Cultural Content in EFL Textbooks and Students' Preferences:

A Case Study of Non-English Major Students in China

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ABSTRACT

It has long been accepted that culture plays a key role in English Language Teaching (ELT). With the advent of English as an international language, a new approach to teach English is to include intercultural knowledge in the teaching, thus enabling students to possess Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) so that they can become intercultural communicators. Therefore, the current cultural contents in EFL textbooks and cultural learning in EFL curriculum are significant issues to be examined. Four teachers' manuals of EFL College English textbooks *(NHCE)* for Chinese non-English major students were analyzed in the current study to determine what sources of cultures are presented in an in-use textbook at the university level of EFL in China, and secondly what themes of cultures are presented. To reveal students attitudes towards cultural learning, 69 second year students of College of Arts and Sciences, Yunnan Normal University in China were surveyed. The findings of this research can be concluded as follows:

1. More than half of the cultural content was unidentifiable in NHCE which indicated textbook authors' main purpose was to enhance students' listening and speaking abilities rather than developing their intercultural skills in an international context. Among identified cultural content, the textbooks were dominated by target cultural content, while international target culture and source cultural content accounted for a very small percentage. Of the 19 cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c" culture, the most preferred theme was the little "c" theme of "values" and common little "c" themes (i.e. "Food", "Holidays", "Hobbies and "Body language") were absent. Such lack of source cultural information and the imbalanced selection in NHCE of cultural themes may not be sufficient to develop Chinese non-English major students' ICC as stipulated by College English Curriculum Requirements (2007).

2. The students' questionnaire responses showed that they were in favor of learning mostly about their own culture, followed by target and international target culture. Regarding cultural themes, they seemed to show a slightly stronger preference towards Big "C" over little "c" culture. With respect to Chinese (source) culture, students were interested in learning about "History", "Food", and "Holidays"; for international target culture (i.e. the cultures of France, Egypt, Japan, Brazil, and Iran), the respondents were curious to learn about the cultural themes of "Geography", "Food", and "Holidays"; and for the target culture (i.e. America and Australia), the cultural themes of Science" and "Geography" were favored by the respondents.

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This thesis is based on the following papers:

I.   Liu, S.M., & Laohawiriyanon, C. (2013a, in press). Cultural Content in EFL Listening and Speaking Textbooks for Chinese University Students. International Journal of English Language Education.

II. Liu, S.M., & Laohawiriyanon, C. (2013b, in press). Students' Attitudes towards cultural learning in the English classroom: A case study of non-English major students in a Chinese university. International Journal of English Language Education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of English as an international language (EIL) or a global language has called scholars, language educators, and practitioners to rethink the significant role of culture in English language teaching and learning (Brown, 2000; Byrnes, 2010; Kramsch, 1993). This new status of English, however, involves a wider range of complex situations than the previous status i.e. ESL/EFL as posited by Hamiloğlu and Mendi (2010: 16) that integrating culture in ELT needs to stress "the social functions of a target language and make learners interculturally sensitive". The fundamental objective of ELT is then no longer limited to teaching English language learners to acquire communicative competence in English, which refers to the ability of a person to use English appropriately in terms of linguistics, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics (Council of Europe, 2001 cited in Gu, Meng, and Li, 2012); but rather a language learner should develop Intercultural Communicative Competence (hereafter ICC) which refers to "one's awareness on others' cultures as well as his /her own culture" (Hamiloğlu and Mendi 2010: 16). Apparently, cultural elements form a major part of English language learning, but the question is how much and whose cultures are represented in ELT textbooks and curriculum?

Traditionally, target cultural content was promoted in the EFL classroom because it is believed that such information will increase learner motivation and attitudes towards language learning (McKay, 2002). Gardner and Lambert (1972) posited that the integration of the target culture was a significant requirement for successful second language learning. However, with the new status of English as an international language, there seems to be some concerns about the overemphasis on cultural elements of English-speaking countries in the process of English language teaching and learning. McKay (2000) reasoned that if one of the primary reasons for learners to acquire English today is to share information with others about their own community and culture, it is not necessary to focus exclusively on the cultures practiced by native speakers of English in the English language classroom. She observed that:

> *If an international language, by definition, means that such a language belongs to no single culture, then it would seem that it is not necessary for language learners to acquire knowledge about the culture of those who*

speak it as a native language. There are some, however, who argue that a language cannot be taught without knowledge of a target culture (McKay, 2000: 7).

In China, ICC is considered one of the ultimate goals for Chinese students to participate effectively in intercultural communication in the future; accordingly the New Curriculum Requirements (2007) requires non-English-majored students to possess ICC. However, according to some findings in a relevant survey, the Chinese students' ICC is fairly low. Xiao and Petraki (2007), for example, surveyed the frequency of interactions between Chinese students and students from other countries, the difficulties they encountered and the reasons for them. The findings revealed that lack of knowledge of intercultural communication is the main reason hindering Chinese students from interacting. The study suggested that intercultural communication skills should be an important component of English language in China. Similarly, Similarly, Wang (2007) found in her survey that Chinese non-English major students from eight universities had a dissatisfactory level of ICC. There are several factors contributing to students' success in language and culture learning such as textbooks and students' attitude.

Textbooks are considered the heart of teaching (Sheldon, 1988 cited in Tok, 2010). Rivers (1981: 475) suggests that "the importance of the textbook cannot be overestimated. It will inevitably determine the major part of the classroom teaching and the students' out-of-class learning." According to Cunningsworth (1995), textbooks are best seen as a resource reflecting the aims, objectives, methods and values of the language teaching programme and can exert considerable influence over what teachers teach and how they do it. Besides, textbooks are important for both teachers and learners. While teachers use textbooks as guidance when conducting lessons, learners need textbooks for linguistic input and models (Cunningsworth, 1995). Tomlinson (1998) pointed out that textbooks provided the core material for a course, serving as the basis for the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. Ashikaga, Fujita, and Ikuta (2001) maintained that English textbooks can function as a primary source of cultural knowledge for students. Moreover, textbooks also affect learners' attitude and performance (Tok, 2010) and can be seen as an effective instrument

for the educational practice and at the same time reflect values and senses for individuals and nations, as stated by Risager (cited in Cunningsworth, 1995: 90) below:

> *Foreign language teaching textbooks no longer just develop concurrently with the development of foreign language pedagogy in a narrow sense, but they increasingly participate in the general cultural transmission with the educational system and in the rest of society.*

Cortazzi and Jin (1999) suggested that EFL textbook should reflect a range of cultural contexts and intercultural elements which in turn should raise students' awareness of intercultural issues in order to let them communicate effectively and appropriately in diversified intercultural communicative contexts. However, the representation of culture in EFL textbooks showed some downsides. Paige *et al.* (1999) examined the research literature on curricular materials, and concluded that the current materials, mainly textbooks, are shallow and superficial with respect to their treatment of culture. They are therefore inadequate to the task of teaching culture specifics in the deeper sense (values, norms, beliefs, etc.) or culture-general skills. Aliakbari (2004) examined the way culture is addressed in ELT textbooks used in high schools in Iran. The textbook analysis was based on a modified version of Ramirea & Halls' (1990) model with a focus on the presentation given to various target language speaking countries or groups in the textbooks. The study found that half of the books referred to general, culture free passages. No reference to eastern countries was involved, nor was there a text exclusively regarding Iranian culture. The research revealed that not enough attention is given to cultural understanding.

In addition, students' achievements of language and learning are also greatly influenced by their attitudes (Paige *et al*, 1999). Savignon (1983: 110) noted: "… ultimate success in learning to use a second language would most likely be seen to depend on the attitude of the learner". Gardner and Lambert (1972), Ellis (1985) and Dörnyei (1994, 2001) hold that attitude is one of the essential factors shaping the rate, proficiency, and accomplishment of L2 learning. Attitude, being negative and positive, is believed to have a strong impact on students' success in language learning. Furthermore, learners with a positive attitude towards the target culture and its people can learn the

target language better than those who do not have such positive attitude (Chamber, 1999; Gardner, 1985).

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This aims of the research is firstly to examine what sources of and themes of culture were introduced in Chinese university EFL textbooks and to what extent they help students' cultural learning and ICC. The second aim was to identify students' attitude towards learning both Big "C" and little "c" culture, referred to as cultural themes, from different countries, known as cultural sources. It is hoped that this study would provide valuable insight into current ELT from the standpoint of what cultural content should be imparted via the resource of textbooks and the attitudes of students with the aim of promoting Chinese students' ICC. It was also expected to offer some advice for cultural teaching and learning in the EFL classroom. Three research questions were addressed as follows:

1. What sources of cultures are presented in an in-use textbook at the university level of EFL in China?

2. What types of cultures are presented in an in-use textbook at the university level of EFL in China?

3. What are the non-English major students' attitudes towards cultural content and learning in English class?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects of the study

3.1.1 Materials for textbooks analysis

Several series of College English books for Chinese non-English-major students (and corresponding teachers' books) were analyzed *(New Horizon College English, 21st Century College English*, and *Experiencing English)*. Among those several series, eight books (four students' books and four teachers' manuals) of *Listening and Speaking 1-4 (Second Edition) of New Horizon College English* (hereafter NHCE) published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, were selected for the

current study because among those series, NHCE are widely used in Chinese colleges and universities. Also, the latest College English Curriculum Requirements (2007) have given top priority to the students' ability of listening and speaking and ICC.

Tables1- 4 below delineate the information about the topics of each unit in the four teachers' manuals and the numbers of units of analysis on culture-related content in the four sections. NHCE series contain a total of 40 units. In the students' books, the structure of each unit is made up of four components: (1) Focus: showing the main ideas and key points of each unit. (2) Words aids: explaining the meanings of new words. (3) Activities: containing activities for listening and speaking. (4) Exercises: providing questions for listening and speaking activities. In the teacher's manual, the structure of each unit consists of five parts: (1) Audio Scripts: providing listening scripts for listening activity. (2) Notes for Teachers: providing teachers further information and explanation about language points and activities. (3) Culture Notes: introducing cultural information and expressions about a certain situation. (4) Key to answer: providing the answer to exercises for listening and speaking activities. (5) Key for reference: providing extra information and explanation for the answer.

