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# Introduction

The conference on *Communication & Culture in the Global Economy*, held by Chaoyang University's Department of Applied Foreign Language, on March 22, 1999, was a resounding success. Over three hundred people were in attendance, and 14 research papers were presented. Professor Wu Jin (former Minister of Education) and Dr. Wu Chung-Lih (Vice Chairman, Council for Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan), both pointed out the central importance of communication and culture to Taiwan's continued success in the next century. This book is the record of the papers presented that day.

It is our hope that this is only the first of a series of meetings that will lead to a better understanding of the practical side of foreign language teaching, learning, and use in Taiwan. Every day, we see the importance of foreign languages in Taiwan, especially English, which has become the default international business language. With this in mind, our conference included reference to the global economy, with an emphasis on the communication needed to compete in such an economy.

Finally, culture cannot be separated from these two. The international nature of business today brings together people who may speak English, but still cannot communicate effectively due to cultural differences. The importance of these three topics is widely recognized and Taiwan schools have covered such skills in numerous departments, such as international trade, management, English, foreign languages, etc. Each of these departments, however, has its own specialization that never quite succeeds at combining *communication*, *culture*, and *business* into one curriculum. The newly established Applied Foreign Language department appears to be perfectly located to combine these areas. To center on effective communication, cultural understanding, and a practical business orientation first requires an understanding of what exactly these issues involve. The C&C conference series is directed at building such an understanding.

This resulting book has a wide selection of papers with practicality as the central theme. Most striking is the international variety of the researchers, German, American, Australian, Chinese, and Taiwanese, yet the central theme is highly relevant to Taiwan's new AFL department. There is a general understanding of the importance of using languages and cultural understanding for success in the twenty-first century.

Clyde Warden



# Section 1: Culture

Certainly there are very few who would dispute the centrality of culture when learning a foreign language. It is almost meaningless to master a language but know nothing of the culture, as one would simply say all the right words, but with all the wrong meanings. Since the AFL department is based on application of language, this department should involve a high level of actual contact with people, and communications, from other cultures, thus increasing the importance of cultural training. Unlike the detached analysis of literature, or the academic study of the details of linguistics, AFL students will go on to actually interface between cultures.

Chris Merkelbach starts us out on this trail, with a look at what culture actually is and how it can be taught. He emphasizes that culture is more than the language and still a vital part of effective communication. Certainly this is true for any cross-culture communication, but my personal experience, as a Westerner in Asia, tells me that it is especially important when dealing with the Asian/Western communication flows, as Merkelbach points out in an all too familiar example (where “Yes” does not mean “Yes”).

Beate Luo continues this strand with an exploration of non-verbal communication, or body language. Kinesics is introduced and numerous examples lead to some comic relief, as we have all experienced misunderstandings due to gestures accompanying a communication. This subject is no laughing matter, however, as body language can be assumed to be understood, thus giving a false sense of security in a cross-cultural meeting. In a business situation, this could be disastrous, as the parties each go on to do what they thought was communicated, even though the intended message was actually lost.

Jeffrey Denton closes out this section with a look at equality in a multicultural workplace. The very concept of equality is so variable through time, culture, and geographic location, that even within the same country, we can find differing definitions. The experiences of numerous Japanese firms in the United States have shown that equality is very differently understood by these two cultures. But no matter how slippery the definition, Denton is absolutely on target in labeling this a management issue, as in the global economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is management's responsibility to overcome equality questions. Denton introduces numerous sources of inequality and how such problems can be overcome, in order to achieve higher levels of productivity as well as employee satisfaction.



# **Culture as a Part of Foreign Language Instruction - Problems and Possibilities**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Culture instruction is considered to be an integral part of foreign language instruction and is influenced by the definition of culture. Recently, however, the term culture has been given a new definition based on research done in cross-cultural psychology. This definition calls for a more intensive education in cross-cultural competence, which has been largely neglected in culture instruction. This article describes the development of the culture definition as has been of relevance in culture instruction and shows ways of an education in cross-cultural competence for teaching modern culture.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Basically the acquisition of a foreign language aims at the establishment of contact with other cultures and their members. Misunderstanding, of course, will arise owing to the shaping of different cultures at any cross-cultural contact (Heyd, 1997, p. 34)

As a result of this misunderstanding/misinterpretation, stereotypes and resentments towards the other culture may emerge, which contradict a successful communication--the implicit aim of a communicative--pragmatic foreign language class. Successful communication can be divided into several speech acts. But the founders of the speech act theory (Austin, 1961; Searle, 1969; Wunderlich, 1972) only refer to written or spoken language on a phonological, grammatical, lexical and morphological level in one community which shares the same language and, as a result, the same culture. The cultural aspect of a successful speech act is not discussed explicitly, the cross-cultural aspect is simply ignored. In present day times, when the global village is more beseeched than actively created, the intercultural encounter with foreign cultures should not merely be taught as a part of foreign language acquisition or traditional culture class, which only adds declarative knowledge. The intention of foreign language class is a methodological imparting of how to create successful communication across different cultures.

Another starting point for language acquisition with an intercultural emphasis should not be neglected, especially for Taiwan as a rich but politically not very powerful country. To keep its economic miracle running, a miracle which guarantees a certain political acceptance in the world community, the business world has to adapt culturally to other countries and their specific needs and habits. To look further into the matter of cross-cultural education in foreign language teaching, an exact definition of culture and of culture introduction is necessary.

## **DEFINITIONS OF CULTURE**

The development of a concept of culture has produced a wide range of multiple and often ambiguous interpretations or definitions. The reason for this is the challenging task of reconciling human uniqueness with human diversity, to order the extremely heterogeneous data of human beliefs and to find a common point of understanding for each of the individual disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology, which have widely differing theoretical concerns (Winthrop, 1991, p. 50).

The development of a definition started from the early notion of culture as cultivation, derived from the Latin word *colere*, to cultivate, meaning not only to cultivate the soil, but also to take care of something (Winthrop 1991, p. 51). From the turn of the century until the late thirties especially among German speaking psychologists, the discussion about the definition of the term culture was extremely progressive, due to the acquisition of colonies by the German Reich. By then it was important to understand the psyche and the culture of the people living in the colonies to govern (and to exploit) them. Culture was regarded as a measurement of mental performance (Wundt, 1913, p. 109). But cultural performance and cultural capability (Boas 1914, p. 3) or the achievement (Wundt, 1913, p. 109) are not the same (Müller & Wendlborn, 1998, p. 50). That means that, with regard to cultural achievement, every society has similar mental conditions to achieve culture. This definition refers to the possible psychological development and not the real achievement (Müller & Wendlborn, 1998, p. 50). There was a common agreement among scientists of that time on how to evaluate the cultural level: Productivity and efficiency of controlling nature were considered the criteria. The higher the level of a culture was judged to be, the less the effort needed to satisfy one's own basic needs (Boas, 1914, p. 171). The saved time can be used for intellectual activity. Therefore, the increasing knowledge can be used as objective criterion to judge the intellectual richness of culture (Müller & Wendlborn, 1998, p. 50). In this context, the technical development and ability of controlling nature were also important. This results in a certain view about

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so-called primitive or natural societies, as summarized by Müller and Wendelborn (p. 51):

**lack of logical thinking,  
lack of control over their free will (impulsiveness),  
inability to concentrate, esp. with regard to intellectual demands,  
lack of genuineness.**

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this linear model of culture was already criticized by Carl Stumpf and Erich Moritz von Hornbostel as being ethnocentric and accordingly dependant on research tools created by white scientists (Müller & Wendelborn, 1998, p. 56). Here we may see the starting point of the discussion about the etic-emic approach to empirical research methods.

In modern times, the development has reached a state which is marked by a very distinct and individually developed definition of culture depending on the theoretical concern. This diversity is well documented by the anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) who provide a definition of culture based on their review of 164 different definitions:

**Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditioning elements for future action (p. 357).**

Although many scientists from disciplines other than anthropology (e.g. Adler, 1997, p. 14; Thomas, 1993, p. 379) still cite Kroeber and Kluckhohn as a starting point, this concept has led to the development of differing mainstreams. They are based on the criticism that—due to the eclecticism of this conceptualization of culture—the definition is too broad and entails too many contrary theoretical perspectives to be used for reasonable research (Geertz, 1973, p. 5).

A quite useful definition for foreign language teaching is provided by Thomas, a cross-cultural psychologist. Both, cross-cultural psychology and foreign language acquisition, aim at mutual cultural understanding and, as a consequence at a successful communication across cultural borders. Thomas (1993) defines culture as a

... universal, but for a society, organisation or group very typical system of orientation. This system consists of specific symbols and is handed down in the respective society, etc. It influences its perception, thinking, value system, and action. Culture as a system of orientation structures a field of action for an individual regarding himself as part of a certain society and by doing so creates preconditions for the development of independent forms of managing the surrounding world (p. 380; translated by the author).

German as Foreign Language instruction assumes a definition of the term culture which is not limited to Goethe's classical sense of Beauty, Truth and Good, but it comprises all abstract (spiritual) and concrete (manual) products of human mankind (Götze, 1992, pp. 3-4). This understanding of culture is characterized by four aspects, which widen Thomas' definition insofar, as it negates the homogeneity of single cultures (e.g. the Russian culture; the German culture) and stresses their mutual influence:

1. Cultures are not homogeneous but heterogeneous. All European cultures have long been mixed cultures.
2. Cultures are not static but historically grown and steadily changing.
3. Cultures comprise the whole living environment of human beings. That means all products and activities of human thinking and action, as well as experiences, regulations and laws, which determine the social life of mankind, especially its attitudes towards new or strange ideas, values, and form of life.
4. Cultures are, in principle, of the same value (Götze, 1992, p. 4).

This concept of culture can be seen as the basis for culture classes in the process of foreign language acquisition. It should influence the content of what foreign language teachers teach besides the language itself. Besides cultural products (esp. literature) of the foreign, society the way of thinking, the values, and the daily forms of life should be taught. The paragraph below gives a short overview about the historical development of culture instruction in Europe, especially in Germany, since the author as a teacher of German as

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a Foreign Language is especially concerned about the Euro-German content of culture-classes.

### **TEACHING CULTURE**

Ever since the mid-seventies the term cross-cultural communication in regard to teaching culture has been widely used. The KSZE-File of 1975 calls for an intercultural Europe where the communication between members of different cultures and language communities should be enlarged and – European - foreigners should be integrated. To reach this goal, a better and deeper understanding of any European culture is indispensable (Uhlisch, 1997, p. 10). The limitation towards Europe within a global world seems anachronistic. The idea of cross-cultural communication/education is luckily not only being discussed in Europe but also in the bigger part of the rest of our globe.

First it must be explained that the German language translates the term teaching culture in two different ways, each with a different concept: On one hand, teaching culture means the more or less academic discussion of cultural artifacts (literature, music, and art). On the other hand, there is the term of “Landeskunde” which is concerned with the imparting of every-day-life culture (Alltagskultur/Leutekunde). The essay on hand refers to the latter concept. For German as Foreign Language three different approaches to the concept of teaching culture can be found:

**The cognitive approach:** realities, institutions, history and cultural products are to the fore. This approach aims at the acquisition of declarative knowledge from different scientific areas (sociology, political science etc.) This acquisition of facts is based on the idea of introducing a coherent image of German reality by utilizing apparently certain and systematic organized knowledge.

**The communicative approach:** knowledge about foreign cultures is no longer transmitted via declarative knowledge, but via experience and students attitudes are the center of content. The topics are about basic molding of human action, both with reference to information and action. The goal of this approach is a procedural knowledge, which refers to the attitude toward the foreign culture.

**The intercultural approach:** As well as the communicative competence, the understanding of the foreign culture is to the fore. Developing the ability of perception and empathy is an important goal, as is the promotion of abilities, strategies and skills while interacting with a foreign culture. Ethnocentric views and prejudice should be minimized. The foreign language class consequently represents a contribution to mutual understanding across cultures (Thimme, 1995, pp. 131-132; for criticism see: Uhlisch, 1997).

The goal of the communicative approach refers first and foremost to a cultural sensitization, whereas the intercultural approach aims at a cross-cultural sensitization. Heyd (1997) defines the term intercultural competence for foreign language classes as the ability to have a multi-perspective perception of foreign cultural conditions, the ability to have empathy and critical tolerance towards the foreign culture and their members. That means the ability to understand the foreign culture, the role expectations of its members, their behavior and the ability to interpret them from the foreign point of view. Furthermore, intercultural competence means the ability to understand the process of interaction between persons from different cultural backgrounds, and to possess strategies for having a close look at one's own as well as at foreign cultural phenomenon so that the learner understands the foreign world against the background of one's own culture and vice versa (p. 34).

In other words: culture related learning should counteract simplified ideas and stereotypes. It should sensitize the learner to a foreign culture. Ramin (1989) mentions five preconditions that are necessary for developing cross-cultural sensitization in foreign language learners:

- 1. Analysis of socialization and typical socialization patterns of the objective culture;**
- 2. In addition to the acquisition of the foreign language, there should also be an analysis of the mother language in order to understand which cultural problems arise from the utilization of the own mother tongue;**

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- 3. Knowledge of the collective history of both one's own and the objective culture, especially of their mutual historical experiences;**
- 4. Search and analysis of comparative forms between cultures like basic constants (e.g. time, space, work) and culturally specific topics/ counter topics. Through comparison of these topic/counter topics system-shaping interrelations can be discovered. This procedure is especially suitable if the topic in one culture is a counter topic in the other culture.**
- 5. Creation of a meta level in order to evaluate oneself and the other (pp. 233-235).**

**In summary, one may say that the intercultural approach adds cultural understanding as a goal to the acquisition of the foreign language itself. Consequently, it is necessary that the learner does not acquire an image of the foreign society as accurately as possible, but he should understand culture as an interrelation between mankind and its surroundings, which interprets the historical dimension as cultural heritage. Furthermore, the learner should acknowledge the mutual influence of cultures in order to recognize his own cultural imprinting against the background of the foreign culture and vice versa (Ramin, 1989, p. 233; Krumm, 1994, p. 31; Heyd, 1997, p. 37).**

**In foreign literature methodology, literature is supposed to have the ability to fulfill the conditions mentioned above. We can find two different approaches: according to Gadamer, understanding of literature is not dependent on authority (Bredella, 1994). The second—more critical—position claims that literature stresses the limits of intercultural understanding and warns of subsuming foreign ideas and values under own ideas and values (Hunfeld, 1990). Heyd (1997, p. 36) states that the advantages of literary texts for intercultural sensitization are the presentation of cultural phenomena from the objective culture. They are usually presented from the inside point of view and describe reality in a multi-perspective way, which enables the learner a multi-layered and emotional access to the foreign culture. A third position doubts the use of literature for achieving the goal of cultural sensitization. Bodgal (1995, p. 25) claims that only very few literary texts offer the aesthetic quality of a subtly differentiated view of the foreign. He questions whether**

literature is free from contradictions and ambivalence towards the foreign culture.

