still adhere to them (Dong, 2009b). Feng and Byram (2002) also point out an important issue: that Dong (1992) and Liu (1987), who are both textbook writers, interpret the second principle – selecting informative texts – as a principle for choosing materials for cultural studies.

### **2.3.1.3 Textbooks Selected for Evaluation**

Among the textbooks mentioned above, *New Horizon College English* (NHCE), which was first published by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in 2001, and the two editions of *College English*, which were published by the Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press in 2001 and 2006 respectively, were selected for analysis. This is because first, the structure and design of most books is in fact similar, except for the newly published *New Standard College English*, which looks different from traditional textbooks published in China and more similar to the internationally published ELT books. Although there are certainly differences in the content of each book, only a few series and a few books in each series could be analysed as examples in this research. Second, the books were the most widely used ones. When the teachers were interviewed, the first informal question was which textbook they had used in College English Teaching. Only these three series were mentioned. Third, the research started in 2007, and most books were collected from China in late 2008, so many newly published books could not be introduced and analysed in this research. Therefore, the books selected for analysis in this dissertation were as follows:

**Table 4.3. Books Selected for Analysis**

<b>Names of the Books</b>	<b>Book Numbers (Students' and Teachers' books)</b>
<i>New Horizon College English</i> (NHCE)	Reading and Writing Book One and Book Two Listening and Speaking Book One
<i>Third Edition College English</i> (TECE)	Reading and Writing Book One and Book Two Listening and Speaking Book One
<i>New College English</i> (NCE)	Reading and Writing Book One to Four Listening and Speaking Book One

#### **2.3.1.4 A Brief Introduction to the NCE, TECE and NHCE Series**

In the NEC series, there are eight units in each volume. Each unit has a topic and is composed of four parts: a pre-reading task, Text A, Text B (for after-class reading) and theme-related language learning tasks. Of these four parts, Text A provides the emphasis for the teaching and learning. There is also an examination paper to test the teaching and learning outcome every four units. The preface to the book makes it clear that the examination paper is designed according to the structure and requirements of CET bands four and six. The purpose is to prepare students for the future CET tests. In the TECE series, there are ten units in each book, and only one text in one unit. Each unit is also composed of a text and some tasks based on the content of the text.

In the NHCE series, there are ten units in each reading book, and three texts in each unit. The reading books are divided into units according to topics. Each unit has a topic, and the three texts in each unit are all about the same topic. Although culture is not highlighted in either the introduction to the book or the website, the topics do show a great concern for culture. When presenting the selection of texts, the introduction confirms that texts must be interesting, informative, enlightening and predictive, and should cover topics about language, culture, customs, science and topical social issues.

#### **2.3.2 An Introduction to the Content Analysis Method**

In order to investigate the varieties of culture that are taught through textbooks in ELT in China, a content analysis method was selected. “Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21). This definition may sound implicit. Perhaps the most common notion is that a content analysis simply means doing a word-frequency count. People often assume that the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concerns (Stemler, 2001). However, as stated by Stemler, in fact, “Content analysis extends far beyond simple word counts, however. What makes the technique particularly rich and meaningful is its reliance on coding and categorizing of the data” (2001, p. 2). Content analysis is not then simply a word-counting technique. Although, at bottom, it simply measures frequency, the data that is measured need to be systematically and objectively specified and characterized. What is counted may not be a word. It can also be a concept or an image (Hara, 2000; Jupp, 2006; Neuendorf, 2002; Slater, 1998).

In this research, what were counted were the instances of variety of culture introduced through *College English* textbooks used in China. The four categories are: (i) native speakers’ culture, which is divided into American culture, British culture and other native speakers’ cultures, (ii) World cultures, which are divided into Chinese culture and other World cultures, (iii) internationally shared culture and (iv) ‘not given’. Although this research also made inferences according to the frequency of different varieties of culture mentioned in the books, this was quite different from standard content analysis. First, nowadays, content analysis is often used to analyse electronic sources especially when a large number of sources are involved, so that words in one category can be identified and counted with the help of a computer. In this research, three series of textbooks, including both teachers’ and students’ books, were selected for analysis, and no electronic version was available. To transcribe the books would have been very time-consuming.

Second, even if a transcription had been available, the coding categories are general categories such as ‘American culture’, ‘British culture’, and ‘other native speakers’ cultures’, which require factual information and much time to

locate the information. In fact, this coding is mostly based on facts, for instance the name of a city or a country. It would have been very time-consuming to list all the names of cities and towns in the world and search for them in the books. More importantly, this kind of investigation would be of little worth because the mere name of a place is not enough to decide the variety of culture the content is about. The content of a text must be checked to decide which variety of culture it is exactly about. Furthermore, information in the teachers' books, for example the name and nationality of an author, can also be a crucial clue to deciding which variety of culture the text is really about. Consequently, all the books may have to be gone through thoroughly in order to locate the information that can help the coding.

The technique of *a priori* coding was adopted in this research, so four categories as mentioned above were established prior to the analysis based upon the theory stated in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. Four methods of *a priori* coding were applied. The first method consisted of checking source or reference information and background information. Normally such information can provide a context for the text. It sometimes tells where the story happens and which country it is about. The second one was to check the content of the text. By reading through the texts, the name of the city or country in which the story happens is often found to be provided. The third method consisted of checking spelling and vocabulary. Sometimes the spelling and the usage of vocabulary selected in a particular context reveals a particular culture. This method can only be used as a complementary method; no conclusion can be drawn from this method only. The fourth method was to check the subject matter. This method can be used to distinguish internationally shared culture from the others. If a text does not indicate anywhere that it is about a specific variety of culture, before putting it into the category of 'not given', the subject matter was checked. The culture was considered to be international if the subject matter is about internationally shared culture which is shared by the world and addressed to the world as demonstrated in Chapter Two, for example: the advantages and disadvantages of computers. Other examples of internationally shared culture such as world business, tourism and academic culture may all start from a specific country and then are developed to be international. For example, when two countries do business nowadays, they

may adopt a similar contract format which is written in English and may have been invented by native speakers.

### **2.3.2.1 Reliability of the Content Analysis Method**

“Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (Hammersley, 1992, p. 67). Although reliability is also important in other research methods, it is often considered more necessary in content analysis because of its coding process (Rourke, Anderson, Garrison & Archer, 2001; Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002; Slatter, 1998). The term ‘reliability’ covers at least three distinct types in content analysis: stability, reproducibility and accuracy (Krippendorff, 1980; Rourke et al., 2001). The first reliability type means that one coder agrees with himself or herself over time; reproducibility refers to the fact that two or more coders agree with each other; “accuracy is the degree to which a process functionally conforms to a known standard, or yields what it is designed to yield” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 131). Each researcher needs to select the design that can be best applied in a given situation, and sometimes all three can be used in the same piece of research. Another skill of improving reliability in content analysis is also mentioned by Slater (1998). He states that high reliability can also be achieved by making the categories so obvious and superficial that “all ambiguity and with it all interesting features are removed from the research” (Slater, 1998, p. 237).

As demonstrated in Section 2.3.2, this research might require the researchers to read all the students’ textbooks and teachers’ books involved to locate the relevant details, and this would be very time-consuming. Twenty books were involved. Therefore, the first reliability type, stability, was applied. The books were analysed under strict supervision. The categorization was conducted twice and it was checked several times for disagreement from early 2009 to mid 2010 until finally the same results were obtained over time. Awareness of the potential weakness of reliability in this research led to great attention being paid to making the categories obvious. As discussed in Section 2.3.2, the coding and categorizing are mostly obvious and superficial. Most can be identified by facts instead of personal attitudes and perceptions which involve a great deal of

interpretation. It may be possible to improve the reliability, as suggested by Slater (1998).

### **2.3.2.2 Validity of the Content Analysis Method**

Hammersley interprets validity as “the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (1990, p. 57). Shapiro and Markoff (1997) assert that content analysis itself is only valid and meaningful to the extent that the results are related to other measures. This means that validation of the inferences made from the data obtained from one approach demands the use of multiple sources of information. From this perspective, a study of official documents, an interview with teachers and a survey among students were also conducted. The results obtained from other study methods would be used to double check and support the data collected from content analysis, so that this research could be more valid.

## **2.4. Content-based Analysis**

Given that this research is about the teaching of culture in ELT in China, the study of the variety of culture itself seems to be far from being sufficient, because the teaching of culture involves many other issues. Many scholars (Byram as cited in Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Cisar, 2000; Kitao & Kitao, 1997; Garinger, 2002; Indiana Department of Education, 2007; Miekley, 2005; Saluveer, 2004; Tomlinson, 2003b; Williams, 1983) have written papers about the aspects to which a textbook should pay attention and have done so in the form of a checklist. Although not many of them put their focus on the teaching of culture, they all stress in their papers that a few cultural aspects should be considered in textbooks. The concerns that may influence the teaching of culture can be summarized as follows:

1. Do the language points help communicative competence?
2. Is the cultural information presented in the textbooks up-to-date?
3. Is the cultural information presented in the textbooks realistic?
4. Is a variety of cultural topics selected?
5. Do the texts create stereotypes?
6. Do the text exercises and activities consolidate or further explain

the cultural information?

7. Is extra information about the culture integrated in the books given?

As can be seen from these questions, the checklists are presented as suggestions. They cannot really be applied to the evaluation of textbooks because they are not validated. However, these criteria are important, because they are actually also concerns for textbook writers, which can be seen in the preface to the College English textbooks. Most books state that they have tried to select up-to-date cultural information and some also mention realism, authenticity and different topics. These may be essential issues that an ELT textbook needs to consider because the teaching of culture is an indispensable part of language teaching.

No research has been found which examines and validates these criteria, criteria which seem to have been the focus of concern for many years. Because there is no research method available that can be applied in this research, each of the criteria were examined and critically analysed so that a more applicable analytical tool could be created for future analysis of textbooks with an emphasis on the teaching of culture. Since the application of the tool was based on an analysis of the content in the books, including text, vocabulary and tasks, it is called a content-based analysis method in this dissertation, although it is not one of the existent research methods. It is just a tool based on a few criteria that can be used to analyse books to see how helpful they are in the teaching of culture.

As discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the variety of culture taught is also a significant part of the teaching of culture and can be analysed by using the content analysis method. Since the essential components of the content analysis method and this method are the same, these two methods will be integrated together in the development of the analytical tool. The criteria set out below will be discussed in order to develop a set of criteria for textbook analysis.

***Criteria:***

language points

recency

realism  
topics  
stereotyping  
task design  
extra information.

### **2.4.1 Language Points**

Many experts (Kitao & Kitao, 1997; Garinger, 2002; Miekley, 2005; Williams, 1983) have regarded language points, such as grammar and vocabulary, as the first important criterion for textbook evaluation. Because a language is a carrier of culture, the selection of the language used in textbooks also indicates cultural tendencies. The language points that are concerned in textbook evaluation are normally SE, vocabulary and grammar (Kitao & Kitao, 1997; Miekley 2005; Williams, 1983).

As highlighted in Chapter Two (see Section 2.1.1), SE is strongly associated with American English and British English. When Kitao and Kitao (1997) state that “English textbooks should have correct, natural, recent, and standard English” (p. 3), they do not explain what correct, natural, recent and standard English is. As with SE, this kind of English might be a theoretical model. It is also hard to define being “recent and natural”. If being natural refers to the English of native speakers, Kitao’s “standard English” may also refer to the English of the native speakers. The selection of English varieties by the textbook writers shows a cultural tendency towards the culture that English language carries. As demonstrated before, English is an international language; the learning of SE (American English and British English) may lead to a limitation of the cultures which a learner learns unless it is used to express other cultures, something which is not very common in ELT. English communication is not just a communication between the Outer or Expanding circle and the Inner circle (Kachru, 1992), because in reality people often do not communicate with only native speakers. English is used as a *lingua franca* very often among people in the expanding circle itself. If ELT pays attention only to SE, a person in China may feel that Indian English is weird and that there is no way to understand it, and *vice versa*. However, SE does seem to be a practical solution to English teaching,

because it is the language the world tends to learn and accept. Before other Englishes are standardized, it may still be the favourite of English teaching. The point is that SE can also be used to express world cultures. It is a carrier of world cultures.

Garinger (2002) and Miekley (2005) claim that language development is one of the key issues for textbook evaluation. In a language textbook, the language is certainly the focus. Grammar and vocabulary are always central elements of a language textbook. People learn English to communicate efficiently, so grammar and vocabulary are very basic and necessary and need to be looked at carefully so that communication can be more and more successful. The transmission of culture is also based on the language in textbooks. However, a reader may be familiar with every word and every grammatical item in a text, yet may still fail to comprehend the text, because he or she fails to have and to activate an appropriate content schema. Thus, the existence of appropriate schemata and the activation of the correct schema are significant during text comprehension (Wang & Ren, 2007). Grammar and vocabulary indicate culture and at the same time culture helps students to learn grammar and vocabulary.

Language use needs to be understood and taught in a cultural context. For example, the way Japanese use the word 'yes', as illustrated by Kachru and Smith (2008), is very special. They state that while a non-Japanese is speaking, a Japanese listener may frequently say 'yes', accompanied by a nod of the head. A native speaker may be surprised to learn that when Japanese say 'yes' in this circumstance, they do so to encourage the speaker and to indicate that they are listening and trying to understand what is being said. This word does not mean that the Japanese understands and agrees with the speaker. Even such a simple word expresses different meanings in different cultures, let alone other words and sentence structures. For another example, in the inner circle, "Could you mail the letter on your way to the store?" sounds more polite than "Brother, mail the letter on your way to the store". However, in south Asian English, the second expression is equally polite. There are also vocabulary items which are only understood by people of a specific country but not necessarily by native speakers. Almost every country has some words which are invented in, and accepted as a local variety of

English such as *salvage* (to kill in cold blood) and *studentry* (the student body) are part of Philippine English; *boy* (waiter) and *cousin, sister/brother* are part of Indian English (Kachru & Smith, 2008). Although most scholars give their attention mainly to the language points in textbooks but not their interaction with culture, culture is inevitable and potentially embedded in the evaluation.

There are many language points that indicate cultural messages, for example, ‘a group of Chinese students’ is obviously different from ‘an army of Chinese students’, especially when it is used in the news. Analysis of such language points may be needed in the following chapters when cultural message are analysed. Since the value system is a core issue of culture, a deep understanding of the value system of ‘western culture’ in turn may guide the learning of vocabulary culture (Jiang, 2000). For example, the word ‘individualism’ is normally translated as ‘ge ren zhu yi’ in Chinese, which means selfishness or self-centeredness. On the other hand, Chinese people lay special stress on ‘collectivism’, using a word which means generosity and group-work spirit. In some countries, however, the understanding of these two words is just the opposite. When teaching English grammar and vocabulary, culture is an inseparable part. The comparison and contrast of culture carried by words and grammar help learners not only to learn foreign culture but also home culture. Both collocations such as ‘an army of students’ and individual words will help the analysis of cultural tendency.

However, English is so international that, in fact, it is often hard to distinguish one variety of English from another, although people of different cultures may use the same word to embody a different meaning. Not all language points can be categorized, so only the grammatical and vocabulary points that indicate some cultural tendency will be used in this study as examples for analysis. This dissertation will not consider language points as a separate category for textbook evaluation because not all language points can be analysed in a cultural way as described above, and it is difficult to establish a criterion by which to assess the cultural tendency of a language point.

#### **2.4.2 Recency**

Recency here refers to up-to-date information. Kane (1991) states that outdated sources cause a reduction of authenticity and misunderstandings of the modern world. Kitao and Kitao (1997) agree with this view by stressing, in their evaluation checklist, that the cultural information included in English textbooks should be correct and recent. The first criterion on the list provided by the Indiana Department of Education (2007) is whether the visual images and cultural information are current. However, there are also different ideas. Feng and Byram suggest “The selection of texts from both angles: texts that show the historical development of the language and the culture and texts reflecting the language and culture of the contemporary societies” (Feng & Byram, 2002, p. 64). They think that texts should not only show up-to-date cultural information but also the history of the language and culture. This suggestion in fact means more requirements for books. If a text is about the history of a country, then the textbook has the responsibility to provide extra cultural background information to help students. The most important thing is how textbooks provide information to help people to be aware of the age of the culture in the text and to understand the information against specific backgrounds. Without any help, it is easy to misunderstand the modern world by using outdated information, especially when the text is about some unfamiliar cultures.

Recent information is necessary because culture keeps changing and cultures of different societies are influencing each other. Students need to be as up-to-date as possible so as to prevent problems arising from using English which reflects a dead or outdated culture. This dissertation will use recency as a criterion and it will assess recency by examining a few textbooks and then listing the year of publication of each text to show whether up-to-date cultural information is provided and whether out-of-date cultural information leads to misunderstandings. If publication dates are not given, clues about the age of the story will be searched for in the text up for analysis. For example, if a text says the story happens in 1990, then this information will be used in the analysis. Some publication dates are also given in the teacher’s books, so both teacher’s books and student’s books will be searched for information about the year of publication. A quantitative method will be used with this evaluation criterion.

When the year of publication has been collected for each text, texts will be placed into groups of five years per group. A bar chart can then be used to describe the data.

### **2.4.3 Realism**

Textbooks need to present a realistic picture (Saluveer, 2004). A realistic picture can help people to understand a society better. Without helpful instructions from teachers, an unrealistic picture can be misunderstood. Miekley states that content serves as a window into learning about the culture of the target language, so it should contain real-life issues (Miekley, 2005). The notion of realism addresses the universal need in textbook writing to represent the culture as it is lived and talked about by people who are credible and recognizable as real human beings (Byram & Esarte-Sarries, 1993).

Normally, authentic materials are considered realistic. However, non-authentic materials designed specifically for cultural education can also help the teaching of culture. So authentic materials and non-authentic materials designed for the teaching and learning of culture in ELT can both provide realistic cultural information. For example, if an article written for English language learners is about how people of different cultural backgrounds celebrate National Days, this may also help culture learning. Materials designed for cultural education sometimes may do more than authentic magazine articles, because they have a focus on culture; normally, however, there are not many such articles in textbooks.

The most important issue about authenticity in this dissertation is that it may deviate English teaching to the learning of native speakers' cultures only. There are many definitions (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Jordan, 1997; Little, Devitt & Singleton, 1989) for the term 'authentic materials' and most definitions agree that authentic materials are the materials produced for social purposes in the community of native speakers, and they are not produced for language teaching at all. For example: newspapers, poems, songs, fiction stories, restaurant menus, recipes, films, TV programmes and radio broadcasts. Most definitions limit authentic materials to the materials written by and for native speakers. However,

English is so special that the definition will not work when talking about English teaching. In a large number of countries, there are some or even many newspapers, magazines or TV programmes that are made in English by and for local people but not by and for native speakers. The materials normally involve their own culture and affairs. The language used in those materials often bears the features of their own culture. These materials are also a part of authentic materials, because they are not written for language teaching at all. Therefore, English authentic materials are the materials that are produced for a social purpose, and they are not written for English learners specifically, for example: newspapers. They cannot be limited to native speakers' cultures only.

To assess realism, authenticity can be the first criterion. However, more attention will be given to the question of whose cultural reality is being transmitted: it is worth evaluating the extent to which authenticity is limited to native speakers' cultures. In this dissertation, Book One and Book Two of each series will be selected to examine whether authenticity is an issue in the compilation of books and whether it is understood to be native speakers' authenticity only. As demonstrated above, a content analysis method will be used to count the varieties of cultures presented in the textbooks. The coding methods adopted are: checking source or reference information and background information, checking the content of the text, checking spelling and vocabulary and checking the subject matter as shown above. The four categories are: (i) native speakers' culture, which is divided into American culture, British culture and other native speakers' cultures, (ii) world cultures which are divided into Chinese culture and other world cultures, (iii) internationally shared culture and (iv) 'not given'. A quantitative method will be used, and all the results will be displayed in tables.

#### **2.4.4 Topics**

Textbooks are normally intentionally or unintentionally divided into units according to cultural topics, for example marriage, education, love and family. However, there is often more than one cultural topic or message illustrated in one text. There can be ten general unit topics in one book, but many other small cultural topics in each text of that book. To assess the cultures constructed in the

texts, Book One of the NCE and TECE series and Book Two of the NHCE series will be selected for analysis.

In fact, the importance of a variety of topics has attracted the attention of textbook writers for many years. Early in the 1980s, scholars (Saluveer, 2004; Sheldon, 1988) clearly stressed the importance of different topics in textbooks. Many scholars (Duan, 2006; Pfister & Borzilleri, 1977; Saluveer, 2004) wrote papers about suitable topics for language teaching. Pfister and Borzilleri (1977) suggest five major categories: 1) family and the personal sphere, 2) the social sphere: jobs, clubs or social festivities; sports or entertainment on the social level; attitudes towards gender in jobs or leadership positions; social responsibility, 3) political systems and institutions, 4) the environmental sphere: geography, space and utilization of space, economic development, and nature of subsistence, and 5) religion and the arts. Byram (as cited in Cortazzi & Jin, 1999) offers seven categories, and Chastain (as cited in Saluveer, 2004) even divided the aspects of culture into more detail by proposing more than 35 categories.

A book normally only has a few texts, so it is not possible to cover all the topics. This dissertation will not evaluate how many topics are mentioned in one book. The point will be whose culture they are constructing and how the culture of one country or the world is constructed. The cultural topics or messages will be listed and then categorized into native speaker's cultures, world cultures or internationally shared culture. The coding methods that are used to decide which culture it is related to are those demonstrated above. They are: reference information, content details, spelling, vocabulary and subject matter. The topics will be divided into two general categories: value systems and cultural information. Value system refers to the beliefs, morals and values that the text depicts. Cultural information refers to other customs and habits. Value systems and cultural information are taken implicitly or explicitly from the text. Sometimes the explicit topics are sentences in the text which show some values or cultural messages. For example, in unit eight of NHCE series, it states "College beginners are more consumeristic and less idealistic than at any time"; this will be regarded as explicit value information. There is also implicit cultural information which needs to be summarized. For example, in unit four of the NCE series, there

is a description of an American immigrant with broken English and clear goals in life. He is hard-working and finally his American dream comes true. This story helps students to understand the life of a group of immigrants. The value system it depicts can be summarized as ‘hard work can make an American dream come true’. In this dissertation, one book of each of the three series will be investigated as an example. Only text A of each unit of each book will be analysed as an example because it is the focus of a language class; further, text A in each case comes with extra information in the Teacher’s Book, while no extra information is given for the other texts.

A table will be used to illustrate in detail not only whose culture is being constructed but also how American culture, British culture or any other culture is constructed in the textbook. In other words, from reading this table, it will be clear how one country is described in one book. This piece of information may also help the analysis of the potential reason for choosing the cultural information and whose ideology it tends to present and encourage by examining whether culture that is very different or similar to Chinese culture is selected. There may be much cultural information in a text. Even one sentence can carry some cultural information, but a text will not be examined in sentence-level detail because the focus of study is to gain a general idea of the cultural message carried by each text in a book. Only a summary of the main topics of a text will be analysed.

#### **2.4.5 Stereotyping**

Stereotyping is similar to generalization (Schneider, 2004). Although some researchers may claim that generalization is more positive, and stereotyping is more negative. With the development of the study of stereotyping, stereotyping is considered as two-sided: positive and negative (Hamilton, 1981; Jones, 1997; Schneider, 2004). Schneider (2004) suggests that it is difficult to decide whether a generalization or a stereotype is accurate or not and it is very difficult to distinguish stereotype from generalization. In this research, the distinction between generalization and stereotyping will not be discussed in detail since it is not the focus of the research. Stereotypes here refers to the results of generalization and it is “a positive and negative set of beliefs by an individual about the characteristics of a group of people” (Jones, 1997, p. 170).

Some researchers (Carrell & Korwitz, 1994) think stereotypes may influence one's belief and therefore cause hatred or admiration towards a particular society. Huhn suggests that textbooks should avoid stereotypes by raising awareness of their potential problems (as cited in Byram, 1989). Some (Carrell & Korwitz, 1994; Clarke & Clarke, 1990) have thought that the presentation of stereotypes may cause misunderstandings. In fact, many researchers have suggested that prejudice is an inevitable consequence of ordinary stereotyping processes (Allport, 1954; Billig, 1985; Ehrlich, 1973; Hamilton, 1981; Tajfel, 1981). Thinking that a stereotype will definitely cause prejudice, however, overlooks an important distinction between knowledge of a cultural stereotype and acceptance of the stereotype as a fact. That is, although an individual may have knowledge of a stereotype, his or her personal beliefs may or may not be congruent with the stereotype. In other words, knowledge of stereotype does not lead to negative attitudes or positive attitudes directly. Life experience and education will also determine attitude.

Stereotyping can also be helpful. To stereotype is to provide a general image of a group, a whole country or even a few countries. "Stereotypical representations are necessary in writing textbooks as they are starting points for teaching cultural studies" (Feng & Byram, 2002, p. 65). Teachers should make the best use of stereotypes because very often they represent the typical culture of a society. Sometimes, with careful explanation, stereotypes can help people to understand culture better (Byram & Morgan, 1994). Lippmann (1965) also agrees that stereotyping is necessary to orient us in the world. It is an efficient method to make the world around us simple.

Therefore, there are both merits and demerits in stereotyping. This creates a dilemma in the teaching and learning of culture. If textbook writers use texts with representative cultures, then they may cause stereotypes. Stereotypes are hard to avoid in textbooks because when people select texts they tend to select texts that can represent a culture (Byram & Esarte-Sarries, 1993). As Byram and Morgan suggest, with careful explanation, stereotypes can be helpful (Byram & Morgan, 1994). For example, if people learn from a book that Americans are always late for an appointment, it may be a harmful stereotype because this piece

of information tries to generalize a specific culture. However, if some further discussion or role play can be organized, students may be able to understand better that piece of culture. Since certain levels of stereotyping are inevitable, the point may not be whether or not there should be stereotypes in textbooks but how to deal with them so that potentially harmful stereotypes can be made helpful. The methods of ICC teaching such as discussion, role-play and real intercultural communication may be able to turn potentially harmful stereotypes into helpful ones. So the analysis of textbooks in this dissertation will focus on whether the textbooks provide some tasks for learners to deal with stereotypes rather than whether or not there should be stereotypes.

To assess whether stereotypes are dealt with properly, a few books will be chosen, and then the tasks will be analysed. In fact, as mentioned above, whenever a culture is introduced, it may be stereotyped. In other words, all the cultural messages or topics identified in the previous section about topics, such as value system and cultural information, could be the subject of stereotyping. It may be impossible to deal with all the stereotypes in the tasks, which is also why intercultural competence is so important. Therefore, it is also not possible to pick up any one stereotype and then check whether it is analysed in the tasks. The methods to deal with stereotypes are normally discussion, role-play and other activities, so they will be analysed to see whether they provide potential opportunities for learners to improve intercultural skills and acquire knowledge and appropriate attitudes towards some stereotypes. The evaluation of stereotypes will not be conducted separately, because the tasks will be analysed in the appropriate section as part of the work on ICC: the analysis of stereotypes will also be the analysis of ICC tasks and stereotype-related tasks if available.

#### **2.4.6 Task Design**

In the evaluation form written by the Indiana Department of Education (2007), the following questions are asked: “Are learners asked to identify, experience, analyze, produce, or discuss tangible (toys, dress, foods, etc.) and expressive (artwork, songs, literature, etc.) products of the target cultures?”, “Do learners have opportunities to participate in entertainment representative of the target cultures (e.g. games, story telling, songs, etc.)?” and “Do the text activities associated with

cultural images and information invite learners to observation, identification, discussion or analysis of cultural practices, products, and perspectives?”

These three questions are asking whether there are relevant exercises for students to review, analyse, discuss, take part in and then understand the cultural points in the text. Without any help from the teacher and the book, learners can only obtain some basic cultural knowledge from a text. However, the fact is that teachers of English are generally not trained to teach culture (Byram & Fleming, 1998; Saluveer, 2004). A textbook is a trainer (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), especially in the context of the current Chinese ELT. Its function is to help an untrained teacher and learner through step-by-step instructions in a teacher’s book and a student’s book. So it will be very helpful if a textbook can provide some well-designed tasks on the teaching of culture. The extent to which the activities encourage ICC not only relies on textbooks; teachers and learners also play an important role. As far as textbooks are concerned, a well-designed task may help teachers and learners to teach and learn better. As stated above, teachers and learners are not experts on cultural studies, so the outcome of the teaching of culture can significantly rely on the design of tasks.

Although the importance of ICC in ELT is stressed in much of the literature (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Byram, 2002; Corbett, 2003; Korhonen, 2010; Pulverness; 2003; Tomlinson, 2003a), few have ever mentioned how ICC can be integrated in textbooks. However, many good methods have been proposed for ICC training in ELT, as shown in Chapter Three. Since textbooks are a part of ELT, and in China they are the most important components in classes, the methods may become a part of the books.