Table 1: Numbers of units of analysis on NHCE book one

Unit	Audio Scripts		Note for Teachers		Cultural Notes		Key for Reference
	C	NC	C	NC	C	NC	
Unit 1 Click here for language learning	4	1	1	2	1	0	
Unit 2 Chilling out with the folks	5	0	1	2	1	0	
Unit 3 Give and sacrifices	4	1	1	2	1	0	
Unit 4 Making a good impression	4	1	2	1	1	0	
Unit 5 The battle against AIDS	5	0	2	1	1	0	
Unit 6 Consider collar colors carefully	4	1	1	2	1	0	NA
Unit 7 Guns for trouble	2	3	1	2	1	0	
Unit 8 Rack your brain for Creativity	3	2	1	2	1	0	
Unit 9 School days	3	2	1	2	1	0	
Unit 10 Stand up for honesty	4	1	1	2	1	0	
Total	38	12	12	18	10	0	
Grand total	50		30		10		

Table 2: Numbers of units of analysis on NHCE book two

Unit	Audio Scripts		Note for Teachers		Cultural Notes	Key for Reference
	C	NC	C	NC		
Unit 1 International clock talk	5	0	1	3		
Unit 2 All that glitters is Olympics gold	2	3	0	4		
Unit 3 Pros and cons of mixed marriages	4	1	1	3	NA	NA
Unit 4 A hunk of burning love	2	3	0	4		
Unit 5 Enough of worries and tears	4	1	1	3		
Unit 6 What's in a name?	5	0	1	3		
Unit 7 Relax or die	3	2	1	3		
Unit 8 Life outside of work	4	1	1	3		
Unit 9 Only losers quit	4	1	1	3		
Unit 10 The Tragedy of war	5	0	0	4		
Total	38	12	7	33		
Grand total	50		40			

Table 3: Numbers of units of analysis on NHCE book three

Unit	Audio Scripts		Note for Teachers		Cultural Notes		Key for Reference	
	C	NC	C	NC	C	NC	C	NC
Unit 1 Live and love	5	1	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 2 Step up to better health	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 3 Ways to win	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 4 Symbols of America	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 5 Death's lessons for life	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 6 Defending ourselves against disasters	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 7 Great! Great! Greatness!	5	1	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 8 Troubling over genetic doubling	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 9 Turning over people's roles in the family	6	0	0	3	1	0	2	0
Unit 10 A friend indeed	4	2	0	3	1	0	2	0
Total	56	4	0	30	10	0	20	0
Grand total	60		30		10		20	

Table 4: Numbers of units of analysis on NHCE book four

Unit	Audio Scripts		Note for Teachers		Cultural Notes	Key for Reference	
	C	NC	C	NC		C	NC
Unit 1 The fame game	4	2	2	1		1	0
Unit 2 One of a kind	6	0	2	1		1	0
Unit 3 Crushed by misfortune	4	2	1	2		1	0
Unit 4 Zooming up the information superhighway	6	0	2	1		1	0
Unit 5 My roommates, my friends	3	3	1	2	NA	1	0
Unit 6 Criminal acts	2	4	1	2		1	0
Unit 7 The truth about your genes	6	0	1	2		1	0
Unit 8 Inequality in society	6	0	1	2		1	0
Unit 9 Amusement parks: loads of fun coming to a place near you	6	0	1	2		1	0
Unit 10 EQ, more important than IO	5	1	1	2		1	0
Total	48	12	13	17		10	0
Grand total	60		30			10	

Note: NA= Not presented in the textbooks

C= Cultural -related content

NC= Non cultural-related content

Based on the structure information of each unit of both the students' textbooks and teachers' manuals above, the students' books of NHCE were used only as a reference while all five components in the teachers' manuals formed the core materials for the analysis given that the latter were more informative.

3.1.2 Questionnaire respondents

Questionnaire respondents were 881 second year students from five departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, Yunnan Normal University. Out of five departments, three departments classified as Non-English major subjects were randomly chosen i.e. Computer Science (n=28), Management Science (n=26), and Horticulture (n=26). Only 80 students were randomly selected from three of these departments. The questionnaire was distributed to the students when they started their fourth semester, meaning that they were studying Reading and Writing 3-4, and Listening and Speaking 3-4.

3.2 Research instruments

3.2.1 Textbook analysis

In the study, the presented cultural framework of textbook analysis focuses on two perspectives. Based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999)'s framework regarding cultural content for English materials and textbooks, the first perspective concentrated on the representation of sources of culture (target, international target, and source culture) in the textbooks, including a new category which was "unidentified sources of culture" to cover all cultural content found in the textbooks. 19 themes of Big "C" and little "c" culture were chosen, based on Chen (2004) and Lee (2009) 's concepts of cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c".

1. Big "C" culture (12 themes): Politic, Economy, History, Geography, Literature/Art, Social norms, Education, Architecture, Sports, Music**,** Movie, and Science.

2. Little "c" culture category (7 themes): Food, Holiday, lifestyles, Customs, Values, Hobbies and Gestures/ body language.

Table 5 describes the information about the numbers of units of analysis on culture-related content in the four sections (Audio scripts, Note for teachers, Cultural notes and Key for references).

Table 5: Numbers of units of analysis on culture-related content/total units

Adopt from Liu and Laohawiriyanon (2013, in press)

Book	Audio Scripts	Note for Teachers	Cultural Notes	Key for Reference
Book 1	38/50	12/30	10/10	NA
Book 2	38/50	7/40	NA	NA
Book 3	56/60	0/30	10/10	20/20
Book 4	48/60	13/30	NA	10/10
Total	180/220	32/130	20/20	30/30
Grand total	262/400			

Note: NA= Not presented in the textbooks

In total, the textbooks contained four hundred units. These four hundred units were analyzed for cultural content in terms of target, international target, and source

culture as well as Big "C" and little "c" (see Table 5). However, some units had no reference to a particular cultural aspect; therefore they were not analyzed. For example, some units of analysis contained "Notes for Teachers" to instruct the teacher how to teach the unit, how to conduct activities and definitions of words and expressions. Accordingly, they had no cultural content. As a result, there were only 262 units of analysis containing certain cultural elements in the four sections (Audio scripts, Notes for teachers, Cultural notes and Key for reference) which were then further categorized as target, international target, source culture as well as unidentified source of culture. The units were further subcategorized into Big "C" or little "c" culture.

3.2.2 Questionnaire

3.2.2.1 Questionnaire Construction

To explore Chinese non-English major students' preferences towards cultural aspects in the English classroom, a questionnaire was employed as an instrument to investigate these preferences. The questionnaire's main objective was to have respondents rank 17 cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c". The researcher provided eight different countries reprehensive of target, international target and source culture. The ranks ranged from 1 (highly interested) to 13 (the least interested). Also, the respondents could put 0 if they were not interested in any cultural themes under a certain country. As well, the researcher provided five blanks for the respondents to fill in countries of their own choice.

To ensure the content validity, the questionnaire items were constructed in English and reviewed by three experts in the field. Taken into consideration the expert's feedback, the questionnaire was then modified in order to make the format both respondent and researcher-friendly. Secondly, given that the respondents were Chinese students, the researcher also translated the questionnaire into Chinese and had it checked by three Chinese English teachers to assure translation validity (See appendix B). The questionnaire was then piloted to ensure that the students understood the instructions.

3.2.2.2 Data collection procedures

The questionnaire was administrated at the beginning of their English class time and took no more than 25 minutes to complete. Eighty students responded to the questionnaire, but only 69 questionnaires (86.25%) were valid.

3.3 Data analysis

3.3.1 Textbook analysis

The data obtained from the textbooks analysis were analyzed by classifying them into target, international target, source culture as well as unidentified sources of culture, and then subcategorized into Big "C" or little "c" culture by percentage and frequency.

3.3.2 Questionnaire analysis

Weigh scores were used to calculate the ranks in the following manner. In the questionnaire, the researcher provided eight countries representing three sources of culture for the respondents to rank. The respondents added five more countries. Therefore, in total there were 13 countries. Rank number 1 (country most interested) was assigned 13 points, number 2 was assigned 12 points,… number 13 (country least interested) was assigned 1 point, and 0 (not interested at all) was assigned 0 points, respectively. All the assigned weigh scores were then summed up. The highest weigh score was interpreted as the country in which the respondents were most interested. The weigh scores were tabulated in descending order from the most interested to the least.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Textbook analysis

The results of textbooks analysis showed that the unidentified source of culture accounted for the largest proportion (59.2%) of the total while the source culture represented the lowest percentage of cultural content (2.2%). Under the identified cultural content, target culture occupied the largest percentage (34.9%), and the international target culture only represented 3.7% of all cultural sources.

Based on the findings above, more than half of the cultural content was unidentifiable. This indicated that the textbook authors' main purpose was to introduce cultural information in order to enhance students' listening and speaking abilities instead of developing their intercultural communicative skills in an international context. As well, among identified cultural content, the textbooks were dominated by target cultural content, while international target culture and source cultural content accounted for a very small percentage. This inferred the low percentage of source and international target culture in NHCE might not be sufficient for the development of Chinese students' ability to mediate in intercultural settings, as stipulated by the College English Curriculum Requirements (2007).

As well, textbooks analysis showed that of the 19 cultural themes, the top three most frequent themes in NHCE were one theme under little "c" and two themes under Big "C" culture. More specifically, more than half (58.08%) of the total themes included the little "c" theme of "values", followed by the Big "C" theme of "science" (11.00%) and the Big "C" theme of "social norms" (9.19%). Examples of "science" themes were introduction of scientific knowledge or technology (such as how to defending against disasters and new American commuter technology), talking about recent scientific research (such as an Australian scientist's new discovery about the new vaccines and advances in the fight against cancer) and the health knowledge (such as the health relaxation time away from work). Examples of "social norms" were using the appropriate expressions when communicating with people in English-speaking countries (such as the expressions of greetings, farewells, and congratulations) and using certain words within a society or group (such as how to use the certain words to show the suspicions, certainty and requests in English-speaking countries). However, there was an absence of the popular little "c" cultural themes of "Hobbies" and "Gestures/body language" and the Big "C" theme of "Music". Obviously, "values" in the little "c" domain overwhelmingly dominated the cultural content. "Values" included issues such as attitudes to life (for example an American person talking about what is important in life), social prejudice (people's different attitudes towards discrimination based on race and against blue-collar workers), the inequality in society (such as the women, minorities, and the elderly status in current society).