Summa summarum, the intercultural approach to teaching culture only adds declarative knowledge with the goal of reaching cultural sensitization, which in regard to action orientation does not necessarily contribute to a successful communication/speech act. The following example will illustrate this problem clearly:

### **Saturday Shift**

**Mr. Jones:** It looks like we're going to have to keep the production line running on Saturday.

**Mr. Wu:** I see.

**Mr. Jones:** Can you come in on Saturday?

**Mr. Wu:** Yes. I think so.

**Mr. Jones:** That'll be a great help.

**Mr. Wu:** Yes. Saturday's a special day, did you know?

**Mr. Jones:** How do you mean?

**Mr. Wu:** It's my son's birthday.

**Mr. Jones:** How nice. I hope you all enjoy it very much.

**Mr. Wu:** Thank you. I appreciate your understanding.

(Storti, 1994, p. 52)

### **Explanatory Note**

Mr. Wu isn't coming on Saturday, as he just explained to Mr. Jones. Indeed, he has been making himself clear on his point from the beginning of the exchange. The problem here is that Mr. Wu, who is Chinese, is crediting Mr. Jones with more subtlety (more Chinese-ness) than is he due; that is, Wu assumes the statement that Jones is going to have to keep the production line running on Saturday is in fact a veiled request that Wu come in on the weekend. This is how a Chinese boss would ask the question because to make a direct request would put the employee in the impossible position of either having to say no to his superior—which would be very disrespectful—or having to say yes when he didn't want to or wasn't able to come in. If Wu could come in, he would have said so unequivocally, thereby answering the "question" that has never really been asked. But instead Wu merely says "I see," a

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response so far from a yes as to make it very clear (to another Chinese, at least not to Mr. Jones) that he's not free on Saturday. In this way he has been able to say no without ever having to use the dreaded word.

Mr. Jones misses the signal and now puts Wu in an impossible position with a direct question, to which Wu—above all concerned to save his boss's face—is obliged to answer yes. It's a ritualistic yes, one prescribed by the situation, and means nothing more than "I heard you." What *does* have meaning, however, and is not at all ritualistic, is the phrase "I think so" that Wu tacks on here. Wu is hedging (by giving a qualified yes) and thereby signaling once again that his answer is in fact no.

Mr. Jones misses the signal this time too, now forcing Mr. Wu to become downright blunt and announce that Saturday is his son's birthday. >From Mr. Wu's vantage point this has apparently done the trick, for Mr. Jones wishes Wu and his family a nice party—meaning, Wu assumes, that he doesn't have to come in! (pp. 76-77)

This, for both parties, not very successful conversation shows clearly that different cultural imprints hinder a realization of reaching their intended goal of communication. We can certainly assume a cultural sensitization—both, Mr. Jones and Mr. Wu, recognize each other as members of a different culture as they see their different racial features—but in reference to action orientation that seems not to be sufficient. This example does not take into account Oksaar's (1988) "theory of culturems," postulating nonverbal, paraverbal, and extraverbal behavior. Those culturems or cultural standards (Thomas 1993, p. 381) are the smallest units of cultural behavior and are influenced by the traditions and norms of a certain society and also, as a result, are specific to that group or society. Oksaar (1988) makes the criticism that modern linguistic researchers (Chomsky School, Speech Act Theory) ignore the cultural standards in spoken language (p. 6).

**The better a learner masters a foreign language, the more cultural competence is expected by members of the foreign culture. If he does not possess them or violates those cultural standards, members of the foreign culture will react quite sensitively (Heyd, 1997, p. 56).**

**With regard to foreign language acquisition the resolution of this dilemma demands the acquisition not only of a high communicative competence but also of interaction competence. This includes the cross-cultural sensitization and widens the field of teaching culture with regard to cross-cultural behavior or intercultural competence. The next paragraph discusses the question of how this intercultural competence may be taught in culture classes as a part of foreign language acquisition.**

## **INTERCULTURAL TRAINING AND TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**Along with Levy (1998) I define "... intercultural training as a cohesive series of events or activities designed to develop cultural self-awareness, culturally appropriate behavioral responses or skills, and a positive orientation towards other cultures" (p.1). In the chapter below, the term intercultural training, cross-cultural training and experiential training are used synonymously by the author. Laird (1985) suggests the following goals for designing experiential training, which seem to be applicable to foreign language classes. He subdivides the whole training period into three major steps and their goals:**

- I. Pre -Training Period:**
  - 1. Learners acquire experience in normal day-to- day activities.
  - 2. The designer provides an experience that will tap learners' values and beliefs.
- II. In-Training Period:**
  - 1. Learners are provided with new experiences with which to compare and match their previous experience and learning.
  - 2. Learners distill new values and new learning from those experiences.
  - 3. Learners try out new behavior in the training environment

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III. Post-Training Period: Learners have acquired the ability to examine and learn from their experiences on a continuing basis (as cited in Levy, 1998, p. 2)

To reach these goals, there are a number of design models from which to choose.

With the exception of the experiential model, which ... focuses on individual training sessions rather than on the training program as a whole, all seem to follow a basic design and delivery process: need assessments, goals/objectives, content selection /sequencing, development of material and activities, implementation, and evaluation (Levy, 1998, p. 6).

Gudykunst and Hammer (1983, pp. 118-154) classify intercultural training into two categories: experiential versus didactic and culture-general versus culture-specific. Knowledge is mostly gained through experience. The experiential training provides the opportunity for the participants to experience a situation relevant to the specific goals of the objective program. The experiences represent/provide data which are analyzed by the participants. The didactic approach (sometimes called the "university model") employs lectures and discussions to provide information about foreign cultures. Culture-specific training is limited to preparing people for contact with a particular culture or culture group. There is some disagreement in the literature about the definition of culture-general training (Levy, 1998, p. 11). One position views culture-general training as a development of cultural awareness to foster a general sensitivity to other cultures. Others feel that it should expose the trainees to a range of specific cross-cultural experiences which can be generalized to any cultural group on earth. A third group views culture-general training as increasing the participants understanding/appreciation of culture's influence on behavior. It is not uncommon to combine all three positions.

Gudykunst and Hammer believe that experiential culture-general training designs are the most commonly used (as cited in Levy, 1998, p. 11). For the purpose of foreign language classes the experiential culture-specific training seems to be more appropriate since students usually learn one specific language which represents one specific culture. The techniques to reach the goals as mentioned above may be the following:

**Modification of traditional human relations training to include the increasingly popular subject of conflict resolution/management and business communication.**

**Intercultural communication workshops.**

**Culture-specific role plays or simulations such as those mentioned above.**

All three techniques are closely related to three quite familiar domains: knowledge, skills and attitudes, which in their combination are, as is language itself, an integral part of successful communication. While knowledge about the other culture can be presented didactically, it is more often learned experientially. There are hundreds of cross-cultural skills which can be included in the list of goals of the intercultural training. Commentary on cross-cultural competencies can be found in Levy (1983), Eder (1996), Deller (1996) and Bittner (1996). For the communicative-pragmatic and intercultural approach to foreign language teaching, the three following skills can be regarded as the most basic ones:

**Ability to recognize that the way a person sees things is selective and culturally determined;**

**Ability to withhold one's own assessment/judgement in a new situation until more information is available;**

**Ability to act in accordance with the norms of the foreign culture.**

**Attitudes are the most difficult part in a cross-cultural training to change.**

**“Unless you are conducting a long-term intercultural training program, or the participants will be working on a cross-cultural project, you find attitude change difficult to achieve” (Levy, 1998, p. 12).**

Finally we have to mention the practical approach of cross-cultural training for foreign language classes in more concrete terms. Since the mid-sixties there has been a huge amount of cross-cultural training techniques in the

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United States due to training projects commissioned by the U.S. Army for improving the interpersonal communications skills of its overseas military advisors (Kimmel, 1998, p. 69). Those techniques comprise role plays (McCaffery, 1998), contrast-culture training (Stewart, 1998; DeMello, 1998), simulation games (Sisk, 1998; Shirts, 1998) critical incidents (Wight, 1998; Dant, 1998) culture assimilators (Albert, 1998; Brislin, 1998; Triandis, 1998) and case studies (Lacy and Trowbridge, 1998) as tools for preparing for an encounter with other cultures and their members. They all can – in one way or another – be integrated into languages classes as a main part of culture instruction.

### **CONCLUSION**

The change of the definition of the term culture during the last century had a big influence on the methodology of teaching a foreign language and culture instruction. Culture is no longer seen as merely an introduction to and understanding of, foreign cultural products (e.g. literature). Rather it also comprises the more important part of everyday life which represents values, attitudes, perception, thinking and social life. A merely declarative instruction of those components is not sufficient. In addition an experiential approach to culture-specific training as part of language – and therewith culture – instruction should be considered to achieve the goal of a successful communication across cultures.

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# **Nonverbal Communication in Cross-Cultural Encounters**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Nonverbal communication is essential for our communication as we express ourselves non-verbally even more than with words. This paper will focus especially on gestures as they play an important role in communication. We tend to use our hands to explain things, we spice up a story or punctuate an idea using gestures. On the other hand they are not only useful for others to better understand an explanation. They are as well important for a speaker himself as they act as a bridge between concepts and words, thus enabling the speaker to think of the correct phrase more quickly.

In cross-cultural encounters, however, misperceptions occur as identical gestures may have different meanings in different parts of the world. Here, it is therefore useful to have not only a knowledge of the other party's verbal language but also of the non-verbal messages that are being sent to us. On the other hand we should be open minded when seeing people from other cultures using (for us) inappropriate gestures.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Nonverbal communication is defined as “that aspect of the communication process that deals with the transmission and reception of signs that are not part of a natural language system.” So that: “Any phase of communication that does not include words is considered nonverbal” (Hickson & Stacks, 1985, p. 5). It accounts for at least 60-70% of our communication (Birdwhistell, 1970) and may reach as much as 93% (Mehrabian, 1981), comprising the following modes of expression:

- 1. Kinesics, the study of human body movements**
- 2. Physical appearance**
- 3. Paralanguage, which refers to the use of the voice in communication and includes the nonverbal voice qualities, modifiers, and independent nonverbal utterances**
- 4. Proxemics, the conceptualization, structuration, and use of space**
- 5. Chronemics, the conceptualization and handling of time**
- 6. Haptics, the use of touch in the communication process**
- 7. Artifacts, which include environmental features and the use of objects**

Although television and large population movements will in the long run help make behavior universal, body language will long continue to be peculiar to specific countries. While it is not intended to describe all (nor even most of) the cultural differences, this article aims at making aware that differences exist and that we should be careful in judging people from other cultures just because of the nonverbal signs they are sending us. We easily react annoyed when the signs of our partners do not correspond to our own programs. Furthermore we should be careful when using nonverbal communication while in a foreign country as we may be misunderstood as well. In business, it may be very helpful when negotiating with a partner from a different culture to have a basic knowledge of the differences in nonverbal communication compared to your own country and this knowledge may be the key to a successful negotiation (for examples see: Birkenbihl, 1994).

This article, however, will be restricted to kinesics and show similarities as well as differences in body movements of people from different cultures. In kinesic research three different kinds of behavior can be distinguished although they are

overlapping each other: Manners, postures and gestures. While manners are mostly learned and ritualized movements that may be simultaneous or alternating with verbal language and are subject to social norms, postures are more static movements used consciously or unconsciously but are as well subject to social norms. Gestures, on the other hand, are movements with the head, the face alone, the eyes, or the limbs, as well conscious or unconscious but dependent or independent of accompanying discourses (Poyatos, 1988).

Manners are the most different in every culture and having good manners in your own culture does not imply that people of other cultures regard you as a polite person. Therefore, coming to a country with a different culture the most important thing to do is to observe people, as your own behavior may not only be impolite but even insulting for the receiver. An example for this I could observe in Thailand, when a Balinese dancing group once came to perform in Thailand. After finishing the performance, the dancers wanted to greet the audience and joined the palms of their hands, with the fingers pointing upwards, in front of the chest, accompanied by a bow of the head. This gesture is a well-known greeting in India. But unlike India, in Thailand, this greeting expresses at the same time respect or disrespect of the sender towards the receiver depending on how high the hands are held. To show respect, the hands should be held high so that they touch at least the nose if not the forehead of the person when bowing. Holding them at the height of the chest is disrespectful and, as some of the dancers did, holding them at the height of their belly even insulting. The audience thus reacted with annoyance although understanding that this was done due to ignorance of Thai culture instead of disrespect.

Postures can indicate our attitudes towards our conversation partners and can show friendliness, anger, superiority, etc. They vary with our emotions but cannot be controlled as well as facial expressions so that postures can, for example, still reveal anxiety even though our face does not show any emotion. Posture may thus “leak” our emotional state (Ekman, 1969).

Darwin (1872) already pointed out that certain facial expressions of emotions are similar among all human beings, regardless of culture because of their

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evolutionary origin. This was criticized by La Barre (1947) and later Birdwhistell (1970) who stated that no expressive movement has the same meaning in every culture and that they are therefore neither inborn nor biologically inherited but as a product of culture are socially learned. In contrast, the findings of Ekman, Sorenson & Friesen (1969) supported the above mentioned thesis of Darwin. They found that people from very different cultures recognize some of the same emotions when shown a standard set of photographs showing facial expressions. Interestingly, the highest rates of recognition, of up to 99%, were those for the expressions showing happiness. This was later supported by the findings of Eibl-Eibesfeld (1972) who showed that basic similarities exist in different cultures not only in facial expressions like smiling, laughing, crying, and anger, but as well in whole syndromes of behavior like frowning, clenching the fists, stamping on the ground and hitting at objects and that these syndromes could as well be observed in deaf and blind born persons. (Eibl-Eibesfeld, 1973). It therefore seems extremely improbable that these similarities are due to chance or similar conditions during development in all cultures. Variations like differences in their form, in the context in which they are evoked, etc. are due to the influence of culture as the available patterns may be used in a wider range of emotional states in one culture and their public manifestation be suppressed in another. In many cultures, for example, it is unsuitable for men to weep while in Arabian and some African cultures this is not supposed to be a problem.

A large part of gesturing must be considered as an integral element of a discourse because of its close integration with speech. It can therefore only be understood by the recipient if it is accompanied by verbal conversation. These gestures are defined as gesticulations in the strict sense. Most people are not aware of their body movements while they are talking and use gesticulations in a very spontaneous way. This is obvious, for example, when observing people on the telephone producing gestures and facial expressions their partners are unable to receive. Gestures occur more frequently during speech perturbations and hesitations (Butterworth & Beattie, 1978). They are made by the speaker to illustrate some aspect of content, especially when describing special shapes, sizes, or movement, or to give emphasis to what is being said. This, in turn, indicates

that gestures are coded with a greater facility than words (McNeill, 1985). Thus waving hands and pointing fingers may actually make our speech more articulate, as they are self-stimulating and help the speaker in retrieving elusive words from his/her memory, working out a grammatical construction, etc. (Freedman, 1977; Frick-Horbury, 1998). As language markers they may punctuate and emphasize the spoken words and help to control the synchronizing of utterances (see Poyatos, 1988, with detailed description of markers).