According to the illustration in Chapter Three, the achievement of ICC in fact relies mostly on activities. Most activities used in ELT can be developed to teach ICC, such as discussions/debates, role-plays and presentations. They will help learners to realize, understand and learn to cope with cultural information and stereotypes. Therefore, exercises and activities in books may need development so that they not only help linguistic competence, but also ultimately consolidate or further explain the cultural information to develop ICC. “A language course concerned with ‘culture’, then, broadens its scope from a focus on improving the

‘four skills’ of reading, writing, listening and speaking, in order to help learners acquire cultural skills, such as strategies for the systematic observation of behavioral patterns” (Corbett, 2003, p. 2).

As demonstrated in Chapter Three, the most recommended approach that can be used in discussions, role-plays and other activities in ELT is a critical incident, because it puts learners into cultural knowledge and affective components in intercultural communication (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994). Incidents can not only be used for ICC training, they can also be used as a speaking activity, writing activity and so on. Here are some examples of critical incidents that can be included in materials in ELT:

- a. A recently arrived student, Mariko, from Japan, at a large British university, although at first apprehensive, was now accustomed to the different routines and lifestyle and was doing quite well in her course. She had become good friends with one of her English classmates, Linda, and they often had lunch together. When one of the professors asked for two volunteers to come in early in the morning to help code some research data, Linda volunteered and suggested that Mariko might also be willing. Mariko replied hesitantly that she did not think her English was good enough for this task and that it would be better to ask someone else. Linda stated that she would be capable and told the professor that they would both do it. When Mariko failed to turn up the next day Linda was obliged to do all the work herself. On their next meeting Mariko apologized, stating that she had had to work for an exam that day and had not felt capable of doing the additional work as well. Linda exasperatedly asked her why she had not said so clearly in the class at the time. Mariko just looked down and said nothing.

How would you explain Mariko’s failure to explicitly state her intention not to come?

A: She didn’t understand what was asked of her and didn’t want to show her lack of comprehension in front of the class;

B: She probably forgot or confused the time but was too embarrassed to admit her silly mistake;

C: She resented Linda publicly volunteering her without asking her first;

D: She felt it wrong to give a direct refusal to a professor. (Jordan, 1994, p. 45)

- b. A Chinese male student commenced a post-graduate TESOL course at the beginning of the Lent term. He had settled reasonably well following an initial culture shock period and found the course content very interesting. However, he began to feel increasingly uncomfortable in the classes.

He never volunteered any views and if asked by the tutors to express his opinion or feelings about the subject under discussion he appeared very uneasy and was unable to respond. In tutorials he also had difficulty when asked to express how he felt about various issues or topics.

What was causing this student's problem?

A: He had not really recovered from culture shock and was probably feeling homesick;

B: His level of English was not very good and he wasn't understanding the questions asked of him;

C: He felt alienated from the other students most of whom had started the course in October;

D: Due to his cultural background he was insecure about expressing personal feelings. He felt unsure about what ought to be discussed. (Jordan, 1994, p. 79)

The use of critical incidents can put learners in an intercultural situation and guide them to learn in that intercultural situation by asking questions, so that the discussion can be more culture-focused. Normally, in practice, textbooks may not contain cases for learners to study. They often only ask a few discussion questions or summarize a case in one sentence for studies. In that case, the tasks will be analysed to see whether they are designed to teach culture, to put learners in an intercultural situation, and how they are designed to develop ICC. For example, one discussion question may not achieve the same result as is derived from a series of questions that are set up step-by-step for a specific purpose. A series of questions may lead the discussion in the right direction. For example, in one unit of the TECE Book One, there are three questions in the discussion part. The first is 'What do you think has led to deterioration in security in the US?'; the second is 'Is there a similar problem in other parts of the world today? If so, what can be done to better the situation?'; the final one is 'What do you understand by the author's remark "we have become so smart about self-protection that, in the end, we have all outsmarted ourselves"?'. If only the first question is left in this part, the outcome of the discussion may be a very harmful stereotype of American society. The second question may lead the discussion to a comparison of world cultures, and this may help learners to realize that the US is not the only country that is not safe. Security is a problem all over the world. The third question may simply make people think about how they are overly self-protected and refuse to trust and accept others. The skills to interpret, relate and analyse culture may be

covered in this discussion and openness, tolerance and other attitudes may also be learned from it. Therefore, a well-designed task can help with the understanding of stereotypes and improve ICC.

In this research, in order to evaluate tasks in textbooks, first, the type of task will be checked to see whether there are task types that can be helpful in ICC learning as discussed in the previous chapters, such as discussion, role-play, culture analysis and setting an intercultural scenario. Then, the design of the activities will be examined to see to what extent it can help ICC. The first evaluation criterion used here is whether the task is designed for cultural studies. The second is whether step-by-step guidance is provided in discussions, role play and other activities so that the activity leads to ICC. The final evaluation is whether the activities put learners in a real intercultural situation so that they have opportunities to compare and relate cultures.

#### **2.4.7 Extra Information**

Extra information is very important for learners and teachers to find out more about the culture constructed in a text. Without necessary information, even a culture expert cannot tell the date, background and so on of a culture. Extra information here refers to the following issues.

First, textbooks need to provide source information on a text, such as the date of publication, and the name, the nationality or some other information about the author and the publisher. Especially when the text is only an excerpt from a story, and it is not possible to judge which group of people or even which country it is about, so the above information is very important.

Second, textbooks and the teacher's books need to provide extra background information in all forms such as words, pictures or videos about the culture integrated in the books, and encourage students to find more background information about the culture. Some cultural messages are difficult to understand without any explanation, so extra information is needed. A textbook is a teacher and a resource (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999), and these two functions can also be performed by providing extra information.

Therefore extra cultural background information is important for the understanding of the culture in texts. To evaluate this issue, whether extra cultural information mentioned above which helps the study of the cultural messages in the text is provided in the teacher's and student's book will be examined first and the results will be shown in a table.

Next, another table (for example: Table 7.18) will be used to explain which culture the information is about: native speakers' cultures, world cultures including local culture, or internationally shared culture. Book One and Book Two of each series were selected for analysis. The coding methods that are used to decide which culture it is related to are still reference information, content details, spelling, vocabulary and subject matter, but the coding here may be easier because the content of the extra information often shows clearly which country it is about. It is worth pointing out that there may also be some information that is not very culture targeted. The following information will not be regarded as cultural information in this dissertation:

First, biographical information about a person. For example:

Stephen Hawking (1942- ): a British scientist who has greatly influenced people's ideas on the origin of the universe. He has devoted much of his life to probing the space-time described by general relativity and the singularities where it breaks down. And he's done most of his work while confined to a wheelchair, brought on by the progressive neurological disease. Hawking is the Lucasian professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, a post once held by Isaac Newton. (Li, 2009, p. 27)

Second, knowledge of a subject matter, a description of an object or an explanation of a language point. For example: "Polar ice cap: a polar ice cap is a high-latitude region, centred in the polar region, which is covered in ice" (Dong, 2009b, p. 60).

Third, source information such as an introduction of the author or the date of publication is not considered to be culture information; this is called source information in this dissertation.

The results will show the percentage of each variety of culture, a total number of each variety of culture will also be counted and listed in a table. To assess this, a quantitative method will be used to count how many references to specific cultures are introduced in the extra information provided.

#### **2.4.8 Summary**

This part has sought to set out methods for textbook analysis. Language points, recency, realism, topics, stereotyping, task design and extra information have all been discussed and five criteria have been settled on for textbook analysis: recency, realism, topics, task design and extra information. Language points and stereotyping will become part of the five criteria when they become an issue in the analysis.

### **3. Conclusion**

There are four methods used in this research. Questionnaires were conducted among teachers and students, and interviews were conducted among teachers. The surveys were conducted to find out how teachers and students understand the teaching of culture. Content analysis method was applied to determine the varieties of culture taught through textbooks and an a priori coding technique was applied in the analysis of the content. A content-based analysis method, which is the analysis of content based on a series of criteria - recency, realism, topics, task design and extra information - was used to find out how textbooks teach culture. The results of the first two methods (the survey among teachers and students) are listed in the appendices, and the results of the surveys will mainly be embedded in the discussion offered in the next two chapters: Chapter Five and Chapter Six. The other two methods (content analysis and content-based analysis) will be applied to the analysis of textbooks in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight.

# **Chapter Five: Cultural Studies in College English Teaching in China**

## **Part One: A Historical Overview**

The significance of cultural studies in ELT has been shown in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. A combination of Anglo-American cultures, world cultures and internationally shared culture has been suggested along with the need to integrate ICC into the teaching of the language. In this dissertation, the teaching and learning of culture in ELT for non-English majors at HE level in China is the focus of the research. Therefore, before investigating what culture is taught and how ICC is taught in China, some background study needs to be provided. This chapter first gives a brief introduction to the history of College English teaching in China before 1979, and then it will be divided into four parts according to the development of *College English curriculum requirements* (curriculum, for short). The four parts are:

- the 1980 curriculum,
- the 1985/1986 curriculum,
- the 1999 curriculum,
- and the 2004 and 2007 curriculums.

This chapter will show how College English teaching and cultural studies have developed with the revisions of the curriculums in China.

### **1. A Brief History of ELT in China before 1979**

English language teaching has undergone several ups and downs in China. It started to be an official course in 1862 and was developed gradually until 1949, the founding of the People's Republic of China (Wang, 1981). Both Boyle (2000) and Wang (1981) divide this period into two parts, the first one being from 1862 to 1922. In the middle of this period, in 1902, China started to follow Japan's education system as a model. The teaching was increased from three hours a week to eight hours a week, and it focused on translation and reading. "There was much grammar and vocabulary learning, with pronunciation learned by imitation and

repetition. This was the norm for about the first twenty years of the century” (Boyle, 2000, p.1). The second part is from 1922 to 1949. During those years, China’s education was greatly influenced by Britain and America. Western models were accepted in China. Speaking and listening were given more emphasis. One reason might be the popularity of Christian missionary schools during that period. The cultural atmosphere in those years seems to have had a significant effect on English language teaching (Boyle, 2000; Wang, 1981).

From 1949 to 1955, because of China’s partnership with Russia, the place of English language in schools and universities was taken by Russian, so Russian became almost the only foreign language taught in China during that period. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, as the need to open up to the world grew, the importance of English teaching was realized in increasing measure. In 1962, English became one of the subjects in the college entrance examination to universities and colleges in China. From 1966 to 1976, however, the English language and almost all English language classes were banned during the Cultural Revolution. The government’s political tendency seemed to play a prevailing role in foreign language teaching, possibly because the culture the foreign language carries influence the selection of the language.

In 1978, an important conference was held by the Ministry of Education on foreign language teaching. Since then, English teaching has become more and more popular in China (Boyle, 2000; Zhu, 1982).

As Boyle (2000) states, China originally felt no need of Western culture; in fact it deliberately avoided all contact, for fear of cultural contamination. But finally because of the need to open up, English became the most important foreign language in China.

## **2. Cultural Studies with the Development of the Curriculums**

### **2.1 The Concept of a Curriculum**

In China, the English teaching conducted in universities and colleges is called College English teaching. The College English curriculum is a document issued every few years by the Ministry of Education in China. It issues a set of uniform

requirements of English language teaching in higher education institutes. It consists of the requirements regarding teaching aims, teaching hours, requirements, vocabulary lists, and teaching methodology. Its function is only to give guidance to English Language teaching in universities. Universities can carry it out in consideration of their own conditions, demands and needs (H. Wang, 2004; Jin, 2003; Xie, 2001; Yang, 1992). According to the results of a teachers' survey carried out for this research (see Appendix A), for most teachers, a curriculum is only an abstract concept. Many of the teachers in the survey never read a curriculum. Its spirit is only shown and understood in the form of CET tests and College English textbooks which are extremely important in College English teaching in China. In other words, although the curriculums say they only give guidance to language teaching, the compilation of the textbooks and the CET examination paper abide by the requirements of the curriculum strictly because they are the representation of the curriculum (Gu, 2007, Mao and Wu, 2007).

From 1979 up to the present, English teaching in China has gone through several revolutions as can be seen from the revisions of the curriculums. According to Jin (2003), B. Huang (2002), Mao and Wu (2007), Teng (1991) who study College English curriculum in their articles and the information shown on the website of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, the College English Curriculum has undergone several revisions since 1980 and there have been five versions of the curriculums for non-English majors up to the present time.

## **2.2 Cultural Studies and English Teaching around the 1980 Curriculum**

### **2.2.1 Background Studies**

In 1978, the enrolment to colleges and universities was resumed. In the same year, China announced Deng Xiaoping's policy of four modernizations: modern agriculture, industry, science and technology and defense. This policy soon evolved into the Reform and Opening-Up policy which made English learning essential for the Chinese. Throughout the 1980s, the policies met with support in terms of curriculum design and materials development (Lam, 2002).

Wang (1981) summarizes the situation of foreign language teaching and Learning in China in 1979 as follows:

The total number of teachers specializing in teaching foreign languages in China at the end of June 1979 was 7251. Among them teachers of English were 3660; Russian, 1432; Japanese, 606; French, 578; Albanian, 131; German, 127; Spanish, 20; and other languages, 311. Of the 3660 teachers of specialized English, 1167 were in institutes of foreign languages, 991 in universities, and 1502 in normal colleges. In addition, several thousand college teachers are teaching foreign languages, but not as a specialization. These number 5513 for English, 456 for Japanese, 656 for Russian, 119 for German, 109 for French, 10 for Spanish, and 3 for Albanian. The number of students in China who are majoring in foreign languages as of June 1979 was: 25,048 in English, 2728 in Japanese, 2201 in French, 1924 in Russian, 1011 in German. (Wang, 1981, p. 658)

By 1979, English had become the most popular language taught in China. However, there were not many articles about cultural studies in ELT, and the teaching of culture was also not mentioned in the first curriculum, so it was still not on the Ministry of Education's agenda by then.

### **2.2.2 The 1980 Curriculum**

The first curriculum was issued in 1980 and was stated to be a curriculum for students of science which might be because of the large population of science students in those years. According to Zhang and Yang, English courses were "loosely guided by the national unified EST Curriculum (August, 1980), which was basically grammatical in approach" (1982, p. 56). They also give a detailed description of the three stages of English education in higher education institutes as it was stipulated in the curriculum. The first was to provide students with a fairly good basis of linguistic knowledge for reading technical literature. The second was to develop students' ability to read technical literature with the help of a dictionary with a speed of 18 words per minute. The third stage included classes of advanced reading skills, listening comprehension of EST (English for Science and Technology) materials, EST conversation, a guide to translation of EST texts into Chinese and academic English writing, but this stage was optional and only offered to those students who had completed the previous two stages with a very high mark. In the late 1970s, China had just started to open to the world. The main

purpose of learning English during those years seems to have been to read technical articles. It can be seen from the above three stages that language teaching and learning reflects the social culture of that period.

Mao and Wu (2007) state that the outstanding features of the 1980 curriculum are that it only deals with grammar teaching and it does not provide a vocabulary list as the more recent ones do. On the other hand, this curriculum did establish an important position of English teaching in Chinese Higher Education for the first time in the form of government documents. The grammatical nature of English teaching shown in the curriculum also explains why culture was not considered important in ELT. Reading technical materials does not involve many cultural issues, so the needs of the country directly determined the direction of English teaching and learning in China. Communication was not realized as an obvious purpose of English teaching during that period by the government, although the opening-up of China might require learners' communicative competence. Cultural studies were also ignored during that period, because culture is often studied in ELT for the purpose of better communication as mentioned in Chapter Three.

## **2.3 Cultural Studies and English Teaching around the 1985 Curriculum**

### **2.3.1 Background Studies and the 1985 Curriculum**

In the ESP (English for Specific Purposes)/EST Forum held in Shanghai Jiaotong University in 1982, Zhang and Yang, who chaired the forum, mentioned two different current views on EST teaching aims. The first one is “reading ability only” which was reflected in the national curriculum in 1980. The second one is “four language skills”. They said:

Recently, this prevailing view has been questioned and re-examined by a growing number of EST teachers, they argue that the development of the “four language skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking” (in order of importance to the Chinese EST students with the main emphasis on reading skills through out the course) is equally realistic and practical. (Zhang and Yang, 1982, p. 57)

They put reading in the first place in English teaching, and speaking in the

least important position. They further explained the reasons for developing these “four language skills” rather than only one. First, with the improvement of secondary school education, the students’ English level was higher than before. Secondly, there were more and more international contacts through the medium of English. Thirdly, the English Proficiency Test organized by the Ministry of Education tested those four aspects and “speaking ability is tested implicitly” (Zhang and Yang, 1982, p. 58).

In terms of teaching methodology, Zhang and Yang pointed out that the grammar-translation method was still favored by most teachers and many tended to over-emphasize the importance of grammar. However, a growing number of teachers had realized that learning language involved more than linguistic competence. Some EST teachers had suggested the development of communicative competence as an aspect in the national curriculum. Communicative competence had started to gain attention since then.

In fact, early in 1979, a team which consisted of two Canadian teachers and a Chinese teacher were sent to Guangzhou in response to an invitation from the Ministry of Education to work on a project that was going to apply the Communicative Approach to EFL in China. They worked in China for three years and in 1984, the director of the project, Li, wrote an article in which he said that:

Three years' work on the project has involved us in all sorts of controversies. The approach we are trying to implement makes such a break with accepted EFL practice in China that we never expected our project to run a smooth course. (Li, 1984, p. 2)

The counter-argument and the counter-practice, Li (1984) mentions, mainly includes four aspects:

- a) Real situations and false situations. Li suggests students should learn English in a real situations, that is the roles should be real, but some Chinese teachers think as long as the students speak English that is communication and good practice. Many “empty talks” are practiced in classes.
- b) Authentic language and native speaker’s language. Many teachers seem to think authentic language means native speaker language. The author thinks it

means language that is actually used in real communication situations. The author suggests students should learn through use, which means that the target language they come into contact with should be real or authentic and appropriate.

c) Different interpretation of the term “learning”. In China, learning English generally means to look up and memorize every single word and translate and analyze grammatically every sentence. The author suggests students should learn from doing tasks to develop communicative competence.

d) Student centeredness and teacher centeredness. The traditional text-analysis method is teacher-centered. The author advocates a communicative curriculum which is designed so that the students are given a chance to do the learning themselves.

Both the teaching methods and content have been questioned by the group of experts. They even mention the problem of limiting authentic language to only native speakers’ language. Although English was not as international as it is today, they suggest authentic language should refer to the language that is actually used in real communication. However, although the problems were pointed out in 1984, they are still the main problems in College English teaching in China as will be shown in the following chapters.

Although communicative competence had become an issue and efforts towards achieving this goal were under way, little attention seemed to be paid to intercultural competence, even though, as shown in Chapter Three, communicative competence is a part of ICC. Although ICC was not mentioned during that period, it was inevitable in intercultural communication. At least the emphasis on communicative competence reflected the changes of social culture in that period. English was finally used for intercultural communication, not just in reading but also in the other three skills.

To catch up with the development of English language teaching, in 1985, the Ministry of Education made some revisions to the first curriculum and published a curriculum for students of science, and in 1986 it was renamed as a

*College English Curriculum for undergraduates of science and art.* This curriculum made speaking a part of English teaching. It states that Chinese scientific and technical people should first focus on improving their reading ability, then listening and translating ability and the least important one is their ability to speak and write. Although the four aspects are not ranked equally, communicative competence is a part of the curriculum. However, cultural issues were still not mentioned at government level. Two years after the curriculum was published, China started its famous College English Test (CET) Band Four and Band Six System which has influenced Chinese teaching and learning significantly ever since (F. Huang, 2002).

### **2.3.2 CET Band 4 and Band 6**

#### **2.3.2.1 A Brief Introduction to CET Band 4 and Band 6**

With the publication of the 1985 curriculum, the Ministry of Education announced that after carrying out this curriculum for two years, standard tests would be started (Mao and Wu, 2007). They ended up being the CET band 4 and band 6. The CET system is designed to serve the College English Curriculum. It aims to help with the implementation of the curriculum and provide some feedback for it. The Curriculum stipulates the scope of the testing content (Gu, 2007). The vocabulary used in CET test should be within the range of the vocabulary listed in the curriculum (F. Huang, 2002; Jin, 2003; Mao and Wu, 2007).

In September 1987, the first CET band 4 test was conducted and the first band 6 test followed in January 1989 (Mao and Wu, 2007). Now the tests are carried out twice a year. In February 2005, the Ministry of Education held a press conference and announced that the first reform of CET tests since they were started in 1987 would be carried out in June of that year. The new question types are given below. More attention is given to listening comprehension and there are more question types used; multiple choice is no longer the prevailing type (Fang, 2008; Li, 2007; Wang, 2008).

Table 5.1. Question Types of CET Test

Content		Question Type	Proportion
Part one Listening Comprehension		Multiple Choice Compound Dictation	35%
Part two Reading Comprehension (Skimming and Scanning)		Multiple Choice Gap Filling True or False Question	35%
Part three	Cloze or	Multiple Choice	15%
	Error Correction or	Looking for Errors and Correcting Them	
Part four	Short Answer Questions or	Writing short answers	
	translation	Chinese to English	
Part five Writing		Writing an essay	15%

The certificates of CET band 4 and band 6 are regarded as extremely important for both teachers and students because:

a) In many universities, students can only obtain a bachelor degree certificate if they pass CET band four. This has caused many complaints and strong dissatisfaction among students and scholars. Chen (2008), J. Li (2002), Wang (2008), Yang (2005) and Zhang (2007) express their disagreements on this regulation in their articles.

b) Most employers only want students with a CET certificate. Chen (2008), Wang, Xu and Zhang (2007) say that it is not only a personal demand any more but that it has become a social demand. The social pressure has made students very stressed and anxious. To pass the test has become a must and a burden for students.

c) The CET pass rate has been an important criterion for the evaluation of universities and teachers. The teachers and the universities are concerned about the test results as much as the students are (J. Chen, 2008; Qian, 2007; Yang, 2005).

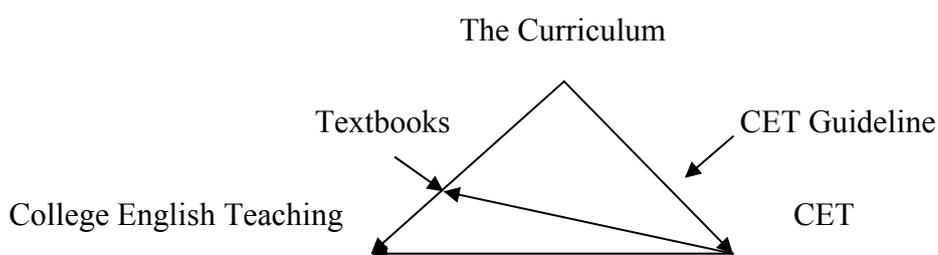
Due to the importance of CET tests for students and institutions, ELT is greatly affected by it (Gu, 2007; Jing, 1999). The next section will examine how

ELT is affected by the testing system.

### 2.3.2.2 CET System and ELT

The relationship among the curriculum, textbooks, College English teaching and CET is described in a graph by Gu (2007). The graph is reproduced below (see Figure 5.1). Gu carried out a survey in three universities in different provinces and found that many teachers had even used old CET examination papers or some other CET materials to teach students in College English Classes where *College English* textbooks should be used. Because reading takes up a significant percentage of the mark in CET tests, it had become the most important part of English teaching in all the three universities. He claims that the effect of CET on English teaching greatly disturbed the teaching. Even the content of the textbooks is designed for the need of CET. In most *College English* textbooks, there is a practice test in between 4-6 reading units to test the outcome of learning, and the practice test is normally called practice CET test. Therefore, the outcome of College English teaching is in fact assessed by CET.

Figure 5.1. The Relationship among Curriculums, Textbooks, College English Teaching and CET



Ye and Zhao (1991) tried to promote a change of the CET system. J. Li (2002) also discusses the negative effects of CET on English teaching. He reiterates that the aim of the curriculum is to develop students' reading, listening, speaking and writing ability, but that the CET focuses too much on linguistic knowledge and that teaching has been misguided by the CET system. The teaching in 90% of the universities is CET-oriented. Jing (1999) calls for a cancellation of the CET system so that the negative effects could be avoided

completely.

It could of course be claimed that all testing systems, such as IELTS, TOEFL and GRE, may have disadvantages once people turn their purpose of learning English to passing the tests, but they also have good reasons to exist. There may be many disadvantages in the CET testing system, but there are also advantages. Wang (2006) demonstrated, by conducting a survey among teachers and students, that, firstly, both teachers and students are motivated by CET4 to teach and learn English. Secondly, they believe that CET4 can serve as a reliable criterion to evaluate the products of the College English teaching and learning in China. Thirdly, they consider that the change of CET4 reflects the direction toward which the College English teaching is moving. Finally, they state that CET4 can draw college administrators' attention towards giving more support to College English teaching. Some other researchers think the CET system helps students to better know their own strengths and weaknesses in English learning, but people should also think about the negative effects of it at the same time (Wang, 2008; Xu, 1992; Zhang 2007). Qian (2007) and Cai (2005) also mention that CET has urged students to work hard and because of the test, they have laid a good foundation in vocabulary and grammar.

According to Wang (2008), Yang (2005), Zhang (2008), Fang (2008) and Wang (2006), CET reform in 2005 has made the test focus more on communicative competence, which shows in turn that College English teaching may also be becoming more communicative and student-centered. Consequently, the CET test can also play a positive role in leading English teaching to reforms.

## **2.4 Cultural Studies and English Teaching around the 1999 Curriculum**

### **2.4.1 Views on Communicative Competence from 1985 to 1999**

Communicative competence started to be noticed in ELT in China from 1970 to 1986, but culture did not gain attention during that period. From 1986 to 1999, the discussion on English teaching never stopped. Traditional teaching methods were still questioned by researchers (Qu & Zhang, 1997; Xu, 1992; Yang, 1998; Yue, 1996; Zhang, 1994). An urge towards communicative teaching was shown in that period.

Zhang and Yang's (1989) paper discusses the theories of Linguistic Competence put forward by Chomsky (1965) and Communicative Competence put forward by Hymes (1972). The authors argue that the achievement of the goal of developing students' communicative competence demands a systematic change in curriculum design, textbook compilation and teacher training. Chen (1999) complains about students' weak competence in language use and says communicative competence should be as important as linguistic competence in language teaching. Attentions were directed towards the theory and the practice of communicative competence. Another problem is that Hymes's and Chomsky's old theories attracted great attention among Chinese scholars and many of their ideas were cited. It seems Canale and Swain's, Byram's and many other people's new input into this research area did not attract the same attention among Chinese scholars.

There were also disagreements on the teaching of communicative competence. Some influential scholars, Han, Lu and Dong (1995), counter argue that although communicative competence includes four aspects: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence, linguistic competence is the basis of the other three. They further argue that, because Chinese and English are completely different, Chinese being ideographic while English is phonogramic, great effort must be placed on linguistic competence and repetitive practice is necessary in English teaching. They suggest that teachers and students should not pay much attention to the use of the language, because without a good foundation of grammatical competence, nobody can use the language.

In short, the reason linguistic competence was still the only focus in some classes in China might be that some people overestimated its role, and underestimated sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. However, a strong dissatisfaction was shown and people were seeking ways to improve learners' communicative competence.

#### **2.4.2 Cultural Studies**

Although there were not many papers related to the teaching of culture in College

English education, a concern for the teaching of culture in English language teaching started to be shown in the 1990s. Zhang (1991) lists four problems existing in language teaching. The first one is that English teachers are still wondering whether to teach culture in English education. The second one is linguistic knowledge teaching is regarded more important than the teaching of culture. The third one is that the teachers play an important role in the teaching of culture, but most of them are not trained to teach culture. The problems show that the teaching of culture was still not fully regarded as an important aspect in English language teaching.

Among few papers about the teaching of culture before 1999, most focused on the role of cultural background information in English reading and the term “intercultural competence” was not mentioned. Zhang and Huang (1995) discuss at length the role of background knowledge in English reading. They conclude that the research of many foreign scholars (Adams, 1982; Carrel, 1984; Levinc & Haus, 1985; Johnson, 1981, 1982; Signer & Donlan, 1982; Steffenson & Joag-Dev, 1984; Wilson, 1986) show: firstly, that lack of background knowledge will do harm to reading comprehension; secondly, that proper use of background knowledge will promote reading comprehension; thirdly, that background knowledge is as important as linguistic competence; fourthly, that some teaching of background knowledge will help students with reading comprehension. They further suggest a few methods on how to teach cultural background knowledge in *Intensive Reading* classes. Zhang and Huang try hard to promote cultural knowledge teaching in English reading classes, but their ideas are limited to cultural knowledge, especially cultural knowledge related to the texts in the *College English* textbooks. It seems that not much attention has been attached to studies of “competence”.