According to the findings above, two noticeable findings found in the textbooks analysis were the predominance of little "c" cultural theme of "Values" and the absence of common little "c" themes. Based on Cunningsworth's (1995) notion of the "hidden curriculum", it can be implied from the predominance of "Values" that the target textbooks were designed to instill moral values to shape the character of students rather than helping develop the students' ICC. Moreover, the deficiency of the common little "c" themes might be one reason why Chinese students have a low competence of intercultural interaction. In fact, little "c" culture plays a more significant role in daily communication across cultural lines than Big "C" culture because students need to have the ability to communicate about their daily way of life in order to be successful in intercultural communication. Accordingly it can be argued that such lack of source cultural information and imbalanced selection in NHCE of cultural themes might not be sufficient to develop non-English major students' ICC and thus might cause difficulties for students when they take part in intercultural communication.

4.2 Students' preferences for cultural content

As for students' preference for the sources of cultural content, it was found that respondents showed an interest in learning culture from different cultural sources. More specifically, the results revealed that the respondents were in favor of learning mostly about their own culture, followed by target and international target culture. With respect to Chinese (source) culture, the results showed that students were interested in learning about "History", "Food", and "Holidays"; for international target culture, the respondents were curious to learn about the cultural themes of "Geography", "Food", and "Holidays"; and for the target culture, the cultural themes of "Science" and "Geography" were favored by the respondents. As well, it was found that there is a discrepancy between students' interest about sources of cultural knowledge and the cultural contents of their English textbook used in English class. More specifically, according to the study's findings, the students were highly interested in source culture. However, it was found there was fairly low percentage of source culture (2.2%) in their English textbooks (Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013 in press).

It can be seen from the results above that the student respondents' preferences for cultural content were diverse. This can indicate that the respondents can,

to a certain extent, acquire ICC due to their positive attitudes towards learning diverse cultures. As well, the order of the respondents' interest (source culture, target culture, and international target culture respectively) seems to be appropriate based on Chlopek (2008)'s intercultural approach in which priority should be given to the students' own cultural background, followed by the cultures that students have direct contact with. The third priority (international target culture) expands the students' knowledge from the first two until all world cultures have been covered. Finally as noted above, the gap between students' cultural interests and the cultural content of their in-class texts may not serve to sufficiently motivate students' to fulfill their needs for cultural learning.

As well, it was found that among 17 cultural themes of Big "C" and little culture, the top five preferred cultural themes were "Geography", "Food", "Holidays", "Science", and "History". More specially, the three most preferred Big "C" themes were "Geography", "Science" and "History", and the two most preferred little "c" themes were "Food" and "Holidays". As well, the results also revealed that the respondents showed a low interest in the little "c" theme of "Body Language". Finally, it was found that there was a gap between students' interest in cultural learning and the cultural contents of their English textbook used in English class. More specifically, the results showed that the top five preferred cultural themes were "Geography", "Food", "Holidays", "Science" and "History in their English classroom. However, information about those cultural themes was virtually absent in their English textbooks.

According to the findings above, the fact that students' top five preferred cultural themes indicated that they had a slightly inclination to preferring Big "C" cultural themes as against little "c" ones. Although both Big "C" and little "c" cultural knowledge contributes to a successful communication in intercultural settings (Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2010), it seems that the knowledge of little "c" culture can prevent misunderstanding and miscommunication among interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds (Lee, 2009). Additionally, respondents' lack of interest in the little "c" theme of "Body Language" may not be helpful for participating in their intercultural communication in the future. This is because firstly more than half of a conversation is communicated in ways other than speaking, and secondly inter-cultural misunderstanding can happen when a nonverbal signal means different things to people from a different

culture (Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2011).The discrepancy between students' preferences for Big "C" and little "c" cultural themes and the actual content of their English textbook used in English class, indicated that students' English textbooks might not be sufficient motivation for fulfilling students' need for cultural learning.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the current research showed that more than half of the cultural content was unidentifiable. Among identified cultural content, the textbooks emphasized target cultural content while international target culture and source cultural content were minimal. Given globalization and opportunities for Chinese students to travel, study, do business and work abroad, EFL textbooks in China should play a greater role in enhancing students' international understanding. It is suggested the textbooks should be designed to include not only target culture but also international target culture and source culture. As well, it was found that among the 19 cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c" culture, the predominant theme was little "c" of "Values", while other common little "c" themes were absent. A possible recommendation is that the textbooks should involve a variety of materials related to little "c" cultural topics such as "Food", "Hobbies", "Holidays "and "Customs". Also, teachers' manuals are an effective supplementary source of information in the classroom and they are indispensable for teaching due to the function of guiding the whole class (Cunningsworth, 1995). Thus, it is recommended that the teachers' books should include extensive cultural information as well as some meaningful advice to teachers on how to teach culture. Additionally, in order to raise students' awareness of the diversity of different world cultures, the sources of the cultural content in the texts should be referenced with footnotes.

With respect to students' preference for cultural learning, the findings showed that respondents favored learning mostly about their own culture, followed by target and international target culture. They had a slightly stronger preference towards Big "C" over little "c" culture. Thus, it is suggested that English courses as well as textbooks should contain a balanced representation of cultural sources and themes. As well, ELT teachers can look at different ways to motivate students to be curious to explore various cultural themes, especially little "c" themes.

Finally, this study found that the textbooks used by the students had minimal little "c" content. As well, students had minimal interest in little "c" themes such as "Body language". Thus, the study may encourage EFL teachers to provide supplementary authentic teaching materials about cultural themes from diverse cultural sources in order to motivate students and expose them to more varied cultures. Moreover, teachers can also use documentaries, video, or film to illustrate appropriate nonverbal communication in both international and target cultures in order to help students identify the meaning of gestures from different cultures. Finally, for learners with advanced language skills, presentations and discussions/debates can be used for cultural knowledge learning.

The findings of this research could pose recommendations for EFL educators and further research as follows:

5.1 The current research investigated *Listening and Speaking 1-4 of New Horizon College English* for Chinese students in non-English major program. While the non-English program has two English courses: listening and speaking course as well as reading and writing course, this study only investigated the former. Thus, the conclusion of the present study regarding sources of culture and themes of culture were limited to only one course. Therefore, in order to get the full picture of the cultural contents of non-English major students' textbooks, *Reading and Writing 1-4 of New Horizon College English* should be examined.

5.2 Due to the limitation of the research, of the many series of College English books compiled by local publishers, only one was investigated. Chinese non-English major students College English programs, such as *21st Century College English*, and *Experiencing English* have not been studied. Thus future studies might analyze those series of College English textbooks. Further studies with greater resources would benefit from a larger sample of students. In this instance, perhaps the research results may be different.

5.3 Given that the current study was based on second year students in the non-English program from one university in China, further research could use a larger sample size of students with different major subjects, such as English major students, to

explore whether students with different majors have different attitudes on cultural learning in their English classroom.

5.4 According to the findings, the reasons why students prefer a particular source of culture over another, and a particular cultural theme over another should be investigated. Thus, further research should also employ interviews as well as questionnaires as instruments to survey the students' actual preferences.

5.5 Given that the current study only focused on students' attitudes towards cultural content in the English class, further research may focus on teachers' perceptions towards ICC, as well as how culture is taught in EFL class.

5.6 As well, further research should compare the cultural content of the myriad of commercial publishers' EFL texts with the Chinese government EFL texts compiled by local authors.

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Appendix A

Cultural Contents and learning Questionnaire

(English Version)

Questionnaire

Non- English Major Students' Attitudes towards Cultural Content and Learning in the English Classroom

<u>Directions</u>

This questionnaire is designed to gather information to help us better understanding how non-English major students prefer to learn in English classroom.

Please answer the following questions about your preferences for learning cultural content. This is not a test, so there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. All responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you very much for your help.

Section 1: personal Information

Major …………………………… …………………………………

Sex ☑ male ☐ female ☐

Section 2: Preferences for cultural content and learning

Instructions: Please **rank** the degree of your interest in learning different aspects of culture of different countries. Please **fill in your rank order** in the spaces provided using the numbers 0, 1, 2,...etc. from greatest interest to least interested . **(The ranking order numbers can't be repeated, with the exception of "0" which can be repeated). "0" means "not interested at all"; "1" means "highly interested".** *For example:*

In English class, I am interested in learning the following **themes** of the following **countries**:												
Themes	**Countries**								Other countries (Please specify) e.g. India, Thailand……			
	China	Egypt	France	Japan	Iran	Brazil	Australia	America	Indian	…	…	…	…
Politics	*2*	*0*	*0*	*4*	*0*	*3*	*6*	*1*	*7*	...	…	…	…

In English class, I am interested in learning the following **themes** of the following **countries**:												
Themes	**Countries**								Other countries (Please specify) e.g. India, Thailand……			
	China	Egypt	France	Japan	Iran	Brazil	Australia	America				
Politics												
Economy												
History												
Geography												
Education												
Science												
Social norms												
Architecture												
Literature/art												
Music/sports												
Food												
Holidays												
Lifestyles												
Customs												
Values												
Hobbies												
Gestures/body language												

Appendix B

Cultural Contents and learning Questionnaire

(Chinese Version)