From these gesticulations the symbolic gestures, or emblems, have to be distinguished which can exist independently of an accompanying discourse, and be used, for example, when verbal communication is hindered as in loud working places or where silence has to be kept, or when diving. Symbolic gestures differ from other gestures in that they are emitted intentionally and have a specific meaning that is known and shared by the members of the same social group, subculture, or culture. These gestures transmit a certain message in a visual image and can repeat or substitute the verbal language as, for example, in the creation of sign languages. They may as well occur in alternation with speech and complete the sentence. This may be illustrated by the following example, I once observed in Germany: A woman talking about a couple she knew of, said: "The woman is okay-but her husband ..." followed by a gesture as if she would throw something over her shoulder without watching and producing a facial expression that showed disgust. Thus in order to understand her discourse one has to include the gesture to complete the sentence. On the other hand, the nonverbal substitution conveyed a stronger message than a verbal message could have done. McNeill (1985), therefore, argued that gesture is not nonverbal at all, but rather forms a part of the same psychological structure as language.

Thus people who do not share a common language can still communicate by using their hands to form symbolic representations of their words. But not always will they be understood as the receiver may interpret the message according to his/her own cultural background and not according to the meaning that was intended by the sender. Many emblems are ambiguous if their meaning has not been learned. The culture may confer a particular meaning to a

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particular movement. If we cannot speak the language of the country we are staying in and want to buy a special object, we can point with our finger and will be understood. If we further indicate the amount we want to have showing our hand with all five fingers stretched out, we will still get what we want, five pieces. If we stretch out the thumb and the index finger, however, this is where problems start. Here in Taiwan and in southern China, we would get seven pieces, in northern China even eight, but in Germany we would get only two, because people there start counting with the thumb, and in North and Central America only one, as the thumb wouldn't be counted in these cultures.

Another emblem that has different meanings in different cultures, for example, is the round "o" made by joining thumb and index finger with the hand held vertically. While this means "OK" for an American and is likewise understood in several parts of Europe, it has insulting and scatological connotations in other parts of Europe as well as in Latin America, is used to get attention in Spain, means "zero" in Mediterranean Europe, "I will kill you" in Tunisia, and "money" in Southeast and East Asia if the hand is held horizontally with the palm showing up.

Touching your earlobe because it is itching while talking to an Italian, your Italian conversation partner will attribute symbolic value to that, thinking the person you are talking about is homosexual, or that you want to tell your partner you believe he/she is homosexual. You may thus insult your partner without even knowing it.

Another well-known example of cultural differences in the use of gestures is the case of the head movements expressing affirmation and negation. The most widespread pattern is the vertical nod for "yes" and the horizontal shake for "no", but in some parts of Greece and Bulgaria, some parts of southern Italy, Corfu, Malta and some Arabian countries, "yes" is indicated by a swiftly moving of the head sideways while "no" is expressed by tossing the head backwards. Sometimes, to emphasize, the hands are lifted to the shoulders. It thus resembles the gesture of Central Europeans when the "no" is emotionally loaded as in "for heavens' sake, no!" In Ethiopia, however, the tossing back of the head has the

meaning “yes.” Especially the sideways moving of the head to indicate “yes” is a very disturbing gesture to a person that will read this as a “no” as it invariably leads to misunderstandings and even if one knows this cultural difference, it is hard to accept. Just imagine yourself giving a speech or a lecture to people who, for you, always indicate “no” although they themselves want to show you their consent.

As we can see in these examples, across cultures the misunderstandings increase as a result of unfamiliarity. A study in Israel (Schneller, 1988), an extremely multicultural society, revealed that of 26 typical Ethiopian gestures demonstrated for decoding by recently arrived Ethiopian immigrants to a group of 46 Israeli college students, selected from 14 different cultures, only 85% of the gestures were recognized. Moreover, only 30% of the gestures recognized were decoded correctly, or at least approximately, while 70% were misunderstood.

Misinterpretations can take place as well when people know the meaning of a particular gesture in only one intensity. In Britain, for example, clapping hands in a fast motion signifies applause while doing so slowly shows boredom. The difference in intensity, however, is perceived as insignificant. A description of a wide variety of gestures is given by Morris (1994).

In a cross-cultural encounter, the presence of an “inappropriate” gesture may thus erroneously be interpreted as ill-mannered or the absence of a gesture as a sign of personal weakness, or disinterest. What may simply be an error due to ignorance of the other cultural norms may be interpreted as an intentional violation of these norms. It is therefore necessary that nonverbal communication receives a central role in language teaching to make students aware of the differences that exist and to prepare them for cross-cultural encounters not only in their future professional live.

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# **Managing Inequality in the Multicultural Workplace: A Management Issue**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Today, more than ever before, companies are made up of owners, managers, and workers from different countries and cultures. This provides those companies with numerous benefits, but it also brings about new challenges and problems because of the diversity in the workplace. This paper will look at workplace cultural diversity and some methods of dealing with the inequality and the problems which sometimes results.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The contemporary company is faced with the need to manage people from culturally diverse backgrounds, who work together, either in the international arena or in a multicultural domestic environment. These culturally diverse people are not necessarily only those who hold lower level jobs or even management positions but are also made up of corporate officers and company owners. The companies who are made up of diverse people, and not just people who are diverse culturally, has the challenge to encourage all of its people throughout the company to value diversity and to take advantage of all the different skills, perspectives, and knowledge that is gained by their unique mixture.

However, many companies choose to ignore diversity and treat their workforce as if it was a homogeneous one. A workforce that consists of similar individuals and where diversity is at a minimum. Naturally, mistakes, misunderstandings, and misperceptions will occur within these organizations. These organizations miss the opportunities available from the wide perspectives and abilities of its workforce and promote the problems inherent in diverse environments. This is also a perfect recipe for inequalities.

An individual or group within a diverse workplace can find themselves faced with an environment that promotes the unequal treatment of its employees, managers, and even owners/directors. Organizational power, although a decided advantage, still cannot be an assurance that an individual will be treated fairly by others within the organization.

Contemporary companies must recognize the unique concerns of the multicultural workplace and take advantage of it. To do this, organizations must understand why prejudices exist within the organization. They must understand and appreciate the cultural differences which exist within the workplace and how perceptions by individuals and groups color those differences into attitudes and stereotypical opinions.

Finally, although there are many managerial methods for managing diversity and thus preventing inequality and discrimination within the workplace, developing an awareness and a valuing of diversity is essential. Training and communication are the keys to success in managing conflicts within the multicultural workplace.

## **II. DEFINITIONS**

In understanding the multicultural workplace along with the terms that are frequently used today in describing and discussing this environment it is necessary to have a clear understanding of their meanings. The scope of some definitions can determine the cause of conflicts along with the possible preventions and solutions of those conflicts.

First, the use of the term “conflicts“ in this paper does not have the potentially positive aspect that has been given to the word by other authors. In business material today, especially material focusing on workgroups, the word conflict represents the clashing of ideas or methods that bring about more creativity through wider or varied viewpoints.

For the purposes of this paper, the term “conflicts” represents the difficulties, disagreements, or confrontations which arise between individuals or groups. These problems being or forming a cause of disruption or disturbance within the company or organization’s operations.

The term “diversity” means people who differ in some way from other people in a grouping. That grouping could be any size from a small work group to a large company of many thousands of workers and managers. These differences could stem from any primary characteristic such as gender, race, country of origin, age, or physical or mental abilities or weaknesses. These primary characteristics are what Lawrence Baytos calls primary dimensions and are inborn and immutable (Baytos, xxiv). Lawrence goes on to list secondary dimensions associated with life in organizations which are the causes of diversity between people. They include such things as education, work experience, marital and

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parental status, and religion. Baytos recognizes that these secondary characteristics can be changed by the person and are not fixed.

The term “multicultural workplace” represents a work environment where those employed toward tasks are from culturally diverse origins or population segments. Such an environment can exist in any context where “work” is being conducted culturally diverse individuals, regardless of the job levels or descriptions.

It is important to understand what our term “culture” refers to. Culture can refer to everything that people have, think, and do as members of a society (Ferraro, 1994). Generally, culture refers to a way of life of a group of people (Francesco & Gold, 1998). A more detailed definition is not only not more precise but fails to take into account the overwhelming aspects of this term.

Prejudices are judgements made that reinforce a personal belief in one’s superiority or inferiority. Typically a prejudice or bias will exaggerate the value of a person’s own group, while it reduces or diminishes the value of other individuals or groups that the person is not a member.

Discrimination is where prejudices bring about disadvantages and/ or the imposition of other beliefs on others through an organization or institution’s ability to impose power on those others (Baytos, p. 16). Discrimination is a major avenue for inequality to manifest itself.

### **III. INEQUALITIES**

Inequalities happen to everyone. We have all felt as if something was either done or not done to us that was unfair in comparison to others. If we had a difference between ourselves and those we are using in comparison, then we may feel that difference was an important factor in determining what we saw as an inequality or injustice. Be it right or wrong, we may feel that the inequality stemmed from that difference and the difference becomes even more pronounced.

The most prominent inequality in the workplace appears to be a variance in pay and compensation between groups and individuals. Diverse workers from

different cultures who receive lesser pay and benefits than others are immediately aware of the fact and their motivation and performance may be affected. Even absent this, they have psychologically negative reactions and attitudes regarding coworkers, the organization, and even themselves. They perceive that everyone else perceives them as less valuable than others, such as workers of a dominant culture or group.

Another prominent and obvious inequality is the advancement of individuals and groups of one culture or in-group within the organization while those of other cultures or groups fail to advance or be given performance rewards equal to the other group. This results in the same perception that they are less valuable, less appreciated, and even looked down upon in some cases.

But inequality can also be much less obvious. Individuals or groups whose opinions or comments are not sought can feel unfairly excluded. This is an inequality with those individuals and groups who do have input into the organizational operations. This is a matter of being appreciate, feeling some worth from work.

When individuals needs are not provided for they can feel the same negative emotions and bring about or reinforce negative attitudes. In a culturally diverse workforce, the needs of individuals and groups also will differ and the organization and/or the members must recognize the different needs in order not to do injustice to some of the members. Making all employees totally equal is not the end result of managing for diversity. Management must be much more flexible with a diverse workforce to prevent inequalities.

Inequalities have several pathways in which they can exist or be perceived. These pathways are described, and indeed are sometimes precipitated, by job status positions within the workplace hierarchy. Indirect pathways can develop; such as between owners/ officers and workers and where management levels are between the two groups. The direct pathways can be described in seven general categories:

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- 1. Worker to worker.** As implied by the category, this pathway is between non-management employees and the most common pathway for general non-cultural disputes and employee problems. (It should be remembered that a many employee problems stem from perceived inequalities and unjust treatment.)
- 2. Workers to management.** Also one of the most prevalent pathways of conflict in any context, this pathway category represents an inequality between persons of unequal status within the organizational structure.
- 3. Management to Worker.** Here is the backside of the Worker to Management pathway. This pathway category flows down from management to non-management employees. This pathway is generally one, not of resentment or envy, but one of a condescending nature ranging from dismissal to disgust (two strong results of prejudice and bias).
- 4. Management to Management.** Managers, too, can be of diverse cultural, ethnic, or racial makeup. A group of North American managers may share the same workplace as Japanese or Taiwanese managers, for example. So the diversity within the management structure itself may lead to the same problems, misunderstandings, perceptions, and biases which could plague any other set of groups.
- 5. Management to Owner/ Director.** This pathway category once again moves up the organizational ladder. This is where there are cultural, ethnic, or racial differences between those who are selected to manage the business workplace and those who own or control the overall business. Practically, there would be no reason not to include stockholders as owners.
- 6. Owner/Director to Management.** This represents the downward movement of inequality or unjust treatment of the last pathway. Here the Owner/ Director has difficulties with the managers.
- 7. Owner/ Director to Owner/ Director.** Just as in pathway 4, Management to Management, those of equal or near equal status can experience the misunderstandings, disputes, and inequalities brought on by their differences.

There are several macro-factors that help to indicate whether there is a likelihood of organizational inequalities or disputes due to differences arising in a certain workplace. It should be noted that diversity inequalities can and do arise in workplaces regardless of any of the following factors. Individual prejudices within an organizational structure can result in inequalities. These factors help to indicate likelihood of the organization itself being biased against certain groups and the pathways that the biases are likely to take. The list is by no means exclusive.

First, the location of the workplace is a major indicator of whether there will be the possibility of cultural, ethnic, or racial problems arising there. When companies maintain properties that utilize a culturally diverse workforce, the location may determine what pathways are most likely to occur. For example, if a U.S. company maintains a factory in Mexico for overhead reasons, it is likely that the major pathways for inequality will be that of Management to Worker and Worker to Management. The reason is that the local labor force will be utilized at lower wages and less benefits than U.S. counterparts. The local workers will know that fact. Meanwhile outside management may be brought in from the company's home country, in this example the U.S. This may easily give rise to a wide gap between management and labor. The perceptions of the workers may be that they are not equal to the other culture's managers. In reality, gross inequality may exist or be established. The management in this case may also participate downward to workers creating those inequalities. In fact, the likelihood that the pathway flow will be both ways between the two groups is strong.

Secondly, the cultural or ethnic composition of the individuals and groups in the workplace is a strong indicator of whether there will be inequality. If the individuals have had long-standing difficulties then the workplace is one place that these difficulties will play out. Some people simply just cannot work together. It may be necessary to separate individuals or groups. The composition of the workplace should be thought out before hand and in most cases simply never evolve.

Thirdly, a strong indicator of the possibility of cultural inequality is the lack of communication between individuals and groups. People who feel prejudices and biases towards others often do not communicate freely and openly. Every level of the workplace must communicate effectively and efficiently to assure the best possible performance. After understanding and awareness, communication is essential to managing conflicts of any kind.

Finally, the most obvious factor that indicates the possibility of organizational prejudices is differences in organizational policy. If the compensation and

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benefits of individuals or groups surpasses those of other individuals or groups, this obvious inequality shows the lack of the organization in addressing diversity issues. If job rewards, advancements, and personnel matters appear to show favoritism then the possibility of there being real organizational prejudices is strong.

Some inequalities are objective. Some inequalities are subjective perceptions. But regardless of whether they are objective or subjective, they will affect job performance and interactions within the organizations.