Feng and Byram (2002) also write that, for many scholars in China, the teaching of culture means the teaching of knowledge:

As cultural studies teaching is taken by many textbook writers (Dong, 1992; Liu & Zhao, 1997) as transmission of knowledge, naturally their textbooks, both in the student’s book and the teacher’s book, contain plenty of background information about the countries of the target cultures, from stereotypes of these peoples

and their customs and traditions, important historical figures and events, to biographies of the authors of the selected texts. (Feng & Byram, 2002, p. 68)

As discussed in the previous chapters, cultural knowledge itself is problematic in the teaching and learning of culture. English is an international language, so it is not possible to acquire all world cultures, and which culture should be taught in ELT is debatable. The ability to communicate effectively does not only require knowledge, it also needs skills and cultural awareness. If ICC is the ultimate goal of the teaching of culture, knowledge on its own cannot in itself meet the needs. Despite all the confusions and difficulties, during the thirteen years, the research on cultural studies in English education shows that the teaching of culture has just been realized by some English scholars in the field of English education in China.

### **2.4.3 1999 Curriculum**

With the development and opening up of China and the research on communicative competence and culture, the old curriculum could not meet the demands of English Education. In 1999, the third curriculum was issued. It says clearly that:

The objective of College English teaching is to equip students with the ability to read, listen, speak, write and translate so that they are able to communicate in English. This course should also help students lay a good language foundation, master study strategies and improve their comprehensive cultural quality (as translated in other curriculums) to meet the needs of social development and economic construction. (Department of Higher Education, 1999, p. 1, Author's Translation)

It not only states clearly that the ultimate purpose of English Teaching and learning is communication, but also mentions the role of cultural competence in English teaching and learning. In the sixth part of the curriculum, it further explains what language foundation and cultural quality is:

Language foundation includes language knowledge and language competence. The former refers to the knowledge of phonetics, grammar and vocabulary, and the latter refers to the ability to use the knowledge to read, listen, speak, write and translate. These two aspects support each other. College English should also help

students widen their vision, enrich their knowledge, deepen their understanding of the world, and at the same time learn from foreign culture to improve their cultural quality. Language and culture are closely related and cultural background knowledge can improve students' language competence. (Department of Higher Education, 1999, p. 3, Author's Translation)

According to this explanation, language competence means the ability to use the knowledge to read, listen, speak, write and translate, which should fall into the category of communicative competence. Here cultural quality refers to vision and knowledge. It can be improved by learning from foreign culture, and it can also improve language competence. It seems that cultural studies are only understood to be the teaching and learning of cultural knowledge in College English teaching. As is shown above, the concepts of language knowledge, language competence, communicative competence and cultural quality are quite confusing. In Chinese, the terms are *yu yan zhi shi* (language knowledge), *yu yan neng li* (knowledge competence), *wen hua su yang* (cultural quality). In fact there are many possibilities of translation and in order to find out how the teachers understand the key terms used in the curriculum interviews were conducted as stated in Chapter Four.

One of the questions in the interview (see Appendix A) was "What does *yu yan zhi shi* mean?" Most teachers translated *yu yan zhi shi* as LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE or THE KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE. And only four translated it as LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE. For most teachers it meant grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Here are three typical answers to this question:

---It is the knowledge of the language itself, the grammar, and the vocabulary, something like that.

---It refers to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary something like that.

--- It is a big definition. Academically, it is something about the grammar, culture etc.

Five teachers held totally different ideas:

---How to read and how to write

--- It refers to the writing, listening, reading, translating and so on.

---Language and social culture. It is a very general word. It is anything about language.

From the answers, it can firstly be seen that the term is not clearly understood by the teachers. Secondly, some do not see the difference between knowledge and ability. To understand this phrase literally, the knowledge of English language can really be all kinds of knowledge such as the history of the language, the culture of it, grammar, and pronunciation. However, according to the explanation in the 1999 curriculum, *yu yan zhi shi* is the knowledge of phonetics, grammar and vocabulary. This in fact refers to linguistic knowledge, but in the 2004 and 2007 curriculums, this explanation is deleted. It may be because the people who wrote the curriculum wanted it to refer to all kinds of knowledge about the language including cultural knowledge.

Another question was “What does *yu yan neng li* mean?” The teachers interviewed translated this term as LANGUAGE COMPETENCE, LANGUAGE LITERACY, LANGUAGE SKILLS, LINGUISTIC CAPACITY, LANGUAGE LITERACY, LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, and 54% used LANGUAGE ABILITY. In Chinese all the English words such as ability, competence, capacity, skill can be translated into one Chinese word: *neng li*. That is why there were so many different translations, but the teachers were all English language teachers, they might use a different English word to show their different perception of the phrase. However, when asked why they selected this word but not the other one, no one could give an explanation. Some said:

-- There are lots of translations; they are just to change one language into another language. No difference.

-- Ability is a general word. I do not know really. I have never thought about it. I would like to use a general word.

-- I use literacy, because I saw people use it in a book.

So, the important thing is not how they translated the word, but how they understood the phrase. 86% of the teachers thought *yu yan neng li* means the ability to use the language, such as, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Here are some typical answers:

--- Language Competence is the ability or the capability to use the language, not only the language but also the skills about how to use it effectively.

---- Language ability means you may use the language to communicate with others and use the language to express yourself.

--- In our new syllabus, it is students' ability of speaking, listening and translating. And in each level, students have different requirements.

--- Language using ability: because I am a teacher, so in this syllabus, it maybe concerns more about how to teach students how to use the language. That is what we are concentrating on now in China, e.g. writing, listening, speaking etc.

---Capability to use a language: it is communicative ability in fact. Written or spoken.

--- The ability to use a foreign language fluently.

---The ability to speak

--- It means person who can use the language very fluently and freely, can use it to communicate.

--- How to use the language.

For the other teachers, it meant the ability to learn the language.

--- Linguistic ability is your ability to study a language, can you understand efficiently, do you study the language very quickly, or the ability to accept.

---Language competence: I think it includes many several parts, e.g. the

ability to acquire or learn knowledge and how to communicate using the knowledge. It means language acquisition.

Most teachers interpreted the requirements according to their own understandings. Some even misinterpreted this as study strategies. Because speaking, reading, writing, listening and translating abilities are stressed and explained in detail in the curriculum, most teachers preferred to relate *yu yan neng li* to the five skills. This ability in fact is normally called communicative competence by scholars in China and in the world. Here it will be interpreted as the competence to communicate in speaking, writing, listening and reading in English. According to the explanation in the 1999 curriculum, *yu yan neng li* is also defined as the ability to use knowledge to read, listen, speak, write and translate, which refers to communicative competence.

One of the interview questions was “What does *wen hua su yang* mean?” The interviewees translated *wen hua su yang*, which is translated as cultural quality in the curriculum, as CULTURAL CULTIVATION, CULTURAL QUALITY, CULTURAL AWARENESS, CULTURAL LITERACY, CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, CULTURAL APPRECIATION ABILITY, CULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENT, CULTURAL CAPACITY, CULTURAL SKILLS, CULTURE BACKGROUND, CULTIVATION OF MULTI CULTURES, INSIGHT INTO FOREIGN CULTURE and CULTURE ORIENTED CULTIVATION. Almost every teacher gave a different translation, and all the teachers reflected that they were not sure how to translate this phrase because they did not really understand this. Here are some sample answers:

--- I am not sure about that term. It means both language knowledge and language competence and culture, the history, the ability to master the language. It is the culture, the habit and the customs.

--- Cultural quality is the native speakers’ culture. You know how to use the language in native speaking counties. It is a very complicated word. It contains many meanings. We can not express it in a few words.

--- Cultural awareness: because it is about College English education in

China, so the students are Chinese, and they are learning English, so they should know the difference between cultures. And the aim of English education is to cultivate this kind of awareness. I do not know really.

--- Culture understanding: It is the most difficult one. Even in Chinese, I do not know how to analyze it. You can translate it into culture quality. Because it is just the level we people are educated. People know the gaps of our culture. And when we are educated or civilized, when we just leave the level of illiteracy. I think why people are so innocent do nothing about the society, because they do not understand our culture. I think it is a bad translation. I do not know how to translate it.

*Wen hua su yang* is said to be one of the important objectives of College English teaching, but the Chinese expression is hard to be understood and explained. The English translation given in the curriculum is also a literal translation. The teachers guessed that it means to know the cultural knowledge, differences between cultures. It is difficult to find out the meaning from the curriculum. In the 1999 curriculum, it says learners should learn from foreign culture to improve their cultural quality. And again in the 2004 and 2007 curriculums, it says people should improve their cultural quality so that they can contribute to social development and international communication. So cultural quality is in fact useful for international communication, and it can be improved by learning from foreign culture according to the curriculum. This will therefore be interpreted as cultural competence, and because it is learned for intercultural communication, it will also be used to refer to intercultural competence.

The phrase ‘cultural quality’ is also the part that is emphasized in the other curriculums published later. As discussed above it is more likely to be intercultural competence, but it has never been clarified in any curriculum, even not in the latest ones which will be analyzed in the following part.

## **2.5 Cultural Studies and English Teaching around the 2004 and 2007 Curriculums**

### **2.5.1. The 2004 and 2007 Curriculums**

The number of people who learn English in China has increased dramatically since 1979. The number of papers on English teaching and learning also soared, and the research on teaching methodology and ICC has attracted great attention in recent years (Ding, 2007; Hu & Peng, 2006; Jiang, 2005). In the curriculum which came into use in 2004, it says right at the beginning: “College English has its main components knowledge and practical skills of the English language, learning strategies and intercultural communication” (Department of Higher Education, 2004, p. 5).

The objective of College English is to develop students’ ability to use English in an all-round way, especially in listening and speaking, so that in their future work and social interactions they will be able to exchange information effectively through both spoken and written channels, and at the same time they will be able to enhance their ability to study independently and improve their cultural quality so as to meet the needs of China’s social development and international exchanges. (Department of Higher Education, 2004, p. 5)

Interestingly, “*jiao liu*” is translated as “exchange”, which means communication and is normally translated as “communication” in other parts of the English version of the curriculum. It can be seen from the objectives that communicative competence has become a ultimate goal of English teaching since 2004. Again for the first time, the phrase “intercultural communication” is mentioned in the curriculum, although there is no further explanation of what it means in the curriculum. It can be seen that ICC has become one of the most important aspect in English language teaching in China. Compared to the previous curriculums which all regard reading as the most important part of English teaching, this one stresses the ability of listening and speaking, which shows the change of direction in English language teaching.

The latest curriculum was published on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 on the website of the Ministry of Education. Because the 2004 Curriculum is a trial version for the 2007 curriculum, not many changes were made in the 2007 one. The main change made in this version is about teaching methods, and there are not significant changes regarding the teaching of culture and language teaching objectives in this edition, so it will not be analyzed in detail in this dissertation

### **2.5.2. Communicative Competence Studies in China**

In 2006, Huang (2007) carried out an investigation among more than 400 freshmen (non-English majors only). In the investigation, the students were required to write down the English scores they got in the College Entrance Examination, their interest or liking, their objectives of English study, etc. This investigation found out that many students were learning English to realize their dreams of going abroad, and they were eager to improve their communicative competence through College English study.

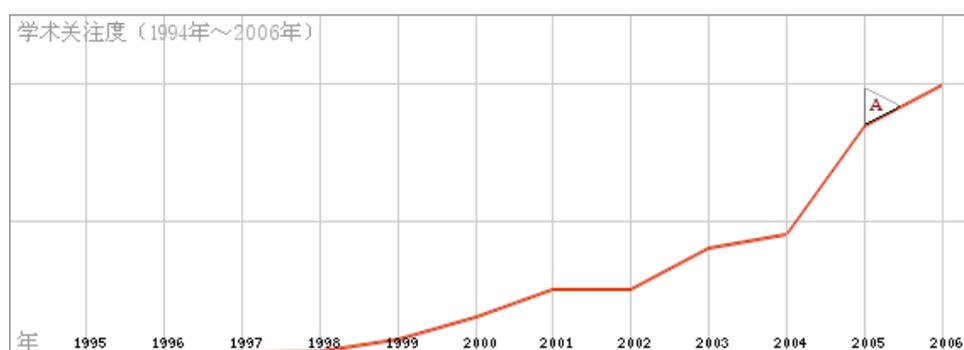
Ding (2007), Hu & Peng (2006), Jiang (2005), Shi (2006), Wei (2005), Jiang, Wu & Feng (2007) and Yan (2006) confirm that, because of China's opening up and its entry into the WTO, communication with overseas countries is more and more important. China needs talents who can communicate competently, so College English education should focus on communicative competence training. As revealed in the 2004 and 2007 curriculums, communicative competence has also been stated as the ultimate goal of ELT at the government level. In Chapter Three, the interdependent relationship between communicative competence and ICC has been shown. Since the significance of communicative competence has been widely acknowledged in China and ICC is an inseparable part of it, ICC has also become a hot issue in the area of English education studies since 2004. The studies on ICC from 2004 to 2007 in China will be discussed in the next part.

### **2.5.3. Recent Research on ICC**

The term ICC or Intercultural Competence became popular in China in the 2000s. Since 1999 when the curriculum made cultural competence an important aspect of English teaching, much research has been carried out on cultural studies and ICC studies.

According to the analysis of China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), the development of the research on ICC from 1994 to 2006 is shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2. The Research on ICC (1994-2006)



CNKI is a key national e-publishing project of China started in 1996. The CNKI project covers newspapers, dissertations, proceedings, yearbooks and reference works. So far CNKI academic databases have been serving more than 5,500 universities, public and corporate libraries, hospitals and other institutions inside and outside China.

Several articles which have a similar title *The introduction of culture into College English teaching* have been found, for example: F. Huang (2002), Luo (2005), Mao (2001) and Tang (2003). These scholars not only focus on cultural background knowledge, they also show a full realization of the relationship between language and culture and they try to put forward some methods for the teaching of culture in English language education. Hu & Peng (2006) suggest language teaching is not only the teaching of linguistic knowledge but also the teaching of culture. They maintain that Chinese language learners may suffer more from culture shock and cultural mistakes than from linguistic mistakes. They suggest with the economic and political development and opening up of China, China needs talents who have a high level of ICC. Although they do not explain why and how students encounter cultural shocks, ICC has been realized to be a significant part of College English teaching in China.

Luo (2005) mentions three principles of intercultural English teaching in China. Firstly, respect for native culture and target culture; secondly, a full awareness of the differences and similarities of different cultures; thirdly, cultural information should be filtered to achieve a learning from the good points of other cultures. The Chinese scholars realized linguistic competence is still not enough

for intercultural communication. Luo's suggestion concerns a local culture which is also important for ELT, but his last suggestion shows his conservatism. If only good points are taught, a false picture of the world may be drawn.

One problem put forward by the scholars is teachers' qualification in teaching ICC. Hu and Peng (2006), Tang (2003), Wang & Guo (2005) and Yan (2005) all mention the important role of English teachers in the cultivation of students' ICC. It is not only a problem of the awareness of the importance of ICC in language teaching for the teachers but also the teachers' need to be competent enough to teach ICC. As stated in Chapter Three, it is not only a problem in China. This problem has also been noticed and emphasized by many foreign experts (Aarup et al., 1995; Byram, 1989; Kilickaya, 2004).

As is shown above, although the importance of ICC has been realized by most teachers and the research on it has been improving dramatically in recent years, the qualification of the teachers is still a problem worth noticing. Even if some teachers would like to teach culture, they may have no clue about how to do that, so teachers' experience and knowledge may be an obstacle in the way of the development of the teaching of culture.

## **2.6 The Advantages of the Curriculums**

As shown above, although terms related to the teaching of culture may need clarification, the curriculums are leading College English teaching from a focus on reading towards communicative language teaching. The curriculums not only guide College English teaching, they also encourage more studies in areas such as communicative teaching and ICC, stated to be one of the objectives of English teaching in China since 2004. They give directions to English teaching, providing the impetus for moving it forward. Many papers have been written to stress the positive effects of curriculums in the development of College English teaching (Bai, 2002; Cai, 2004; Cai, 2005; Chen & Zhu, 2008; Shao, 1999; Tang, 2009; Wang, 1999; Xie, 2001). They all agree that the revisions of curriculums are leading English teaching in China to be more communicative.

Although the curriculums do not explain in detail about the teaching of culture, they provide requirements at length on other aspects of English teaching such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating. They give specific guidance to teachers, textbook writers and CET test editing groups. The effective role of the curriculums in China is of paramount interest.

### **3. Conclusion**

English language teaching in China has undergone several reforms which can be seen in the revision of the curriculums. College English teaching in early 1980s simply refers to grammar teaching and reading, but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is developed to be the teaching of communicative competence and ICC. The change of direction may be caused by the development of the ELT in China and the change of learners' needs. However, communicative competence only became the aim of ELT in 1999 and ICC was first regarded important in 2004. The study about it is late compared with that in many other developed countries. Another problem that is shown from the studies of the curriculum is that most of the key terms used in the curriculums which are also key objectives of College English teaching are ambiguous and widely misunderstood by teachers. The government provides guidance for English teaching, but the guidance itself seems confusing. Cultural studies seem to be misunderstood and badly stipulated in the curriculums at the government level.

## **Chapter Six: Cultural Studies in College English Teaching in China**

### **Part Two: A Contemporary Study**

In Chapter Five, the development of cultural studies in College English teaching in China was introduced. Although the teaching of culture is stated to be important in the curriculums and papers, it has been shown in Chapter Five that the requirements of the teaching and learning of culture are ambiguous and teachers do not seem to really understand what they mean. As discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the focus of the dissertation is to explore how Anglo-American cultures, world cultures and internationally shared culture are balanced in ELT and how ICC is taught to make the teaching and learning of culture in ELT more sensible and effective. Therefore, this chapter will first examine whether the teaching and learning of culture is important for students and teachers, who are the core of ELT, and then some complementary, original research will be reported to show how ICC is understood and assessed in ELT in China. Following this, the varieties of culture taught in College English teaching in China will be investigated according to the answers given by the teachers and students in a survey.

#### **1. Students' and Teachers' Attitudes towards the Teaching of Culture in China**

The significance of the teaching and learning of culture in ELT has been clearly demonstrated in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. It is also agreed to be important by the Chinese government and Chinese scholars. In this chapter, results from the surveys introduced in Chapter Four will be discussed to investigate students' and teachers' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of culture.

##### **1.1 Students' Views**

According to the questionnaires (see Appendix D and F), when students were asked what their purposes of learning English were (see Figure D.1 in Appendix D), 77% of the students chose “to pass English tests”, and 91% thought “to

communicate in English” was their ultimate purpose; 92% chose “to find a good job”. Among them 39% strongly agreed with “to pass English tests”, 65% strongly agreed with “to communicate in English”, and 69% strongly agreed with “to find a good job”. There were few students who disagreed with “to find a good job” and “to communicate in English”. 45 % of the students did not really think their purpose is to learn about foreign culture and 41% were not learning English to go abroad. Therefore, to learn foreign culture was in fact not the direct purpose of English learning for many students. The students’ purposes of learning English were mainly to find a good job, to be able to communicate in English and to pass English tests. As stated in the previous chapter, the CET certificate is extremely important for students to find a job, and the competence of using the language to communicate is also important for job hunting and passing the tests. The three aspects are in fact closely related. The learning of culture seems not to be an obvious goal of English learning for students. However, communication is one of the most important aims, and, as discussed in Chapter Three, communicative competence is closely related with intercultural competence especially in ELT, so the learning of culture also becomes an aim implicitly.

However, when the students were asked “are you interested in culture learning and Why?” Only nine participants mentioned they were not interested in culture learning because culture is difficult and one also said it is not useful to learn culture, one will learn culture once the person lives in the culture. Another few students said it was not good for the CET test, so they were not interested.

The other 191 participants all said they were interested in culture learning; the reasons can be summarized as follows:

- A. It is interesting and magic.
- B. If I go abroad to study in the future, it will be useful.
- C. It is good for language learning and communication with foreigners.

A and C were supported by 56% and 34% of the 191 participants respectively, and the others supported B.

Although cultural studies were not the most important purpose of English learning, students said they were very interested in the learning of culture in ELT. 96% of all the respondents were interested in the learning of culture, because it is interesting and good for language learning and communication. All in all, culture learning is very important for students. Although it is not an explicit purpose of English learning, it has become a hidden purpose that is closely related with communication.

## **1.2 Teachers' Views**

In the teachers' interview (see Appendix A), one of the questions was "do you think it is important to teach culture in College English classes?" All the teachers interviewed were very sure that it was very important and necessary to teach culture. Here are some typical answers:

---Yes, very important. If they do not know the difference, they may make lots of mistakes.

---Yes, very important. For Chinese students, some are good at grammar or dealing with the text. But when they are faced with the native speaker, they sometimes feel difficult to communicate with them. They can say hello, how do they do, they can not communicate with them deeply.

---Yes, very important. If you want to learn a foreign language and communicate with a foreigner without any misunderstanding, you must know the value of their culture. When we are just beginning to learn English, we were told to ask "how old are you", but it is very rude to ask that.

As seen from these typical answers, the teachers all thought it was very important to teach culture because learners need culture to communicate well. People need to learn culture because in intercultural communications people need knowledge, skills and cultural awareness to mediate and behave in a right way. In fact, the teachers all more or less agreed that the goal of the teaching of culture is ICC implicitly.

## **2. A Contemporary Study of ICC in China**

## 2.1. The Concept of ICC in China

As mentioned in Chapter Five, in China, the term “cultural competence” first implicitly appeared in the curriculum in 1999 which states clearly that the ultimate purpose of language teaching and learning is communication. The phrase “intercultural communication” was first mentioned in the curriculum in 2004, but the study of ICC has drawn more and more attention in China since 1999.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, most Chinese authors writing on the teaching of culture in ELT (W. Chen, 2008; Duan, 2006; Han, Lu and Dong, 1995; Huang, 2006; S. Li, 2002; Liu, 2008; Xiao, 2005) regard Byram’s (1995), Sercu’s (2005) and some other foreign experts’ ICC theories as authoritative. Consequently, the concept of ICC adopted in China is the one that is mentioned in Chapter Three. It covers three aspects mainly: knowledge, skills and attitudes. As discussed in Chapter Three, ‘knowledge’ refers to cultural knowledge of all cultures the language carries, knowledge about the international nature of the language, the connection of the language and culture. ‘Skills’ refer to the skills to observe, interpret, analyze, evaluate, relate and interact with other cultures and self culture. ‘Attitudes’ refer mainly to openness, respect, curiosity and critical cultural awareness.

## 2.2 The Chinese Teachers’ Understanding of ICC

Although the theories are there, and ICC is considered as one of the ultimate objectives in College English teaching in China, it seems that the English teachers who are central to ELT do not really know what it means. To investigate the concept of ICC for teachers in China, an interview of some Chinese teachers across eight universities in China was conducted as introduced in Chapter Four. In this section, teachers’ view about the concept of ICC will be discussed.

One of the questions asked in the interview (see Appendix A) is “What does *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* (ICC) mean?” The interviewees translated *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* (ICC) into INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE, TRANS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION ABILITY, CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION LITERACY, INTERCULTURAL

COMMUNICATION ABILITY, CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION CAPACITY, CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE CAPABILITY, MULTI-CULTURE ABILITY and CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS. Inter-culture, cross-culture, trans-culture and multi-culture can all be translated into *kua wen hua*, in Chinese, so there are so many different translations. When asked what ICC means in the interview, the following answers were given:

**Typical answer one (61%): pay attention to other cultures or the differences between cultures**

--- Not only to know how to communicate with others but also know the culture of another country, the Background. You should know the cultural background.

--- I am not sure about the Translation. Just as the proverb says “when in Rome do as the Romans do”. If you go to a country, you experience the culture. When you communicate you have to think about the customs, the culture, something like that. You have to know the difference of culture.

--- It is the ability to be aware of the difference between culture, when you communicate with foreigner, you can respect their culture, not offend them.

**Typical answer two (13%): to know your own culture and foreign culture**

--- To avoid culture shock. The ability to know your own culture and foreign culture.

--- That is my research topic in fact. From what I have learned now, I think two sides are very important. First, you know something about foreign culture, secondly, how to express Chinese culture in English. So it is cross-culture Communication. Communication is bilateral, it mean mutual communication. You tell me something and I tell you something. For Chinese students should not just accept what a foreigner tells him or her. As a Chinese, we should be able to tell our own culture to the foreigners.

### **Typical answer three (4%): native speakers' culture**

--- I mean the freely and very successful communication with native speakers.

### **Typical answer four (4%): world cultures**

--- You can also use inter cultural communication. It means some people are well educated, they know not only the culture in one social system but many cultures from many social systems. Not only western culture but also Eastern culture, it not only means China, but also Japan, Iran and so on.

### **Typical answer five (9%): Cultural awareness**

---The most important point is you should have the ability to bridge the gap. You should have the cultural awareness. You can reduce the misunderstanding and make both of you comfortable.

### **Others (9%)**

--- It means even people come from different countries, with different nationalities, come from different cultural background, they can communicate, they can understand each other, and this kind of things.

--- I think in China especially among my colleagues, it is a hot topic in a lot of meetings. In China, it is only another word for communication across different cultures or countries. A person with this ability should know something about two cultures, two languages, especially, know the differences between cultures. A lot of my colleagues wrote essays about the difference about culture and then it will be a good essay. So it is a very hot topic in China.

As shown from the data, most teachers thought ICC is to know the differences between cultures and to respect other cultures in order not to offend the foreigner. 13% realized that ICC also means the acquisition of one's own culture. Only one person among the 23 people said that ICC also refers to native speakers' culture and also only one said the cultures should not only be the native speakers' cultures but also world cultures. Two people also mentioned cultural

awareness. No one teacher's answer covers all aspects of ICC, and they all do not seem to really understand what ICC is. Since ICC is not understood by the teachers, it is then impossible for it to be taught in College English teaching, unless the textbooks provide teachers with clear and specific guidance.

To sum up, the concept of ICC in China relies mostly on the studies and definitions of ICC provided by experts outside the country. Although the theories are acknowledged by Chinese scholars, the teachers do not really know what it means. There is an obvious mismatch between the requirement of the government, the theories about ICC established by experts worldwide and Chinese teachers' perceptions. Therefore, guidance is needed in the teaching materials and the reference books for teachers so that teachers are able to learn and teach at the same time.

### **2.3 The Understanding of ICC in Research Projects in China**

As mentioned above most Chinese scholars use experts' ICC theories as their theoretical background in their research and papers. Although the theories are acknowledged by scholars, they are not only misunderstood by the teachers as shown above, but also misunderstood by the scholars and postgraduates who use the theories in their research themselves. A careful study of their research seems to show that most Chinese researchers still focus on cultural knowledge rather than competence when they talk about the teaching and learning of culture. The misunderstanding can be shown obviously in the surveys most researchers did in their research.

One master thesis will be used as an example. The research method used in this thesis is quite typical in the study of ICC in ELT in China, because many other people (Jiang, Wu & Feng, 2007; Liu, 2004; Qin, 2005; S. Li, 2002; Wang, 2007; Y. Li, 2002; Y. Wang, 2004; Yang, 2002; Zhao, 2003) also used a similar or the same questionnaire in their research. Normally an assessment of ICC or the outcome of the teaching of culture was conducted in their researches. The assessment method used itself shows how the researchers understand ICC.

In Xiao's (2005) thesis, she conducted a research about the learning of

culture among English majors in China. In the introduction, she states that students' all-round competence is stressed, for it is the basis of arriving at the cultural understanding and forming the right attitude. Her survey sets out to investigate the present situation of culture learning in some colleges. She used questionnaires in the survey. In the first part of the questionnaire, there are true or false questions. Here are some examples:

1. *You had dinner with an American family. A while after the dinner, you stood up and said, "I must be going now, really. Good-bye."* ( )

2. *When you want to compliment your American friend's new coat, you can say "I like your new coat".* ( )

3. *Li Xia met American guests who just had a long journey at the railway station. She said to them: "I am afraid you must have been tired."* ( )

4. *When you are five-minute late for class, you should stand at the door and offer an explanation.* ( )

5. *Mike caught a cold and didn't attend class. Li Lin went to see him, and tried to comfort him, "Drink a lot of water, and put on more clothes".* ( )

6. *You are invited to a British friend's house and accept some drink. You usually drink it up even when you don't feel it taste good.* ( )

In Xiao's analysis, she says it is disappointing those subjects' scores in this part show students' failure in acquiring knowledge of culture. Whereas in fact it is almost impossible to say which one is right or wrong. It is more like a problem of manners and personal habit than of culture. Xiao stresses her disappointment about question two. She says it is rude to say you like the others' new coat while talking with a foreigner. However, in reality, it seems this question also depends on the interlocutor's relationship and some other details.

In part two, some examples are as follows:

1. *Florida is a \_\_\_\_ state in the U.S.A.*

*a. windy b. rainy c. sunny d. snowy*

2. *In English if someone is always jealous of others, we can say "He was a \_\_\_\_-eyed person."*

*a. blue b. green c. red d. yellow*

3. *In 1620, Mayflower, the ship in which the Pilgrim Fathers sailed, voyaged to \_\_\_\_.*

*a. Plymouth b. James Town c. Boston d. Philadelphia*

4. *Which wind is the warm wind to British people?*

*a. west wind b. east wind c. south wind d. north wind*

These questions test students' language knowledge, geographical knowledge and history knowledge. The marks are again disappointing according to Xiao. She claims that it shows students don't have a systematic acquaintance with English culture and the failure to answer questions in part one and part two causes students' failure in communication. It seems that good communication is based on a deep understanding of the geography, politics, history and language of the target country. If it is true, communication may be impossible, because not many people can promise they learn English only to communicate with British or American people and it is difficult to have so much cultural knowledge about every country in the world.