关于文化学习的文卷调查

本问卷旨在研究中国英语课堂文化内容学习，调查非英语专业学生对于文化学习的态度。

　　本问卷包含两个部分：

　　　　第一部分： 个人信息

　　　　第二部分： 对文化的态度

请仔细阅读各部分的要求， 并认真完成问卷。此问卷只用于研究中国英语课堂文化内容学习,不涉及考试成绩。谢谢您的参与和配合！

第一部分： 个人信息

专业 …………………………… …………………………………

性别　☑　男　　☐　　　女　☐

第二部分： 对文化内容学习的态度

请用阿拉伯数字(0,1,2…) 根据你对英语课堂文化内容学习**兴趣等级的不同依次排列**下列各项。

0= 不感兴趣 (该选项可重复) 1= 第一感兴趣 2= 第二感兴趣 3=第三感兴趣… (1, 2, 3…是排列选项不可重复). *例如:*

在英语课堂上, 我对以下国家的文化内容各个不同方面感兴趣的是:												
文化内容	国家								其他 (请写明), 如 印度，泰国 …			
	中国	埃及	法国	日本	伊朗	巴西	澳大利亚	美国	泰国	…	…	…	…
政治	*1*	*0*	*5*	*4*	*0*	*3*	*6*	*2*	*7*	…	…	…	…

在英语课堂上, 我对以下国家的文化内容各个不同方面感兴趣的是:												
文化内容	国家								其他 (请写明), 如 印度，泰国 …			
	中国	埃及	法国	日本	伊朗	巴西	澳大利亚	美国				
政治												
经济												
历史												
地理												
教育												
科学												
社会礼仪												
建筑												
文学和艺术												
音乐和体育												
饮食												
节日												
生活方式												
习俗												
价值观												
爱好												
肢体语言												

PAPER 1

Cultural Content in EFL Listening and Speaking Textbooks for Chinese University Student

Cultural Content in EFL Listening and Speaking Textbooks for Chinese University Students

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Abstract

The aim of this article was to report the results of a textbooks analysis in an attempt to identify which type of culture and what kind of culture were introduced in Chinese EFL textbooks for the university level. Four teachers' manuals of EFL College English textbooks for Chinese non-English major students were investigated. The analysis revealed that more than half of the cultural content was unidentifiable. Among identified cultural content, the textbooks were dominated by target cultural content while international target culture and source cultural content contained a very small percentage. It was also found out that among the 19 cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c" culture, the predominant theme was little "c" of "values" and the absent themes were common little "c" themes (i.e. "food", "holidays", "hobbies and "body language"). Such lack of source information and imbalanced selection in NHCE of cultural themes might not be sufficient to develop Chinese non-English major students' ICC and thus might cause difficulties to students when they take part in intercultural communication. This study also makes suggestions on how culture can be represented in university level Chinese textbooks to promote students' ICC.

Keywords: English Language Teaching (ELT); Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC); Cultural content; Big "C" culture; little "c" culture

1. Introduction

The new status of English as an international language (EIL) or lingua franca requires scholars, language professionals, and practitioners to reconsider the important role of culture in English language class (Brown, 2000; Byrnes, 2010; Kramsch, 1993). This new role of English, however, requires a more complex approach than when English had the previous status of ESL/EFL. Hamiloğlu and Mendi (2010: 16) suggested that incorporating culture in English language class needs to emphasize "the social functions of a target language and make learners inter-culturally sensitive". The ultimate goal of English language teaching (ELT) then has been shifted from communicative competence, which empowers learners to use English appropriately in terms of linguistics, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics (Council of Europe, 2001 cited in Gu *et al,* 2012), to Intercultural Communicative Competence (hereafter ICC) which refers to "one's awareness on others' cultures as well as his /her own culture" (Hamiloğlu and Mendi 2010: 16). Consequently, the issue arises as to which type of culture and what kind of culture should be taught in the language classroom.

In China, ICC is considered one of the ultimate goals for preparing Chinese students to take part effectively in intercultural communication in the future; therefore the latest College English Curriculum Requirements (2007) stipulates that non-English-major students must possess ICC. However, the study conducted by Xiao and Petraki (2007) revealed that Chinese students' ICC was at a fairly low level and that they encountered many difficulties interacting with students from other cultures. The researchers argued that such difficulties could be mainly attributed by the insufficient intercultural knowledge. Similarly, Wang (2007) found out in her survey that Chinese non-English major students from eight universities had a dissatisfactory level of ICC. There are several factors contributing to students' success in language learning, one of which is textbooks.

Textbooks play an important role in ELT classroom. Teachers use textbooks for planning and giving lessons and students rely on them for linguistic content and models (Cunningsworth, 1995). Moreover, textbooks provide the core material for a course, serving as the basis for language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom (Tomlinson, 1998). Given that language and culture are intertwined, EFL textbooks invariably carry directly or indirectly a set of cultural values referred to in the literature as the "hidden curriculum" (Cunningsworth, 1995; Hinkel, 1999). The 'hidden curriculum', which is often stronger than the official curriculum will, after students are exposed at length to it, affect students' cultural awareness, perceptions and knowledge (Cunningsworth, 1995).

In light of the significant influence of teaching materials on students' cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and linguistic ability, and Chinese students' poor intercultural knowledge, the researcher has a hypothesis that there might be some correlation between them; therefore, the aim of the current study was to examine which type of culture and what kind of culture were introduced in Chinese EFL textbooks for the university level. The hope was to provide valuable insight into current ELT from the standpoint of what cultural content should be imparted via the resource of textbooks with the aim of promoting Chinese students' ICC. It is also expected to offer some advice for cultural teaching and learning in the EFL classroom.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Culture, Language and ELT

Culture is a complex and broad concept to define. According to Hinkel (1999), it refers to areas of inquiry into human societies, groups, systems, behaviors, and activities. Brown (2000: 177) defines culture as "the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period of time"; while Brooks (1975: 20) refers to culture as "everything in human life and the best of everything in human life".

Information, thoughts and feelings are conveyed by language in a language community or culture (Brown, 2000). Therefore, for humans, language is the most important means of communication (Wilkins, 1978; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Fantini (1995) pointed out the symbiotic relationship between language and culture since language affects and reflects culture and vice-versa. Echoing Fantini, Brown (2000: 177) wrote "a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture." In other words, language is regarded as a means by which people communicate to and interact with others, which in turn is responsible for cultural development.

In light of the inseparable relationship between language and culture, more and more scholars and educators have emphasized the significant role of culture in language teaching and learning. For instance, McKay (2002) noted that the integration of cultural components into language teaching can heighten the motivation language class. Nault (2006) called for scholars, language educators and practitioners to reconsider the status quo of cultures and their representation for the development of English as an International Language (EIL). He advised that English educators must be aware of other target culture than only British and American culture. Additionally, ELT specialists should select and design teaching curricular using international source materials.

2.2 Sources of culture

Regarding culture-related teaching materials and textbooks in English classroom, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) provide a novel look at the sources of cultural information. They classified the sources of cultural information into source culture (learner's own culture), target culture (any English-speaking countries where English is spoken as a first language), and international target culture (English-speaking or non-speaking English counties around the world where English is not used as a first language).

The reason for introducing source cultural content in ELT textbooks is to cultivate learners' knowledge of their own culture. Students will have a chance to learn about topics and vocabularies which are related to their native background in English so that they can interact with people from different cultural backgrounds McKay (2000).Target cultural knowledge has long been a main component in the ELT classroom. The rationale for integrating target culture into English classroom lies in firstly that learning a target culture will enhance student

motivation and develop their attitudes toward language learning (McKay, 2002). Secondly the author's consideration of using target culture in the classroom makes it possible for users from different societies to make best use of the same materials in both EFL and ESL contexts. As well, since it is difficult for native English speaking ELT textbook writers to source cultural data other than from their own culture, they should look to the target culture for that information (Alptekin, 1993).

However, due to a paradigm shift from ESL/EFL to EIL, cultures other than the target ones should receive equal attention in ELT textbooks (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). McKay (2000) proposed the three benefits of international target culture in materials: firstly they show the pragmatics when non-native English speakers communicate with the target culture, they should be able to use their own notions of what is appropriate, secondly it shows the way English can be used effectively in the international environment, and finally, for English to truly be the "lingua franca" of today, there must be a choice for non-native English speakers to reflect cultural norms of culture other than native-English-speaking cultures.

2.3 Themes of culture

Culture can be in general divided into two types: Big "C" culture and little "c" culture (Lee 2009; Peterson, 2004). Lee (2009: 78) refers to Big "C" culture as "the culture which represents a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society." For Peterson (2004), the culture relating to grand themes, is classified under Big "C " culture which includes the following themes such as geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, society's norms, legal foundation, core values, history, and cognitive processes.

Regarding little "c" culture, it involves the routine aspects of life and encompasses everything as a total way of life. For Lee (2009: 78) this type of culture is "the invisible and deeper sense of a target culture" including attitudes or beliefs and assumptions. Peterson (2004) defines little "c" culture as the culture focusing on common or minor themes. It includes themes such as opinions, viewpoints, preferences or tastes, gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing styles, food, hobbies, popular music, and popular issues, and certain knowledge (trivia, facts).

Wintergerst and Mcveigh (2010) maintained that students possessing both big "C" and little "c" culture can effectively take part in intercultural settings. While the domain of big "C" culture (e.g. arts, history, geography, education, business, etc.) is for the highly educated, little "c" cultural knowledge is essential for intercultural communication because it affects ways of thinking, behaving and using a language. The socio-cultural values, norms, beliefs and assumptions entailed in small "c" culture assists members of a particular culture to use "appropriate and polite" language within the target society. However, it can also possibly result in, as Lee (2009) put it "pragmatic failure" when attempting to communicate with other cultural groups. Therefore, if EFL learners know about small "c" culture in the target culture, they will better comprehend how those in that culture communicate with each other.