#### **IV. UNDERSTANDING PREJUDICE**

Few people like to or are able to admit that they have a prejudice or bias against any group of other people. It is difficult for persons, especially people who see themselves as enlightened, educated, or having the ideals and values which do not tolerate the concept of prejudice. However, biases and prejudices are obviously prevalent in society.

Why are people prejudiced against others? The answer is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the creation of attitudes that people have formed may have come from an early age and those attitudes continue to be molded by current and future experiences or influencing factors. Factors and experiences such as mass media; the TV, movies, radio, newspapers, magazines, and books. People may find themselves influenced by politics, family, friends, or organizations. Observations that the person witnesses him or herself may strongly influence his or her opinions of others. In short the range of influencing factors is almost as limitless as what happens in a person's life from day to day.

People at an early age (usually around 5 years old according to developmental psychologists) begin to understand and appreciate if they are or are not a member of some group. The individuals in this group are somehow similar. It may be ascribed to some particular primary characteristic such as being from one country or culture. It may be according to religion, class, etc. Something is linking individuals together in unity.

It is normal for people to make judgments about others who are different from their group. But the ideas or biases we have can result in placing others into categories or stereotypes.

Stereotyping is when an exaggerated belief is associated with a category. People use stereotypes to predict behavior or to justify their own behavior or conduct (Baytos, p. 19). Stereotypes can be positive or negative. They can exist without any supporting facts or by exaggerating or expounding on perceived facts or experiences.

People at work form what are called psychological contracts with others in the workplace. These psychological contracts are sets of expectations held by individuals about what he or she expects to get from and give to the organization and to other members (Bailey, et al., 1991). If individuals or groups have formed stereotyped opinions or attitudes toward others, these expectations will differ greatly from the expectations they have of others in the organization. Expectations can either be confirmed or not. But sometimes the cultural differences can actually seem to confirm stereotypical opinions. This is because there is a lack of understanding and appreciation of the cultural differences that exist.

## **V. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

As stated, culture can be defined as the way of life of a group of people. When people mention the term culture, many think in terms of the people of different countries. This is of course true. However, it should also be noted that a great many of these countries also have many subcultures. Because of the large variety of countries and areas around the world do not have simply one culture but several. Furthermore, within cultures are many subcultures, such as are found in the United States. So even among people of the same national origins there can be cultural differences that result in the culturally diverse workplace.

One major difference is religion. Many countries of the world are divided and in conflict because of differing and competing religions. Entire cultures are defined

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by their religious beliefs. These beliefs can create friction between individuals and groups within an organization even if hostilities are not evident.

Religion is a powerful force in many people's lives and can bring biases and prejudices to the workplace which will result in inequalities and organizational injustices. For example, individuals of one religion may be favored for promotion over individuals of another faith. This inequality may be intentional or even non-intentional, but the cultural difference is the causation factor.

Another major cultural difference is in the way people from differing cultures view work attitudes. In all cultures most people want to do well and to have certain goals that they work to achieve. It is advanced by some authors that a person's need for achievement is greater in more advanced industrialized cultures than in simpler less economically advanced cultures (McClelland, 1961). Tayeb believes this is not the case and that those from economically poor countries show their achievement motive very clearly (Tayeb, p. 59).

The differences appear to be in the way people from different cultures view achievement and work. People from one culture, for example Mexico, may be more relaxed in their work attitudes than those from another country, such as Germany. They may be less disciplined in their activities and social contacts within the workplace. Individuals from some cultures may view employment as a defining characteristic of who they themselves are. I am a lawyer. I am a construction worker. People from other cultures may view employment only in terms of compensation for themselves and their families. A result of such a view may be less involvement in the workplace. The view that "this is not who I am".

It is important to understand what work means to people from different cultures. For most, the meaning of work is tied to economic security for the individual and others he or she is concerned with (Deresky, 1997). However to others the meaning of work may include many other things other than money. Such things as achievement, honor, social contracts, and self fulfillment are things which an increasing number of people are concerned with above and beyond monetary compensation.

People may also compare the importance of work to alternative activities. The degree of importance given to work activities can help to determine the initial attitudes people have about their jobs. These attitudes can be positive or negative. These attitudes can influence how diverse individuals or groups view each other.

Muslims feel that work is a virtue and that they have an obligation to create a balance in their lives between work and social life. However, an Arab is judged by his (and culturally it is the male) commitment to family (Deresky, p. 365).

People from different cultures also differ in the type of work environment they prefer. Some cultures prefer well-structured organizations with well-defined rules and regulations. Other cultures prefer loose organization and more individual and group freedom.

Employee preferences as to the type of leadership or management style also differs between cultures. Some cultures, such as Greek, prefer managers to clearly define what is expected. They expect the manager to set the limits and that the basis for such limits have already been thought out. Other cultures, such as the British, prefer looser management and desire input into the management decisions. They understand and tolerate manager uncertainty more than the Greek culture.

Even inequality in the workplace is tolerated differently within different cultures. Some cultures, such as in India, expect inequality between different classes of workers. In contrast, in Canada there is a much less tolerating attitude about inequality even between managers and workers.

In some cultures, individuality is stressed. In others, such as Asian cultures, the group or the collective is stressed. This major difference may strongly influence the way in which an individual from each culture reacts, works, and deals with others within the workplace. In an individualist culture, the individual wants control over his or her own affairs. They are more private and do not tend to impose on others their problems. Likewise, they don't want to hear about other

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people's problems. People from a collective society may view them as arrogant and pushy.

On the other hand, people from cultures that stress the group are more dependent on others. Not just financially, but also emotionally and intellectually. They are more likely to ask for and to offer help to others within their group. However, people from an individualist culture may view them as indecisive and slow.

Another major difference that can be encountered between some cultures is the fact that some cultures are time oriented and others are task oriented. In other words, some cultures, like Americans, are concerned with completing tasks according to a time schedule. Whereas others, such as Taiwanese, are concerned with getting the task done correctly. That is not to say that either side is not aware of both concerns, only that they are more concerned with time or with the task. Working together, these differing orientations can cause friction and often times rifts between individuals and groups.

Language is a difference that should also be mentioned. People from different cultures often times speak different languages. This lack of or difficulty in communication can lead to miscommunications, misperceptions, and a reinforcing of prejudicial attitudes.

The differences between cultures can be found taking up many books. Regardless of the difference, it can lead or reinforce perceptions and attitudes that can form prejudices and biases that can in turn lead to workplace inequalities.

## **VI. PERCEPTIONS**

The workplace is a perfect place for the problems of society to play themselves out. Employees bring to the workplace some strong opinions about people they view as being different from themselves. Their opinions of others are influenced by their perceptions of groups and individuals. These perceptions can arise from a number of factors and experiences, which can act to reinforce the attitudes, which lead to prejudice, biases, and inequalities.

Individuals within an organization will naturally have different experiences. This differing experiences can lead to a perception of inequity. For example, if one person is asked to sit in on an important meeting, another may perceive an inequality. He or she was not invited. But for others in the organization, there was no intention of an unequal treatment or chance for advancement.

Take the time vs. task orientation differences between Americans and Taiwanese for example. The Americans' perception of the Taiwanese coworkers may be that they are slow. The Taiwanese may perceive their American coworkers as sloppy and not careful in their work.

For every experience or attitude that differs there is the potential for a misperception by some individual or group. As will be discussed, the best way to avoid these misperceptions is with understanding and awareness.

## **VII. MANAGING CULTURAL INEQUALITIES**

As the global workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, that diversity is arguably the biggest challenge organizational human resource departments can face. Dealing with all of the cultural differences may decide if an organizational venture will succeed or fail.

Managing diversity concentrates on valuing differences. It requires putting policies and procedures into place to meet the needs of the workforce. The emphasis should be on meeting the needs of the workforce on an individual as well as on a group level (Lussier, 1990).

To begin with, organizations should implement rules, procedures, and guidelines that protect the interests of the workforce and to promote diversity without discrimination. Procedures should be put in place to handle problems that arise because of diversity (Lussier, p. 391). If there is a complaint, how will the organization handle it so that perceptions throughout the organizations are positive.

Managing diversity can only be accomplished with a change in the organizational culture itself. The organizational culture must have the concerns

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and values of the members within itself. Members can know what the organization values by what management does; mostly through rewards and punishments. Therefore, management must reward diversity and remove inequalities and the behaviors that produce them.

Behaviors of individuals can be shaped and molded by management and by procedures and guidelines. Good behaviors can be reinforced. Attempts can be made to remove bad behaviors using a variety of techniques. However, for all management or the organization can do the best possible approach is to bring about an awareness of cultural differences. Then an understanding of those differences. Finally, getting the organization and its members to value the differences and to realize the true worth of the additions and variety.

Training is the best method of achieving these goals. Both in the form of courses and daily workplace training. This can be accomplished by example of the managers.

The organizational culture must be managed in such a way as to change to incorporate the dimensions of the different cultures into itself. If an organization is to produce the best product or service it can it must have an organized culture that gives job satisfaction.

One of the best possible means to manage diversity is to provide for the needs of the members within the organization and to promote job satisfaction. Needs will differ between members, especially in a diverse workforce. Job satisfaction is linked to morale. Moral can be different within different levels of the organizations.

Morale and job satisfaction has a direct correlation with performance (Lussier, p. 79). Therefore, the basic reason that managers should stress the needs of each of the diverse individuals or groups is to assure high morale and high job satisfaction. Thus, insuring increased production.

## **VIII. SUCCESSFUL CHARACTERISTICS**

Is it possible to measure or to determine whether or not a company's efforts at managing cultural inequalities have been successful? Surveys may or may not provide the answer. Employees may be unwilling to provide fully truthful answers to questions of fair treatment or workplace conflicts due to a variety of reasons. These reasons may range from fear of reprisal to the employee not being aware of inequalities that do in fact exist.

Baytos outlines several key characteristics that he feels has a relation to the success of a diversity success program. They are as follows:

- 1. Climate of Mutual Respect.** Here employees treat everyone in the organization with the same positive attitudes and behaviors that the employee wants in return.
- 2. Normalization.** This is where the organization views diversity as normal.
- 3. Development.** The organization is dedicated to the progression and advancement of all of its workers.
- 4. Valuing Differences.** The organization promotes education, recognition, and valuing of differences as well as similarities.
- 5. Strategic Imperative.** The organization has put policy into place that safeguards diversity even when the organization moves its attention away from the issues.
- 6. Contribution.** Every member of the organization is encouraged to give opinions or comments on business and none is discounted or discredited due to diversity grounds.
- 7. Collaboration.** Everyone is working together to achieve goals and blame for past mistakes is not assigned.
- 8. Universality.** Diversity is accepted as natural and the association's structure and way of working incorporates that idea.
- 9. Accountability.** Every member of the organization works to make the work environment productive and to make the necessary changes to achieve good working relationships between all workers and management.

Recognizing these characteristics and traits in the organization may be difficult and may even be missed or misinterpreted. However, some should be fairly obvious to anyone who observes the workplace for any length of time. Once such example of an obvious characteristic is that of Strategic Imperative. Has the organization implemented any change in actual policy regarding diversity? Are there rules that have been put in place to assure equal pay, equal benefits, or the possibility of job advancement?

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In contrast, a characteristic such as accountability is one that is very hard to verify. It is a trait that generally must be assumed from the daily conduct of the members of the organization as they go about their daily work routines. This is the type of trait that only long-term observation can assume.

In this author's opinion the easiest way of determining whether diversity is being managed correctly or properly does incorporate the above key factors, although each factor may not be individually identified. But these characteristics should be stressed in the management of diversity to build and strengthen them into the organizational culture.

### **IX. CONCLUSION**

The prejudices and biases which people have about other people who are different from themselves can seriously hurt productivity and effectiveness of work relationships. They can cause unfair treatment and inequalities in the workplace. These inequalities can be manifested through several different pathways between individuals and groups throughout the organizational hierarchy.

The inequalities can be extremely obvious forms of discrimination, such as compensation and benefit variances between individuals and groups. Promotions and preferences given (or perceived as given) to members of one group more so than to other groups who are different. Or rather, these inequalities can be less tangible and not so easily perceived; such as isolation of individuals or groups from others and from activities within and without the workplace.

Understanding the cultural differences and the perceptions of people in the workplace is vital to managing cultural inequality. Beyond simply correcting organizational structure and individual/ group behaviors, training is essential. Only by an awareness, understanding, and later valuing of diversity can organizations properly manage the diversity workplace and prevent the majority of inequalities that can arise in such an environment.

Successful diversity management will indicate its success through the interactions of the individuals and groups within the organization as well as the

**productiveness of the organization. Key characteristics of a productive diverse workforce include collaboration, contribution, and accountability among others.**

**Diversity in the workplace is a fact of a global economy. The benefits available to companies through the abilities and perspectives of this diverse workforce hold great promise for future productivity and creativity. However, the clash of cultures, if not understood and handled properly could spell disaster for an organization.**

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## Section 2: Learning Styles

Understanding how people learn is a fundamental step in creating effective training regimes. While many ideas have been raised in the education field, it often appears that there are always exceptions to the rules. Attempting to teach our students about different cultures and different languages introduces many more variables than are traditionally examined when looking at learning styles. Throw into the mix teachers from different cultures and nationalities, students who will go on to work in the global economy, with a nearly unlimited number of possible work situations and locations, and we begin to see that learning styles, while central, can be a very complex and difficult topic.

Wen-Hua Hsu begins our discussion with an approach that fits the global trend in many fields—the personalization of interaction. Hsu argues that there is support for directing teaching efforts to match individuals' learning styles. Hsu's paper gives a good introduction to the numerous research directions and findings in language learning styles. Needless to say, our goal is to make the best match possible, but that can only be done through an understanding of what is available and what different language learners' dispositions are.

Following closely on Hsu's topic is Warden and Lin's paper, which takes an empirical approach in order to find what language learning motivations exist in Taiwan EFL settings. The finding that there may not be an integration motivation, the desire to join the target language's culture, is both surprising and not surprising. Surprising is that the traditional reliance language teachers have had on Western ESL theories may not work in Asia. Not surprising is that if it is true English is the global business language, many people who study English have no goal to assimilate into Western culture. Important points to consider in our classrooms.



# **Differentiating Teaching According to Individual Learning Style: A Justification of the Feasibility from Recent Empirical Research**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Quite a lot of research effort has been devoted to elucidating how learning style is related to success in language learning and to what extent they are related. However, there is no general agreement about what learning style consists of and no agreement how to measure it. As Ellis (1993) described, some researchers have made use of instruments borrowed from psychology, while others have developed definitions of learning style based on direct observations.