The last part of the questionnaire tests knowledge of China, their home country. The questions are similar to those in part two. It tests knowledge of geography, history and politics in China. Its purpose is to have all-round developed students, but the questions are as difficult as the examples in the second part of the questionnaire. It seems experts of a certain area may not be able to answer most questions in part three.

This kind of test totally twists the ideas held by scholars such as Byram (1989, 1995, 1997) and Sercu (2005). As stated in Chapter Three, in their opinions, ICC does not only mean cultural knowledge but also skills, abilities, attitudes and insights; but the research done by Chinese scholars focuses too much on knowledge. It seems that if a person has enough knowledge of different areas of his or her home country and America or Britain, the person will be able to communicate with people in English successfully and strategically and a right attitude is established through the process of knowledge learning and manners training.

As mentioned in Chapter Five, cultural studies in China started to become

popular in the late 1990s, and for years, cultural studies meant background knowledge or cultural knowledge studies. This idea has been prevailing and has influenced people's thinking significantly. Although there is input of foreign theories about ICC, many Chinese scholars have not realized the essence of the theories. Another reason for the misunderstanding may be the difficulty of the assessment of ICC as mentioned in Chapter Three. The level of ICC varies from person to person. It is closely related to one's personal experience and way of thinking which is not easy to test. No matter what the reason is, it seems the researchers misunderstood the concept of ICC.

#### **2. 4 Dissatisfaction with Chinese Students' ICC**

There is a strong dissatisfaction with Chinese students' ICC. The dissatisfaction continues as the assessments go on and on. Qin (2005) tested Chinese students' intercultural awareness and intercultural competence in 2005. 216 English majors and 354 non-English majors in five universities of northern China participated in Qin's test. The results show that both English and non-English majors prevalently lack profound intercultural communication awareness. In September, 2006, Wang (2007) also conducted a survey. The test was conducted among 266 Chinese non-English majors from different departments of eight universities: Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Anhui University, Guangzhou Medical College, University of Science and Technology of China, Shandong Normal University, PLA Nanjing Institute of Politics, Southwest University of Political Science and Law, and Shanghai Institute of Foreign Trade. Test papers were employed as instruments of the investigation to explore the overall level of the students' ICC. The collected data were then analyzed with the help of the statistical software SPSS. The ultimate results indicate that the ICC of Chinese non-English majors has remained at a fairly low level, and there exist great individual differences. Y. Wang (2004) and Yang (2002) ran similar questionnaire tests and they also complain about Chinese students' low ICC.

Scholars have, then, made great efforts and consumed much time doing questionnaires. However, their questionnaires, as analyzed above, can only test cultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge and students' ability to react in certain situations. ICC includes three aspects: knowledge, skill and attitudes, as

mentioned above. Although there is a strong dissatisfaction with Chinese students' ICC, by reading through the database of some famous Chinese journals and the database of master theses, no convincing and comprehensive surveys were found. It is not to say, students have good ICC or vice versa. It can only show that complaints about the students are not well proved, and that the direction of teaching which this kind of assessment and these complaints lead to may also be wrong.

## **2.5 Summary**

The concept of ICC in China refers to knowledge, skills and attitudes, which is agreed by many scholars worldwide as discussed in Chapter Three. However, most teachers and scholars whose research topics are about ICC do not really understand what it is. ICC is widely misunderstood, but at the same time the assessment of it and complaints about students' low ICC level on the basis of a wrong perception seem to continue. The misconceptions on cultural studies may finally lead the teaching of culture in ELT to a wrong direction.

## **3. Cultures Taught in ELT in China**

Chapter Two and Chapter Three analyze English teaching and the teaching of culture from two main aspects. The first one is the varieties of culture, and the second one is ICC which has been discussed above. This section will examine, from students' and teachers' point of view, what varieties of culture were taught and how culture was taught in ELT in China.

### **3.1 Students' Views**

According to the survey (see Appendix D), when asked what kind of culture is taught in classes (See Figure D.5 in Appendix D), 77% of respondents considered that the teaching of culture was about America and/or Britain. American culture itself (33%) occupied most of the teaching of culture. 17% of the participants did not know which culture the teacher mentioned at all. 6% of respondents thought Chinese culture was the focus of the English classes. Although there were other cultures mentioned in classes, they took up only a very small proportion. It seems American and British cultures were overloaded in English classes.

According to this survey, American and British cultures took about 80% of the centre of the teaching of culture. Among them, American culture was the most prevailing one. Local culture was mentioned in the teaching of culture, but not a variety of world cultures.

When asked “Does your teacher teach culture in classes? If yes, how and how often?” in the survey, the answer to this question was mostly yes. Only 21 students (11%) out of 200 said their teachers rarely taught culture. When asked how the teachers taught culture 92% of the respondents stated that it depended on the textbooks. If there were cultural points or cultural differences from Chinese culture, the teacher would talk about it. 6% of the participants also mentioned their teacher used movies twice a month to teach culture. Eight respondents (4%) also said the teachers also used PPT or pictures to teach them some culture. Two respondents (1%) said their teacher taught culture by talking about their own experience in Canada. Although there were different ways of teaching culture, from a student’s point of view, the teaching of culture was significantly controlled by textbooks.

### **3.2 Teachers’ Views**

One of the questions in the interview (see Appendix A) was “when you teach culture in a class, which country do you mostly focus on?” there were mainly two types of answers. The first one was “American and British cultures”. The second one was “it depends on the textbooks”. In fact the culture in textbooks is mostly about America and Britain which will be shown in the following chapters. So the two answers are the same. Only one teacher said: “It depends on the textbook. Culture has no boundary, so we can not just teach American and British cultures.” Although the teachers did not agree that the teaching of culture should be restricted to American culture and British culture. The teacher also relied on textbooks for the teaching of culture.

When asked how and how often they taught culture in a language class, they all said it depended on the textbook. They mainly talked about the culture related to the texts. The teacher relied on textbooks for the teaching of culture. They might also turn to the Internet and other sources for help if they realized

there were some important cultural messages in the texts. The problem was whether they could see the cultural messages embedded in textbooks and whether they would like to spend time on them.

In a nutshell, all teachers thought the teaching of culture was very important and necessary in College English classes, but they had no clear idea of how to teach culture. The teaching of culture depended on the content of textbooks significantly.

### **3.3 Summary**

According to the surveys, the cultures taught in College English teaching in China are mainly American culture and British culture. However, respondents also mentioned that it depends on the content of the textbooks. In other words, the varieties of culture selected in the textbooks are the culture taught in ELT in China. Therefore, a study of a few series of textbooks to see what and whose culture is constructed in the textbooks and how ICC is taught will be the focus of the dissertation.

### **4. Conclusion**

Cultural studies in ELT are considered very important by the government, teachers and students in China. However, there is a significant misunderstanding, in English teaching in China, about ICC which is agreed to be a ultimate goal of the teaching of culture by many scholars (Byram, 1997; Feng, 2000). ICC is mainly explained to be the teaching of background knowledge, and it is limited to the communication with native speakers in the studies conducted by most Chinese researchers. The teaching of culture in China is mainly about America and Britain according to the surveys because they are the cultures textbooks cover. The teaching of culture and even English teaching in China is in fact controlled by textbooks. Therefore, textbooks will be analyzed in the following chapters to investigate the extent to which they help the teaching and learning of culture.

## **Chapter Seven: Cultural Evaluation of *College English* Textbooks—the Results**

A most important feature of textbooks is their intrinsically challenging nature, so the development of a textbook is a long and complex process (Price-Machado, 1998). Because of its challenging nature, it is very difficult to produce a perfect book. There is no perfect textbook that is why so many scholars are devoted to the evaluation and development of textbooks. The purpose of this analysis and evaluation of the textbooks is only to accelerate the development of teaching materials. In this chapter, the books mentioned in Chapter Four will be analyzed according to the criteria put forward in Chapter Four: recency, realism, topics, task design and extra information. An integration of a content analysis method and a content-based analysis method was adopted in the analysis as introduced in Chapter Four. The main purpose of this analysis is to see whether and how Anglo-American cultures, world cultures, internationally shared culture and ICC are covered in the books. The reading and writing books will first be examined in Part One and then the listening and speaking books which is also an important part of ELT in China will be evaluated in Part Two. All three series will be evaluated according to the criteria mentioned above in the following order: the NCE series, the NHCE series and the TECE series in most of its parts. Only results of the analysis will be provided in this chapter, and these results will be discussed and analysed in Chapter Eight.

### **1. Cultural Evaluation of the Reading and Writing Books**

#### **1.1 Recency**

Among the three series of textbooks, only the NCE series and the TECE series provide some information about the year of the publication of the texts. The NHCE series does not mention it at all. No source information is given in the NHCE series. The only information provided in the preface to the NHCE series is that most of the texts are taken from American or British magazines, newspapers and books published in the 1980s to 1990s. This means most cultural information is twenty to thirty years old. However, The NHCE series was first published in

2001, and the textbook writers realized the problem of recency as they mention in the preface to the series that they tried to find texts that are not very old, although they are old when we look at them today.

Because no relative information is provided in the NHCE series, Table 7.1 below shows the year of publication of the texts in NCE Book One to Book Four and TECE Book One and Book Two as an example. There are eight units in each book of the NCE series, but ten units in that of the TECE series. There are also two texts in each unit of the NCE series but only one text in each unit of the TECE series, so the number of texts of each series selected is very different, and the purpose is also not to compare the two series but to analyze them.

Table 7.1. Year of Publication of the NCE and the TECE Reading and Writing Book One

Book One	Year of publication (NCE)		Year of publication (TECE)
	Text A	Text B	
Unit One	1982	1994	Not given
Unit Two	1985	1997	Not given
Unit Three	1989	1998	Not given
Unit Four	1991	1990	1976
Unit Five	2000, (the story is during WW II)	1992	1996
Unit Six	1999	1995	1977
Unit Seven	1990	1998	Not given
Unit Eight	1990	1997	1982
Unit Nine	N/A	N/A	Not given
Unit Ten	N/A	N/A	1971

Table 7.2. Year of Publication of the NCE and the TECE Reading and Writing Book Two

Book Two	Year of publication (NCE)		Year of publication (TECE)
	Text A	B	
Unit one	1995	1998	1973
Unit two	1985	1996	Story happened during 1931-1967
Unit Three	1997	1998	1971
Unit Four	1996	1995	Not given
Unit Five	1996	1996	1986
Unit Six	1998	1995	Not given
Unit Seven	1995	2000	2003
Unit Eight	1991	1996	1980
Unit Nine	N/A	N/A	Not given
Unit Ten	N/A	N/A	Not given

Table 7.3. Year of Publication of the NCE Reading and Writing Book Three

Book Three	Year of publication (NCE)	
	A	B
Unit One	1984	2001
Unit Two	1985	1995
Unit Three	2000	1992
Unit Four	1990	1991
Unit Five	1982	1997
Unit Six	2001	2001
Unit Seven	1995	1995
Unit Eight	2000	2000

Table 7.4. Year of Publication of the NCE Reading and Writing Book Four

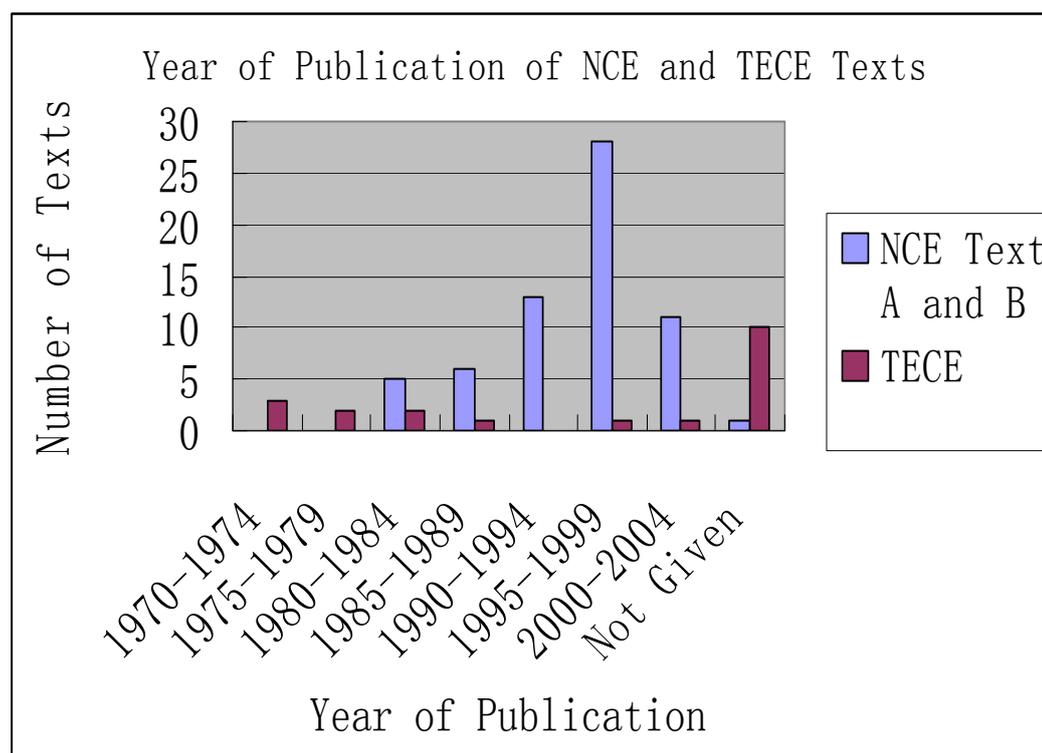
Book Four	Year of publication (NCE)	
	Text A	Text B
Unit One	1997	Not given
Unit Two	1997	2000
Unit Three	1991	1966
Unit Four	Early 1990s	1990
Unit Five	1983	1987
Unit Six	1999	1999
Unit Seven	2002	2002
Unit Eight	1988	1982

To demonstrate the data more clearly, the years will be divided into groups with five years in one group. There are sixty four texts altogether in the NCE books and twenty in the TECE books. The number of texts of each category is shown in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5. Years of Publication of the NCE and the TECE Reading and Writing Books

Year of Publication	NCE Text A and B	TECE
1970-1974	0	3
1975-1979	0	2
1980-1984	5	2
1985-1989	6	1
1990-1994	13	0
1995-1999	28	1
2000-2004	11	1
Not Given	1	10

Figure 7.1. Year of Publication of the NCE and the TECE Texts



As indicated in Table 7.5 and Figure 7.1, in the NCE books, 17% of the texts were published in the early 2000s, 44% from 1995 to 1999, 20% from 1990 to 1994 and 19% in the 1980s. Most texts are no more than fifteen years old, and no text published before 1980 was selected in the books. While in the TECE books, most years of publication are not provided in the books. Among the ten known ones, 50% were published in the 1970s. Only 10% were published in the early 2000s.

## 1.2 Realism

As stated in Chapter Four, one way of obtaining realism is authenticity. According to the given references of the NCE series, one can easily see that the great majority of texts come from sources such as newspapers, journals, magazines, novels and autobiographies written by native speakers of English and published in the United States and the United Kingdom. They are not written specifically for language learners, so they can be called authentic materials.

Although there is almost no source information given in all the other

series of books, all the series mention that the texts are mostly taken directly from authentic materials. In the NHCE series, the only information about authenticity is given in its preface. It says that most of the texts are taken from American or British magazines, newspapers and books published in the 1980s to 1990s. For the needs of language teaching, parts of the original articles have been adapted. Most texts are not online texts and little online information can be found. Because parts of the original articles have been changed for the needs of language teaching, the degree of authenticity and realism becomes lower than if no changes had taken place.

The TECE series seem to pay great attention to the selection of texts. It states in the preface to the series, although there are millions of authentic materials to choose from, textbook writers have to read tens of articles to select one with “*Chun zheng*” (meaning native and standard) English so that the text is interesting, informative and enlightening.

As stated in Chapter Four, one very important point in this dissertation is whether authentic materials are only restricted to “native-speakers” materials. The culture presented in the authentic materials is one of the focuses in this dissertation. As discussed in Chapter Four, many coding methods such as reference information, text content, spelling, vocabulary and subject matter can be used to decide the variety of culture that each text presents. The Tables below demonstrate which culture the texts are related to. Book One and Book Two of each series will be analyzed as an example. To make it short, ‘international culture’ in the tables in the following sections refers to ‘internationally shared culture’.

Table 7.6. Whose Realistic Culture the NCE Reading and Writing Book One and Book Two Present

The NCE series	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures	International culture	Not given
	American culture	British culture	Others			
Book One	Unit 1 Text A, B Unit 2 Text A, Unit 4 Text A B Unit 5 Text A B Unit 7 Text A B Unit 8 Text A B		Unit 2 Text B: Australia		Unit 3 Text A B Unit 6 Text A B	Unit 5 Text B
Book Two	Unit 1 Text B Unit 2 Text A B Unit 3 Text A B Unit 4 Text A Unit 5 Text A B Unit 6 Text A Unit 7 Text A	Unit 4 Text B		Unit 1 Text A: America and China	Unit 7 Text B Unit 8 Text A B	Unit 6 Text B

Table 7.7. Whose Realistic Culture the NHCE Reading and Writing Book One and Book Two Present

The NHCE series	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures	International culture	Not given
	American culture	British culture	Others			
Book One	Unit 2 Text A,B,C; Unit 3 Text A,B Unit 5 Text A, B Unit 6 Text A, B Unit 7 Text A, B Unit 9 Text C Unit 10 Text B, C	Unit 1 Text C;		Unit 7 Text C Naples	Unit 1 Text A, B; Unit 3 Text C; Unit 4 Text A, B, C Unit 8 Text A, B, C Unit 9 Text A, B Unit 10 Text A	Unit 5 Text C Unit 6 Text C
Book Two	Unit 1 Text A, B Unit 3 Text A Unit 5 Text A Unit 6 Text A, B, C Unit 8 Text A B C Unit 9 Text B	Unit 10 Text A		Unit 1 Text C China and America Unit 3 Text C China, Hopi, America and Mormon Unit 4 Text A America and Brazil Unit 4 Text B America and Poland Unit 9 Text A India and America Unit 9 Text C China Unit 10 Text B Japan Unit 10 Text C Germany	Unit 2 Text A Unit 2 Text B Unit 2 Text C  Unit 5 Text B Unit 7 Text A B C	Unit 3 Text B Unit 4 Text C Unit 5 Text C

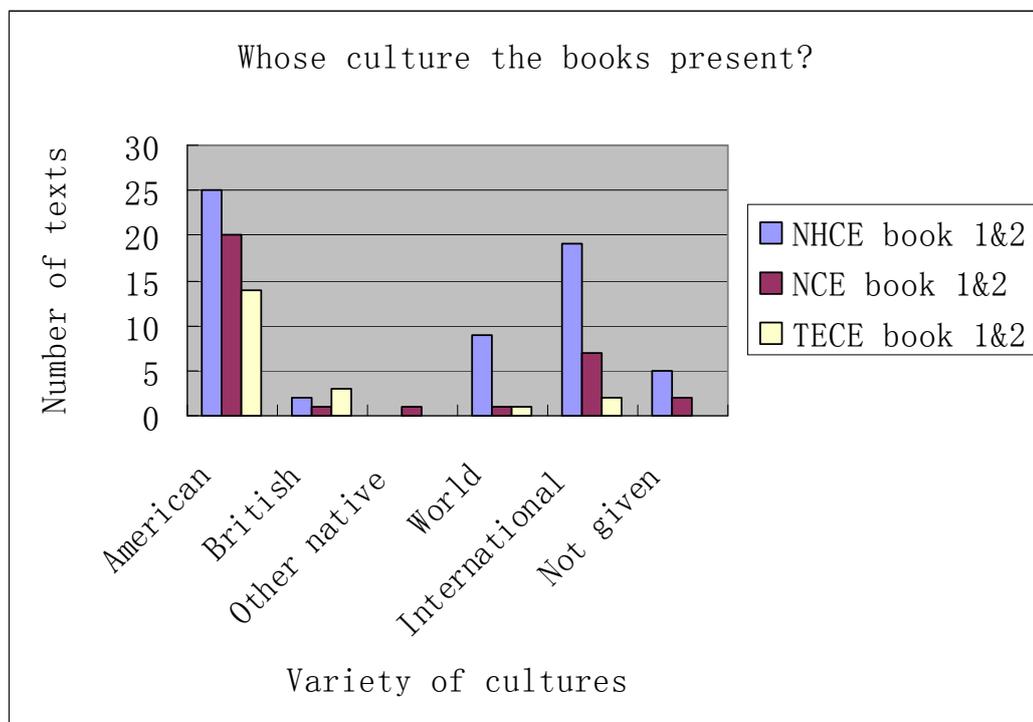
Table 7.8. Whose Realistic Culture the TECE Reading and Writing Book One and Book Two Present

The TECE series	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures	International culture	Not given
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures			
Book One	Unit 4,5,6,7,8, 9,10	Unit 2, 3			Unit 1	
Book Two	Unit 2 4 6 7 8 9 10	Unit 3		Unit 1 India	Unit 5	

Table 7.9. Number of Each Cultural Category in All the Three Series

	American	British	Other native	World	International	Not given
NHCE Book One and Two	25	2	0	9	19	5
NCE Book One and Two	20	1	1	1	7	2
TECE Book One and Two	14	3	0	1	2	0

Figure 7.2. Whose Culture the Reading and Writing Book Presents



According to Table 7.6 and 8.9, 63% of the cultures in the NCE textbooks is American culture and 22% is internationally shared culture. Only one text is about world cultures, one about British culture and one about other native cultures. World cultures are almost not mentioned at all. Only in text A of Unit One, some Chinese culture is mentioned, but it is also in fact much about American culture, because it is written by an American about his experience and feeling in China.

As illustrated in Table 7.7 and Table 7.9, 41% of the culture in the NHCE

books is American, but 32% of texts relate to internationally shared culture and 15% to world cultures. Among world cultures 40% of are related with American culture in that they describe how people of other cultures feel and live in the US. Other native speakers' cultures are seldom mentioned in the books. In Book Two of the NHCE series, quite a lot of world cultures are demonstrated. Chinese culture is also mentioned in two texts, but as shown in Table 7.7 they are both text Cs, not the focus of a language class, and suggested in the preface to be studied by students themselves after school hours.

It can be seen from Table 7.8 and Table 7.9, 70% of the culture in the TECE books is American and 15% are British, so 85% of the culture is native speakers' cultures. 10% are internationally shared culture and another 10% are world cultures. No Chinese culture is mentioned in the TECE books, and only Indian culture is presented in one text as world cultures. Almost no other cultures are demonstrated except native speakers' cultures in the TECE books.

### **1.3 Topics**

All College English textbooks are divided into units according to topics. For example, in Book One of the NCE series, the topics are: growing up, friendships, understanding science, the American dream, romance, animal intelligence, emergency and coping with an educational problem. They are just general topics for the texts in the units; in fact, in each text there are many other sub-topics related to the main topic. For example, in the unit about education, there is also some cultural information about living patterns and behaviors. As mentioned in Chapter Four, although each sentence may carry some cultural information, this chapter is not going into such details. Only some main topics will be picked up for analysis. Only text A of each unit in Book One and Book Two of each series will be analyzed because they are the focus of English teaching in classes and only extra information about text A is provided in teachers' books. In the following tables, not only a summary of the topics in each text will be listed out, the varieties of culture that each topic is related to will also be pointed out according to the coding methods proposed in Chapter Four, so that how a variety of culture is presented can be demonstrated.

Table 7.10. Topics in the NCE Reading and Writing Book One

NCE Topics	Details:	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture
		American	British	Others	Local culture	Others	
Value systems	Unit 1: Self-importance and self-confidence is very important in students' life.	√					
	Unit 2: Friendship is very important and friends need to keep in touch, or they will be regretted.	√					
	Unit 3: The public should be kept in touch with what science is about.						√
	Unit 4: Hardworking can make American dream come true.	√					
	Unit 5: The true nature of a heart or love is seen in its response to the unattractive.	√					
	Unit 6: Some animals can think, and they will probably do their best when it serves their own purposes, not when the scientists ask them to do it.						√
	Unit 7: It is courageous to rescue the others when they are in danger even in the risk of one's own life.	√					
	Unit 8: Young people are so ignorant and so ignorant of their ignorance. A modern industrial state cannot function with an idle, ignorant labor force.	√					
	Unit 8: Asia especially Japan seem to be a threat to America.	√					
Unit 8: When a man has no money, education can supply the human capital necessary to start to acquire financial capital. Hard work, education, saving and discipline can do anything.	√						

Table 7.10. Topics in the NCE Reading and Writing Book One (continued)

NCE Topics	Details:	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture
		American	British	Others	Local culture	Others	
Cultural information	Unit 1: School classes are tedious.	√					
	Unit 2: People communicate through mails in the 1980s.	√					
	Unit 4: People mow their own lawn or pay to have it mowed.	√					
	Unit 5: Two young people became lovers for being pen-pals during world war two.	√					
	Unit 8: Students all make spelling mistakes. They cannot even perform simplest calculation, and their knowledge of world history and geography is nonexistent.	√					
	Unit 8: Asian students work harder in America, and local teenagers do not want to compete with them.	√					

Table 7.11. Topics in the NHCE Reading and Writing Book Two

NHCE Topics	Details:	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture
		American	British	Others	Local culture	Others	
Value systems	Unit 1: American people value speed and time highly.	√					
	Unit 2: Most countries only concern about economic development, regardless its effect on the global ecology, but in recent years signs of changes have sprung up.						√
	Unit 3: There is racial hatred in American society	√					
	Unit 4: English is very important for Brazilian high school students, and they are eager to learn everything they can about the American way of life.					√	
	Unit 5: the daughter does not listen to the mother.	√					
	Unit 6: Names are often attached to specific images. Names with a positive sense can work for you, even encourage new acquaintances. Name prejudice can also affect classroom achievement.	√					
	Unit 7: If you feel stressed and angry, you need to learn to take charge of your life where you can recognize there are many things beyond your control.						√
	Unit 8: College beginners are more consumeristic and less idealistic than at any time. The educators should realize the shortsightedness of career education. There is a lot more to life than a job.	√					

Table 7.11. Topics in the NHCE Reading and Writing Book Two (continued)

NHCE Topics	Details:	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture
		American	British	Others	Local culture	Others	
Value systems	Unit 9: Most Indian students trained by Indian government dream of going to America but not of staying in India.					√	
	Unit 10: Whichever political system best provides for the defense and decency of the little man will win.		√				
Cultural information	Unit 1: American people are always in a rush - often under press.	√					
	Unit 1: The U.S. is definitely a telephone country. Almost everyone uses a telephone to communicate.	√					
	Unit 1: American people do not normally take their visitors out for dinner or coffee. They start talking business quickly because of being time-conscious.	√					
	Unit 3: The parents of a white girl strongly opposed her marriage with a black man.	√					
	Unit 3: Mixed marriage between black and white has higher divorce rate than couples of the same race.	√					
	Unit 3: Children from a mixed marriage go through hardship.	√					
	Unit 4: Each year the United States is host to an average of 78,000 foreign high school level students of which 3000 are Brazilian.	√				√	

Table 7.11. Topics in the NHCE Reading and Writing Book Two (continued)

NHCE Topics	Details:	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture
		American	British	Others	Local culture	Others	
Cultural information	Unit 4: Some Brazilian students in the U.S. have problems about accommodation, food, schools hours and English language.					√	
	Unit 5: School girls smoke.	√					
	Unit 9: Talents are trained for the needs of America because every politician has a son or daughter aiming to go abroad in India.					√	
	Unit 9: American steals brains from the third world.	√					
	Unit 10: Britain went through hardships in the first week of September 1940 because of Nazi power attack.		√				

Table 7.12. Topics in the TECE Reading and Writing Book One

TECE Topics	Details:	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture
		American	British	Others	Local culture	Others	
Value systems	Unit 2: braveness and courage is a pride.		√				
	Unit 3: Children do not look after their parents.		√				
	Unit 4: TV controls American free time, an hour without TV each evening after the early evening news is recommended by the author.	√					
	Unit 5: One should pursue his or her dream no matter what the Others say and think.	√					
	Unit 6: Good working conditions and pay increase or promotion can improve efficiency.	√					
	Unit 7: Benevolence and sympathy sometimes hurt people's self-esteem.	√					
	Unit 8: Happiness from other family members is important.	√					
	Unit 9: Pollution needs attentions.	√					
Cultural information	Unit 2: Chichester although had a lung cancer, sailed around the world and then came back to England in 1967.		√				
	Unit 3: An old lady lived a lonely life. Her daughter seldom visited her. On her 80 <sup>th</sup> birthday, her daughter only sent her a cheque which disappointed her very much.		√				

Table 7.12. Topics in the TECE Reading and Writing Book One (continued)

TECE Topics	Details:	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture
		American	British	Others	Local culture	Others	
Cultural information	Unit 4: American people's life is controlled by TV, so they do not have time to talk to each other, do activities and read.	√					
	Unit 4: It has been twenty five years since TV came to control Americans free time. (publication year: 1976)	√					
	Unit 5: Teachers and students laughed at a school girl when she said she wanted to be a writer and again when she published a poem and get paid \$2.	√					
	Unit 5: The author had four young children. She looked after them and wrote eight books.	√					
	Unit 6: The working condition was poor in a local small shirt factory in Indiana. And it lacked efficiency. The boss of the factory cared about it and spent money on looking for solutions.	√					
	Unit 7: People buy puddings at Christmas seasons. And stores provide pudding samples.	√					
	Unit 8: People give presents on Christmas morning.	√					
	Unit 9: America is heavily polluted.	√					
	Unit 10: A wife waited her husband for three and a half years while he was in jail.	√					

As shown in Table 7.10, in the NCE Book One, there are only two texts that are not about American culture specifically, because the subject matter in those two texts is about science, which belongs to the category of ‘internationally shared culture’. The first one is about public attitudes towards science; the second one is about animal intelligence which cannot easily be related to any one culture only. The other six texts are all about America. The American stories in the book sound very morally enlightening. They are about hardworking and successful people, true love, friendship and courageous behavior and spirit. One text also complains about the ignorance of the young generation and the challenge brought about by the Asian group.