Corresponding with the concepts of big "C" and little "c" culture, many cultural frameworks regarding specific aspects of cultural learning in EFL classroom were proposed in relevant research. Chen (2004), for example, carried out a survey to examine Chinese students' attitudes towards cultural themes in EFL classroom. In his study, Chen proposed a cultural framework on the model conceptualized by Lessard-Clouston (1996). Chen's framework includes seven themes under Big "C" (music, social norms, education, economy, politics, history and geography and nine themes under little "c" (daily routine, lifestyle, holiday, food, gesture, weather, greeting, customs and values). Based on Paige *et al*. (1999)'s model of cultural-specific aspect of culture learning, Lee (2009) designed a set of concrete themes for examination of how culture was taught in Korean EFL textbooks. Lee's framework consisted of 22 themes for Big "C" for example arts, agriculture, education, sports, and politics and 26 themes for little "c" such as freedom, materialism, informality, fairness, and competition. Compared to the previous cultural framework of Chen (2004), Lee (2009)'s framework is more comprehensive and detailed to present the material from intercultural, sociological, ethnographic and sociolinguistic perspectives. However, Lee (2009)'s framework is too tedious which does not apply to the current textbook analysis very well. Having considered the respective merits and weakness of both cultural frameworks above, the researcher used only 19 cultural themes (12 themes for Big "C" and 7 themes for little "c" culture) as the cultural framework of current study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Materials

The materials analyzed in this study were a series of Chinese College English textbooks. With the permission of Education Ministry in China, several series of College English books were compiled by local publishers only for Chinese non-English-major students in College English programs. Examples are *New Horizon College English, 21st Century College English*, and *Experiencing English*. The College English program is taught over two years or four semesters. For the first year, Listening and Speaking 1-2 and Reading and Writing 1-2 are used; and for the second year Listening and Speaking 3-4 and Reading and Writing 3-4 are used. For the current study, eight books (four students' books and four teachers' manuals) of *Listening and Speaking 1-4 (Second Edition) of New Horizon College English* (hereafter NHCE) published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press were selected for the study because, among all the series, they are widely used in Chinese colleges and universities. Also, the latest College English Curriculum Requirements (2007) have given top priority to the students' ability of listening and speaking and ICC.

NHCE contains a total of 40 units. In the students' books, each unit is made up of four components: (1) Focus: showing the main ideas and key points of each unit. (2) Words aids: explaining the meanings of new words. (3) Activities: containing activities for listening and speaking. (4) Exercises: providing questions for listening and speaking activities. In the teacher's manual, each unit consists of five parts: (1) Audio Scripts: providing listening scripts for listening activity. (2) Notes for Teachers: providing teachers further information and

explanation about language points and activities. (3) Culture Notes: introducing cultural information and expressions about a certain situation. (4) Key to answer: providing the answer to exercises for listening and speaking activities. (5) Key for reference: providing extra information and explanation for the answer.

Based on the aforementioned description of the students' books and the teacher's manuals, the students' books of NHCE were used only as a reference while all five components in the teachers' manuals formed the core materials for the analysis. This is because the students' books were not as informative as the teachers.

3.2 Analysis

In this study, the cultural content in NHCE was analyzed from two perspectives. Based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999)'s framework regarding cultural content for English materials and textbooks, the first perspective concentrated on the representation of sources of culture (target, international target, and source culture) in the textbooks. However, there was a slight problem with adapting Cortazzi and Jin (1999)'s framework in the actual analysis because some cultural content in the textbooks referring to Big "C" and little "c" culture had no reference to any specific countries. For this reason, the researcher proposed a new category which was "unidentified sources of culture" to cover all cultural content found in the textbooks. The second perspective is concerned with the two notions of culture i.e. Big "C" and little "c" culture. For this, 19 themes was designed for examining specific aspects of culture under the Big "C" and little "c" culture, which based on Chen (2004) and Lee (2009)'s concepts on the cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c". The 19 themes referring to the Big "C" and little "c" culture are as follow:

1. Big "C" culture (12 themes): Politic, Economy, History, Geography, Literature/Art, Social norms, Education, Architecture, Sports, Music, Movie, and Science.

2. Little "c" culture category (7 themes): Food, Holiday, lifestyles, Customs, Values, Hobbies and Gestures/ body language.

Table 1 delineates the information about numbers of units of analysis on culture-related content in the four sections (Audio scripts, Notes for teachers, Cultural notes and Key for reference).

Table 1: Numbers of units of analysis on culture-related content/total units

Book	Audio Scripts	Note for Teachers	Cultural Notes	Key for Reference
Book 1	38/50	12/30	10/10	N/A
Book 2	38/50	7/40	N/A	N/A
Book 3	56/60	0/30	10/10	20/20
Book 4	48/60	13/30	N/A	10/10
Total	180/220	32/130	20/20	30/30
Grand total	262/400			

Note: N/A= Not presented in the textbooks

In total, the textbooks contained 400 units. These 400 units were analyzed for cultural content in terms of target, international target, and source culture as well as Big "C" and little "c". Some units had no reference to a particular cultural aspect, therefore they were not analyzed. As a result, there were only 262 units of analysis containing certain cultural elements. All 262 units were further categorized as target, international target, source culture as well as unidentified source of culture. They were then subcategorized into Big "C" or little "c" culture.

For distinguishing the themes under Big "C" and little "c" culture", each section of cultural content was coded with the corresponding cultural theme. In this regard, the dictionary (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 6th Edition) was consulted for reference to identify the definitions of cultural themes. To illustrate, the unit of analysis about the history of American slavery was classified as Big "C" under target culture because the history of American slavery belongs to the Big "C" domain and obviously indicated its origin. By contrast, the cultural messages about online course, for instance, was classified as Big "C" under the unidentified sources of culture because it did not connect with any specific country.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Sources of culture

It can be seen from Table 1 that more than half of the units (262 out of 400) contained cultural content. This preliminary analysis was further examined to find out about the sources of culture found in NHCE, which is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of culture-related content in NHCE

| Book	Target culture		International target culture		Source culture		Unidentified sources of culture	
	Big "C"	little "c"	Big "C"	little "c"	Big "C"	little "c"	Big "C"	little "c"
Book 1	14	15	0	0	0	0	13	18
Book 2	8	17	1	3	0	2	2	15
Book 3	20	4	3	1	2	1	16	45
Book 4	13	4	1	1	1	0	9	43
Total	**55**	**40**	**5**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**40**	**121**
	95		10		6		161	
Total percentage	**20.2%**	**14.7%**	**1.85%**	**1.85%**	**1.1%**	**1.1%**	**14.7%**	**44.5%**
	34.9%		3.7%		2.2%		59.2%	

Table 2 shows two main sources of culture i.e. those which were identifiable (target, international target, and source culture) and those unidentifiable. It was found that the unidentified source of culture accounted for the largest proportion (59.2%) of the total while the source culture represented the lowest percentage of cultural content (2.2%). Under the identified cultural content, target culture occupied the largest percentage (34.9%), and the international target culture only represented 3.7% of all cultural sources. Interestingly, Book 1 contained only target cultural content and unidentified sources of culture. In short, the content

of NHCE teachers' manuals was mainly related to target culture and unidentified sources of culture.

4.2 Themes of Culture

The 262 units of analysis were further analyzed for two cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c". As some units of analysis contained more than one theme, the total occurrences were 272. Figure 1 shows the frequency of occurrences of 19 cultural themes found in NHCE. ("geography", "food", "holidays", "science" and "history")

Figure 1: Frequency of cultural themes in NHCE
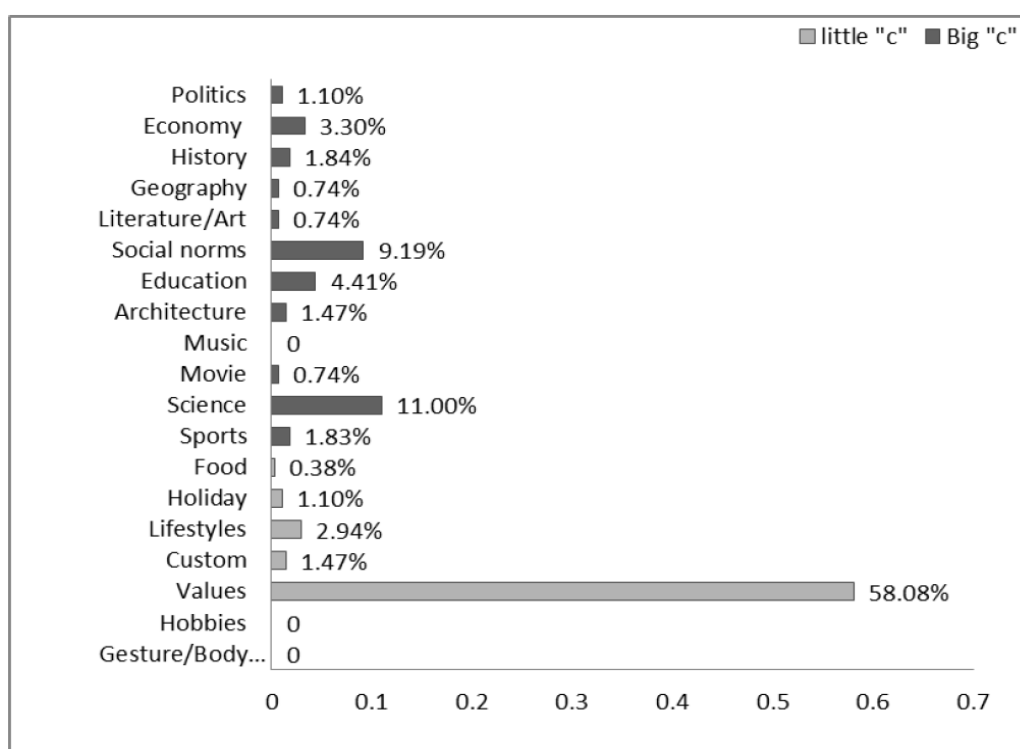
As revealed in Figure 1, of the 19 cultural themes, the top three most frequent themes in NHCE were one theme under little "c" and two themes under Big "C" culture. More specifically, more than half (58.08%) of the total themes was the little "c" theme of "values", followed by the Big "C" theme of "science" (11.00%) and the Big "C" theme of "social norms" (9.19%). Surprisingly, there was the absence of the popular little "c" culture under "hobbies", "gestures/body language" and under the Big "C" theme of "music". Apparently, "values" in the little "c" domain overwhelmingly dominated the cultural content. "Values" included issues such as attitudes to lifestyle (for example an American person talking about what is important in life), and social prejudice (people's differing attitudes towards discrimination based on race and against blue-collar workers).

To conclude, regarding the sources of culture, unidentified sources of culture and target culture were the primary focus in NHCE, while source culture and international target culture

were ignored, although not completely. For types of culture, among the 19 themes, the little "c" culture of "values" dominated other cultural themes.