Given the uncertainty about how best to measure learning style, the findings provided by the approaches above seem to be exploratory in nature. In the first part of this essay, I shall present a selective review of early work about learning style, with no intention of suggesting that learners do best if teachers can identify and follow their preferred learning styles. I shall attempt to justify my argument that learners benefit if the instruction suits their learning styles in the light of recent empirical research (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and composition). In the second part, the focus of this essay is narrowed to provide evidence for the feasibility of differentiating teaching according to individual learning style. At the same time, the essay is organized around the hidden theme, “differentiating teaching is not a point, but rather a continuum” (Altman, P. 6).

In conclusion, learning style information can be used to improve instruction and evaluate the suitability of different teaching approaches.

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### PREVIOUS WORK ON LEARNING STYLE

Parry (1984) and Shipman (1985) have found that at least twenty different dimensions of learning styles have been identified (cited in Oxford, Hollaway & Hortony-Murillo, 1992, p. 441). Different groups of researchers used different labels about learning style and different measures for traits.

Impulsive/ Reflective Distinction	(Bruner et. al., 1956; Guilford, 1956; Kagan, 1965)
Holistic/ Serialistic	(Pask & Scott, 1971, 1972; Daniel, 1975)
Field Dependent/ Independent	(Witkin et. al., 1975; Witkin & Goodenough, 1981; Hensen & Stansfield, 1981; Day, 1984; Abraham, 1985; Chapelle & Roberts, 1986; Goodenough, 1986; Oxford, 1989; Oxford et al., 1991)
Intuitive-random/ Concrete-sequential (Sensing)	(Gregorc, 1979; Myers & McCaulley, 1985)
Visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile	(Dunn, 1983, 1984; Raid, 1987; Willing, 1988)
Comprehension/ Operation learning	(Clahsen, 1985)
Communicative-oriented/ Norm-oriented	(Clahsen, 1985)
Experiential/ Studial (Passive/ Active)	(Dechert, 1984; Wenden, 1986; Willing, 1988)
Feeling/ Thinking	(Myers & McCaulley, 1985)
Extroverted/ Introverted	(Myers & McCaulley, 1985; Willing, 1988; Oxford et al., 1991)
Open-oriented (Perceiving)/ Closure-oriented (Judging)	(Myers & McCaulley, 1985)
Global/ Analytic	(Harshbarger et al., 1985; Ellis, 1989)

(cited in Willing, 1988, p. 56-57; Oxford, Hollaway & Horton-Murillo, 1992, p. 441-446; Raid, 1987, p. 89-90; Moody, 1988, p. 389-391; Jamieson, 1992, p. 491-493)

**ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS ARE LISTED AS FOLLOWS:**

Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT)	(Carroll & Sapon, 1957)
Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT)	(Witkin et al., 1971)
Child Rating Form	(Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974)
Learning Style Inventory (LSI)	(Dunn, Dunn & Price, 1975; Canfield & Lafferty, 1981)
Edmonds Learning Style Identification Exercise (ELSIE)	(Reinert, 1976, 1977)
Educational Cognitive Style, Cognitive Preference Inventory, Cognitive Style Interest Inventory	(Hill, 1971, 1975, 1976)
Teacher Assessment of Student Learning Styles	(Hunt, 1976)
Paragraph Completion Method (PCM)	(Hunt, 1976)
Learning Style Inventory (CE, RO, AC, AE)	(Kolb, 1976)
Transaction Ability Inventory	Gregorc, 1979)
Inventory of Learning Processes	(Schmeck, 1983)
Keirsey Temperament Sorter	(Keirsey & Bates, 1984)
Human Information Processing Survey (HIPS)	(Taggart & Torrance, 1984)
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)	(Myers & McCaulley, 1985)
Learning Channel Preference Checklist	(O'Brien, 1990)
Style Orientation Survey	(Oxford, 1991)

(cited in Willing, 1988, p. 63-69; Oxford et al., 1992, p. 451; Raid, 1987, p. 89-90)

**Corbett and Smith (1984) have come up with the problem of the reliability of such learning style instruments. No single diagnostic instruments can solve all learning problems.**

**The dimensions of learning styles above constitute continua. That is, these are tendencies rather than absolutes. Learners can fall at any point on them. The mental set is not immutable. Studies of the “good language learners” (Rubin, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978; Reiss, 1981, 1985) have tried to identify those learning tactics that result in rapid learning and higher levels of achievement.**

## **ISSUES RELATED TO THE USE OF LEARNING STYLE INFORMATION**

Once learning style profiles are available, how can they be used to improve instruction? As Raid (1987) has indicated, two issues arise in related to the use of the data:

- 1. How to match students' learning style with teaching style**
- 2. Whether learning style preferences are malleable**

To solve these two problems, some learning style theorists have suggested that students should be exposed to teaching style that is consistent with their learning style. Hunt (1979) and Dunn (1984) have urged teachers to identify individual learning style and determine various approaches to achieve interaction (cited in Willing, 1988, p. 88). Learners with varying degrees of learning style may excel in different situations. The matching has been tried in both second language instruction (Wesche, 1981) and instruction in other subject areas (Pask, 1976) with some success.

Other studies like Reinert's (1976) have reported that learning style, like aptitude, is immutable. It remains consistent regardless of the environment. More recent research (Dorsey & Pierson, 1984) has demonstrated that age, prior work experience and culture influence learning style. Tarone (1979) has found that style shifting occurs when the same person responds to different context. The results from O'Malley and Chamot (1985) have shown that second language learners can improve their language performance by being trained to use specific strategies (cited in Willing, 1988, p. 65).

Given the complexity of identifying learning style and the reliability of learning style instruments, teachers have no control over these factors. It is not clear whether learning style is teachable or how learning preferences might affect the operation of a class.

## **THE FEASIBILITY OF DIFFERENTIATING TEACHING: FLEXIBLE, MATCHING AND COMPENSATORY APPROACHES**

Based on the issues above, the feasibility of differentiating teaching is further discussed in the light of differential degree: flexibility, matching and remedy.

## **FLEXIBLE APPROACH**

Because of the range of learning style likely to be present in any group of classroom learners and the absence of reliable instruments for determining learners' learning style, several researchers, like Hunt (1976) and Dunn (1979), have concluded that "most reasonable recommendation is for a high degree of teacher flexibility" (cited in Willing, 1988, p. 56). According to Willing's (1988) project research, "teachers are able to respond appropriately to a broad spectrum of learning style differences if the need for that diversified response is clear" (p. 88).

For many years, methodologists have stressed the importance of providing a variety of classroom activities. As Brown (1987) pointed out, FI/D are not in complementary distribution, and students are able to exercise both FI/D learning styles depending on the task in which they are engaged. Therefore, it is not appropriate to assume that all students will benefit from the same kind of L2 instruction.

Trautmann (1979) has also defined "differentiated teaching" as planned differences in instructional style (cited in Willing, 1988, p. 81). If teachers can show students the versatility of learning style by providing experiences in different learning styles may better allow students to meet the demands of academic teaching approaches. Friedman and Alley (1984) have suggested that teacher guidance can motivate students to identify and utilize their preferred learning styles.

### **MATCHING APPROACH**

1. Willing (1988) has described that teachers can differentiate their students in terms of general approach to learning based on the following polarities:
2. Prefers to work alone/ Work with others
3. Likes a step-by-step presentation/ A holistic presentation
4. Wants actively to organize own material/ Wants passively for teachers to explain the material
5. Rely on the spoken word/ the written word
6. Focus on the learning itself/ Immersion in realistic situations when learning is embedded
7. Prefers a structured form/ an unstructured form (p. 23-24)
8. Once different learner types have been identified, as Willing pointed out, “any learning arrangement should be structured to permit differentiated teaching approaches to be carried on in an ongoing way within that arrangement” (p. 169). This can be done through matching.

According to Rivers and Melvin’s (1981) definition, matching means that instruction is individualized for groups of students with similar learning styles in such a way that the student has the opportunity of utilizing those cognitive skills in which he or she is particularly strong. Rivers and Melvin (1981) have assumed that this will enable students to perform the task more efficiently and as a result, learning will be more efficient. This matching approach is also advocated by Nunney (1977), Lepke (1977) and Reinert (1976) for foreign language learning (cited in Rivers & Melvin, 1981, p. 89). Ellis (1989) has also defined that “matching is best achieved by the teacher catering for individual needs during the moment-by-moment process of teaching (i.e. by emphasizing group dynamics and offering a range of activity types)” (p. 260).

### **COMPENSATORY APPROACH**

The other way of incorporating learning style information into instruction is remediation, an approach advocated by Birckbichler and Omaggio (1978). Instead of tailoring instruction to fit a student’s particular strength, the student is assigned special activities for those aspects of the learning task where his or her skills are weak.

For example, one set of activities can be designed to complement the learning strengths of a student with an analytical cognitive style, while another set of

activities can be designed to complement the learning strengths of a student with a global cognitive style.

Salomen (1972) has proposed two different models of matching: one by complementarity or compensation and one by similarity (a compensatory mode or a preferential mode). According to Salomen, the notion here is that matching may be either filling gaps or remedying deficiencies in the learner's particular set of abilities. Either preferential mode or compensatory mode may be appropriate in particular circumstances. Teachers can conduct the classes differentially, in ways intended to match the predominant learning styles (either by similarity or by complementarity, as the case requires) (cited in Willing, 1988, p. 169). As Rivers and Melvin (1981) have commented, "students, once aware of their own weak points, may be able to consciously plan compensatory working strategies" (p. 90).

***OXFORD, HOLLAWAY AND HORTON-MURILLO (1992) HAVE OFFERED SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPTIMIZING STYLES:***

1. Assess the language styles of both teachers and students. Using more than one of the instruments mentioned above to measure learning style will give a more complete picture than employing just one. Teachers can also rely on learners' own report of their preferences in the various aspects of the learning process.
2. Alter the teaching style in order to create teacher-student matching with the wide range of activities. Oxford, Ehrman and Lavine (1991) have suggested that teachers can change their own styles to provide a variety of activities to meet the needs of many different learning styles.
3. Provide activities with different groupings. Grouping learners into broad types makes differentiated teaching more possible. Teachers can put students into groups according to their learning style from time to time. As Oxford, Hollaway and Horton-Murillo (1992) have indicated, teachers can try style-alike groups for greatest efficiency and use style-varied groups for generating greater flexibility. The former makes learning more lively, while the latter ensures the teamwork task is done in good order. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1986) have implied that co-operative learning can accommodate a variety of learning styles.
4. Include different learning styles in lesson plans. By providing the setting and the activities where all learners can find some portion of the class that particularly appeals to them, teachers can reduce the fear or anxiety of students.
5. Encourage changes in students' behaviour and stretch their learning styles. Suggestions about incorporating strategy instruction into regular

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language classroom activities are given in abundance by Wenden and Rubin (1987), O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and Oxford (1990).

6. Change the way in which style conflicts are viewed. Teachers can help students view different learning styles as opportunities for growth. In this way, students can continue to learn from the experience and increase their own self-awareness of style (cited in Oxford et al., 1992, p. 452-453).

### **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH CONCERNING TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES: A JUSTIFICATION FROM THE RESULTS**

#### ***INCOMPATIBILITY/COMPATIBILITY***

Composition researchers Carrell and Monroe (1993) used MBTI to investigate how compatible teaching and leaning styles were in writing classes with college students at various levels of proficiency and had the following findings.

ESL writers who were Intuitive, Feeling and Perceiving (as opposed to Sensing, Thinking and Judging) tended to use greater lexical diversity in their writing. Thinking students preferred a writing process driving toward structure. Therefore, in Carrell and Monroe's study, the Thinking students were enrolled in very traditional composition classes, structured to encourage outlining to generate ideas and presenting specific types of analytical writing tasks. To their expectation, there was a positive relationship between Thinking students' preference style and their success with the traditional instruction they were given. The negative correlation with the Feeling scale might be interpreted as a basic incompatibility of Feeling students' style with the traditional composition instruction they were receiving. Carrell and Monroe (1993) have suggested that "Feeling students may need different approaches to writing instruction in order to benefit from instruction" (p. 160).

#### ***MISMATCH/MATCH***

In a study on student-teacher style differences in a multicultural tertiary ESL setting, Wallace and Oxford (1992) found that, in the writing area, style differences between students and teachers consistently and negatively affected student grades, and style congruence positively influenced student grades. In reading and grammar, style differences negatively affected grades for a significant number of students. Wallace and Oxford (1992) interpreted this as

evidence that students do better when their cognitive preferences match the instructional style.

### ***MONOTONY/ VERSATILITY***

Sanaoui (1995) undertook research concerning comparisons of profiles of learners' approaches to vocabulary learning. His research assessed the extent to which vocabulary learning by L2 learners varied with (a) the level of proficiency (b) a structured and unstructured approach to vocabulary learning (c) an analytic and experiential approach to classroom instruction. Results indicated that learners with a structured approach were more successful in retaining vocabulary taught in their classes. Furthermore, a structured approach was found to be more effective for both beginning and advanced learners. From the research, Sanaoui (1995) had the following report:

1. Some of the learners seem to learn best when the language is seen in graphic form; others learn best when they hear the language often. Many perform and remember better if they can analyze structure. Some learn best inductively, others deductively. Many prefer mainly to imitate. A few seem to learn best when randomly exposed to a large variety of stimuli (p. 26).
2. The report above has shown that not every kind of drill appeals to everyone.

### ***VARYING TEACHING STYLES***

Elliott (1995) studied FI/D and Hemispheric Specialization in relation to pronunciation accuracy in Spanish as a foreign language. His findings that RT hemispheric specialization is related to pronunciation accuracy in certain tasks supported Leaver's (1989) speculation that right-specialized individuals have better pronunciation (cited in Elliott, 1995, p. 367). Oxford (1989) has stated that the left hemisphere of the brain deals with language through analysis and abstraction, while the right hemisphere recognizes language as more global auditory or visual patterns (cited in Elliot, 1995, p. 366). Elliott's results also supported his belief that by varying mode of pronunciation instruction, teachers can appeal to the students with distinctive learning styles and increase students' chances for successful mastery of the non-native phonological system.

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### **ADAPTATION**

In Ellis' (1992) investigation into the learning styles' effect on L2 acquisition, two types of learners received the same instruction (form-focused and teacher-centered). The result has shown that these two learners did manifest identifiable styles of learning. One learner was exclusively experiential in her approach; the other was more balanced. The experiential learner adapted her style to the requirements of the course, accompanied by stress and tension. The other learner was equipped with the abilities needed to cope with the instruction. The learner adapted because of her strong instrumental need to succeed. The course proved a painful experience and she was unable to perform effectively in a communicative task. The result indicated that her chosen learning style might not have been the style she was naturally suited to. Ellis (1993) has commented that "learners do benefit if the instruction suits their learning style, but if it does not, they may be able to adapt, at some cost to their own ease of mind and the type of proficiency they develop" (p. 187).