According to Table 7.11, in the NHCE Book Two, Americans are described to be time-conscious and racist, and young people are rebellious and consumerist. There seems to be a strong dissatisfaction with the young generation. Americans are also quite concerned about names. Unit six indicates American names are often attached to specific images, and names with a positive sense can work for you, even encourage new acquaintances. One text is about Britain, it describes how Londoners went through the attack by Nazi power with patience and braveness. It says “whichever political system best provides for the defense and decency of the little man will win” (Zheng, 2006, p. 264).

There are two texts about world cultures, one is about Brazil and another is about India. People of both countries hold the value that America is a dreamed-of country: Brazilians would like to learn their language and everything about their country. The Indians dream of immigrating to America and never coming back, so they learn the skills that are important for the development of America in their home country to get accepted by America. There are also two texts about internationally shared culture, because they signal international issues. The first one is about environment protection, and the second one is how to deal with stress.

As indicated in Table 7.12, in the TECE Book One, only the first unit is about an internationally shared culture. All the others are about American and British culture. It seems American are very concerned about pollution and the Americans’ addiction to TV watching. Love among family members in America

is also stressed in this book. Christmas is described in two texts. British people are described to be independent and brave and it seems old people in the UK live a lonely life

## **1.4 Task Design**

### **1.4.1 Introduction to the Tasks**

In the NCE series, the tasks following text A are:

1. Pre-reading task (listening)
2. Comprehension: content questions and points for discussion, text organization
3. Language sense enhancement
4. Language focus: words and phrases to drill including vocabulary, structure, comprehensive exercises, collocation, usage, synonyms, confusable words, word family, word formation and cloze

Following text B, there is a comprehension exercise, translation and language practice. The last part of a task in each unit is also a theme-related language learning task: group discussion, debate or presentation and essay writing.

In each unit of NHCE *Reading and Writing* books, the exercises following text A include the following parts:

1. Pre-reading activities (listening)
2. Reading aloud: to read a passage from the text aloud until you can memorize it.
3. Comprehension of the text.
4. Vocabulary
5. Structure
6. Translation
7. Story summary which is a cloze exercise
8. Text structure analysis
9. Writing

Exercise for text B are comprehension of the text (multiple choice), and vocabulary. Exercises after text C are reading skills and text comprehension.

In the TECE series, the tasks are composed of the following parts:

1. Warm-up questions
2. Reading aloud and memorizing
3. Comprehension of the text
4. Vocabulary activities
5. Enriching your word power
6. Usage (grammar)
7. Sentence structure
8. Cloze
9. Spot dictation (listening)
10. Translation
11. Oral practice
12. Reading activity
13. Guided writing

No matter what name a task is given, in all the College English books of different series and different levels, the tasks of a book can all be categorized into the following five parts: discussion, reading comprehension, vocabulary and grammar, translation and writing. As is shown above, in each unit, the five skills, listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating, are all included. Language practice, such as grammar and vocabulary, takes up the largest percentage of the whole task section.

#### **1.4.2 Task Analysis**

As stated in Chapter Four, exercises are very important for ICC learning and teaching and it is the place where learners can review, analyze, discuss, take part in and then understand the cultural points in the text. To evaluate task design, the aim and type of activities will first be examined, and if there are activities that can help ICC, they will then be investigated to see whether they are well designed as a trainer to lead teachers and learners to cultural studies and whether step by step

guidance is provided in discussions, role-plays and other activities so that the activities can lead to ICC. Finally the tasks will also be checked to see whether the activities put learners in a real intercultural situation so that they have opportunities to compare and relate cultures.

In fact, the cultural information in the tasks is colorful. There are a large number of sentences in the tasks, and almost each sentence gives a cultural message. There are messages about famous people, for example: “Virginia is famous for the birthplace of American presidents” (Li, 2007, p.16). There is a part in the exercise in the NCE series called collocation. For example: it teaches learners that it is not right to say “I prefer red tea”, and it should be “I prefer black tea”. Although cultural messages are everywhere as discussed in the Chapter Four, no cultural information is pointed out in the tasks and no guided learning about the culture is provided. It may be because the main aim of most exercises is to improve linguistic competence.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the methods that can be used to improve ICC in a language class are discussion, role-play, presentation and other simulated intercultural scenario so that learners can think about, compare and analyze culture. The only methods that can lead to cultural studies in each series, as stated in the introduction to the tasks, are discussions and presentations, but no one activity says it is designed for cultural studies. Some use it as an oral practice or a brainstorming process for essay writing and most use it to help text comprehension. Therefore, no single one is stated to be targeted at ICC teaching and cultural studies.

In the pre-reading task of each unit of the NCE series, there is a “Listening Practice”. The topic of each listening practice is similar to the one in the reading text of the same unit. In Unit One of Book One, the topic is growing up, so the listening material is about a famous British singer, John Lennon’s song: Growing Up; the topic in Unit Two is about friendship, so the listening is an American pop singer, Dionne Warwick’s, song: That’s what friendships are for; the topic in Unit three is understanding science, so the listening topic is the introduction of Stephen Hawking, a British scientist. The textbook writers choose some famous and successful American and British singers or people to talk about

their attitudes towards certain topics. There are always some questions to go with the listening practice, for example, in Unit One of Book One, the questions are:

1. Do you know who John Lennon was?
2. Have you ever heard the song before?
3. What does Lennon think of growing up? Is it easy or full of adventures?
4. Can you guess what the texts in this unit are going to be about? (Li, 2007, p. 2)

Most people chosen in the series are well-known British or American people, so it may be easy to trigger students' interest, and the famous people themselves embody culture. However, the questions are more like listening comprehension questions and they are not suggested to be discussion questions in the instructions to the teacher.

There is another activity in the tasks which is called "Points for Discussion". It is described to be a group work. The instruction of the activity says "break into small groups and discuss the following questions. Later the teacher may want to ask some of you to report the answers of your group to the class." The discussion questions are all related to the text A in each unit. Take Book One of the NCE series as an example:

Unit 2:

1. The author, throughout the story, thought that the cab driver had received a letter from an old friend named Ed. Find out comments and observations in the story that demonstrate the author's misunderstanding of the situation.
2. Have you ever written a letter and then not sent it? Why did you keep it?
3. What is your idea of friendship? How important are friends to you? (Li, 2007, p. 39)

Unit 5:

1. How do you understand Houssaye's remark "tell me whom you love, and I will tell you who you are"?
2. John Nlanchard and Hollis Maynell were pen-pals turned-lovers. Do you think it wise to develop friendship or even love with a pen pal or a key pal? Why or why not?

3. If you loved someone but your parents forbade you to see him or her, what would you do? (Li, 2007, p. 142)

## Unit 7

1. What can you learn about Anthony's character from the story?

2. Anthony says that holding the boys against is a wonderful feeling. Can you explain why?

3. What qualities are necessary when one handles an emergency? (Li, 2007, p. 204)

As can be seen from the randomly-selected examples, the first one or two questions are normally like text comprehension questions, and the others are questions about one's own experience and opinions. They do not obviously put learners in an intercultural context and then encourage learners to compare and relate different cultures and then analyze them. In fact the questions are not culture-targeted.

As mentioned above, the last discussion activity is designed to be a brainstorming activity before a theme-related writing task. For example, the writing task in Unit Six is about animal intelligence, so the questions are all related to the topic:

1. Do you or your family or friends have a pet, such as a dog, a cat, or birds? If so, how does the pet communicate with you or them? Does the pet understand you or them?

2. Have you ever observed that a pet usually knows its master? How do you explain this?

3. Have you ever been to the circus and seen the feats trained animals perform? What do these indicate?

4. Do you think animals, especially very intelligent ones, have thoughts and feelings? (Li, 2007, p. 192)

For another example in Unit Eight, the writing topic is the use of computers in schools. The "Mock Debate" designed in this unit is as follows:

Students today are making more and more frequent use of computers. Does the increasing use of computers do good or harm to them? Some hold that it benefits the students in many ways, but others argue that it causes problems. As a result, a debate is called for. (Li, 2007, p. 212)

Although there are many discussion activities in each unit in the NCE series, the discussion tasks are not well designed to lead to ICC studies. No intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes are promoted in the NCE series.

In the NHCE series, there is in fact no discussion activity or any other activities to help ICC learning and teaching at all. The tasks are very vocabulary and grammar centered.

In the TECE series, there are two discussion activities, the first one is the “Warm-up Questions” before reading a text, and the second one is called an “Oral Practice” which is used after a text.

The “Warm-up Questions” are often designed to allow learners to think about internationally shared culture, Chinese culture and, sometimes, a comparison of cultures. Take some units in Book Two as an example:

Unit one Warm-up Questions:

1. Women used to be referred to as the weaker sex. What do you think?
  2. Do you think there is real equality between the sexes in present-day China?
  3. Who is the heroine you admire most? Give your reasons.
- (Dong, 2009b, p. 1)

These questions lead learners to consider and discuss Chinese culture and their opinion about this cultural topic.

Here is another example in the Warm-up Questions in Unit two of Book Two:

1. Do you know anything about Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln? Say a few words about each of them.
  2. Do you know anything about the declaration of independence?
  3. Who is the Chinese political leader you admire most? Why?
- (Dong, 2009b, p. 24)

The questions may lead to a discussion about American leaders and history, and they can also allow learners to compare Chinese leaders with

American leaders, which may also involve other cultural issues such as ways of thinking, living and behaving in the discussion.

Another discussion activity in the TECE series is called “Oral Practice”. It seems the purpose of the activity is to practice speaking. Although it may not be designed deliberately for cultural studies, the discussion questions may encourage cultural thinking. For example:

## Unit 2

1. What did Jefferson say about obtaining knowledge and making judgment?
2. What did Jefferson say about youth and the future?
3. What ideas of Jefferson’s do you appreciate most? Do you think they are still of use to us today? Why? (Dong, 2009b, p. 43)

The first one or two questions of this activity in each unit are normally more like text comprehension questions. However, in this task, by evaluating the ideas held by Jefferson, choosing the most appreciated one and thinking whether they are still of use today, a comparison of two cultures may be made. However, in the two discussion activities, in fact, no intercultural scenario is constructed and intercultural skills are still hardly practiced.

There are also some discussion questions that do not lead to intercultural understandings that much. For example in Unit One, the discussion topics are as follows:

1. If you are a man, are you ready to protect a woman in danger? Why? If you are a woman, do you expect protection from a man, why?
2. How do men and women react in a crisis? Who do you think are more brave, men or women? Can you cite any incidents to prove your point?
3. What do you think is the greatest difference between men and women? Is the difference innate or is it developed after birth? (Dong, 2009b, p. 17)

## 1.5 Extra Information

Firstly, extra information refers to the source information of a text. The NCE series is obviously the best *College English* series among these four series in terms of giving references or source information, because it gives some basic information about the author, date of publication and source of the text, although some are incomplete references. However, the NHCE series does not provide any information about the text at all; In the TECE series, at the end of some texts, some source information is given, but normally, it only provides the name of the author or the name of the original article or sometimes both. No other information is provided.

Secondly, “Extra Information” can mean extra background information about the culture in the texts. In the teachers’ books of each series, there is always a part which provides some cultural background information related to the text. It is the information the teachers are supposed to give to students before or during the analysis of a text. For example, the cultural information suggested in the eight units in Book One of the NCE and TECE series is mostly about America and Britain. It includes grade schools in the U.S., what the American teachers wear in school, spaghetti and the proper way of eating it, the University of California, the American dream, American public libraries, American immigrants, Halloween, American and British emergency services. The variety of the culture presented in the ‘Extra Information’ part will be analyzed in detail later in this part.

The NHCE series offers students and teachers the same cultural background knowledge in its complementary CD-ROMs and the teacher’s books. The cultural information given in the reference books is not really culture-centered, and does not constitute cultural information as defined in Chapter Four. It pays more attention to the explanation of some phrases and words. The following are some examples from the cultural notes of the reference books of the NHCE series:

**Green waves:** is a fictional name for a musical group made up by the writer for use in this story. (Zheng, 2008, p. 24)

**French Lilac Blue:** is a fictional name for eye-liner makeup made up by the writer for use in this story. (Zheng, 2008, p. 24)

**KFC:** Kentucky Fried Chicken, known as KFC in the US, is the world's most popular chicken restaurant chain. The company originated and still has its headquarters in the US. It now has more than 30,000 restaurants worldwide. For more information, check out KFC's homepage at <http://www.kfc.com> . (Zheng, 2008, p. 129)

**The Thames** is the main river flowing through London, and England's most important river. For more information, check out the website at <http://www.riverthames.co.uk>. (Zheng, 2008, p. 129)

Non-cultural information is also provided as key cultural information in the other two series, not only in the NHCE series. Detailed information about extra information will be listed below. Table 7.13 illustrates whether extra cultural information is provided in the students' books or the teachers' books:

Table 7.13. Is Extra Cultural Information Provided in All the Three Reading and Writing Series?

Extra information	NCE series	NHCE series	TECE series
Source information	S	N	S
Extra cultural information	T	B	T

S: Students' book T: Teachers' book B: both students' and teachers' N: Neither

As shown in Table 7.13, all three series provide extra cultural information. What is worth pointing out is that all books only provide cultural information that is related with Text A in each unit. No extra cultural information about text B and C is given. The Coding methods stated in Chapter Four will be adopted to decide the variety of culture that the information presents. The tables below show which culture the extra information is about:

Table 7.14. Extra Information in the NCE Reading and Writing Book One

Extra info. NCE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Unit One	2/3*					1/3	
Unit Two	1/1						
Unit Three		1/4				1/4	2/4
Unit Four	2/2						
Unit Five	1/1						
Unit Six							2/2
Unit Seven	1/1						
Unit Eight	1/2					1/2	
Total	8	3	0	0	0	3	4

\*2/3: two out of three.

Table 7.15. Extra Information in the NCE Reading and Writing Book Two

Extra info. NCE Book Two	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Unit One	1/2						1/2
Unit Two	3/6	1/6 (A&B) *				3/6	
Unit Three	2/2	1/2 (A&B)					
Unit Four	3/4					1/4	
Unit Five	1/2					1/2	
Unit Six	2/3					1/3	
Unit Seven		5/8			1/8 Norway	1/8	1/8
Unit Eight	1/4 (A&B)						3/4
Total	13	9	0	0	1	7	5

\*A&B: American and British

Table 7.16. A Total Number of Extra Information in the NCE Reading and Writing Book One and Book Two

Extra info. NCE Book One and Two	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Total	21	12	0	0	1	10	9

As shown in Table 7.16, in the NCE Book One and Two, native speakers' cultures still represent the majority among all cultures introduced in the extra information. 40% of extra information relates to American culture, 24% to British. 19% of extra information relates to culture which do not have a clear

national boundary and can be considered as shared worldwide. Other native speakers' cultures and world cultures including local culture are almost not mentioned in the books.

Table 7.17. Extra Information in the NHCE Reading and Writing Book One

Extra info. NHCE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Unit One				2/3		1/3	
Unit Two							2/2
Unit Three	2/4						2/4
Unit Four							
Unit Five	2/5					2/5	1/5
Unit Six							2/2
Unit Seven	1/4					1/4	2/4
Unit Eight							6/6
Unit Nine						1/2	1/2
Unit Ten							1/1
total	5	0	0	2	0	5	17

Table 7.18. Extra Information in the NHCE Reading and Writing Book Two

Extra info. NHCE Book Two	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Unit One							1/1
Unit Two	1/5				3/5		1/5
Unit Three							
Unit Four						2/4	2/4
Unit Five	1/9						8/9
Unit Six	1/10						9/10
Unit Seven	1/4						3/4
Unit Eight	5/8						3/8
Unit Nine	1/11	2/11			1/11		7/11
Unit Ten		2/6			3/6		1/6
Total	10	4	0	0	7	2	35

Table 7.19. Total Amount of Extra Information in the NHCE Reading and Writing Book One and Book Two

Extra info. NHCE Book One and Two	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Total	15	4	0	2	7	7	52

In the teacher's books of the NHCE series, the part that provides cultural information is called "Background Information". It seems its main function is to provide websites about some cultural information. For example:

**New England** is the most northeastern region of the USA, including the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. It was so named by John Smith when he explored it in 1616. A New Englander is a native or resident of New England. See <http://newengland.com> for more information about the region. (Zheng, 2008, p.38)

For another example, some information does not provide any explanation but only a website address.

**Oxford:** please visit <http://www.ox.ac.uk/> for more information about the university of Oxford. (Zheng, 2008, p.38)

As indicated in Table 7.19, most information is not really cultural information: most is biographical information. American culture is still the most important part of the books, but world cultures take up 26% and internationally shared culture 20%.

Table 7.20. Extra Information in the TECE Reading and Writing Book One

Extra info. TECE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Unit One							4/4
Unit Two		1/3			1/3 Europe		1/3
Unit Three					2/2 west		
Unit Four	1/1						
Unit Five	4/6						2/6
Unit Six							2/2
Unit Seven					1/4 west	1/4	2/4
Unit Eight							2/2
Unit Nine	1/3						2/3
Unit Ten	2/4						2/4
Total	8	1	0	0	4	1	17

Table 7.21. Extra Information in the TECE Reading and Writing Book Two

Extra info. TECE Book Two	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Unit One					1/4 India		3/4
Unit Two	1/3				1/3 France		1/3
Unit Three		3/4			1/4 West		
Unit Four	1/3						2/3
Unit Five	3/8	1/8					4/8
Unit Six	2/3						1/3
Unit Seven	5/6						1/6
Unit Eight	4/4						
Unit Nine	1/3						2/3
Unit Ten	1/2						1/2
Total	18	4	0	0	3	0	15

Table 7.22. A Total Number of Extra Information in the TECE Book One and Book Two

Extra info. TECE Book One and Two	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others		
Total	26	5	0	0	7	1	32

In TECE series, the part that provides cultural information is called “Information Related to the Text”, so it is not only used to provide cultural information but all sorts of information related to the texts. That is why there is so much information that is not cultural information. There are quite a few pieces of

biographical information about famous people, which are not regarded as cultural information in this dissertation, and there is also much information which is an introduction of a subject or theory. For example:

**The Yo-Yo:** the Yo-Yo is a simple toy consisting of a grooved double disk with a string about the centre. The player holds the end of the string which unwinds itself as the disc is dropped. Then by a slight jerk on the string, the player causes it to rewind itself, and to reel up back to the hand. The toy is said to have originated in the Philippines, and Yo-Yo actually is a trademark. (Dong, 2009c, p. 48)

Among all 39 pieces of cultural information, 67% relate to American culture, and 13% to British culture. 18% relate to world cultures, but local culture, internationally shared culture and other native speakers' cultures are almost not mentioned.

## **2. Cultural Evaluation of the Listening and Speaking Books**

As mentioned in Chapter Four, each series of *College English* is composed of reading and writing books and listening and speaking books. The same criteria such as recency, realism, topics, extra information and task design have been applied to the analysis of the listening and speaking books.

### **2.1 Recency**

The NCE series was published in 2001. According to the preface to the NCE series, the textbook writer and some American and British experts worked together and produced the listening materials. Although no date is given in the series, in the preface, it says the series tries to provide up-to-date information. The NHCE series was published in 2004 and the TECE series in 2006. There is no information about the date of each task in all the series. There is no date information, because the listening and speaking books are different from the reading and writing ones: there are almost no texts, only dialogues and short passages in the listening and speaking books.

### **2.2 Realism**

Because the materials are dialogues or passages made for language teaching and

learning purposes, the listening materials used in all the books are not authentic materials. The materials are written specifically for learners, and the dialogues are often designed to teach useful expressions such as “beautiful day, isn’t it?” and “Excuse me, could you tell me the time?” A very “native-speaker” way of speaking is recommended in the books, with model expressions such as “my Gosh.,” “dorm”, “whatcha been doin?”, “ladies and gentleman” before giving a talk, “excuse me, is this seat taken?”, “this is ...speaking” while answering a phone and “you look like you are on cloud nine”. There are also some short passages in books, but the short passages and the dialogues in each unit are language-targeted, and they are firstly designed to teach students useful expressions in different situations. Secondly, they are used as listening comprehension exercises.

As indicated in Chapter Four, the most important thing is not only whether the culture is authentic but also whether it is limited to American culture only. It can be seen from the content of each book that America is automatically considered as the background country for some materials. America is not only often mentioned in conversations or passages, the spelling and the content such as the names of the cities, street and universities often imply some materials are set in an American background. Even the currency mentioned is also always American dollars. Moreover, the extra information which will be analyzed later also implies that America is the background country for most materials although it is not possible to tell which culture it is about in most materials. China is another focus in the books. There are a few conversations that mention some Chinese elements in them. However, according to the coding methods demonstrated in Chapter Four, the information provided in most materials are not sufficient enough to decide the variety of culture the materials present, so most cultural information stays unknown. Detailed information about which culture is the focus of a book will not be listed in detail, because there are many short dialogues in each unit and most do not show clearly which culture it is about.

### **2.3 Topics**

The units are divided by topic. The topics in Book One of NCE series are: studying English, fun with language, school life, going to party, telephoning,

shopping, a job interview, employment, going on vacation, places of interest, animals, money matters, dreams and ambitions, the media, advertising and culture. Topics in the TECE Book One are: meeting people, study, apologies, asking the way, daily activities, dining out, shopping and description. Topics in the NHCE Book One are: college life, working out, friends, talking about weather, favorite food, asking prices, renting a house, internet and holiday. The topics are very often used as scenarios. For example in Unit Seven of the NCE Book One the topic is a job interview. The materials in this unit are dialogues in a job interview. The unit teaches learners the expressions that they may need in a job interview in English.

The materials are very language-centered. However, several pieces of material are designed to give some general cultural messages to help students to know one culture better. For example, the text, *What Friendship Means to Americans*, gives a general impression of American people and their view of friendship. It says American young people are friendly and open-minded, but that friendliness does not mean friendship. It tries to warn learners that, even if an American is very friendly to you, it does not mean he or she considers you as a friend. In many books, the materials teach students to start a conversation with talking about weather which is also a general cultural message. The books provide general culture information to help learners be more aware in intercultural communication. There are cultural topics or stereotypes in all the books, but most can not be related to any one of the categories used in this dissertation (American culture, British culture, world cultures and internationally shared culture) because of the lack of indications.

## **2.4 Task Design**

All the listening and speaking books are made up of tasks, and there are similar tasks designed in all the three series of books. The listening tasks are mainly an assessment of comprehension. There are multiple choice questions and gap-filling questions in the listening tasks. The speaking tasks are discussions and role-plays which can be helpful for ICC learning. Therefore, as suggested in Chapter Four, first, the activities that can be used in ICC teaching will be picked out, and then they will be analyzed to see how helpful they are for ICC teaching and learning.

The two activities that are picked out for ICC teaching in the three series are role-plays and discussions. A so called “Role-Play” task in the speaking and listening part of each series is to listen to the dialogues and repeat after the recording. The learners are also asked to practice the dialogues with their partner, and then work with their partners to create their own dialogues by replacing the underlined parts. For example:

An example in Book One of the NHCE series:

*Max: Excuse me, could you tell me where the school sports centre is?*

*Nancy: the sports centre? Hmmm. Sorry, I'm new here, too.*

*Max: Ok, Thanks anyway. (Zheng, 2007, p. 22)*

*An example in the NCE series:*

*(In a department store)*

*Receptionist: can I help you, ladies?*

*B: yes, please. We are looking for a backpack.*

*Receptionist: that will be in sporting goods, 5<sup>th</sup> floor all the way in he back.*

*B: thank you. Let's go. Betty. (Zheng, 2007, p. 57)*

The role-play in the TECE series is a little bit different. It first gives a dialogue model as the other books do, and then ask students to “now make similar conversation of your own, using the given situation. Try to use what you have learned in this lesson in your conversation.” The situation given is often similar to the situation in the model provided above. For example:

*Situation: you are showing your cousin around the campus. You run into an old friend of yours. Greet your friend and introduce him/her to your cousin. (Dong, 2009a, p.21)*

There is no discussion activity in the TECE series. The second speaking activity is pair work. It asks learners to “listen to a conversation and answer the following questions in complete sentences, then link up your answers to

summarize the conversation.” The learners will be asked to read the summary out, so it is in fact an oral practice.

Another type of speaking activity in the NCE and NHCE series is called “Discussion”. They both ask learners to work in pairs to discuss a few questions. For example:

*Are you doing a part-time job? Why and why not?*

*Have you ever been to a job interview?*

*Are you a basketball fan? Who is your favorite basketball player?*

*If someone who is wanted on the phone is not available, what can you do? What would you say if you want the caller to leave a message?*

Although there are role-plays and discussions which can be made interculturally important, the instruction for the activities may limit them to language learning, and leave little room for exploration. Intercultural activities that are set up step by step to lead to ICC and intercultural situations or critical incidents as introduced in Chapter Four are not to be found in the textbooks.

## 2.5 Extra Information

The extra information provided in the listening and speaking books comprises only some cultural background information. No source information such as date of publication or name of author is given in the books. Details are listed in Table 7.23:

Table 7.23. Is Extra Cultural Information Provided in Listening and Speaking Books?

Extra information	NCE series	NHCE series	TECE series
Source information	N	N	N
Extra cultural information	T	B	T

S: Students’ book T: Teachers’ book B: Both students’ and teachers’ N: Neither

There is a part called “Language and Culture Notes or Tips” in all the teachers’ books of each series. Cultural tips are also given in the students’ books of the NHCE series, but the information in the students’ books are the same as that in the teachers’ books. It provides cultural information for the listening materials and explains some language points. The language notes are mainly used to explain some native and informal expressions used in listening. Take Book One of each series as an example:

It is on me! : I will pay for the meal. (Zheng, 2007, p. 25)

Whatcha been doin?: an informal form of “what have you been doing?”. It is used mainly between friends or familiar acquaintances. (Zheng, 2007, p. 6)

Small talk: light conversation on unimportant or non-serious subjects such as the weather or TV programs that you saw last night, or little compliments on what people are wearing. In a social gathering where a lot of guests are strangers to one another, small talk can be very useful to make them feel at ease. (Li, 2004, p. 52)

Freshman: a first year university student. Sophomore, junior and senior are respectively second, third and fourth year university students. (Li, 2004, p. 8)

Although many of the language and cultural notes sound very “native”, the note itself does not state whose culture it is about. For example:

Registration office: the registration office is very important in a university. Students can sign up for classes, or make changes to their programs in a registration office. Many universities now provide on-line registration. (Zheng, 2007, p. 3)

The day care center: a place where care is provided during the day, especially for young children, which allows the people who usually take care of them to go to work or have holiday. (Dong, 2009a, p. 42)

The books explain the cultural messages without saying in which country or society, a registration office or a day care centre exists or is very important. Although much of the cultural information is about unknown countries, some idea of national backgrounds can be gained by using the coding methods proposed in Chapter Four which are: reference information, content details, spelling,

vocabulary and subject matter. Because varieties of culture are not listed in the parts about realism and topics because of lack of indications, and extra information is the only place where indications can be obtained in the listening and speaking books, this part will be analyzed in detail. The tables below demonstrate which variety of culture is introduced in the “Cultural Notes” part in Book One of all the three series.