The reason that almost 60% of cultural content was unidentifiable is probably because the textbook authors' main purpose was to introduce cultural information in order to enhance students' listening and speaking abilities rather than developing their intercultural skills in an international context. However, more than half of the total units of analysis were related to the target culture. This finding is in agreement with the investigation conducted by Liu and Laohawiriyanon (2012) who examined seven studies analyzing 61 EFL textbooks used in China (Wu, 2010; Jiang, 2010; Xiao, 2010; Yuen, 2011), Japan (Matsuda, 2002; Yamanaka, 2006) and Korean (Lee, 2009). It was found that all the 61 analyzed EFL textbooks heavily emphasized the cultures of English-speaking countries or the target culture.

It can be argued from the findings above that the low percentage of source and international target culture in NHCE might not be sufficient for the development of Chinese students' ability to mediate in intercultural settings, as stipulated by College English Curriculum Requirements (2007). For example, they learn the English names of Western festivals and the way of celebrating them, but they are not taught to talk about their own festivals in English. Thus, the students are equipped with cultural knowledge of mainly English-speaking countries.

According to the findings above, two striking findings are the predominance of little "c" cultural theme of "values" and the absence of common little "c" themes (i.e. "food", "holidays", "hobbies and "body language"). Based on Cunningsworth's (1995) notion of the "hidden curriculum", it can be implied from the predominance of "values" that NHCE was designed to instill moral values to shape the character of students rather than helping develop the students' ICC. Although there was little information regarding the origin of the examples of "values", it is worth mentioning that those topics of values reflected in the textbooks were often closely related to Chinese Confucian ethics and teaching. For example, the section on giving and sacrifice and putting others' needs before one's own reflected Confucianism which believes that one should give up his or her life, if necessary, for the moral values of *ren* (referring to a duty of a humaneness for other people) and *yi* (referring to the moral righteousness to do good thing).

The deficiency of the other common little "c" themes might be one reason why Chinese students have a low competence of intercultural interaction. In fact, little "c" culture plays a more significant role in daily communication across cultural lines than Big "C" culture because students need to have the ability to communicate about their daily way of life in order to be successful in intercultural communication (Wintergerst & Mcveigh, 2010).

5. Conclusion

This present study evaluated 4 teachers' manuals of EFL College English textbooks for Chinese non-English major students to investigate which culture and what kind of culture were

presented in Chinese EFL College English textbooks. The analysis revealed that more than half of the cultural content was unidentifiable. Among identified cultural content, the textbooks were dominated by target cultural content while international target culture and source cultural content contained a very small percentage. It was also found out that among the 19 cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c" culture, the predominant theme was little "c" of "values" and the absent themes were common little "c" themes (i.e. "food", "holidays", "hobbies and "body language"). Such lack of source information and imbalanced selection in NHCE of cultural themes might not be sufficient to develop non-English major students' ICC and thus might cause difficulties to students when they take part in intercultural communication.

6. Pedagogical Implications

On the basis of the research findings, the study suggests that changes to NHCE textbooks are required if ICC is the ultimate goal of ELT. In light of globalization and opportunities for Chinese students to travel, study, do business and work abroad, EFL textbooks in China should pay more attention to enhancing students' international understanding. Therefore the materials should be designed to include not only target culture but also international target culture as well as source culture. Furthermore, in light of the imbalanced selection of cultural themes especially the little "c", it is suggested that the textbooks should involve a variety of materials related to little "c" cultural topics such as "food", "hobbies", "holidays "and "customs".

Besides, as maintained by Cunningsworth (1995), teacher's manuals are an effective supplementary source of information in classroom and they are indispensable for teaching due to the function of guiding the whole class. However, most of the notes in NHCE teachers' books only provide tips on how to carry out classroom activities or explain language points while cultural information is rarely mentioned. In light of this, it is advised that the teachers' books should include extensive cultural information as well as some meaningful advice to teachers on how to teach culture. Additionally, to raise students' awareness of the diversity of different world cultures, there should be a reference to the source of culture.

Finally, student's cultural knowledge and awareness can be developed in other ways than just through exposure to NHCE texts. For example, there could be in-class activities (e.g. video, dialogue, drama games, dance, songs, films and role plays), and out-of-class activities such as a direct contact to the target language society (Altay, 2005). These activities can motivate students to learn about various cultures in different countries and result in more effective ICC.

Acknowledgement

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PAPER 2

**Students' Attitudes towards Cultural Learning in the English Classroom:
A Case Study of Non-English Major Students in a Chinese University**

Students' Attitudes towards Cultural Learning in the English Classroom:

A Case Study of Non-English Major Students in a Chinese University

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to investigate Chinese non-English major university students' interest in learning about Big "C" and little "c" cultural themes of different countries. A questionnaire was randomly distributed to 69 students in a university in China. Research findings revealed that the respondents were in favor of learning mostly about their own culture, followed by target and international target culture. Regarding cultural themes, they seemed to show a slightly stronger preference towards Big "C" over little "c" culture. With respect to Chinese (source) culture, students were interested in learning about "History", "Food", and "Holidays";   for international target culture (i.e. the cultures of France, Egypt, Japan, Brazil, and Iran), the respondents were curious to learn about the cultural themes of "Geography", "Food", and "Holidays"; and for the target culture (i.e. America and Australia), the cultural themes of Science" and "Geography" were favored by the respondents. Pedagogical implications of training learners to improve their ICC are offered.

Keywords: Big "C" culture; little "c" culture; sources of culture; Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

1. Introduction

It is trite to say that language and culture are closely linked and culture plays a key role in English Language teaching (ELT). With the advent of English as an international language (EIL), intercultural language learning has become central to modern language education, thus pressing English language teachers to prepare their students for intercultural communication in an increasingly multicultural world. Conceived by the awareness of the inseparability of language and culture, Intercultural Commutative Competence (ICC), the ability to function effectively in intercultural settings, has been widely recognized as the ultimate goal of ELT (Brown, 2000; Byrnes, 2010; Kramsch, 1993; Byram, 1997). Paige *et al*. (1999) pointed out language and cultural achievements are influenced by many variables such as learners' attitudes, teacher, and learning settings. The significant role of attitude in second language learning is resonated in many studies (Dörnyei, 1994, 2001; Ellis, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Savignon, 1983) in that ESL/EFL language learners are required to have positive attitudes in order to successful in language learning. Moreover, it is important for teachers to know students' attitudes to learning about culture in order to design the ELT curriculum effectively Chlopek (2008).

Taking together the importance of cultural knowledge and attitudes in language learning, the researcher attempted to carry out a survey to identify students' preference of learning both Big "C" and little "c" culture, referred to as cultural themes, from different countries, known as cultural sources. It is expected that the research findings would provide valuable insights into current ELT from the standpoint of what cultural content should be imparted in order to promote Chinese students' language and culture learning as well as ICC.

2. Literature review

2.1 Culture, Language and ELT

To define culture is a challenging task. Brown (2000: 177) defines culture as "the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools that characterize a given group of people in a given period of time". Information, thoughts and feelings are conveyed by language in a language community or culture (Brown, 2000). Fantini (1995) pointed out the interdependent relationship between language and culture since language affects and reflects culture and vice-versa. Echoing Fantini, Brown stated that language and culture are closely connected and inseparable. Language is regarded as a means by which people communicate and interact with others, which in turn is responsible for cultural development.

Due to the inseparable relationship between language and culture, there has been an increase in the number of language educators who emphasize the significant role of culture in the ELT classroom. For instance, McKay (2002) noted that the integration of cultural components into language teaching can increase motivation in a language class. Nault (2006) invited scholars, language educators and practitioners to reconsider the existing condition of cultures and their representation for the development of EIL. He pointed out that English educators should also pay attention to other target cultures besides British and American.

Additionally, ELT specialists should select and design the curriculum using international source materials.

2.2 Sources of culture

As regards culture-related teaching material and textbooks in English classroom, Cortazzi and Jin (1999) offered a new look at the sources of cultural information. They classify the sources of cultural information into source culture (learner's own culture), target culture (any English-speaking countries where English is spoken as a first language), and international target culture (English-speaking or non-speaking English countries around the world where English is not used as a first language).

The reason for introducing source cultural content in ELT textbooks is to cultivate learners' knowledge of their own culture. Students can learn about topics and vocabularies which are related to their native background in English so that they can interact with people from different cultural backgrounds (McKay, 2000).

Target culture knowledge has long been a main component in the ELT classroom because it enhances student motivation toward learning languages (McKay, 2002). The author's consideration of using target culture in the classroom makes it possible for users from different societies to make optimal use of the same materials in both EFL and ESL contexts. Also, since it is difficult for native English speaking ELT textbook writers to source cultural data other than from their own culture, they should look to the target culture for that information (Alptekin, 1993).

However, due to the current shift from ESL/EFL to EIL, cultures other than the target ones should receive equal attention in ELT textbooks (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). McKay (2000) stated that there are three benefits of using international target culture in teaching materials. Firstly, it would allow non-native speakers to use sense of what is appropriate in communicating inter-personally. Secondly, it could demonstrate how non-native speakers can effectively use English for international communication. Finally, for English to truly be the "lingua franca" of today there must be a choice for non-native English speakers to reflect cultural norms of culture different from those of countries in which English is the native language.

2.3 Themes of culture

Culture can be generally divided into two types: Big "C" culture and little "c" culture (Lee 2009; Peterson, 2004). Lee (2009: 78) refers to Big "C" culture as "the culture which represents a set of facts and statistics relating to the arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society." For Peterson (2004), the culture relating to grand themes, is classified under Big "C " culture which includes the following themes such as geography, architecture, classical music, literature, political issues, society's norms, legal foundation, core values, history, and cognitive processes.

Regarding little "c" culture, it involves the routine aspects of life together with attitudes and beliefs. Peterson (2004) defines little "c" culture as the culture focusing on common or minor themes. It includes themes such as opinions, viewpoints, preferences or tastes, gestures, body posture, use of space, clothing styles, food, hobbies, popular music, and popular issues, and certain knowledge (trivia, facts).