From recent empirical research described above, it has shown that most students do have a preference for one style over the other. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers and students understand how these styles operate on an individual level and how the methodologies teachers employ tend to tap skills associated with one style over the other.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Previous studies of learning style aimed to identify learner characteristics, which influence an individual's approach to and mastery of a learning task. Most work in this area was based on the assumption that individuals would be able to learn with "their best abilities" (Diller, 1976, p. 350), given the differentiated teaching approaches, which accommodate learner style differences.

Recent research has been done in an effort to test the effects of differential teaching treatment on learners according to learning style (Willing, 1988, p. 15). Learning style assessment instruments, skill tests, cognitive tasks, observation, interviews and questions on student background, attitudes and preferences for particular learning environments are helpful in defining the instructional

situation, which will provide an optimal pedagogical match. The learning style information can be used as follows:

- 1 Teachers can adapt instructional style to students' learning style on both micro and macro scales. Cook (1996) has suggested the following:  
At a gross level, a teacher needs to cater for the factors that a class has in common. At a finer level, the teacher has to cater for the differences between individuals in the class by providing opportunities for each of them to benefit in their own way. (p. 116)**
- 2 Learning style information helps in training learners to develop greater awareness of their most efficient ways of learning and to actively seek appropriate learning conditions.**
- 3 It can be used as a resource in adjusting classroom practice to the individual needs of learners.**

**In conclusion, the feasible advice to the teacher is to provide a variety of activities and emphases; thus there will be a greater likelihood that individual preferences and learning style can be appealed to.**

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# **The Existence and Importance of Utility (Instrumental) in Non-English Students' Motivation in Studying English**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the existence of distinct motivational groups within a population of Taiwan EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. Based on previous ESL (English as a Second Language) research, this study assumed the existence of both an integrative and an instrumental motivation. A hypothesized motivation, labeled "required," was also tested for. A survey instrument was developed and completed by over 2000 Taiwan non-English majors at two educational institutions in Taiwan. This paper reports preliminary results from the first educational institution, and includes a random sub-sample of 500 responses. Exploratory factor analysis was employed to confirm the existence of each motivational group, as well as their temporal orientation (past, present, or future). Results did not support the existence of an integrative motivational group, but did find a strong required motivational group as well as an instrumental group. Lack of an integrative motivation among Taiwan EFL learners has significance for language education in Taiwan, since most EFL classroom techniques are derived directly from Western ESL theory which assumes integration as one of the main motivation. Directions for future research are discussed.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study originated from the research results of our last research cooperation published in 1998. That study concerned different attitudes and perspectives about English learning among Non-English major EFL students at Chaoyang University of Technology. We found many differences among the students of different departments---even in the same university--- in attitudes and perspectives towards English learning. That finding pointed towards the need for a better understanding of just what our students' motivations towards English learning are. Such information is fundamental to better provide our students with adequate training. This topic is extremely important because motivation is considered by many to be one of the main determining factors to success in developing a second or foreign language (34, *Language learning motivation: expanding...*). It is our belief that motivation determines the extent of active, personal involvement in L2 learning. Conversely, unmotivated students are insufficiently involved and therefore unable to develop their potential L2 skills. However, to what extent are the motivations in an EFL context similar or different from those of an ESL setting? Are needs and motivations of students from different cultures the same?

Indeed, when discussing any issue about language teaching and learning, cultural differences should contribute to the thrust of the discussion. Issues may include the differences of educational systems, learning conditions, teaching and learning styles, differences in needs for language use in the job market, and differences in the purpose for learning English.

The existence of many different attitudes and perspectives about English learning among Taiwan students raises the question of how should we teach the students from the Applied Chemistry Department, or the students from Finance? Students of different university majors show preferences for different language skills and teaching methods (Lin and Warden 1998). While many studies of English learners in Taiwan have dealt with English majors, there are far more students studying English because it is a core requirement at all Taiwan colleges and universities. What are the real needs and motivations that lay

behind these non-English major students? And what are the perspectives of the future employers of these students?

## **REBUILDING THE THEORY: WESTERN VS. EASTERN**

**Sridhar (1994) states that SLA theory needs rebuilding from the ground up, in order to have a more functionally oriented and culturally authentic theory. ‘Why do models of second language acquisition (SLA) developed in the U.S. and Western Europe treat the vast majority of L2 learners, those that learn and use an L2 in non-native contexts, as marginal? The inescapable answer seems to be that current theories are powerfully constrained by Western cultural premises...’ And when a culture does not fit the assumptions no special allowances are made.**

**Kachru (1994) and Sridhar (1994) have pointed out that the dominant acquisition theories and teaching methodologies currently taught are largely based on second language acquisition models found in North America, Britain, and Australia (hereafter referred to as NABA). Most of the data used in developing these models were taken from immigrants and international students studying in NABA, and little effort has been made to collect information from other contexts in the rest of the world (Kachru 1994: 796). The dominant L2 acquisition paradigm thus ‘leaves out vast millions of L2 users who learn and use second language in their own countries . . .’ (Sridhar 1994: 801). ‘In other words, without suitable adaptation, many of the L2 acquisition theories may be irrelevant . . .’ (Liu 1998). Dornyei (1990) has pointed out that the results obtained from second-language acquisition (SLA) contexts are not directly applicable to FLL (foreign language learning) situations. Gardner and Macintyre (1991), Ramage (1986) and others have also noted the differences in motivation toward English learning in different contexts. And as Holliday (1994a, 1994b) and Prabhu (1987) have shown, many teaching methodologies may be impractical or ineffective in Non-NABA countries.**

## **DIFFERENT CONDITIONS AND CONTEXTS**

**The factors that made English education in non-NABA countries very different from that in NABA countries can be categorized as follows:**

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### **1. *EDUCATIONAL POLICY***

As in most non-NABA countries, English language education in Asia generally takes place in state-run institutions such as elementary or secondary schools, as well as at the tertiary level. English is treated as a required academic subject, rather than as a tool for survival in business and education, as is usually the case with ESL in NABA settings.

### **2. *TRADITION***

Although there have been some changes, English teaching in most of Asia still tends to mean teaching grammar, reading, and translation. Language evaluation tests under this practice measure mainly grammatical competence (Campbell and Zhao 1993). In cultures with a long tradition of obedience to authority, a teacher is not seen as a facilitator but as a presenter of knowledge. Thus, English teaching in Asia is still dominantly teacher-centered (Campbell and Zhao 1993). While in the West, teaching is process, discovery-oriented or student-centered which often entails amounts of interaction and group work in classes whose normal size is under 20 students, other cultures simply do not have the same classroom setting.

### **3. *RESOURCES***

Limited educational resources, lack of funds and teachers have led to classrooms crowded with as many as 70 students in China (Hudson 1994) and 60 in Taiwan, with little or no audio-visual or other teaching equipment. These limitations have resulted in large numbers of students being taught in predominantly non-interactive lecture-style settings.

### **4. *CLASS TIME***

The class time per week for English is limited to about 2-4 hours, far fewer than in NABA's intensive ESL programs. Such limited class time greatly constrains the amount of information that can be covered as well as simply eliminating opportunities for students to practice using the language.

## **PURPOSE OF ENGLISH STUDY**

Before rendering assistance to our students, we should change our attitude and work hard to ascertain what is really needed by our students. Otherwise, our efforts may be in vain. Hudson's (1994: 21) reflections on the teacher training course she offered in Thailand are especially illuminating:

The course focuses on ESL because the resources and the practicum offered are in an ESL situation, not an EFL situation. Many of the students intended to use their teaching skills in an EFL situation but the differences required by the EFL situation are largely left to the students to investigate.

Although Hudson's remarks refer to a teacher training situation, it is also highly relevant to the problem of our students' needs. Besides differences in learning contexts and conditions, the needs of non-NABA students certainly are very different than their NABA counterparts.

## **MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

The study of motivation in second-language acquisition became a distinguished research topic after Gardner and Lambert (1972) published a comprehensive summary of the results of a more than ten-year-long research program. They found that success in language attainment was dependent upon the learner's affective predisposition toward the target linguistic-cultural group. This led them to conceptualize 'integrative motivation,' which reflects "a high level of drive on the part of the individual to acquire the language of a valued second-language community in order to facilitate communication with that group" (Gardner, Smythe, Clement, & Glikzman 1976, p. 199). Integrative motivation is associated with components such as "interest in foreign languages," "desire to interact with the target language community," and "attitudes toward the target language community" (Gardner, 1982). This motive is clearly distinct from a second drive, instrumental motivation, where the learner's interest in learning the foreign language is associated with the pragmatic, utilitarian benefits of language proficiency, such as a better job or a higher salary (Dornyei 1990).

Dornyei's study of 134 learners of English in Hungary, a typical European FLL environment, investigated the components of motivation in foreign-language

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learning (FLL). Findings involved learning the target language in institutional/academic settings without regularly interacting with the target language community. It was assumed that the results obtained from second-language acquisition (SLA) contexts---those in which the target language is learned at least partly embedded in the host environment---are not directly applicable to FLL situations (Dornyei 1990). Among the motivational components in his motivational construct, Dornyei postulated the following: (1) an Instrumental Motivational Subsystem, (2) an Integrative Motivational Subsystem, (3) Need for Achievement, and (4) Attributions about Past Failures (Dornyei 1990). The results of his study indicated that in mastering an intermediate target language proficiency, the Instrumental Motivational Subsystem and Need for Achievement especially, play a significant role, whereas the desire to go beyond this level is associated with integrative motives. In other words, learners with a high level of instrumental motivation and need for achievement are more likely than are others to attain an intermediate level of proficiency in the target language. On the other hand, to get beyond this level, that is, to “really learn” the target language, one has to have an integration motivation. Although these results were based upon data drawn from only one FLL situation, it is possible that the conceptualized model applies to FLL in general. Some components, however, may not be present in all FLL environments.

It is fair to interpret Dornyei’s study results as suggesting that integrative motivation might be far less relevant for foreign language learners than for those learning a second language. According to him, foreign language learners rarely have sufficient experience with the target language community to have clearly articulated attitudes toward that community, and they are therefore uncommitted to integrating with that group. Additionally, instrumental motivation and need for achievement are associated with each other, and these two factors affect foreign language students at an intermediate proficiency level and below. It seems that the motivations of foreign and second language learners are often highly disparate, and that integrative motivation is much more meaningful for second language learners, who must learn to live in the new

culture and communicate fluently in the target language, than for most foreign language learners, who are separated in space and attitude from the target culture and who rarely surpass intermediate language proficiency (Oxford and Shearin 1994).

Differences between L2 learning motivation in second and foreign language environments have been observed by numerous researchers. A second language is one that is learned in a location where that language is typically used as the main vehicle of everyday communication for most people (for instance, English being learned by a non-native speaker of that language in Singapore, in Hong Kong, or in Malaysia). The learner of the second language is surrounded by stimulation, both visual and auditory, in the target language and thus has many motivational and instructional advantages (Oxford and Shearin 1994). A foreign language is one that is learned in a place where that language is not typically used as the medium of ordinary communication (for instance, English as it is usually learned in Taiwan, in Japan, or in Korea). 'Foreign language learners are surrounded by their own native language and have to go out of their way to find stimulation and input in the target language. These students typically receive input in the new language only in the classroom and by rather artificial means, no matter how talented the teacher is' (Oxford and Shearin 1994).

The question of whether motivations differ between learners of second and foreign languages is very important and has been repeatedly discussed in recent years (1; 3; 5). We hypothesized that in the EFL situation like ours in Taiwan, at least at a tertiary level, the L2 learning motivations are to be related more with instrumental aspect rather than with integrative one.

Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) found that instrumentally motivated students spent more time in thinking about the correct answer (to the questions in an English test) than non-instrumentally motivated students when there was an opportunity to monetarily profit from learning. The results of their study support the generalization that motivation facilitates learning, and that by and large any factors that motivate an individual to learn will result in successful acquisition (cf. Gardner, 1985, p. 168). Spolsky (1989) made a similar

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observation when he pointed out that there are many possible bases for motivation. He stated: "A language may be learned for any one or any collection of practical reasons. The importance of these reasons to the learner will determine what degree of effort he or she will make, what cost he or she will pay for the learning" (p. 160).

To the list of existing motivations, we add one more: required. While somewhat alien to the majority of American's, a required foreign language is quite common in educational institutions around the world. Obviously, English is one of the languages most often required, which results in many students studying English simply because it is required. In the absence of the two previously observed motivations, one could assume that the reason for studying the foreign language is simply because it is required. But can this default state actually be a motivation, in which it helps students obtain a higher skill level? We hypothesize that Taiwan students are motivated by language learning requirements. Cultural background for why this is the case are far too complex to cover in this paper. Simply summarized, the importance English plays in a student's life is nearly entirely within the context of past, present, and future English exams that are needed to enter high school, college, university, government jobs, and even private sector jobs.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Do three distinct, measurable motivation groups exist among EFL non-major English students in Taiwan: integrative, instrumental, and required?
2. What is the relevant importance played by these motivations for EFL non-major English students?
3. Can membership in these motivational groups be predicted or influenced by actual environmental use of English in the past, present, or future?
4. Can membership in these motivational groups be predicted or influenced by expectancy factors--results of personal effort (past, present, future)

### **STUDY**

In order to investigate the existence of instrumental, integrative and required groups, a survey was created and distributed to students at two educational institutions in Taiwan. The total number of respondents numbered over 2000,

although this preliminary report focuses on the first group of 500 to complete the survey.

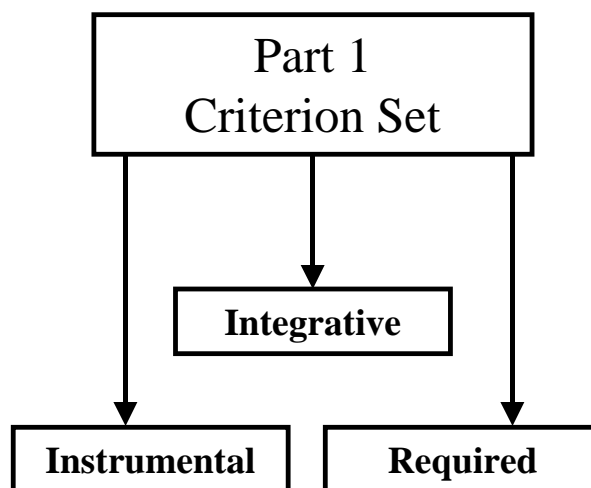
The survey was distributed to non-English majors at Chaoyang University of Technology, located in central Taiwan. Teachers in the Applied Foreign Languages department were asked to distribute the questionnaires during their required English classes. These classes are year long courses required of both first and second year university students.

The requirement for taking English is prescribed by the Ministry of Education and is not the result of decisions by individual schools. It is possible for a university to increase the required English hours, such as when the curriculum appears highly related to English use, such as for international business schools. This is not the case in the present study, however, as Chaoyang's non-English majors include chemistry, industrial design, etc.