Table 7.24 Extra Information in the NCE Listening and Speaking Book One

Extra info. NCE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Unit One					1/4			3/4
Unit Two							1/1 western	
Unit Three	1/4							3/4
Unit Four							1/4	3/4
Unit Five								4/4
Unit Six	2/4							2/4
Unit Seven							2/5 one western	3/5
Unit Eight							1/4 western	3/4
Unit Nine					5/5			
Unit Ten	4/6							2/6
Unit Eleven	1/3						1/3 western	1/3
Unit Twelve	1/4							3/4
Unit Thirteen	1/5							4/5

Table 7.24 Extra Information in the NCE Listening and Speaking Book One (continued)

Extra info. NCE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Unit Fourteen								5/5
Unit Fifteen	1/9							8/9
Unit Sixteen	1/4China & US			1/4 China & US	2/4			1/4
Total	12 (one British and American)			1	8		6 (five western)	45

Table 7.25. A Total Number of Extra Information in the NCE Listening and Speaking Book One

Extra info. NCE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Total	12 (one British and American)	0	0	1	8	0	6 (five western)	45

As indicated in Table 7.24 and 7.25, American culture is presented in eight units, one note is about both American culture and British culture. World cultures are mentioned in three units, one unit even gives five notes about Thailand, but all the world cultures in this book are only given to explain the name of a country or a city. For example: “Sydney: chief city and port of Australia, capital of New South Wales in Southeast Australia. The city is well known for its firework display over the harbor to welcome the New Year” (Li, 2004, p. 235). While the culture about the U.S. covers many areas such as education and accommodation. For example: In Unit Six: “American people do not bargain in shops, and they do not carry cash around they normally use credit cards to pay. Things are very expensive before Christmas and very cheap soon after the festival” (Li, 2004, p. 82) In Unit Seven: “many students in the west take part-time jobs to earn some money to cover their tuition fee and living expenses” (Li, 2004, p. 98). In Unit Three: an introduction of university accommodation in America and how to book an accommodation. In Unit Fifteen: how to rent a house in America, what a university newspaper is like in America and how to apply to do an advertisement on the newspaper. In Unit Eleven: American people like pets, especially, dogs.

Among the cultural notes that can not be categorized, five out of six can be described as relevant to “western culture”. For example: “in present day western society, the job market is very competitive” (Li, 2004, p. 113). To conclude, except for the brief introduction of a city or a country, most cultural notes are about America and the rest are about “western” culture.

Table 7.26. Extra Information in the NHCE Listening and Speaking Book One

Extra info. NHCE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Unit One							1/9	8/9
Unit Two								14/14
Unit Three								6/6
Unit Four								8/8
Unit Five	1/14							13/14
Unit Six								12/12
Unit Seven							3/13	10/13
Unit Eight							1/6	5/6
Unit Nine	1/8							7/8
Unit Ten	6/8						1/8	1/8
Total	8	0	0	0	0	0	6	84

Table 7.27. A Total Number of Extra Information in the NHCE Listening and Speaking Book One

Extra info. NHCE Book One and Two	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Total	8	0	0	0		0	6	84

The language and culture notes of the NHCE series in fact focuses mainly on explaining language points, and most language points are idioms or colloquial, informal and local expressions used in the US and sometimes in Britain. According to Table 7.26 and 7.27, the known cultural information is all American. It is similar to the other two series. The book has put itself in an American context. The notes in this book are in general very short. They only explain the language points and do not often provide any cultural information related to the language points as the other two series do. For example:

I'd like it medium: I'd like it neither underdone nor overdone.  
(Zheng, 2007, p. 57)

You devil: (informal) an intimate way to call someone you are fond of.  
(Zheng, 2007, p. 57)

It can be seen from the extra information given, although the listening materials are normally short, they are full of informal and “native” expressions. The conversations in the book are obviously made very local which are not very likely to happen between non-native speakers in an intercultural situation. For example:

Darn (informal): a milder form of “damn”. People sometimes use ‘darn’ or ‘darned’ to emphasize what they are saying often when they are annoyed. (Zheng, 2007, p. 87)

You've got a touch of the flu: you're bit down with the flu. (Zheng, 2007, p. 74)

You should be back on your feet in a week: you would recover in a week. (Zheng, 2007, p. 74)

My eyes were bigger than my stomach: I took more than I could eat.  
(Zheng, 2007, p. 62)

Table 7.28. Extra Information in the TECE Listening and Speaking Book One

Extra info. TECE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Unit One								13/13
Unit Two		1/10						9/10
Unit Three				1/4				3/4
Unit Four							1/15	14/15
Unit Five							2/8	6/8
Unit Six								6/6
Unit Seven	1/13							12/13
Unit Eight	2/11							9/11
Unit Nine	1/10	3/10						6/10
Unit Ten	1/7						2/7 western	4/7
Unit Eleven	1/9						1/9	7/9
Unit Twelve	2/10							8/10
Unit Thirteen	2/8						1/8	5/8

Table 7.28. Extra Information in the TECE Listening and Speaking Book One (continued)

Extra info. TECE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Unit Fourteen	2/9							7/9
Unit Fifteen	1/8						3/8	4/8
Unit Sixteen							1/7	6/7
Total	13	5	0	0	0	0	11	119

Table 7.29. A Total Number of Extra Information in the TECE Listening and Speaking Book One

Extra info. TECE Book One	Native speakers' cultures			World cultures		International culture	Not given	Not culture
	American culture	British culture	Other native speakers' cultures	Local	Others			
Total	13 (one British and American)	5 (one British and American)	0	1		0	11 (two western)	119

According to Table 7.28 and 7.29, most cultural notes are about Anglo-American cultures. In fact in the listening transcripts, ‘America’ is often not mentioned, but when the cultural information is given, it will automatically relate that piece of culture to America. For example:

**I’m going out for a walk.** Walking is an exercise for all ages and is strongly recommended by doctors. A brisk walk for 30 minutes daily, which means walking at a pace of twenty minutes or less a mile (=1.6 km), helps reduce stress, burn fat, and speed up your metabolism. It is said that appropriately half of American adults (18 years of age and older) walk regularly and the number of people who walk for exercise is increasing every year. To measure their speed in walking, people often use a pedometer, which is a measuring instrument for recording the number of steps taken in walking. (Dong, 2009a, p. 100)

**Baseball:** a game between two opposing teams.... It is the most popular game in the United States. The first baseball game was held in New York in 1839. The New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox are among the famous Major League baseball teams in the US. (Dong, 2009a, p. 110)

**But I’d like a glass of water.** In many restaurants in the US, iced water is offered immediately after diners sit down to their table... (Dong, 2009a, p. 123)

Among the eleven unknown cultures, in fact most are about America, although they are not stated explicitly to be American. It seems they are not specified to be American or British because the whole book is seen in an American and sometimes British setting. For example:

**I want to pay for my dinner.** Traditionally when men take their female friends out to dinner they are expected to pay for all the expenses. But the custom is changing. Nowadays women usually pay for themselves and they feel more comfortable doing so. (Dong, 2009a, p. 123)

Although in this piece of information the US is not mentioned, it can be seen from other cultural notes about this listening material, such as the one about a glass of water mentioned above, the dialogue is about America.

### 3. Conclusion

In this chapter, three series of the most popular textbooks used in China in the

2000s have been analyzed and evaluated according to the criteria put forward in Chapter Four. The results are listed in order of recency, realism, topics, task design and extra information. The reading and writing books and the listening and speaking books have both been analyzed to examine whether and how all the three categories of culture and ICC are included in College English teaching in China. A discussion of the results in this chapter will be made in Chapter Eight.

## **Chapter Eight: A Discussion of Textbook Evaluation**

### **Results**

In Chapter Seven, the results of textbook evaluation were presented from five aspects which are recency, realism, topics, task design and extra information. The analysis and discussion of the results will be conducted in the same order of the five aspects in this chapter, so that the evaluation of textbooks can be more effective. In addition to the discussion about the five parts, a discussion about the possibility of teaching English language without teaching culture in College English teaching in China is also conducted in Section 6 of this chapter.

#### **1. Recency**

The listening and speaking books do not have any source information about the publication date of the materials. It might be because they are written just for the textbooks, and they are mostly dialogues and short passages but not articles, so it is also hard to find any date information about them. However, recency is a big issue in the reading and writing books, so the discussion focus of this section will be the recency of the reading and writing books.

As stated in Chapter Seven, in the NCE books, 17% of the texts were published in the early 2000s, 44% between 1995 and 1999, 20% between 1990 and 1994 and 19% in the 1980s. In the TECE books, most years of publication are not provided in the books. Among the ten known ones, 50% were published in the 1970s. Only 10% were published in the early 2000s. Most reading texts in the three series seem to be old today. As stated in Chapter Four, recent information can provide learners with up-to-date information which will help them to understand the contemporary world better. The world is changing very fast. Outdated culture may cause misunderstanding about modern culture. Friendship and school life in America of twenty years ago are very different from those of today. If a comparison of old culture with new culture is not given, or if a teacher does not point out the age of the cultural information, learners may be confused by the culture presented in the book. However, as mentioned in Chapter Seven, in fact, the textbooks seldom provide any comparison and explanation. In the TECE

and NHCE series, most reading texts even do not provide any information about the years of publication which may also cause cultural misunderstandings. Learners may have to consider the culture in the books as recent, because they have no other choices. Not many people consider what they read in a recently published book providing old cultural information, unless it is specified to be old.

The materials chosen in the reading and writing books of the three series are in general out-of-date. It seems the authors did not consider the age of the texts or culture as a very important issue when they edited the books. Being interesting, informative and enlightening is the criterion in text selection as mentioned in all the prefaces to the books, but interesting, informative and morally enlightening stories does not mean useful and recent culture. Being morally enlightening sounds typically Chinese, because moral education is always a part of Chinese education. If attention is given to this criterion, old materials may be chosen, because morally enlightening materials are often old and the focus of text selection seems to be the content that serves a Chinese educational ideology rather than recency. It also seems that vocabulary is more important in the process of text selection than recency, because the vocabulary in each text is strictly limited in the range of that of the CET system. Not many words are out of that range, and where these exist, it has to be pointed out. The books even mark all the new words by using a small triangle or bold letters if it is in the vocabulary range of CET Band Four and Band Six. Emphasis on moral education, being examine-oriented and ignorance of cultural studies may all determine that not much attention is given to up-to-date culture in the selection of texts.

Further, in the 1970s and the 1980s when some texts used in the books were written, the degree of the globalization of English language was not yet as high as it is today. If the language does not belong to the world, it may not be used to express world cultures. British and American cultures will definitely have the priority in the texts. Therefore, by choosing old texts, College English teaching can not propose the idea that English is an international language. If the cultures carried by English as a world language are to be represented, more recent articles are needed in the books so that recent culture can be presented and world cultures and internationally shared culture can be given some attention through the texts.

## 2. Realism

As shown in the Chapter Seven, it is claimed that almost all texts are authentic in the reading and writing books. The purpose of choosing only authentic materials as claimed by the textbook writer is to obtain realistic culture and standard and native language (Dong, 2009b). However, it seems that realism in the *College English* series is limited to America mainly. According to the results given in Chapter Seven, 63% of the culture in the NCE textbooks is American; 41% of the culture in the NHCE books is American; 70% of the culture in the TECE books is American. In the listening and speaking books, most dialogues are also constructed with an American background in mind. Obviously, American views are overloaded in *College English* textbooks. As stated in Chapter Two, English is used for intercultural and also international communication. The teaching and learning of American culture itself may not be able to lead to successful intercultural communication. Moreover, the focus on American culture may also accelerate cultural Americanization.

Chinese students mainly learn American and occasionally British culture from English classes. It can give people the feeling that English is used to express American culture and the culture presented through English is American. The ownership of the language goes back to mainly America in ELT in China. However, it is not true as mentioned in the previous chapters. English is an international language, and it is used all over the world by people of all the three circles (Kachru, 1992): the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. When Chinese learners communicate with a non-American in English, the learner may have to adopt an American way of communication because that is the only way they have learned in ELT.

The limitation of ICC to American-Chinese communicative competence in ELT may cause problems for students, because learners do not learn intercultural skills. They only learn how the Americans behave and live. Learners may also think the cultures that are different from American culture are new and strange because foreign culture is described to be American in ELT. They cannot be prepared for intercultural communication with non-Americans due to too much exposure to American culture. However, in fact, in China and in most parts of the

world, communication in English often takes place between non-native speakers. The limitation of English teaching to American English and its culture only may be harmful for knowledge learning, skills and attitudes training.

One of the reasons that American culture is given so much focus in the textbooks in China is that American culture plays a dominant role in the development of world cultures through English language because of America's political, economic and entertainment strengths, as highlighted in Chapter Two. Most people in China have heard an American song and seen an American movie. News about America can be seen every day on websites and on TV. It has drawn much attention in China. As suggested by Gao, "American cultural values make an impact on Chinese teenagers in three ways: first infiltration of cultural industry, second monopolization in internet culture, third selection of young talented people as spokesman for the West" (2007, p. 19). Since being interesting is one of the criteria for textbooks compilation, American culture has no doubt become the most popular one in the books, although many Chinese scholars (Gao, 2007; Liu & Wu, 2005) warn about Americanization in China. It seems cultural homogenization and American cultural hegemony is not considered a problem in the books. The books might accelerate its development through a most powerful tool: English language teaching and learning which is made extremely important for learners in China.

However, what is taught clashes with what the students expect most. According to the survey conducted in a Chinese university among 202 students as introduced in Chapter Four, American culture is not the most attractive one for learners. The question asked is "Which culture are you most interested in?" Altogether 19 categories were mentioned in the answers (see Figure D.4). 32% of the participants were interested in British culture, 17.5% in American culture and 14% in Chinese culture. These three cultures were the most welcome cultures. Except for these three categories, Indian, French, Japanese and Egyptian cultures were approximately equally popular among the participants which were supported by 7.5%, 5.5%, and 4.5% of respondents individually. Three respondents even mentioned all cultures, and another three mentioned European culture as a large category. A further ten countries were favored by one to four respondents each.

The most obvious reasons for a high percentage of interest in British culture provided by the students are that they think English originates from the UK, and British people are more gentlemen-like, so they would like to speak and behave like a British person. Most students like American culture because America is the focus of the world. They also gave different reasons for other preferences. For example, “I like Portuguese culture because I like its football team”, “I like Indian culture because I read some books about Indian food”, “I like Greek culture because of Greek mythology”, and “I like Chinese culture because China has a long history and its culture is amazing.”

The book used in the university where the survey was conducted is the NHCE series. Most cultures in the books are American culture, and Chinese culture is mentioned in some units, only two units in reading book one and book two are in fact about Britain in the NHCE series. What’s more, the book itself does not provide any source information, so most culture stays unknown.

Although no one student seems to realize the role of culture in intercultural communication because no one mentioned that as a reason of their interest in culture, they show a wide range of interests instead of American culture only. It indicates American culture may not be the most interesting culture for Chinese learners. The adoption of mainly American culture in textbooks needs rethinking. Firstly, it is not helpful for intercultural communication and it does not encourage the right understanding of English as an international language and a carrier of world cultures. Secondly, it is not the culture the students are most interested in. A variety of cultures can be a sensible idea for textbooks because it also reflects the learners’ interest.

One thing that is noticeable is a tendency for internationally shared culture to take second place, after American culture, in the three series of textbooks. As shown in Chapter Seven, in the NCE textbooks 22% of the culture is internationally shared culture; in the NHCE books 32% of texts relate to internationally shared culture; in the TECE books 10% of the culture is internationally shared culture. English is used for international communication, so internationally shared culture such as world tourism and international business is playing a more and more important role in communication. This may be why

internationally shared culture has attracted more and more attention in ELT. The selection of internationally shared culture does not necessarily mean the textbook writers have realized the importance of the culture in intercultural communication. They could have been chosen because they are popular issues in the world.

World cultures in fact are still not given much attention. In the NCE textbooks only one text is about world cultures; in the NHCE books, 15% are about world cultures, but among these world cultures 40% are related to American culture in that they describe how people of other cultures feel and live in the US; In the TECE books 10% of texts refer to world cultures. Therefore, other cultures except for American culture are still not regarded significant in College English teaching. In the *College English* textbooks, Chinese culture is seldom mentioned. As stated in Chapter Three, ICC means to understand other cultures and one's own culture. The skills to relate to and mediate in an intercultural situation are also based on a consideration of one's own culture. Chinese Learners mainly learn how to express American culture from the books, for instance: they learn the English names of American festivals and the way of celebrating them, but they have no chance to learn how to express their own festivals in English in ELT. The reading and writing books pay almost no attention to cultural studies, and vocabulary and grammar has most importance in the books. The listening and speaking books are also designed to teach students how to live and study in America and occasionally Britain although only a small amount of students said one of their purposes of learning English is to study abroad according to the survey (see Appendix D). English is used as a Lingua Franca for Chinese learners. They use the language to communicate and introduce their own culture. There are many foreign companies and factories in China, and they are eager to learn Chinese culture so that they can open a market in China. There are also many Chinese companies overseas, they are eager to introduce Chinese culture out of China so that their products and ideas are accepted in another country. However, local culture and world cultures are often ignored in the books, which is not helpful for intercultural communication.

To conclude, to learn English is mainly to learn American culture in College English teaching. The books do not really help the learning of other

cultures through the English language. They also do not help learners understand that English is an international language and it is a carrier of world cultures. Intercultural communication in English refers to a communication with people of many different cultures. College English in fact does not focus on intercultural communication although it is stated to be the goal of English teaching in the curriculums. Therefore, a balanced view of different cultures needs to be presented. World cultures including local culture and internationally shared culture are also needed in the books.

### **3. Topics**

As demonstrated in Chapter Seven, most texts A in all the three series are about America, and normally either a very negative or a very positive image of America is constructed in the books. Positive cultural messages may help with ICC learning because it leads to a positive attitude. The limitation is that while the positive images give people a positive idea of America, they focus more on moral education rather than giving a whole picture of a society. According to Yu negative cultural information can twist learners' world view (Yu, 2009), so positive information is suggested by many Chinese scholars (Liu & Wu, 2005). They think that positive culture can help to form right world views (Liu & Wu, 2005). As mentioned above, being morally enlightening is one of the criteria of text selection, but it is often judged in a Chinese context and it is also a typical Chinese ideology in *College English* books. The right world views they mentioned are most likely evaluated to be right in a Chinese setting. Yu (2009) also suggests moral education is considered very important in College English teaching because it is an important part of higher education (Yu, 2009). This may be why mainly positive and morally enlightening culture is selected all over the NCE and TECE series.

On the contrary, the NHCE series is quite negative and is the series that is often criticized for misleading learners because the learners may follow what the American people do and accept their views such as racism and consumerism (Liu & Wu, 2005; Yu, 2009). ICC is to help people to use the cultural knowledge learned about a culture, positive or negative, to learn intercultural skills and to establish right attitudes. Too much stress on the differences and negative aspects

of a culture may make people think other cultures are weird and inferior. ICC first refers to intercultural communication among many cultures, which is not acknowledged in the books. It also refers to knowledge, skills and attitudes. All information, no matter whether positive or negative, can be cultural knowledge. The problem is that negative information, for example that black people are dangerous, can cause learners' negative attitudes towards black people. As discussed in Chapter Four, if harmful stereotypes can be dealt with properly, it can also be helpful. However, as shown in Chapter Seven, stereotypes are often not dealt with anywhere in the books. Therefore, negative culture itself may give learners a negative impression about one society. In fact, stereotypes, negative or positive, need to be stressed and analyzed so that generalization is not easily made by learners. The books do not pay much attention to a well-balanced mixture of positive and negative culture, and they also seldom explain and give opportunities for students to analyze the culture.

It is important to note that a university normally only chooses one series of books to use, which is to say a university student may learn mainly positive or negative culture about America. It will definitely not help intercultural communication, because what is positive in the U.S. may not be positive in another country. Liu and Wu (2005) also argue that the American cultural views, negative or positive, may influence the learners world view, so anyway the books are imposing American culture and views on learner's in China (Liu & Wu, 2005).

However, although the texts mainly deal with non-Chinese culture, some Chinese culture is also hinted at through the selection of texts. The encouragement of risking one's own life to save the others' life sounds very Chinese. In China, ideological and moral education is one of the most important subjects in schools and universities. This kind of education encourages kindness, hardworking, honesty and courage. Many positive sayings and idioms also advocate all these good qualities. For example: "*she ji jiu ren*" and "*fen bu gu shen*" (meaning to rescue others without thinking of oneself). The values selected in the book in fact follow a very Chinese way of thinking. They are morally enlightening in Chinese understanding. That is to say, what are regarded as good in China is often selected in books. The books seem in fact to be constructing a suitable Chinese culture so

that they can be a part of the moral education in China.

The positive cultural information about the family selected in the book as illustrated in Chapter Seven sounds very similar to the Chinese culture: a strict and responsible mother and a mother's dominating role in old Chinese love stories. Duan (2006) claims that "The culture here is so different from what most Chinese have learned about America. It tries to give students a positive view of America or rather a view of America which is similar to a would-be view of China" (Duan, 2006, p.56). It seems the material is chosen because it is familiar to the students and easy to be understood by Chinese learners. It may also be selected because the authors realize the importance of moral education, so they use the positive views in a Chinese setting to reinforce Chinese culture and to educate learners.

In brief, although a Chinese influence can be seen from the selection of texts, only a few are really about Chinese culture. It seems knowing American culture is all for intercultural communication. The fact that English is a global language and English is used all over the world as a communicative tool is ignored in College English teaching in China. A large percent of positive culture about America or the opposite may give people a unilateral view of the society. Moral education seems to be a very important criterion in the selection of texts in some books.

#### **4. Task Design**

Words, phrases and sentences that carry strong cultural information can be seen in most activities. However, the cultural points are often not dealt with. Without help in the book, many messages may be ignored and left ambiguous for the learners. For example, in the book, it says it is not right to say "I prefer red tea", but "I prefer black tea". In China there are two kinds of tea in terms of colors: green tea and red tea. But in Britain and some other countries, people have green tea and black tea in terms of colors. Chinese learners only learned to translate Chinese red tea into black tea. It is to impose another culture. Chinese red tea is different from English black tea, even the way of making tea is very different, but to teach a language is to teach another culture. This piece of language input ignores the difference of cultures. There are many cultural points like this, but most of them

are not analyzed culturally.

The activities provided in the books are all not designed specifically for cultural studies. Although cultural studies are considered very important in ELT by the government, teachers and students, in fact, it is not made a very important part in ELT in practice. The books are the essence of ELT, and as stated in Chapter Four, activities are the places where cultural knowledge can be practiced, understood and learned, but still no focus is given to the teaching and learning of culture in the books. The tasks in each book mainly cover vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, listening and speaking. The teaching of culture is not mentioned in the tasks, although some tasks may be able to lead to culture learning and teaching, especially the discussion tasks and role-plays.

There are several kinds of discussion activities. The pre-reading task in the reading and writing books of the NCE series illustrated in Chapter Seven is also a product of culture. In this part, a question about a famous American or British person is normally asked. For example: “Do you know who John Lennon was?”, “Have you ever heard the song before?” However the book is written for Chinese students, so it does not mean this person is famous in Britain or even Europe, and then Chinese people know him. It is also true that the most famous Chinese singer may stay unknown to the people of other countries. However, the textbook tends to give learners the feeling that the knowledge of the famous people they selected is a common sense. They strive to put the students into an American and British community, and then their culture is promoted through the questions. To be able to answer questions in a class is normally a source of pride for learners; so by doing this exercise, to know American or British famous people also becomes an honor. This kind of cultural input may cause cultural admiration towards the U.S. and the UK and devaluation of other cultures including home culture.

The criterion proposed in Chapter Four to evaluate task design is that the type of task will first be checked to see whether there are task types that can be helpful in ICC learning, tasks such as discussion, role-play, culture analysis and setting an intercultural scenario. Then, the design of the activities will be examined to see to what extent it can help ICC. The first evaluation criterion used

here is to ascertain whether the task is designed for cultural studies. The second is to examine whether step-by-step guidance is provided in discussions, role play and other activities so that the activity leads to ICC. The final evaluation is concerned with whether the activities put learners into a real intercultural situation so that they have opportunities to compare and relate cultures. It can be seen in Chapter Seven that there are activities that can be used for the teaching of culture, but the discussions, role-plays and other activities in the reading and writing books and listening and speaking books of all the three series do not obviously put learners in an intercultural context and then encourage learners to compare and relate different cultures and then analyze them. In fact the questions are not culture-targeted. Following the questions step by step does not lead to ICC learning by design. For example, some questions as mentioned in Chapter Seven ask “Have you ever written a letter and then not sent it? Why did you keep it?” it may be difficult to put learners in such a situation. The text is published in 1985, and it is about writing a letter to a friend, but in modern China, people seldom use letters to communicate. Some students maybe have never written a letter. It may cause people’s understanding of modern culture from an old point of view, and it can hardly help the discussion and culture learning.

The role-play tasks in the listening and speaking books mentioned in Chapter Seven ask learners to use and practice the expression suggested in the books. Although learners sometime are allowed to use their own words, the room for innovation and changes is very little. They are obviously used for language purposes giving little room for cultural exploration. There are in fact many role-play examples which can help ICC learning, as suggested in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. A critical incident or any other intercultural situation may help both communicative competence and also ICC.

The value system and the cultural information constructed in the texts mentioned in Chapter Seven can all become stereotypes, because, as discussed in Chapter Four, stereotypes are inevitable. The most important issue as stated in Chapter Four is how to deal with them in the tasks so that the potentially harmful ones can be turned into helpful ones. The activities that can be helpful for ICC learning in ELT as mentioned in Chapter Three are mainly discussions, role-plays

and presentations. However, the outcome of an activity also depends on the teaching and the learning. An activity may be able to help turn a potentially harmful stereotype into a helpful one, if the teachers make the best use of it. Some teachers may be able to lead learners to a cultural topic, some may only use a cultural topic as an oral practice, and some may just ignore the activity. In an objective analysis of the books, no activity seems to be designed to explain the stereotypes. Not many intercultural skills are exercised through the activities. The knowledge is mostly about American culture. The attitudes are also positive American views or negative American views. It seems that intercultural competence can hardly be learned from the books and then developed in the tasks.

The tasks, which are one of the most important parts of a class, focus only on linguistic competence, so cultural points may be ignored. The reasons for the ignorance of cultural studies in spite of all the emphasis on it in government documents and research projects may be summarized as follows:

a. Although culture is stressed to be important, it is still not a part of the CET system. As introduced in Chapter Five, CET scores are extremely important for university students because they are a necessity for job hunting and also decide whether one can get his or her degree in most cases. The CET test mainly tests learners' linguistic competence, but not ICC. The books are very exam-oriented, vocabulary and grammar learning and the listening tasks are mostly designed to meet the needs of the tests.

b. The requirements in the curriculum seem ambiguous in themselves, and ICC and cultural studies are much misunderstood in China to be teaching of cultural knowledge and to behave in an American or 'western' way.

c. Textbook writers and the teachers are not trained to teach culture. As stated in the previous chapters, this is not just a problem in China. Most teachers in the world are not experts in the area of ICC studies. Cultural studies in ELT in China are especially late compared with those in many other countries in the world. It became an issue only in late 1990s in China. It may still not be a mature subject in China and it may need more research and study.

One thing that is in common for the three series of textbooks is that all the tasks are not designed for cultural studies directly. There are some kinds of

discussion and role-play tasks, but they are targeted at oral practice, text comprehension or brainstorming for writing. No task is set up directly to put learners in an intercultural situation. In the NHCE series, there is no task at all for further discussion or cultural studies. Only some of the discussion tasks in the TECE series encourage cultural comparison and discussion directly. The stereotypes constructed in the texts are often not dealt with in the task part. No direct relationship is found between the tasks and the stereotypes in the texts. It seems that the teaching of culture has not been given much attention in the tasks.

In a nutshell, there are a number of cultural messages in the sentences of the exercises, but few of the exercises are targeted at culture. The cultural points are not pointed out in the book and therefore not encouraged for further exploration. Most the exercises focus on vocabulary and grammar, but their function as a cultural carrier is not mentioned in the books. The tasks may help cultural studies, but it is left to the learners and teachers to decide to what extent it may help ICC learning. However, as mentioned in Chapter Three, most teachers do not understand what ICC is although they agree the teaching of culture is extremely important in ELT.

## **5. Extra information**

Lack of source information in all the three series is not helpful for cultural studies. The NCE series gives some basic information about the author, date of publication and source of the text, although some are incomplete references. However, the NHCE series does not provide any information about the text at all; In the TECE series, the source information only provides the name of the author or the name of the original article or sometimes both. No other information is provided. Even if the teachers or students are interested in the teaching and learning of culture, they cannot find any information about the texts. Most texts are old in these books and almost no online information can be found about the texts. As stated in Chapter Four, without knowing any information about the text, the culture is difficult to be understood clearly.

Although no specific attention to culture is given in the students' books, the first part of the teacher's book is often about cultural background information.