Wintergerst and McVeigh (2010) maintained that students possessing both Big "C" and little "c" culture can effectively take part in intercultural settings. While the domain of capital "C" culture (e.g. arts, history, geography, education, business, etc.) is for the highly educated, little "c" cultural knowledge is essential for intercultural communication because it affects ways of thinking, behaving and the use of a language. The socio-cultural values and norms in little "c" culture help members of a particular culture to use well-mannered language within the target society. However, it can also possibly result in, as Lee (2009) put it, "pragmatic failure" when attempting to communicate with other cultural groups. Therefore, if EFL learners know about little "c" culture in the target culture, they will understand better how those in that culture communicate with each other.

Researchers have incorporated the concepts of Big "C" and little "c" in their studies to investigate students' attitudes towards cultural learning in EFL classroom. Chen (2004), for example, examined Chinese students' attitudes towards cultural themes in EFL classroom. In his study, Chen proposed a cultural framework based on the model conceptualized by Lessard-Clouston (1996). Chen's framework includes seven themes under Big "C" (music, social norms, education, economy, politics, history and geography) and nine themes under little "c" (daily routine, lifestyle, holiday, food, gesture, weather, greeting, customs and values). Based on Paige *et al.* (1999)'s model of cultural-specific aspect of culture learning, Lee (2009) designed a set of concrete themes for examination of how culture was taught in Korean EFL textbooks. Lee's framework consisted of 22 themes for Big "C" for example arts, agriculture, education, sports, and politics and 26 themes for little "c" such as freedom, materialism, informality, fairness, and competition. Compared to the previous cultural framework of Chen (2004), Lee (2009)'s framework is more comprehensive and detailed to present the material from the intercultural, sociological, ethnographic and sociolinguistic perspectives. However, Lee's framework is too tedious and does not apply to the current investigation very well. Having considered the respective merits and weaknesses of both cultural frameworks above, the researcher used only 17 cultural themes (10 themes for Big "C" and 7 themes for little "c" culture) as the cultural framework of the current study.

2.4 Attitudes and language and cultural learning

A student's attitude has frequently been reported to be an essential component of second language learning pedagogy (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993). Gardner and Lambert (1972), Ellis (1985) and Dörnyei (1994, 2001) hold that attitude is one of the essential factors shaping the rate, proficiency, and accomplishment of L2 learning. Attitude, being negative and positive, is believed to have a strong impact on students' success in language learning. Furthermore, learners with a positive attitude towards the target culture and its

people can learn the target language better than those who do not have such positive attitude (Chamber, 1999; Gardner, 1985).

There is a close relationship between students' attitude and language as well as culture learning. Paige *et al* (1999) noted that learners' attitudes are believed to be an influential factor on their language and culture learning process. Byram (1997: 34) in his discussion of attitudes towards acquiring cultural knowledge stated that learners' attitude is one important element in ICC and it is regarded as pre-condition for successful interaction. He further explained that attitude means "the attitude of curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment with respect to others' meanings, beliefs and behaviors".

Recent research conducted in this area has shed some light on students' attitude towards language and culture learning in EFL classroom. For instance, Sárdi (2002) surveyed Hungarian university students' attitudes towards specific cultural topics (aesthetic sense, sociological sense, pragmatic sense) of three contexts (target culture context, cross-cultural context, and source culture context) in their EFL courses. It was found firstly that the students were more interested in learning English to improve their career prospects. Secondly, they generally expected a high level of cultural content in their English language classroom. Finally, they wanted more exposure to cross cultural issues (e.g. knowing lives of people of different communities). In 2010, Jiang carried out a survey to investigate the Chinese students' opinion as to which countries' culture they preferred to learn in their English classroom. A relatively low percentage of students expressed an interest in learning culture i.e. 32% of them were interested in British cultures, 17.5% in American culture and 14% in Chinese culture. It could be inferred from the low percentage of the students who showed interest in learning about the cultures of India, France, Japan, and Egypt that the Chinese respondents were not highly interested in international culture.

In relation to students' attitudes towards sources and types of culture, Xiao (2010) carried out a survey on the Chinese English-major students and found that they wanted to learn both target and source culture, but did not value international culture as an important element in their EFL class. The study also revealed that the students preferred to learn Big "C" culture rather than little "c" culture. The Big "C" topics of their interest were literature & arts, economy, politics and history.

In summary, the review above demonstrated, despite the awareness of the important role of culture, that EFL learners' interest in and perception of learning culture was varied and thus inconclusive. Additional research is needed to explore students' interest in learning about sources and types of culture because the findings regarding students' preferences for learning about specific cultural themes in sources of culture have particular implications for improving materials, teaching methods, and designing the ELT curriculum to foster students' ICC.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Questionnaire respondents

The population of the survey was 881 second year students from five departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, Yunnan Normal University: Computer Science (N=120), Management Science (N=167), Horticulture (N=136), Foreign Language (N=288) and Engineering (N=170). Out of five departments, three departments classified as Non-English major subjects were randomly chosen i.e. Computer Science (n=28), Management Science (n=26), and Horticulture (n=26). Only 80 students were randomly selected from these departments. Their ages ranged from 16-18 with a similar pre-university English education background. In other words, they had learnt English for six years starting from the first year of their junior middle school, before entering university. At the university, they were required to study the same compulsory English courses over two years. The textbooks they used were a series of *New Horizon College English 1-4, Second Edition*[1].   For the first year, English Listening and Speaking 1-2 and Reading and Writing 1-2 are taught; and for the second year English, Listening and Speaking 3-4 and Reading and Writing 3-4 are taught. Each course is taught two hours a week. The questionnaire was distributed to the students when they started their fourth semester, meaning that they were studying Reading and Writing 3-4, and Listening and Speaking 3-4.

3.2 Questionnaire construction

The main purpose of the current study was to survey Chinese non-English major students' attitudes towards cultural learning in the English classroom. The questionnaire was composed of two parts. The first part concerned the respondents' background information such as gender and major subject area. The second part required the respondents to rank 17 cultural themes, adapted from Chen's (2004) and Lee (2009)'s concepts of cultural themes under Big "C" and little "c", of eight different countries that they preferred to learn in English class. The ranks ranged from 1 (highly interested) to 8 (the least interested). Also, the respondents could put 0 if they were not interested in any cultural themes under a certain country. Moreover, they could put 9 or 10 or 11 if they were interested in learning the cultural themes of countries other than selected by the researcher. Blank spaces were given in the list so that they could add the countries of their own choice. The eight countries were selected based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999)'s idea regarding target, international target, and source culture. For target culture, only Australia and America represented the countries in which English is used as the mother tongue, while Egypt, France, Japan, Iran, and Brazil were chosen to represent international target cultures. In the case of Chinese students, Chinese culture is the "source culture".

To ensure the content validity, the questionnaire items were constructed in English and reviewed by three experts in the field. Taken into consideration the expert's feedback, the questionnaire was then modified in order to make the format both respondent and researcher-friendly. Secondly, given that the respondents were Chinese students, the

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[1] According to Liu & Laohawiriyanon (in press 2013), the textbooks were dominated by target cultural content while there was a small percentage of international target culture and source culture. Also, the predominant cultural theme was the little "c" theme of "values" while there was low coverage of common cultural themes (i.e. "food", "holidays", "geography" and "history").

researcher also translated the questionnaire into Chinese and had it checked by three Chinese English teachers to assure translation validity.

The questionnaire was then piloted with fifteen second year Chinese non-English major students. In this pilot process, when students were required to rank each cultural theme in eight different countries according to their preference, some of pilot respondents did not understand the ranking order process because they were not sure whether they could repeat ranking numbers. Based on this feedback, the instructions in final version was modified by clearly stating that "0" (not at all interested) could be repeated, but rankings numbers (e.g. 1, 2, 3…) could not be repeated and an example of how to respond to the questionnaire was provided.

The questionnaire was administrated at the beginning of their English class time and took no more than 25 minutes to complete. Eighty students responded to the questionnaire, but only 69 questionnaires (86.25%) were valid.

3.3 Data analysis

For data analysis, weigh scores were used to calculate the ranks in the following manner. In the questionnaire, the researcher provided eight countries representing three sources of culture for the respondents to rank. The respondents added five more countries. Therefore, in total there were 13 countries. Rank number 1 (country most interested) was assigned 13 points, number 2 was assigned 12 points,… number 13 (country least interested) was assigned 1 point and 0 (not interested at all) was assigned 0 point, respectively.   All the assigned weigh scores were then summed up. The highest weigh score was interpreted as the country in which the respondents were most interested. The weigh scores were tabulated in descending order from the most interested to the least (see Appendix 1).

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Students' preference for sources of culture

Table 1 demonstrates the rank of students' preference for learning about the cultures of different countries in the English classroom. In the survey questionnaire, the researcher provided the name of eight countries representing three sources of culture (target, international and source culture) and invited the respondents to add the name of their preferred countries. As a result, five more countries were ranked (U.K., Korea, Burma, Afghanistan, and Pakistan respectively). However, the frequency of those ranked countries was quite low. Therefore, the researcher put those five countries together under a new category "others". This is the reason why the weigh scores of "others" cannot be ranked. (See Appendix 1 for more details).

Table 1: Rank of students' preference for sources of culture in English classroom

Countries	Target Culture	International target culture	Source culture	Weigh scores	Rank
China			✔	*12772*	*1*
America	✔			*10826*	*2*
France		✔		*9792*	*3*
Australia	✔			*8569*	*4*
Egypt		✔		*7938*	*5*
Japan		✔		7729	6
Brazil		✔		7029	7
Iran		✔		5658	8
Others				414	N/A

According to the data in Table 1, it can be seen that the respondents demonstrated their interest in diverse cultural sources. To be more specific, of the top five countries receiving the high degree of interest, it is apparent that the Chinese students showed the highest degree of interest in their native culture. America and Australia, the two countries where English is the mother tongue, were ranked second and fourth. France and Egypt, the two countries where English is used as an international language were third and fifth. In spite of the students' interest in diverse cultural sources, caution should be taken before concluding that the students would function effectively in intercultural interaction. This is because they lacked interest in essential cultural themes of those countries, as shown in Table 2 below.

4.2 Students' preference for themes of culture

Table 2 illustrates the rank, ranging from 1-17 according to the number of all cultural themes, and weigh scores of students' preference for cultural themes in their English classroom. It also identifies whether the ranked cultural themes were Big "C" or little "c" culture.