## **SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

The questionnaire was first produced in English, then translated to Chinese. Back translation was used to confirm accuracy and make adjustments to the Chinese version. The survey was structured for use with factor analysis, with questions being grouped by the hypothesized existence of the three motivational groups (see Figure 1). A criterion set was measured by asking questions related to each of the three motivational groups.

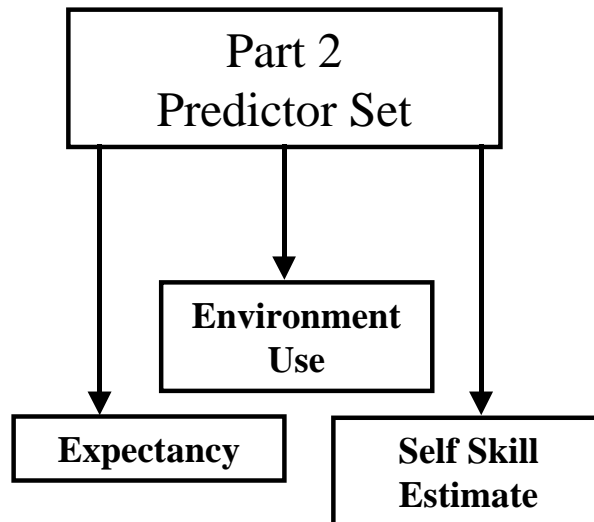
**FIGURE 1. STRUCTURE OF THE CRITERION SET**



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The remaining three sections of the survey were constructed to test influence of three factors on the criterion set. As seen in Figure 2, these factors included environmental use of English (use of English outside of class), expectancy (attitudes towards success in the target language) and self skill estimate (self rated relevant English skill score). The predictor set was further delineated temporally, by asking each question for the past, present and future. In this way, the predictor set could capture the importance, or lack there of, temporal events. For example, previous requirements for English learning may not impact a student's motivation as much as a future requirement, say entry to graduate school.

FIGURE 2. STRUCTURE OF PREDICTOR SET



## SUBJECTS

The survey was administered during the spring semester of 1999. These preliminary results report the first 500 respondents. Of the 500 surveys distributed, 442 were returned complete and usable. The remaining number were discarded mostly due to incomplete responses. summarizes information about the respondents.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Survey Respondents

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
AGE	442	19.9819	5.0453
SEX		Frequency	Percent

Valid	female	299	67.2
	male	140	31.5

## RESULTS

Factor analysis of the criterion set confirmed that two groups existed, not three. Table 2 shows that the first factor is made up of questions two, four, three, one, and five. The last two questions, six and eleven, are reflective of a required motivation, but do not clearly load on either factor. Factor one can confidently be labeled as the instrumental motivation. The second factor includes questions ten, eight, nine, seven. These questions are all from the required motivation, thus we will label factor 2 as required. Questions twelve, thirteen, and fourteen deal with integration but do not clearly load on either factor.

**TABLE 2. FACTOR ANALYSIS OF CRITERION SET (N=442)**

Survey Questions	Factor 1	Factor 2
Q2 Obtain a raise	.86	.3
Q4 Higher job security	.81	.38
Q3 Change job easily	.81	.34
Q1 Higher paying job	.80	.28
Q5 Part-time consulting jobs	.69	.48
Q6 Pass University exam	.61	.55
Q11 Travel overseas	.58	.57
Q8 Pass elective class	.24	.81
Q10 Complete education	.23	.77
Q9 Job exam	.41	.77
Q7 Pass required class	.39	.75
Q12 Social contacts	.42	.63
Q13 Social prestige	.48	.61
Q14 Understand books, magazines & movies	.5	.58

Question not clearly loading on any factor were discarded from further analysis. The remaining questions were retested ( purified varimax rotated results can be seen in Table 3. Eigenvalues for the two factors were 6.47 for the instrumental factor and 1.02 for the required factor.

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**TABLE 3. PURIFIED FACTORS**

Survey Questions	Instrumental	Required
Q2 Obtain a raise	.87	.29
Q4 Higher job security	.83	.37
Q3 Change job easily	.82	.34
Q1 Higher paying job	.82	.29
Q5 Part-time consulting jobs	.69	.47
Q8 Pass elective class	.26	.85
Q10 Complete education	.25	.84
Q7 Pass required class	.40	.77
Q9 Job exam	.43	.75
Q12 Social contacts	.44	.60

Predictor sets were next factor analyzed. Environmental use revealed three factors, as seen in Table 4, but these factors did not align perfectly with the three temporal dimensions of the questions. Questions concerning the past and present loaded on factor 1, while questions concerning the future loaded on factor 3. Loading onto factor 2 are the three versions of the same question, 24, 25, and 26, which concerns the actual use of English with friends, family, and/or associates. It would appear that this question does not reflect any temporal relationship. In fact, the reason for this question creating its own factor may be that the opportunity for the respondents to actually use English with real people is highly limited in Taiwan. For purification of the measures, questions not aligning with either temporal factors were eliminated from further consideration.

**TABLE 4. FACTOR ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENT USE SET (N=442)**

Survey Questions	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Q15 Previous use of Eng. skills	.83	.16	.12
Q16 Present use of Eng. skills	.83	.1	.27
Q18 Previously study these skills in a cram school	.74	.27	.21
Q21 Previously study these skills in an elective class	.69	.24	.4
Q19 Presently study these skills in a cram school	.67	.27	.15
Q22 Presently study these skills in an elective class	.7	.244	.42
Q25 Presently used these skills with people	.30	.91	.08
Q24 Previously used these skills with people	.31	.88	.04
Q26 Future will use these skills with people	.12	.8	.36
Q23 Future will study these skills in an elective class	.22	.19	.80
Q17 Future use of Eng. skills	.20	0.	.75
Q20 Future will study these skills in a cram school	.27	.19	.67

**TABLE 5. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Q15	443	1.00	7.00	3.8315	1.3687
Q16	442	1.00	7.00	3.9055	1.3695
Q17	442	1.00	7.00	5.1338	1.1804
Q18	434	1.00	7.00	3.9803	1.3389
Q19	385	1.00	7.00	3.2862	1.6652
Q20	431	1.00	7.00	4.9318	1.5007
Q21	438	1.00	7.00	4.0186	1.4183
Q22	431	1.00	7.00	3.9825	1.3786
Q23	430	1.00	7.00	4.8056	1.4614
Q24	429	1.00	7.00	2.7491	1.6124
Q25	429	1.00	7.00	2.8019	1.5622
Q26	429	1.00	7.00	3.7981	1.5567

**Valid N (listwise) 369**

**After purification, two factors emerged; factor 1 was labeled as past/present orientation while factor 2 was labeled future orientation (see Table 6). Expectancy measures formed a single factor only. This result would suggest that students do not see the past, present, or future differently when viewing their success with the English language. Since skill was only a single measure, it was not factor analyzed.**

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**TABLE 6. PURIFIED FACTOR ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENT USE SET (N=442)**

	Past/Present	Future
Q15 Previous use of Eng. Skills	.81	.18
Q16 Present use of Eng. Skills	.79	.30
Q18 Previously study these skills in a cram school	.778	.25
Q19 Presently study these skills in a cram school	.74	.14
Q21 Previously study these skills in an elective class	.73	.4
Q22 Presently study these skills in an elective class	.68	.45
Q23 Future will study these skills in an elective class	.22	.84
Q17 Future use of Eng. skills	.20	.8
Q20 Future will study these skills in a cram school	.30	.69

### FACTOR CORRELATION

After factor purification, correlation analysis was run to test the relationships among the resulting factors. All of the significant correlation measures were positive in direction of interaction. The highest correlation was between expectancy and skill. This relationship makes sense in the context of students with higher self rated skill levels must also have high expectancy of success with the language. The required variable did not correlate positively or negatively with the instrumental measure. This is most likely due to the fact that only two factors were derived from the data. Required did, however, correlate highly with the future orientation. This finding is somewhat of a surprise, as it was predicted that a future orientation would correlate with an instrumental orientation. This was the case, but much less strong.

**TABLE 7. CORRELATION MATRIX OF FACTORS**

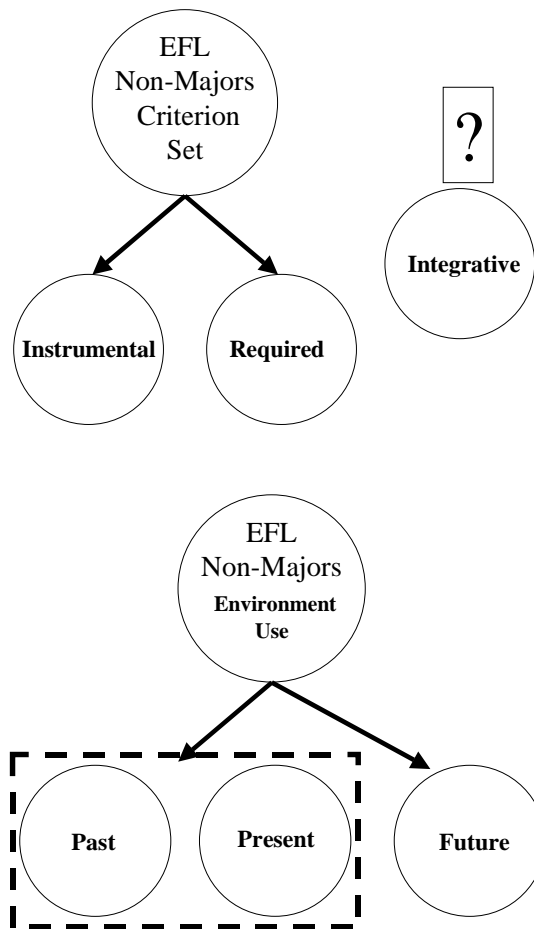
	Instrumental	Required	Future	Past/Present	Expect	Skill
Instrumental	1.000					
Required	.000	1.000				
Future	.202**	.420**	1.000			
Past/Present	-.088	.135**	-.002	1.000		
Expect	.041	.224**	.456**	.457**	1.000	
Skill	-.030	.097*	.236**	.412**	.675**	1.000

\*  $p < .05$  \*\* $P < .01$

**DISCUSSION**

This preliminary study has shown the existence of two motivational groups and two temporal orientations (see Figure 3) in Taiwan EFL environment. Most notable is the absence of an integration group. This finding is significant in that EFL instruction in Taiwan is highly informed by imported ESL theory. Teachers returning from ESL education training in the West, may actually be missing the central motivation of their students.

**FIGURE 3. FACTOR GROUPINGS CONFIRMED**



There are two major questions raised by this finding. First, are students ill served by the integration orientation used in EFL education? The environment in many Asian EFL settings precludes any meaningful opportunities for English use with native speakers of English. This does not mean that the language is not important, but that the importance is not centered on social interaction with

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Westerners. Students who enter a class in Taiwan learn social conversations that must seem very removed from their reality.

Secondly, does a requirement motivation qualify as a motivation that can be taken advantage of in EFL teaching. If this motivation is simply a default motivation that exist in the absence of other more effective forms of motivation, then this study's findings would appear to report that Taiwan schools and teachers have not been effective in their efforts. On the other hand, if this is a true motivation that can be effectively used to improve learning, then this study points to a direction very different than that generally accepted in the West. It is very plausible that the cultural background of students in Taiwan have oriented them towards an appreciation, or at least some type of conditioning, that predisposes them to being sensitive to requirements.

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## Section3: Teaching Culture

Culture is at the center of understanding, and misunderstanding, relationships among people. What appear to be small differences between cultures with somewhat common histories can lead to many misunderstandings and conflict. The difference between Chinese culture and Western culture (take your pick of nearly any topic), is so large that it often defies definition. We often observe, however, a dangerous assumption that the many surface similarities, based on economic success, technological progress, and just plain commercialism, signal a kind of global culture.

While there are certain global features to living in the modern world, assuming differences among cultures have disappeared would indeed be an error. As many multinational companies have discovered, there is not just one way to act (unless you want to fail), thus leading to the new business motto of *think globally, act locally*.

With behaviors built upon the foundation of culture, the AFL department must pay attention to improving students' understanding of foreign cultures, as well as their own. Edward Danison introduces what are the numerous possibilities in teaching culture as well as what makes up culture. Practical guidelines are covered and should prove extremely useful for developing AFL departments in Taiwan.

Angelika Mayer Loo points out the very close link between language and culture: one cannot be understood without the other. The importance of applying such an understanding is made clear in the business setting of multi-cultural Europe. All this leads Loo to some very practical and useful suggestions for how to handle culture training in the classroom.



# Teaching culture in the Applied Foreign Languages Department

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study centers on the culture component in the Applied Foreign Languages Departments in which culture is treated as a course in its own right. Four approaches to the culture class are described: 1) literature focus; 2) manners and customs focus; 3) language focus/linguistic analysis; 4) focus on self-awareness/cultural awareness. Regardless of the approach taken in the culture class, this paper posits that the study of culture should begin with a number of foundational concepts derived from social sciences. These foundational concepts are summarized in six instructional goals: 1) awareness, 2) analytical tools from social and behavioral science, 3) cultural universals, 4) cultural particulars, 5) an approach to comparison and conflict, and 6) intercultural competence.

## INTRODUCTION

It is assumed in this paper that readers have a background in TEFL or Applied Linguistics, but not necessarily in human/social sciences such as Cultural Anthropology or Intercultural Communication. The discussion here is especially relevant to teachers of courses dealing specifically with culture, but should also be of interest to teachers of any facet of English language. Language and culture are inextricably bound together, and it is argued that awareness of culture (as defined below) should permeate language teaching and learning.

## TERMS

1. *The culture component* is a catchall term used here to refer to the courses and content in Applied Foreign Languages Department (AFLD) curricula where culture is dealt with explicitly. A survey of fourteen AFLD curricula turns up these course titles:
  1. Popular Culture (通俗文化)
  2. Cross-cultural Awareness (跨文化認知)
  3. Survey of European and American Culture (歐美文化概論)
  4. Language and Culture (語言與文化)
  5. Western Culture (or Western Civilization) (西洋文化)
  6. International Protocol (or International Etiquette) (國際禮儀)

In addition, departments surveyed (Lin 1998) have literature-related courses which may deal with culture more or less explicitly: Comparative Literature, American Novel, (Readings in / Introduction to) Western Literature, and Greek Mythology.

2. *Cross-cultural* vs. *intercultural*: These terms are often treated synonymously, but in the field of Intercultural Communication, a distinction is made such as in L.S. Harms' (1973) definition: "The term cross-cultural is reserved... for the systematic comparison of two or more cultures" (p. 40). Cross-cultural *communication*, then, takes place between formal representatives of two static cultures, such as in international diplomatic relations. Intercultural communication, on the other hand, 「is participant communication...The participants exchange information and form unique associations or relationships; in a word, they engage in intercultural *interchange*」 (p. 41). Intercultural communication is a dynamic process in which culturally dissimilar participants co-operatively construct meanings.