The point is how the cultural information helps culture learning or ICC training and how it helps learners understand the culture in the texts. Some of the cultural background information given in NCE teacher's book one provides an example:

What American teachers wear in school: Nowadays, people in the U.S. love to dress casually. Even among those companies with a rigid dress code some now allow employees not to wear suits on Fridays. U.S. teachers wear fairly formal clothes to school, but not necessarily suits and ties. Bow ties are considered even more old-fashioned than ties. (Li, 2009, p. 6)

It is a general piece of culture, because people even of the same profession may have different dressing habits, for example, teachers. Out of many pieces of cultural information in the text in unit one of the NCE reading and writing book, the writers choose this as a particular cultural input. There may be two possibilities of understanding this: firstly, the textbook writers think this is something special or different compared to the Chinese culture; secondly, the writers are suggesting a kind of dressing culture because of the leading position of America in the world. In addition, in unit one of NCE book one, the text complains about boring English classes and a prim and old teacher, and it is about school life in the 1940s. The school life, the way of teaching and the way of dressing are all very different from those of modern societies. The cultural messages given in the teachers' book do not put any emphasis on the age of the culture. To explain the cultural point in the textbook, it says "nowadays in America, people tend to dress casually. Traditional dress is considered very old-fashioned" (Li, 2009, p. 6). This piece of explanation illustrates old culture from a contemporary point of view. Therefore the book presents old cultural information without giving explanations or even dates. It can confuse learners and can also be harmful for the teaching and learning of culture.

Another example is about spaghetti. Eating spaghetti is regarded as an important culture. In the pre-reading task, the teachers are even asked to spend fifteen minutes to teach students how to eat spaghetti. In the section of Cultural Notes, it says:

Spaghetti is the Italian-style thin noodle, cooked by boiling and served with sauce. Usually you would put a fork into a plate of spaghetti, turn the fork several times so that spaghetti will wind

around the fork, then place the fork into your mouth. It is impolite to suck. (Li, 2009, p. 6)

It is a piece of food culture, but it does not talk too much about the food or the history of the food. It pays great attention to the proper way of eating the food. It seems like a suggestion of another culture. Surely, it can be a helpful piece of culture in an intercultural situation. Both sides have the responsibility to behave in a way that is acceptable by the others. A comparison of the two food cultures might help with cultural understanding. The comparison is in fact done in the last sentence: “it is impolite to suck”. Chinese people use chopsticks to eat, so it is common to suck while eating noodles in China. However, no explanation is given. It only says it is impolite to suck as if it is saying the Chinese way of eating is impolite. It needs pointing out that in an intercultural situation it is not polite, and learners should pay attention to other cultures in an intercultural situation.

The extra information given in the listening and speaking books further proves that American and sometimes British culture is considered the most significant choice in ELT in College English teaching in China. Although the listening materials do not say that dialogues are contextualised in America and between two Americans, the extra culture information provided in the teachers’ books normally automatically assumes they are about America. Many expressions which sound very “native” are selected purposefully for teaching, such as “darn” and “you devil”. One may wonder how useful the expressions are in intercultural communication. If people in other non-English-speaking countries do not learn the expressions, they will not be able to understand the Chinese learners. Obviously, the books aim at successful communication with Americans mainly. It may be just a tradition of textbook writing to focus on American culture. The possible answer to why so many series of books and textbook writers ignore the problem may be that they do not think about the teaching of culture or they do not want to think about it because of the reasons listed in Section 4 in this chapter.

It can be seen from the tables in Section 1.5 and Section 2.5 in Chapter Seven that most cultural information is about American culture and British culture. In the NCE Book One and Two, 40% of extra information relates to American culture, 24% to British; in the NHCE Book One and Two, 43% of the extra

information is about America; in the TECE Books One and Two, 67% relates to American culture, and 13% to British culture. Sometimes, no matter which culture it is about in the text, the cultural information will explain American culture and then British culture or it will simply say “in America and Britain...” to put these two cultures together. It also often says “in western countries...” to explain a cultural point. It seems English is only related with those cultures, which is a misconception the books are broadcasting.

However, it is noticeable that cultural information is regarded as important in College English teaching and it is suggested as the first thing to be achieved. Before text analysis, there should be cultural analysis. As mentioned in Chapter Six, teachers are generally not trained to teach culture, so guidance in the books is very important in the teaching of culture. The extra information in the books is listed without any requirement. The selection of cultural points seems quite random, and the explanation sometime has nothing to do with the texts. However, although students sometimes may need clarification and explanation, some background information can help cultural knowledge learning and explain the cultural points in the texts. All in all, basic source information and culture-oriented information is needed in all the books.

## **6. Linguistic Competence versus the Teaching of Culture in ELT in China**

As shown in the previous five sections in this chapter, the books seem to focus on linguistic competence only. Some people may then argue that it is possible to teach the language only without teaching culture, and we can separate language teaching from the teaching of culture in China especially. Therefore, the last section in this chapter will discuss whether it is possible to teach English language without teaching culture in College English teaching in China.

As stated in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, Language and culture are inseparable, so, therefore, are language teaching and the teaching of culture. However, in China, it seems from the results in Chapter Seven that it is possible to teach the language without thinking about culture. The survey carried out for this dissertation as introduced in Chapter Four shows the opposite. Although English teaching in China is language-focused, students still learn culture (see Figure D.2).

When students were asked: What have you learned from College English Classes? Five categories of answers to this question were listed by the participants. One respondent might list two or three categories, so the number of answers altogether is more than 200. The answers are as follows:

- A. how to communicate with foreigners
- B. foreign culture and the differences between Chinese culture and foreign culture
- C. vocabulary (words and phrases)
- D. nothing
- E. grammar

The result reveals that 166 respondents out of 200 (83%) stated they have learned words and phrases from College English classes, and 76% leaned foreign culture. Only 4.5% of the respondents actually mentioned grammar, and 24% mentioned “how to communicate”. Vocabulary and culture were obviously the focus of classes. It is not surprising that students leaned vocabulary mainly, because as mentioned above, vocabulary is one of the most important criteria for textbook compilation. It is given the most attention in the book. However, it may be surprising that the second important answer is culture. There may be two reasons for this. The first reason is the first part of teaching is always suggested to be cultural knowledge teaching, and the teaching of culture is considered important in ELT in China. The second reason is culture is inevitable in ELT. Although the teaching is language-focused, culture is transmitted through the content of the texts, grammar and vocabulary.

The problem is the culture students learned may be very shallow and they could seldom automatically turn knowledge into ICC. Misunderstandings might also occur without any guidance from the teacher. That is why the teaching of culture is so important. A right understanding of the language and the culture it carries needs to be clarified in ELT or it can be misleading because the teaching and learning of culture is unavoidable in ELT.

## **7. Conclusion**

The reading and writing books and the listening and speaking books of each series focus mostly on American culture. American culture are broadcasted and taught in English classes which shows a tendency of cultural preference and it also accelerates Americanization. It may be reasonable because the world is more and more American to some extent, but the fact is that people of different cultures are still not completely Americanized, and they have their own cultures. As stated in the previous chapters, English is used as an international language to communicate worldwide. If the Chinese learners only learn how to use English and understand English in an American way, it cannot help communication. There are millions of cultures in the world, the American way of talking and behaving may not suit all situations. ICC is the ultimate aim of the teaching and learning of culture, but as revealed above, no task is designed specifically for ICC learning and the stereotypes constructed in texts are mostly not dealt with. The listening and speaking books can be more focused on ICC teaching, because they are full of listening and speaking activities, but they do not make any difference in practice.

The TECE series focuses almost only on native speakers' cultures, but the other two also present internationally shared culture. Internationally shared culture is the second noticeable culture in the books which indicates that the purpose of using English as an international language is more and more obvious. International communication is also the basic need for English learning. Other cultures are seldom mentioned in the books, but as stated above, Chinese culture are presented implicitly in the selection of texts. However, almost no local culture are taught and used in the books explicitly.

Lack of source information and well-selected background cultural information may cause misunderstandings of the culture in the text. Although ICC is considered to be one of the ultimate aims of ELT in China, the limitation of cultural studies to American culture and the teaching of ELT to linguistic competence may damage the learning and teaching of culture in ELT in China. All in all, there is a gap between what is expected by the government and what is actually carried out.

# Chapter Nine: Conclusion

## 1. Problems of the Teaching of Culture in ELT in China

According to the findings of the research, the teaching of culture in ELT in China is basically problematic. The problems are:

- a) The government lays down requirements concerning English teaching and the teaching of culture, but the requirements are in themselves ambiguous and confused. There are no clear explanations or definitions about the key terms used in the curriculums. The requirements are not as helpful and instructive as they might be, and they have not led to an achievement of what was expected.
- b) Research into the teaching of culture and ICC in College English teaching is relatively new in China, and the basic terms are generally misunderstood by researchers in the field of cultural studies in ELT to be the teaching of native speakers' cultural knowledge. The research therefore seems to lead nowhere or even to follow the wrong direction.
- c) The teachers who should be carrying out the requirements do not understand the key terms about the teaching of culture used in the curriculums. Although ICC is the ultimate objective of the teaching of culture, Chinese teachers of English do not know what it means. They do not really know how to teach culture and rely on textbooks for guidance and instruction. There is a significant mismatch between the requirements of the government and what is carried out in practice.
- d) Although there are different series of textbooks, they are all very similarly designed. No obvious breakthrough is seen. The books are not targeted at the teaching and learning of culture. They are grammar and vocabulary focused. The texts used in the books are generally old, and sometimes old cultural information is treated as current because of the lack of source information about the name of the author, date of publication and publisher. American culture dominates the books. Local or home culture and world cultures are not given much attention in the books. Tasks are not designed to teach culture, stereotypes are not dealt with and ICC is obviously not a part of English education in China. The books do not really help the

teaching of culture. On the contrary, they can even lead the teaching of culture in a wrong direction, one which is America-centred and knowledge-oriented.

- e) The ultimate purpose of English learning is communication, and communication is by nature intercultural. College English teaching in China does not lead to ICC, so there is also a mismatch between the needs of English learning and the direction of English teaching in China.

The problems defined above are also reasons for each other. Misunderstandings about ICC and the relationship between culture, English language and ELT lead to confusing requirements from the government, unhelpful textbooks and the aforementioned mismatches. ICC study is relatively new in China, so it may need a long time to develop. Teaching American English and culture is the tradition of English teaching in China. It may also take a while to find out the true nature of English communication in the field of English teaching and learning.

## **2. Good Points of the Teaching of Culture in ELT in China**

In spite of all the problems, Chinese scholars and teachers are trying very hard to improve students' communicative competence. Due to the fact that communication is intercultural, the teaching of culture is being given more and more attention. Reflecting on the narrow focus on grammar and reading in the 1980s in China, people have realized the importance of communicative competence and cultural knowledge in English teaching. Teachers and students all agree that the teaching of culture is very important in ELT, and providing cultural information is a very important part of College English teaching. Although ICC is misunderstood, it is stated to be one of the ultimate objectives of English teaching by the government and studies about it have been carried out.

## **3. Implications**

Based on the problems of the teaching of culture in China, some implications may be put forward. First, since most teachers in this research are confused about the

teaching of culture, it might be helpful if the government or other teaching authorities could clarify what ICC is and how to integrate intercultural training into language teaching. As demonstrated in Chapter Five, many educationalists claim that the curriculum plays a leading role in College English teaching in China, and that the guidance provided in the curriculum can change the direction of English teaching (Bai, 2002; Cai, 2004; Cai, 2005; Chen & Zhu, 2008; Shao, 1999; Tang, 2009; Wang, 1999; Xie, 2001). Therefore, it may lead to changes in the teaching of culture in College English teaching if the curriculums can clarify that ICC not only includes background cultural knowledge, but also skills and attitudes. Except for providing cultural knowledge in classes and in books, other aspects of ICC may also need attention.

Furthermore, intercultural training can also become a part of communicative language teaching. As Corbett (2003) stresses, “an intercultural approach does not demand a wholesale revolution in teaching practices – it requires a redirection towards a significantly altered set of goals, goals that, for the majority of learners, are more readily realised than slow progress towards a vaguely conceived ‘native speaker proficiency’” (p. 211). Corbett (2003) also gives an example to explain how the curriculum for modern language teaching in England was revised with the goal of an intercultural approach. The curriculum proposes that learners should have the opportunity to:

- a. Appreciate the similarities and differences between their own and the cultures of the communities/countries where the target language is spoken.
- b. Identify with the experience and perspective of people in the countries and communities where the target language is spoken.
- c. Use this knowledge to develop a more objective view of their own customs and ways of thinking. (DES, 1990: 3, cited in Corbett, 2003: 3)

By embedding these goals in activities, an intercultural approach gives teachers and learners a clearly-defined and consistent set of purposes in communicative language teaching (Corbett, 2003). Consequently, a combination of intercultural teaching and communicative language teaching may contribute to both.

Methods of teaching ICC are illustrated in Chapter Three. If activities are

encouraged, which are designed to put learners in an intercultural situation and if step-by-step instruction can be provided, the intercultural goal is very likely to be embedded in other goals of language teaching. Therefore the implication here is that an intercultural goal may be clarified in the curriculum so that it can be embedded in language teaching. It may not be the role of the curriculum to specify what kind of activities should be included in English teaching, but the aims of language teaching may need to be defined so that language teaching can move in the right direction.

Second, textbooks may need improvement. Recent cultures, a variety of cultures, a balanced selection of topics, helpful extra information, and activities that are designed to teach ICC and deal with the stereotypes in the texts are needed in the books.

Recently published articles may be useful in the teaching of culture, and if out-of-date texts are found to be good teaching materials, background cultural information and source information on them can be very helpful for learners to understand the culture in its appropriate context. Authentic materials or inauthentic materials designed to teach cultures may both help the teaching of culture. However, as has been demonstrated in this dissertation, any one variety of culture may not be sufficient in English language learning, because English is used globally and often among non-native speakers (Jenkins, 2009). Varieties of cultures, such as World Englishes, one International English and native speakers' English, are suggested to be included in textbooks. As illustrated in the results of the analysis of the books, there are many different topics in each book, so the books analysed in this research are intrinsically effective at enabling different cultural topics to be chosen. If a balanced selection of positive and negative cultural topics can be presented, the books might be more helpful. Extra information such as source information for the texts and cultural information can be useful especially when the context of the text is unclear. Activities can be the places where ICC can be taught with a combination of communicative language teaching. Apart from an intercultural situation and a guiding instruction in the activities, critical incidents are recommended to be used as teaching materials in ELT, since they are considered to be the most effective approach to intercultural

training (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Corbett, 2003; Jordan, 1994; Korhonen, 2010; Neuliep, 2006).

Finally, teacher training may be needed. Even if there are helpful textbooks, teachers may not be able or willing to use them because they are unfamiliar with the teaching of culture. Teachers need to be trained to teach culture. They may have to know what ICC is, how to teach it, why ICC is important and the nature of English as an international language before teaching. There are many books (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Byram, 2002; Corbett, 2003; Gudykunst et al., 1996; Jordan, 1994; Korhonen, 2010; Neuliep, 2006) about intercultural communication training. They can all be referred to if training is to be organized. The training approaches suggested by Jordan (1994) and Gudykunst et al. (1996), such as lecture/discussions, self-assessment instruments, case studies, and simulation role-plays, videos and homework assignments can all be used in the training programme. Only when teachers understand what ICC is, how to teach it and the importance of it in the training is it then more likely that they will be able to introduce and teach ICC in English classes.

Furthermore, the complexity of the English language may be essential to the introduction of ICC teaching, because it means that the intercultural communication may involve many varieties of cultures. According to the findings of this research, it seems the concept of World Englishes is more or less missing in teachers' understandings. It might therefore be useful if the teachers could learn about it from teacher training.

#### **4. Limitation of the Research**

In spite of the importance of this research, it also has limitations. First, it only investigates how important culture is in ELT and it only evaluates how textbooks help cultural studies. Other aspects of language teaching and learning such as linguistic competence, teaching methods and teaching facilities are not given equal attention. Although these other aspects are not the focus of this research, they are also important in ELT.

Second, questionnaires, interviews, a content analysis method and a

content-based analysis method have been used in this research. They all have their own inherent limitations. For example, the students were all chosen from one university in China, and only 202 students took part in the survey. The teachers were afraid of making mistakes, so they sometimes gave short answers in the interview. What is more, the methods used in the evaluation of textbooks are normally qualitative, which may not be sufficiently objective.

Third, although the three series of books selected for evaluation are still among the most popular books used in ELT in China, there are also some new series of textbooks coming out, for example *New Standard College English*, which makes ICC one of its targets. Not all of them are analysed in this dissertation because of time constraints.

## **5. Direction for Future Research**

First, due to the limitation of the research, many recently published series of books have not been studied. More and more textbook writers have realized the importance of culture in ELT, and recently-published textbooks seem to be more student-centred. Future studies might be based on more recent series of College English textbooks and some internationally published textbooks. With the same analysis methods applied to these books, the results may be different.

Second, this research only focuses on the teaching of culture. A study on an integration of the teaching of culture, teaching facilities, teaching methods and teaching materials might be conducted in future, so that the teaching of culture could be more effective.

Third, although ICC is a very important objective of ELT, the assessment of ICC still needs development. Without assessments, teachers and learners may be less enthusiastic about the teaching and learning of culture, especially in China where English teaching is more or less exam-oriented. A study of the assessment of ICC in the English testing system may accelerate the development of ICC training in College English teaching.

Last, according to this research, many teachers may need help to teach culture: a useful research question might focus on how the Chinese government conducts teacher training and how new research theories and methods are provided to Chinese teachers with its support.

## **6. Concluding Comments**

This research has shown that the teaching of culture is considered very important by students, teachers and the Chinese government, but that the culture taught is mainly American culture and that ICC is not an obvious target in English teaching. Cultural knowledge seems to be the focus of the teaching of culture in China. The problems are compounded by textbooks used in College English teaching. This research has suggested two methods which might be used in the evaluation of textbooks. These two methods can be applied to many other series of English language textbooks, besides the ones analyzed in this research. The coding technique of the content analysis method can be used to find out the variety of culture taught in books. The content-based analysis method developed in this research can be used to evaluate many important aspects that a textbook writer may need to consider in the teaching of culture. This research also discusses how ICC can be integrated into the teaching of the English language. In future, by developing tasks in textbooks, ICC training and language teaching may be achieved at the same time. More efforts may be needed not only at teachers' level but also at governmental level through the stipulation and implementation of curriculums and the English testing system.

# Appendices

## Appendix A:

### Teacher Survey Results

#### 1. Questionnaire Questions (See Appendix B for the questions)

One of the questions in the questionnaire is “Have you ever read a College English curriculum? If yes, please write down the year of publication of the curriculum.” About half of the participants said that they had never read a curriculum. Among those whose answer was “yes”, most read the 2004 curriculums and 43% of them forgot which one they read.

#### 2. Interview Questions (See appendix C for the questions)

##### **Question one: Which *College English* textbook is used in your university now?**

Only three series of textbooks are mentioned in the interviews. They are NCE series, TECE series and NHCE series.

##### **Question Two: What does *yu yan zhi shi* mean?**

Most teachers translated *yu yan zhi shi* into LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE or THE KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGE; only four translated it into LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE. For most teachers it meant grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation etc. here are three typical answers to this question:

---It is the knowledge of the language itself, the grammar, and the vocabulary, something like that.

---It refers to pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary something like that.

--- It is a big definition. Academically, it is something about the grammar, culture etc.

Five teachers held totally different ideas:

---How to read and how to write

--- It refers to the writing, listening, reading, translating and so on.

---Language and social culture. It is a very general word. It is anything about language.

### **Question Three: What does *yu yan neng li* mean?**

The second question is about *yu yan neng li*, the teachers translated this term into LANGUAGE COMPETENCE, LANGUAGE LITERACY, LANGUAGE SKILLS, LINGUISTIC CAPACITY, LANGUAGE LITERACY, LANGUAGE ACQUISITION, and 54% use LANGUAGE ABILITY. In Chinese all these English words: *ability, competence, capacity, skill* can be translated into one Chinese word: *neng li*. That is why there were so many different translations, but the teachers were all English language teachers, they used a different English word to show their different perception of the phrase. However, when asked why they selected this word rather than another one, no one could give an explanation. Some said:

---There are lots of translations; they are just to change one language into another language. No difference.

--- Ability is a general word. I do not know really. I have never thought about it. I would like to use a general word.

--- I use literacy, because I saw people use it in a book.

So, the important thing was not how they translated the word, but how they understood the phrase. 86% of the teachers thought *yu yan neng li* meant the ability to use the language in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Here are some typical answers:

--- Language Competence is the ability or the capability to use the language, not only the language but also the skills about how to use it effectively.

---- Language ability means you may use the language to communicate with others and use the language to express yourself.

--- In our new syllabus, it is students' ability of speaking, listening and translating. And in each level, students have different requirements.

--- Language using ability: because I am a teacher, so in this syllabus, it maybe concerns more about how to teach students how to use the language. That is what we are concentrating on now in China, e.g. writing, listening, speaking etc.

---Capability to use a language: it is communicative ability in fact. Written or spoken.

--- The ability to use a foreign language fluently.

---The ability to speak

--- It means person who can use the language very fluently and freely, can use it to communicate.

--- How to use the language.

For the other teachers, it meant the ability to learn the language.

--- Linguistic ability is your ability to study a language, can you understand efficiently, do you study the language very quickly, or the ability to accept.

---Language competence: I think it includes many several parts, e.g. the ability to acquire or learn knowledge and how to communicate using the knowledge. It means language acquisition.

**Question Four: Why do you use the word *language* and not *linguistic* or vice versa?**

Because *yu yan* in the above phrase was often translated into *language* or *linguistic*, this question was asked in order to investigate the reason for the

selection. Another problem arose from the interview inasmuch as none of the teachers were familiar with the terms *linguistic knowledge* and *linguistic competence*. When asked why they selected the word *linguistic* but not *language* or vice versa, there were only two answers. The first one was “I do not know”. The second one was “the word *linguistic* is more academic and it refers to the study or the knowledge of the course: linguistics”. For the interviewees, language knowledge and linguistic knowledge was the same, it was just a different way of translation.

#### **Question Five: What does *wen hua su yang* mean?**

The interviewees translated *wen hua su yang* which is translated into “cultural quality” in the syllabus into CULTURAL CULTIVATION, CULTURAL QUALITY, CULTURAL AWARENESS, CULTURAL LITERACY, CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, CULTURAL APPRECIATION ABILITY, CULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENT, CULTURAL CAPACITY, CULTURAL SKILLS, CULTURE BACKGROUND, CULTIVATION OF MULTI CULTURES, INSIGHT INTO FOREIGN CULTURE and CULTURE ORIENTED CULTIVATION. Almost every teacher gave a different translation, and all the teachers reflected that they were not sure how to translate this phrase because they did not really understand it. Here are some samples:

--- I am not sure about that term. It means both Language knowledge and Language Competence and culture, the history, the ability to master the language. It is the culture, the habit and the customs.

--- Cultural quality is the native speakers’ culture. You know how to use the language in native speaking countries. It is a very complicated word. It contains many meanings. We can not express it in a few words.

--- Cultural awareness: because it is about College English education in China, so the students are Chinese, and they are learning English, so they should know the difference between cultures. And the aim of English education is to cultivate this kind of awareness. I do not know really.

--- Cultural understanding: It is the most difficult one. Even in Chinese, I

do not know how to analyze it. You can translate it into culture quality. Because it is just the level we people are educated. People know the gaps of our culture. And when we are educated or civilized, when we just leave the level of illiteracy. I think why people are so innocent do nothing about the society, because they do not understand our culture. I think it is a bad translation. I do not know how to translate it.

**Question Six: What does *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* mean?**

The interviewees translated *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* into INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE, TRANS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION ABILITY, CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION LITERACY, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION ABILITY, CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION CAPACITY, CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE CAPABILITY, MULTI-CULTURE ABILITY and CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS. When asked about the differences between inter-cultural, cross-cultural, trans-cultural or multi-cultural, the teacher had no idea about it. When asked what ICC means, they gave the following answers:

**Typical answer one (61%): pay attention to other cultures or the differences between cultures**

--- Not only to know how to communicate with others but also know the culture of another country, the Background. You should know the cultural background.

--- I am not sure about the Translation. Just as the proverb says “when in Rome do as the Romans do”. If you go to a country, you experience the culture. When you communicate you have to think about the customs, the culture, something like that. You have to know the difference of culture.

--- It is the ability to be aware of the difference between culture, when you communicate with foreigner, you can respect their culture, not offend them.

**Typical answer two (13%): to know your own culture**

--- Cross-culture communication ability: to avoid culture shock. The ability to know your own culture and foreign culture.

--- That is my research topic in fact. From what I have learned now, I think two sides are very important. First, you know something about foreign culture, secondly, how to express Chinese culture in English. So it is cross-culture Communication. Communication is bilateral, it mean mutual communication. You tell me something and I tell you something. For Chinese students should not just accept what a foreigner tells him or her. As a Chinese, we should be able to tell our own culture to the foreigners.

**Typical answer three (4%): native speakers' culture**

--- I mean the freely and very successful communication with native speakers.

**Typical answer four (4%): World cultures**

--- The ability of multi-cultural communication: you can also use inter cultural communication. It means some people are well educated, they know not only the culture in one social system but many cultures from many social systems. Not only western cultures but also Eastern culture, it not only means China, but also Japan, Iran and so on.

**Typical answer five (9%): cultural awareness**

---The most important point is you should have the ability to bridge the gap. You should have the cultural awareness. You can reduce the misunderstanding and make both of you comfortable.

**Others (9%)**

--- Trans-cultural ability: it means even people come from different countries, with different nationalities, come from different cultural background, they can communicate, they can understand each other, and this kind of things.

ICC is a very hot research topic in China as mentioned by the one of the

teachers interviewed:

--- I think in China especially among my colleagues, it is a hot topic in a lot of meetings. In China, it is only another word for communication across different culture or countries. A person with this ability should know something about two cultures, two languages. Esp. know the differences between cultures. A lot of my colleagues wrote essays about the difference about culture and then it will be a good essay. So it is a very hot topic in China.

**Question Seven: Do you think it is important to teach culture in College English classes?**

All the teachers interviewed were very sure that it was very important and necessary to teach culture. Here are some typical answers:

---Yes, very important. If they do not know the difference, they may make lots of mistakes.

---Yes, very important. For Chinese students, some are good at grammar or dealing with the text. But when they are faced with the native speaker, they sometimes feel difficult to communicate with them. They can say hello, how do they do, they can not communicate with them deeply.

---Yes, very important. If you want to learn a foreign language and communicate with a foreigner without any misunderstanding, you must know the value of their culture. When we are just beginning to learn English, we were told to ask “how old are you”, but it is very rude to ask that.

As can be seen from these typical answers, the teachers all thought it is very important to teach culture because learners need culture to communicate well.

When asked how and how often they taught culture in a language class, they all said it depended on the textbook. They mainly talked about cultures related to the texts. The teachers relied on textbooks for the teaching of culture; at least the idea of culture was from the textbooks. They might also turn to the

Internet and other sources for help if they realized there were some important cultural messages in the texts.

**Question Eight: When you teach culture in a class, which country do you mostly focus on?**

There were mainly two types of answers. The first one was “American and British cultures”. The second one was “it depends on the textbooks”. In fact the cultures in textbooks are all about America and Britain. So the two answers are the same. Only one teacher said: “It depends on the textbook. Culture has no boundary, so we can not just teach American and British culture”. Although the teachers did not agree that the teaching of culture should be restricted to American culture and British culture. The teachers also relied on textbooks for the teaching of culture.

All the teachers agreed that the teaching of culture was very important and necessary in College English classes, but they had no clear idea about how to teach culture. The teaching of culture was largely controlled by textbooks.

**Appendix B:**

**Questionnaire for Teachers**

**If you don't mind, please write your name and e-mail address below, I will not mention your name in any piece of writing without your permission. All the information collected will only be used for my PhD research. Thank you.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex (Please circle): Male/Female

1. How many years have you worked as a teacher of English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which university do you work in? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which part of China are you from (City + Province)? \_\_\_\_\_
4. If you taught non-English majors, which course did you teach in your university?
5. Have you ever read a College English curriculum? If yes, please write down the year of publication of the curriculum.
6. Please translate the underlined phrases into English for me.
  - a) 语言基础包括语言知识和语言能力。
  - b) 大学英语教学还应有助于学生开阔视野, 扩大知识面, 加深对世界的了解, 借鉴和吸收外国文化精华, 提高文化素养。
  - c) 跨文化交际能力

## Appendix C:

### Interview plan for Teachers

1. What does *yu yan neng li* mean in your opinion?
2. What does *yu yan zhi shi* mean in your opinion?
3. Why did you use the word “language” and not “linguistic” or vice versa?
4. What does *wen hua su yang* mean in your opinion?
5. What does *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* mean in your opinion?
6. Do you think it is important to integrate the teaching of culture into foreign language classes? Why? How do you teach culture?
7. When you teach culture in classes which country do you mostly focus on?