Table 2: Rank of students' preference for cultural themes in English classroom

Themes	Big C	Little c	Weigh scores	Rank
Geography	✔		*4485*	*1*
Food		✔	*4345*	*2*
Holidays		✔	*4336*	*3*
Science	✔		*4329*	*4*
History	✔		*4295*	*5*
Social norms	✔		4254	6
Architecture	✔		4249	7
Economy	✔		4247	8
Lifestyles		✔	4211	9
Customs		✔	4193	10
Education	✔		4155	11
Values		✔	4122	12
Literature/Arts	✔		4069	13
Body language		✔	3908	14
Politics	✔		3866	15
Hobbies		✔	3844	16
Music/Sports	✔		3819	17

Overall, it can be seen from Table 2 that the respondents preferred to learn Big "C" culture to little "c" (10 Big "C" and 7 little "c" themes). This is also apparent when considering only the top five preferred cultural themes (Geography, Food, Holidays, Science, and History). The three most preferred Big "C" themes were "Geography", "Science" and "History", and the two most preferred little "c" themes were "Food" and "Holidays" This suggests that respondents seemed to have a slight inclination to learning about Big "C" cultural themes.

A further analysis was made in order to provide a clearer picture as to which highly preferred cultural themes fell under which highly preferred sources of culture. Table 3 revealed the results of mapping the ranking for preferred cultural themes with their cultural sources.

Table 3: Top five preferred cultural themes and sources

Themes	Target culture	International target culture	Source culture
*Geography**	*5*	*1*	7
*Food***	13	*3*	*2*
*Holidays***	8	*4*	*3*
*Science**	*2*	8	9
*History**	11	6	*1*
Social norms	15	5	8
Architecture	14	1	12
Economy	4	11	4
Lifestyles	6	9	10
Customs	12	7	6
Education	1	12	17
Values	3	13	16
Literature/art	16	10	5
Body language	9	14	15
Politics	7	17	11
Hobbies	10	16	13
Music/sports	17	15	14

*Note: * refers to Big "C" cultural theme and ** refers to little "c" cultural theme*

Table 3 revealed a more precise and interesting picture about the respondents' interest in culture learning in that their highest interest was learning about their native culture. Three cultural themes in order of preference were "History", "Food", and "Holidays". For international target culture, (i.e. the cultures of France, Egypt, Japan, Brazil, and Iran) the respondents preferred to learn about "Geography", "Food", and "Holidays". Interestingly enough, two little "c" themes ("Food" and "Holidays") were the two common preferred themes of both source and international target culture, but not the target culture. The respondents were curious about "Science" and "Geography" in the target culture (i.e. America and Australia).

Drawing upon the results shown in Tables 1-3, it can be concluded that the respondents preferred to learn about their own culture, followed by target and international target cultures. For cultural themes, they seemed to show a slightly higher interest in Big "C" than in little "c" culture. Among the top five preferred cultural themes, there were three common themes i.e. "Food", "Holidays", and "Geography".

According to the findings above, the fact that there was a distribution of interest in learning culture from difference cultural sources, although unequal, may indicate that the respondents can, to a certain extent, acquire ICC due to their positive attitudes towards

learning diverse cultures. This view can be supported by Byram (1997: 35) who maintained in his discussion of attitudes towards cultural learning that "…the skills of discovery and interaction are less difficult to operate, less likely to involve psychological stress… if the person involved has attitudes of openness and curiosity". Moreover, the order of the respondents' interest (source culture, target culture, and internal target culture respectively) seems to be appropriate based on Chlopek (2008)'s intercultural approach. According to the approach, priority should be given to the students' own cultural background, followed by the cultures that students have direct contact with. The third priority expands from the first two until all world cultures have been covered.

However, when considering the types of knowledge the students in this study preferred to learn in the EFL classroom, it cannot be assumed that they would be able to communicate successfully in intercultural communities. It was found that the student respondents were inclined to preferred Big "C" cultural themes as against little "c" ones. This finding is in agreement with the study by Xiao (2010) who found in her study that the English major students had a stronger preference towards Big "C" culture than little "c" culture. Although both Big "C" and little "c" cultural knowledge contributes to a successful communication in intercultural settings (Wintergerst & McVeigh, 2010), it seems that the knowledge of little "c" culture can prevent misunderstanding and miscommunication among interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds (Lee, 2009). Moreover, the respondents in the current study showed a low interest in the little "c" theme of "Body Language". Reasoned by Wintergerst & McVeigh (2010), non-verbal communication such as body language, plays an important role of in inter-cultural communication because more than half of a conversation is communicated in ways other than by speaking. Since non-verbal language is a little "c" theme, the students' preference for Big "C" knowledge may inhibit their intercultural communicative ability. This can also be supported by Chastain (1976: 388) that the Big "C" culture "may not contribute significantly to the students' ability to function linguistically and socially in the contemporary culture or to their intercultural understanding."

Another interesting finding is that there is a mismatch between students' interest in cultural learning and the cultural contents of their English textbook used in English class. More specifically, according to the findings above that the students were highly interested in source culture. However, it was found there was fairly low percentage of source culture (2.2%) in their English textbooks (Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013 in press). Moreover, the results showed that the top five preferred cultural themes were "Geography", "Food", "Holidays", "Science" and "History in their English classroom. However, information about those cultural themes was virtually absent in their English textbooks (Liu & Laohawiriyanon, 2013 in press). It can be argued that such treatment of cultural contents in English textbooks might not be sufficient motivation for fulfilling students' need for cultural learning.

5. Summary and Implications

This present study investigated the interest of Chinese non-English major students towards cultural learning in their English classroom. The findings revealed that the respondents were

in favor of learning mostly about their own culture, followed by target and international target culture. Regarding cultural themes, they seemed to have a slightly stronger preference towards Big "C" over little "c" culture. With respect to Chinese (source) culture, students were interested in learning about "History", "Food", and "Holidays"; for international target culture (i.e. the cultures of France, Egypt, Japan, Brazil, and Iran), the respondents were curious to learn about the cultural themes of "Geography", "Food", and "Holidays"; and for the target culture (i.e. America and Australia), the cultural themes of Science" and "Geography" were favored by the respondents.

On the basis of the research findings, some teaching implications are evident, mainly for mono-cultural classes. Firstly, in order to promote Chinese students' ICC, especially for those who do not take English as their major subject, English courses as well as textbooks should contain a balanced representation of cultural sources and themes. As well, ELT teachers can look at different ways to motivate students to be curious to explore various cultural themes especially little "c" themes. Studies conclude learning little "c" cultural themes greatly contribute to cultural learning and ICC. However, this study found that the textbooks used by the students had minimal little "c" content. As well, students had minimal interest in little "c" themes such as "Body language". Therefore, the study suggests that EFL teachers should provide supplementary authentic teaching materials about cultural themes from diverse cultural sources in order to motivate students and expose them to more varied cultures. They can also use documentaries, video, or film to illustrate appropriate nonverbal communication in both international and target cultures in order to help students identify the meaning of gestures from different cultures. For students with advanced language skills, presentations and discussions/debates can be used for cultural knowledge learning. For example, students can discuss the similarities and differences between cultures. Finally, role-plays are another activity which can be used for skills and attitudes training to motivate students and to strengthen cultural knowledge learning.

6. Suggestions for further research

Some of the issues remaining to be investigated include the following. First, further research needs to be drawn from a larger sample size. Second, reasons why students prefer a particular source of culture over another, and a particular cultural theme over another should be investigated. Finally, teachers' perception towards ICC, as well as how to teach culture need further research.

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Appendix 1

| Themes | China | U.S. | France | Australia | Egypt | Japan | Brazil | Iran | Other countries | | | | | Total | Rank |
									U.K.	Korea	Burma	Afghanistan	Pakistan		
Geography	788.00	645.00	535.00	583.00	559.00	468.00	489.00	397.00	11.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	4485.00	1
Food	829.00	601.00	668.00	466.00	380.00	557.00	431.00	383.00	9.00	10.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	4345.00	2
Holidays	802.00	593.00	576.00	518.00	530.00	473.00	456.00	361.00	11.00	5.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	4336.00	3
Science	742.00	744.00	551.00	537.00	418.00	567.00	403.00	367.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4329.00	4
History	829.00	608.00	561.00	475.00	618.00	452.00	416.00	305.00	12.00	9.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	4295.00	5
Social norms	775.00	581.00	666.00	477.00	501.00	504.00	372.00	346.00	12.00	9.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	4254.00	6
Architecture	718.00	591.00	654.00	471.00	611.00	444.00	421.00	318.00	10.00	0.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	4249.00	7
Economy	799.00	729.00	582.00	504.00	407.00	521.00	412.00	262.00	9.00	9.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	4247.00	8
Lifestyles	738.00	665.00	576.00	523.00	426.00	524.00	410.00	321.00	12.00	5.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	4211.00	9
Customs	789.00	567.00	535.00	507.00	532.00	470.00	412.00	348.00	12.00	10.00	11.00	0.00	0.00	4193.00	10
Education	619.00	761.00	584.00	570.00	356.00	474.00	415.00	353.00	11.00	0.00	12.00	0.00	0.00	4155.00	11
Values	689.00	713.00	596.00	525.00	418.00	483.00	375.00	307.00	11.00	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4122.00	12
Literature/art	796.00	565.00	575.00	475.00	555.00	389.00	393.00	302.00	12.00	7.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4069.00	13
Body language	693.00	624.00	521.00	481.00	459.00	367.00	397.00	366.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3908.00	14
Politics	734.00	665.00	527.00	506.00	362.00	388.00	352.00	287.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	12.00	11.00	3866.00	15
Hobbies	717.00	617.00	537.00	481.00	438.00	372.00	378.00	284.00	12.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3844.00	16
Music/sports	715.00	557.00	548.00	470.00	368.00	276.00	497.00	351.00	11.00	13.00	13.00	0.00	0.00	3819.00	17
Total	12,772.00	10,826.00	9,792.00	8,569.00	7,938.00	7,729.00	7,029.00	5,658.00	166.00	90.00	135.00	12.00	11.00		
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				414.00			

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