## Appendix D:

### Student Survey Results

(See Appendix F for the questionnaire)

#### Question one: What are your purposes of learning English?

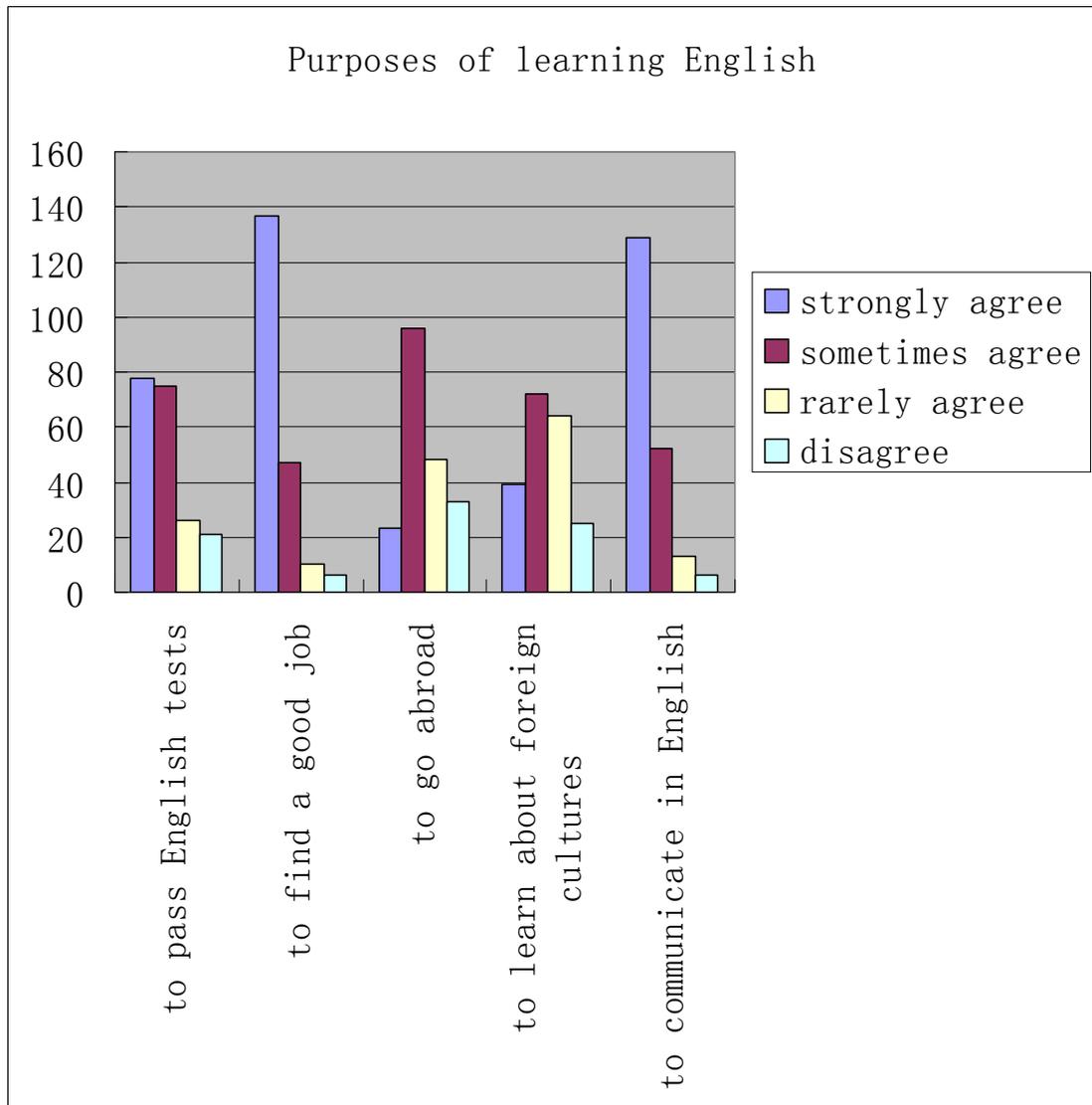
The results are displayed in Table D.1 and Figure D.1. Figure D.1 shows that “to find a good job” and “to communicate in English” outnumber the others significantly, and “to go abroad to study” and “to learn about foreign culture” obviously have less supporters.

According to the figures in Table D.1, when the students were asked what their purposes of learning English were, 77% of the students favored “to pass English tests”, and 91% thought “to communicate in English” was their ultimate purpose. 92% chose “to find a good job; 39% strongly agreed with “to pass English tests”, 65% strongly agreed with “to communicate in English”, and 69% strongly agreed with “to find a good job”. There were few students who disagreed with “to find a good job” and “to communicate in English”. 45 % of the students did not really think their purpose was to learn about foreign culture and 41% were not learning English to go abroad. Therefore, to learn foreign culture was in fact not the direct purpose of English learning for the students.

Table D.1. What are Your Purposes of Learning English?

	strongly agree	sometimes agree	Rarely agree	disagree
to pass English tests	78	75	26	21
to find a good job	137	47	10	6
to go abroad	23	96	48	33
to learn about foreign culture	39	72	64	25
to communicate in English	129	52	13	6

Figure D. 1. Purposes of Learning English



**Question Two: What have you learned from College English Classes?**

Five categories of answers to this question were listed by the participants. One respondent might list two or three categories, so the number of answers altogether is more than 200. The answers are as follows:

- A. how to communicate with foreigners
- B. foreign culture and the differences between
- C. vocabulary (words and phrases)

D. nothing

E. grammar

Figure D.2. What have you Learned from College English Classes?

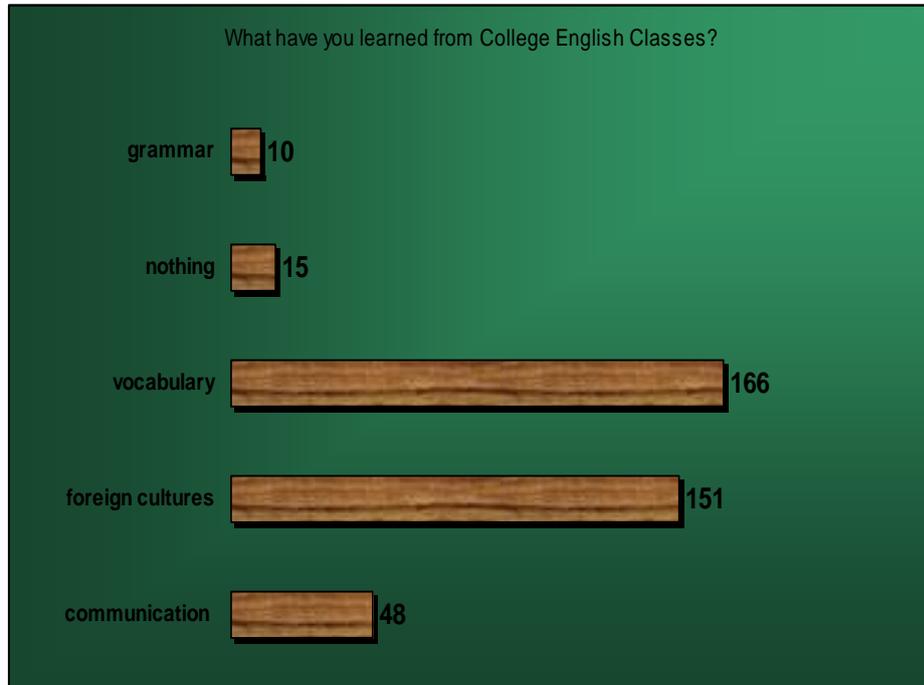


Figure D.2 shows that 166 respondents out of 200 (83%) stated they have learned words and phrases from College English classes, and 76% leaned foreign culture. Only 4.5% of the respondents actually mentioned grammar, but 24% mentioned “how to communicate”. Vocabulary and cultures were obviously the focus of classes.

**Question Three: How does your teacher teach College English?**

The participants were asked to write down the normal procedure of a College English class. The answers about the reading class are all similar, and can be summarized in a flow chart:

Figure D.3. Normal Procedure of a College English Class

A dictation of words in the books or a presentation of a topic related to the texts learned → learning new words in the books → an analysis of the text sentence by sentence → doing exercises in the book

Some respondents also mentioned the teachers sometimes also played a movie, a video or some English songs for them.

**Question Four: Does your teacher teach culture in classes? If yes, how and how often?**

The answer to the first question was mostly yes which can also be seen from the result above. Only 21 students (11%) out of 200 said their teachers rarely taught cultures. When asked how the teachers taught cultures 92% of the respondents stated that it depended on the texts, if there were cultural points or cultural differences from Chinese cultures, the teacher would talk about it. 6% of the participants also mentioned their teacher normally used movies twice a month to teach cultures. Eight respondents (4%) also said the teachers also used PPT or pictures to teach them some cultures. Two respondents (2%) said their teacher taught cultures by talking about their own experience in Canada.

**Question Five: Are you interested in culture learning? Why?**

Only nine participants mentioned they were not interested in culture learning because culture was difficult and one also said it was not useful to learn cultures, one would learn a culture once the person lived in the culture. Another few students said it was not good for CET test, so they were not interested.

The other 191 participants were all interested in culture learning, the reasons can be summarized as follows:

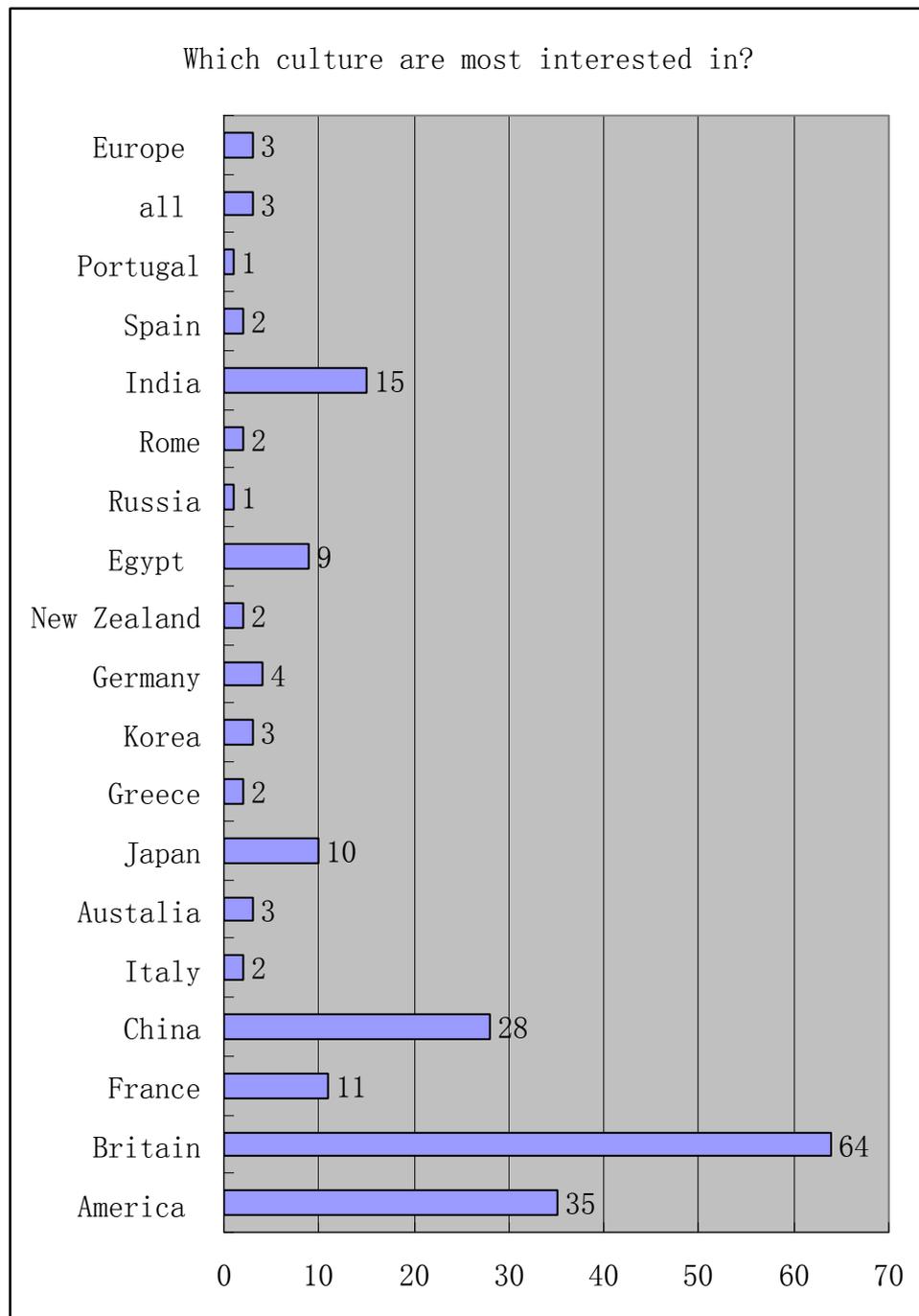
- A. It is interesting and magic.
- B. If I go abroad to study in the future, it will be useful.
- C. It is good for language learning and communication with foreigners.

A and C are supported by 56% and 34% respectively, and only eleven (5.5%) supported B.

**Question Six: Which culture are you most interested in?**

Altogether 19 categories were mentioned in the answers. 32% of the participants were interested in British cultures, 17.5% in American culture and 14% in Chinese culture. These three cultures were the most welcome cultures. Except for the three big categories, Indian, French, Japanese and Egyptian cultures were approximately equally popular among the participants and were supported by fifteen, eleven, ten and nine respondents individually. Three respondents even mentioned all cultures, and another three mentioned European culture as a large category. Another ten countries were favored by one to four respondents each.

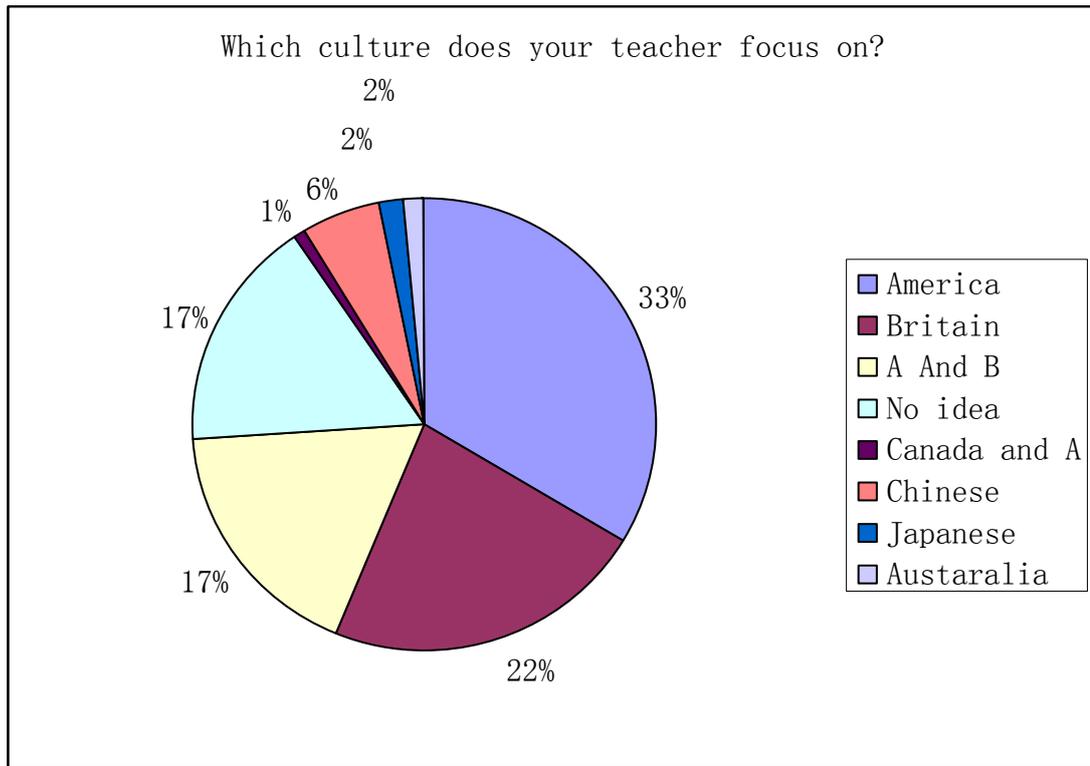
Figure D.4. Which Culture are You Most Interested in?



The reasons for a high percentage of interest in British cultures are (according to the questionnaire results) that they think English originates from the UK, and that British people are more gentlemen-like, so they would like to speak and behave like a British person.

**Question Seven: Which culture does your teacher normally focus on?**

Figure D.5. Which Culture does Your Teacher Most Focus on?



\*A: American B: British

According to Figure D.5, 77% of respondents considered the teaching of culture to be about America and/or Britain. American culture itself (33%) occupied most of the teaching of culture. 17% of the participants did not know which culture the teacher mentioned at all. 6% of respondents thought Chinese culture was the focus of the English classes.

**Appendix E:**

**Questionnaire for Students in the UK**

**If you don't mind, please write your name and e-mail address below, I will not mention your name in any piece of writing without your permission. All the information collected will only be used for my PhD research. Thank you.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex (Please circle): Male/Female

4. Which part of China are you from (City + Province)? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you been in the UK? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many years did you study in a Chinese university? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did you get a bachelor degree in China? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which university did you study in? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which *College English* textbook did you use in your Chinese university?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How many hours of English classes which were based on the *College English* textbooks did you have a week? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many hours of other English classes did you have every week?  
\_\_\_\_\_ What classes were they? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How did your teacher normally teach College English? \_\_\_\_\_

Please choose the answers which are the closest to your opinion by ticking the box under the appropriate numbers.

1. disagree
2. rarely agree
3. sometimes agree
4. agree

Answers	1	2	3	4
1 The teacher organized group or pair discussion in English classes				
2 The teacher explained the grammar and the vocabulary in almost each sentence.				
3 The teacher gave you some cultural background of the text				
4 The teacher organized group or pair discussion about some cultural points in the text?				
5 The teaching mostly relied on the textbook.				

11. When you were in China, what were your main purposes of learning English?

Please choose the answers which are the closest to your opinion by ticking the box under the appropriate numbers.

1. disagree
2. rarely agree

3. sometimes agree
4. agree

	Answers	1	2	3	4
1	to pass different types of English tests				
2	to find a good job in the future				
3	to go abroad				
4	to learn about foreign culture				
5	to be able to communicate (read, write, speak and listen) in English				

12. What is your purpose of learning English now?

Please choose the answers which are the closest to your opinion by ticking the box under the appropriate numbers.

1. disagree
2. rarely agree
3. sometimes agree
4. agree

	Answers	1	2	3	4
1	to pass different types of English tests				
2	to find a good job in the future				
3	To stay abroad				
4	to learn about foreign culture				
5	to be able to communicate (read, write, speak and listen) in English				

**Appendix F:**

**Questionnaire for Students in Harbin**

此问卷将只用于我的博士研究，未经您的允许，我不会向任何人、在任何文章、论文中提及您的个人信息。请留下您的姓名和联系方式，以便我今后和您取得联系。感谢您的帮助和合作。

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Male/Female (Please circle)

1. Which year of a university are you in now? \_\_\_\_\_  
What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many hours of College English class (新视野大学英语) do you have each week? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What other English classes do you have?  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please choose the answer which is the closest to your opinion by ticking the box under the appropriate numbers.
  1. strongly agree
  2. sometimes agree
  3. rarely agree
  4. disagree

Question: What are your main purposes of learning English?	1	2	3	4
1 to pass different types of English tests				
2 to find a good job in the future				
3 to go abroad				
4 to learn about foreign culture				
5 to be able to communicate (read, write, speak and listen) in English				

5. What have you learned from your College English classes?

6. How does your teacher teach College English?

7. Does your teacher teach culture in classes? If yes, how and how often?

8. Are you interested in culture learning? Why?

9. Which culture are you most interested in, e.g. British and Indian? Why?

10. Which culture does your teacher most focus on?

## Appendix G:

### Sample Transcripts

#### Sample Transcript One:

**Interviewer:** Which *College English* textbook is used in your university now?

**Interviewee:** The Third Edition of College English

**Interviewer:** Ok, I will start from asking you questions about your understanding of the terms used in the curriculums. What does *yu yan neng li* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Language literacy)

**Interviewee:** In our new syllabus, it is students' ability of speaking, listening and translating. And in each level, students have different requirements.

**Interviewer:** What does *yu yan zhi shi* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Language knowledge)

**Interviewee:** How to read and how to write

**Interviewer:** You used the word "language" but not "linguistic". Is there any specific reason for choosing this word?

**Interviewee:** Linguistic is an adjective form of language. No idea at all. Do not know. Language and linguistic are different. Linguistic is more academic.

**Interviewer:** Why did you use the word "literacy" but not other words such as "ability" or "competence"?

**Interviewee:** They are the same.

**Interviewer:** What does *wen hua su yang* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Cultural awareness)

**Interviewee:** The students can learn culture and communicate with English people. For example: Good manners, behaviours. I do not really know.

**Interviewer:** Do you think I can translate it into "cultural competence"?

**Interviewee:** In china, we see cultural awareness more often.

**Interviewer:** What does *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* mean, in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Cross-cultural communication literacy)

**Interviewee:** People can distinguish the culture difference to communicate with each other.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it is important to integrate the teaching of culture into foreign language classes? Why?

**Interviewee:** Yes, very important. If they do not know the difference, they may make lots of mistakes.

**Interviewer:** How do you teach culture?

**Interviewee:** If my text is related with it, I will do that.

**Interviewer:** How?

**Interviewee:** Just tell them something. For example: difference of culture.

**Interviewer:** When you teach culture in classes which country do you mostly focus on?

**Interviewee:** America and Britain.

**Interviewer:** What do think of the *College English* textbooks you used?

**Interviewee:** The College English textbooks are not very good. In this book we cannot see lots of literature writing. The old version is better because there are not many good, old articles with lots of language points. The articles are very old, but there is lots of knowledge in it. For example the text: going home. It teaches us how to be a good person. The articles in new textbooks are very new, but not very good. Not language points. If I do not teach grammar, students do not like it.

## Sample Transcript Two:

**Interviewer:** Which *College English* textbook is used in your university now?

**Interviewee:** New Horizon College English

**Interviewer:** Ok, I will start asking you questions about your understanding of the terms used in the curriculums. What does *yu yan neng li* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Language skills)

**Interviewee:** The ability to use the language, listening, speaking and so on.

**Interviewer:** What does *yu yan zhi shi* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Language knowledge)

**Interviewee:** Language and social culture. It is a very general word. It is anything about language.

**Interviewer:** Why did you use the word "language" but not "linguistic"?

**Interviewee:** I am not sure. Linguistic is small it refers to the pronunciation, slang, idioms. It is a part of the subject linguistics. Language knowledge includes linguistic knowledge.

**Interviewer:** What does *wen hua su yang* mean here in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Cultural literacy)

**Interviewee:** It is not a tool. For example, the ability of using computer is translated as computer literacy by foreigners. It is the ability to use English to talk about our own culture and understand foreign culture. The importation and exportation of culture. I am not sure.

**Interviewer:** Can I translate it into cultural Competence?

**Interviewee:** Competence is a higher ability. Literacy is more general. In College English teaching, students do not have to have a high ability.

**Interviewer:** What does *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* mean, in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Cross-culture communication ability)

**Interviewee:** To avoid culture shock. The ability to know your own culture and

foreign culture.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it is important to integrate the teaching of culture into foreign language classes? Why?

**Interviewee:** Yes. Language points are not the only thing in English teaching. E.g. when you see British tea, the teacher can explain the culture of British tea. And at the same time, we can also teach some new words. Our teaching is very exam-oriented, but it is still important to teach cultural background. .

**Interviewer:** How do you teach culture? How often?

**Interviewee:** We should not teach too much culture. If in the texts there are some cultural points, I will talk about it.

**Interviewer:** When you teach culture in classes which country do you mostly focus on?

**Interviewee:** It depends on the textbooks. Culture has no boundary, so we can not just teach American and British culture.

### Sample Transcript Three:

**Interviewer:** Which *College English* textbook is used in your university now?

**Interviewee:** New Horizon College English

**Interviewer:** Ok. What does *yu yan neng li* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Language ability)

**Interviewee:** It means person who can use the language very fluently and freely, can use it to communicate.

**Interviewer:** What does *yu yan zhi shi* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: The knowledge of language)

**Interviewee:** It means know something about the language, speaking, listening and the culture background.

**Interviewer:** You used the word "language" but not "linguistic". Was there any specific reason for choosing this word?

**Interviewee:** It is different. Linguistic knowledge is more professional, formal language. The language I mean is for communication. Linguistic is just for research, further study. Language is just for daily use.

**Interviewer:** What does *wen hua su yang* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Cultural understanding)

**Interviewee:** It is the most difficult one. Even in Chinese, I do not know how to analyze it. You can translate it into culture quality. Because it is just the level we people are educated. People know the gaps of our culture. And when we are educated or civilized, when we just leave the level of illiteracy. I think why people are so innocent do nothing about the society, because they do not understand our culture. I think it is a bad translation. I do not know how to translate it.

**Interviewer:** What does *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* mean, in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Trans-cultural ability)

**Interviewee:** It means even people come from different countries, with different nationalities, come from different cultural background, they can communicate;

they can understand each other, and this kind of things.

**Interviewer:** Can I translate it into intercultural ability?

**Interviewee:** Yes, I think this is better.

**Interviewer:** Do you know the difference between these two?

**Interviewee:** Trans- has lots of words, e.g. transport, transplant. For me, it means we can change one language into another language.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it is important to integrate the teaching of culture into foreign language classes? Why?

**Interviewee:** Yea, if a foreigner comes to China, if they do not know anything about the cultural background of China, it is very difficult for them to understand fully about the people, about the society, the relationship, words use. So it is important.

**Interviewer:** How often do you teach culture-related issues in your English classes and how do you do it?

**Interviewee:** No, I do not teach culture, but of course, sometimes we introduce a little about the background. For example, we prepare the lesson; we may search the information from the internet and we try to find some information related to the text. The best way is to suggest the students to read more books from the website, the library.

**Interviewer:** When you teach culture in classes which country do you mostly focus on?

**Interviewee:** UK and America.

#### **Sample Transcript Four:**

**Interviewer:** Which *College English* textbook is used in your university now?

**Interviewee:** New College English

**Interviewer:** Ok. What does *yu yan neng li* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Language skills)

**Interviewee:** You can use English to speak, communicate and you can listen to other people and you can translate, read something. Your reading, speaking, translating skills.

**Interviewer:** What does *yu yan zhi shi* mean in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Language knowledge)

**Interviewee:** It means some basic knowledge. For example: grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary.

**Interviewer:** You used the word "language" but not "linguistic". Is there any specific reason for choosing this word?

**Interviewee:** They are different. Linguistic is for English majors, they will learn something more deep and profound knowledge about English. Not just basic knowledge and skills.

**Interviewer:** Why did you use "skills" but not "ability" or "competence"?

**Interviewee:** When we teach students we often teach some skills to use the language. To me, skills and ability are almost the same. Maybe Competence means you are very skilful when you use the language and you are very good at it. Maybe competence is better here.

**Interviewer:** What does *wen hua su yang* mean here in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Cultural accomplishments)

**Interviewee:** When you communicate, you know the culture difference between your language and the language you are learning. When we teach students a language we should also teach them some cultural background so that they can reach some level and when they communicate with the native speaker, they will

not make mistakes. Some times it can be very embarrassing. So we will teach them.

**Interviewer:** What does *kua wen hua jiao ji neng li* mean, in your opinion? (The interviewee's translation: Cross-culture communication capabilities)

**Interviewee:** It means when we, in language teaching, we will not only teach them some basic knowledge, some grammar, we also teach them some cultural background, for example, when we teach them a text, we will not only teach them the pronunciation, spelling and the meaning on the surface. We make them understand deeply about the language and about their life, the country's life and history etc. A person with this ability can communicate with them naturally, maybe. And they can understand each other better, make their communicative more smooth. You will not ask some embarrassing questions, because you know what should not be asked, and you know their cultural background, and you will not make mistake.

**Interviewer:** Why did you choose to use the word "capabilities"?

**Interviewee:** I think of this word by accident. It occurs to me. You told us it is on the syllabus, I didn't use ability because is more common used and in the syllabus, it should be more formal, so capability is formal.

**Interviewer:** Do you think it is important to integrate the teaching of culture into foreign language classes? Why?

**Interviewee:** Yes, very important. For Chinese students, some are good at grammar or dealing with the text. But when they are faced with the native speaker, they sometimes feel difficult to communicate with them. They can say hello, how do they do, they can not communicate with them deeply.

**Interviewer:** How often do you teach culture-related issues in your English classes and how do you normally do it?

**Interviewee:** In a text there are some culture differences between china and Britain and America. So the teacher will ask them the question if they know the difference. We will teach them.

**Interviewer:** How often?

**Interviewee:** It depends on the texts and different teachers.

**Interviewer:** When you teach culture in classes which country do you mostly focus on?

**Interviewee:** Britain and America.

**Interviewer:** Do you like the *College English* textbooks?

**Interviewee:** This book is better than NHCE, and we compared, we think the language in it is better, because it has different style of text. It covers different topic.

**Interviewer:** In teacher trainings or meetings, do you normally talk about culture teaching?

**Interviewee:** No, up to now, we do not.

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