As we use the terms here, *cross-cultural* refers to conceptualizing and studying (comparing and contrasting) cultural distinctiveness; *intercultural* refers to interacting and communicating across cultures. A *cross-cultural encounter* is a

person's initial contact with people, ideas, or things from a foreign culture; in this encounter, participants represent their respective cultures. The interaction that ensues from this contact is *intercultural communication*.

3. *Awareness*: Writers in the field of language teaching often use *cultural awareness* as a synonym for *cultural knowledge* or specific knowledge about particular cultures. This usage reflects an approach to culture as a set of materials, behaviors, institutions, etc., which accompany the language under study. Rebecca M. Valette, for example, on the subject of "testing culture," writes:

As students progress through a foreign language program, it is expected that they will increase their awareness of the culture or cultures characteristic of the speakers of the language under study. This broadened awareness may touch on all aspects of culture: the people's way of life as well as the geographical, historical, economic, artistic, and scientific aspects of the target society (1977, p. 182).

Knowledge of these surface aspects of culture is essential for foreign language and culture competence, and should constitute a major portion of the AFLD culture component content. However, there is a deeper dimension of culture—a "collective programming of the mind" (Hofstede 1991, p. 5)—that may remain *out-of-awareness* even after students demonstrate a thorough knowledge of surface culture.

*Cultural awareness* is defined here as a kind of awakening to a hidden dimension in which we are perpetually immersed (Hall, 1959; 1966). This dimension is the "cultural unconscious" in which are rooted perceptions of time, space, activity, and relationships, as well as attitudes, values, and beliefs. Edward T. Hall writes:

All of my books deal with the *structure of experience as it is molded by culture*, those deep, common, unstated experiences which members of a given culture share, which they communicate without knowing, and which form the backdrop against which all other events are judged... Most of culture lies hidden and is outside voluntary control, making up the warp and weft of human existence... *people cannot act or interact at all in any meaningful way except through the medium of culture* (1966, p. x; p. 188).

Awareness of these "deep, common, unstated experiences" is usually not necessary until different cultures come into contact. In cross-cultural encounters, awareness of the cultural dimension becomes necessary not only for competent

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interpersonal interaction, but also for understanding one's own emotional responses when confronted with things foreign or new.

*Self-awareness* is a means to cultural awareness: the individual is a product of culture, and understanding one's self on emotional, nonverbal levels—taking the self as a “cultural specimen”—will reveal culture's pervasive influence. Self-awareness is also a first step toward the cultivation of *empathy*—a trait necessary for effective intercultural communication.

In sum, *cultural awareness* is the realization that culture influences everything people think, say, and do; it is awareness that every person, object, and event has a cultural dimension which is usually not perceived until different cultures are juxtaposed.

### **THE CULTURE COMPONENT IN THE APPLIED FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**

The first Applied Foreign Languages Department above the secondary school level opened at Kao Yuan Junior College in the fall of 1993. Designers of the curriculum included a required culture component called “A Survey of World Cultures” (世界文化概論), later renamed “Language and Culture” (語言與文化). Curriculum planner Chweenmei Lin recognized that the study of language is also the study of culture, and as such, study of culture should be a course in its own right. The purpose of culture study, furthermore, is to enlarge students' “global vision”<sup>1</sup> (Lin 1997).

University foreign language department curricula have a culture component focused on world literature, art, mythology, and the like. This is necessary knowledge in liberal arts education; however, it does not prepare the student specifically for intercultural communication. Certainly literature, art, and

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“「世界文化概論」〔今名「語言與文化」〕：文化是人類活動的縮影，語言是人類活動的工具，也就是說學習語言也是學習文化的一部份，而瞭解其他語言，更可能刺激語言學習的趣味和開拓人生的視野” (Lin 1997, p.3)

mythology are the products of cultures, but what is often overlooked—yet far more significant—is that the student is a product of a culture. When this is not brought to light, students fluent in foreign languages are not prepared for the inevitable conflicts and misunderstandings inherent in encounters with foreign people and ideas.

Learning a set of cultural behaviors (such as table manners, taboos, polite customs, etc.) is very useful, but only scratches the surface of the cross-cultural encounter. Manners and customs are highly situational, and to teach the appropriate cultural behavior for every situation is quite impossible; a focus on manners and customs can easily lead to stereotypes and rigid notions of foreign cultures. Underneath manners and customs are attitudes, beliefs, and values—these are the foundations of behavior. Learning these is the beginning of cultural awareness.

The specific curricular content of the AFLD is still being formed. At this point in the evolution of the AFLD curriculum, schools are choosing a specialization such as translation, tourism, journalism, international trade, etc. Foreign language is then applied to this focus or specialty. In any case, the application of culture learning to these areas of focus is the same: foreign language is used primarily to interact with foreign people. Students need a foundation in intercultural communication. The culture component in the curriculum presents an opportunity to begin laying this foundation.

### ***BEYOND A PHRASEBOOK UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE***

The culture component at the college, institute of technology, or junior college level is Taiwanese students' first intensive exposure to the field. It certainly is not their first exposure to things foreign. Movies, music, television and other media, as well as foreign teachers in cram schools, foreign laborers in the neighborhood, and other bearers of things exotic have given students a wide variety of impressions—stereotypes—which make up their schematic knowledge of “us” and “them.” In this sense they are false beginners: learners with “phrasebook” knowledge of foreign culture. Like learners of “survival English,” reciting phrases and performing simple functions, giving the appearance of competence,

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students are not conversant in culture. Much of this phrasebook knowledge needs to be modified and even unlearned.

There is no shortage of anecdotal culture teaching. Interesting facts about manners and customs often accompany the four skills. But a comprehensive approach to culture—one encompassing history, geography, social organization, etc.—is lacking; moreover, the invisible “cultural grammar” is neglected. Students graduate from foreign language departments with hands full of pieces of culture without a coherent understanding of the fundamental nature of culture and how it is part and parcel of the languages they speak. The primary purpose of the culture component in higher education is to dig to the roots and lay a foundation encompassing the key issues in intercultural interaction. What follows in this paper is an attempt to define those key issues.

### **SOME APPROACHES TO TEACHING CULTURE CURRENTLY IN USE**

Before we outline the foundations of culture study, let us briefly examine four approaches currently being used in AFLD culture classes, which are summarized as 1. Literature focus, 2. Manners and customs focus, 3. Language focus/linguistic analysis, and 4. Cultural awareness through self-awareness. The study of culture requires a cultural object; these approaches flow from the objects that are available: (1) foreign literature, (2) textbooks focused on surface culture, (3) studies of linguistic analysis, and (4) the student as cultural being.

#### **1. *LITERATURE FOCUS***

Perhaps no resource is as rich an object for culture study as target language literature. Within literature (classics, novels, essays, comic books, etc.) are encapsulated the manners, customs, attitudes, beliefs, and values of the writers and the places and times in which they live. A study of literature seems the most fruitful place to begin to capture the essence of culture. Yet while literature provides examples of cultural phenomena, it does not come with explications of what makes it culturally coherent discourse. Literature springs from a cultural context that is hidden in the text.

To get at the cultural context that makes discourse meaningful, we need to draw upon the social sciences (sociology, social and cultural psychology, anthropology, ethnology, etc.) for conceptualizations of cultural patterns. For instance, Robinson Crusoe may be taken in terms of literary criticism as an allegory for 19<sup>th</sup> century Western imperialism, the adventures of Crusoe paralleling imperialist exploits, and the tone of the author representing the view of the times that European colonizers were brave and resourceful men. But on a broader cultural plane, the story illustrates Western values of independence, subjugation of nature, and orientation to action which underlie many Western cultural patterns; these stand in contrast to Chinese values of interdependence, harmony with nature, and orientation to being. These concepts come from the social sciences (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961).

In short, according to H. Ned Seelye, in the study of culture, social science is the source, and literature provides examples. “Literature can best be seen in the present context as illustrating the cultural patterns of a society once the patterns have been identified by the methods of the social sciences...*Culture cannot be dealt with as a series of disconnected footnotes to literature.*” (1993, p.18). Moreover, cultures change over time, but the printed word does not. Social sciences give a diachronic view of cultural patterns—the big picture of culture.

## **2. MANNERS AND CUSTOMS FOCUS**

Manners and customs (and artifacts) are the visible part of culture; they are particular pieces of a whole culture. There are many resources available for study of this surface aspect of culture: tour books, etiquette books, guides to American manners and customs, and so forth. The same may be said for the manners and customs approach to culture as for the literature approach: the particulars are excellent examples of target culture behavior, but do not provide a comprehensive scheme in which to integrate culture knowledge.

Manners and customs are often rooted in broader cultural themes. Take the American custom of greeting a teacher for example: a teacher is usually greeted by a student with a polite title, “Ms., Mrs., Mr., Dr., or Professor,” followed by a surname (or in some cases, simply by his/her first name). In Chinese culture, the

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greeting may include the title, “Teacher, Master, Dr., or Professor,” but not “Ms., Mrs., or Mr.,” but not his/her first name. This should be rudimentary cultural knowledge for Chinese learners of American English. But where a focus on manners and customs falls short is in the potential misconceptions Chinese students may have of the kind of respect due teachers in American society. It may be reasoned that if a teacher is called “Ms., Mrs., or Mr. (小姐、太太、先生),” their status is somewhat lower than their Chinese counterparts—a misguided and oversimplified conclusion. This opens up the topic of cultural notions of authority, status, and respect, which can only be adequately treated with analytical tools from the social sciences.

In the culture class, a focus on fragmented manners and customs without prior development of a fuller flavor of the whole culture is like teaching geography without maps or atlases. Students may learn a lot of things about a culture, but cannot see how they all fit together in the larger scheme of things.

### **3. LANGUAGE FOCUS/LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS**

Language, and what people do with it, should be a primary object of study in the culture class. The widely accepted “soft version” of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis—the claim that language filters perception and the way people categorize experience—suggests that linguistic analysis is a direct route to culture learning. For instance, gathering examples of the linguistic environment surrounding a particular word or concept will reveal semantic connotations and offer insights into cultural values. Studies in contrastive rhetoric (Kaplan 1966; Connor 1996), furthermore, uncover rhetorical conventions and open a window to languages as cultural phenomena.

A good example of a language focus in the AFLD culture class is provided by Judith Yi-yun Chen in Language and Culture: Lesson planning and case studies (1998). Chen presents considerable personal research data for three lessons centering on analysis of: 1) idiomatic expressions used by Taiwanese college students, 2) folk/popular Chinese song lyrics, and 3) contrast between English and Chinese passive voice. In the first and second lessons, Chen shows that idiomatic expressions “serve as a helpful index of the youth culture” (p.7), and

that song lyrics “are embedded with ‘signifying codes’ that reveal general statements” about a culture (p.18). In the third lesson, she notes that contrastive analysis “enables the learner to come to grips with textual problems in a decoding process that requires thorough understanding of not only the second language but also the culture [out of] which it is evolved” (p.52).

Interestingly, Chen approaches culture from the student’s immediate surroundings, thus making the subject relevant and interesting to students, and also promoting the awareness that the study of culture is not merely the study of foreign ways. These lessons sensitize students to the cultural dimension of language. In subsequent lessons, as foreign language and culture is treated with similar linguistic analysis, students will approach it with greater empathy.

Unfortunately, there are no textbooks available aimed at Chinese learners of English that deal specifically with language and culture in the vein described above. Teachers of culture in the AFLD are left to gather course material from various interdisciplinary sources, as exemplified in the work of Judith Chen.

Speech acts are culture-bound norms for interaction, and cross-cultural comparison of them will yield much cultural insight. But again we find a paucity of classroom resources for the teacher of culture. Sociolinguist Nessa Wolfson wrote in 1981, “Communicative competence is now widely recognized as an important goal of language teaching, and a good deal has been written [in academic literature] concerning the necessity of making knowledge about sociolinguistic rules a part of classroom instruction in ESL...” (p.112). Nearly two decades hence, we find most ESL conversation textbooks are organized around language functions or speech acts, and yet there is still little available that systematically explains the cultural background behind the speech acts presented. Harder still to find are EFL texts written specifically for native Chinese speakers that treat areas of Chinese-English communicative interference.

In the past decade or so there has been an increased emphasis on “language in context” in ESL/EFL textbooks. Unfortunately again, most of these materials are intended for learners living in the country where the language is spoken. Even

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though many texts include scattered “culture notes” or “intercultural awareness tips,” these books require a lot more cultural explanations when they are used outside the country for which they are intended. This is another good reason to have a course (or courses) devoted solely to culture; textbooks in themselves require cultural explication.

### **4. CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH SELF-AWARENESS**

In the foregoing three approaches we have pointed out the interdisciplinary nature of culture teaching and learning. Seelye, cited above, says, “Culture cannot be dealt with as a series of disconnected footnotes” to whatever cultural object we choose to study. Social sciences provide the backdrop against which a culture takes a comprehensible form, and cultural objects such as literature, manners and customs, speech acts and linguistic studies provide illustrations. The fourth approach to culture, a focus on cultural awareness through self-awareness, starts from the proposition that people are products of culture, and through interdisciplinary (anthropological, sociological, and psychological) means, one can discover the cultural dimension in which one lives, and transfer that awareness to other world cultures.

This is the approach taken in the first textbook written specifically for AFLD culture classes, Cross-cultural Encounters: Foundations in cultivating cultural awareness for Taiwanese students of American English (Danison 1998), the outline of which forms the final section of this paper. This textbook is intended to serve as a complement to the culture class—a backdrop of concepts from social science against which literature, manners and customs, speech acts, etc., may be presented.

### **NEEDS ANALYSIS: ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER-NESS**

What do AFLD students really need in terms of culture learning? The answer to this question should inform the goals of the AFLD culture component. As noted above, the culture component should touch on “all aspects of culture: the people’s way of life as well as the geographical, historical, economic, artistic, and scientific aspects of the target society” (Valette, *ibid.*). Furthermore, informal surveys of students indicate a desire to learn strange manners and customs,

gestures, idioms, foreign holiday celebrations, and how to avoid cultural faux pas. These are interesting and useful learning, and should not be neglected. However, intercultural conflict goes far deeper than using the wrong fork for salad or putting one's elbows on the table. Conflicts rooted in misunderstanding of differences, left unresolved, may color one's whole attitude toward a foreign language and culture. At the most basic level, foreign language students need to be prepared to encounter "other-ness."

### ***TOWARD AN EMPATHETIC APPROACH TO OTHER CULTURES***

Hanvey (cited in Damen, 1987) has identified three levels of "cross-cultural informational awareness," i.e., three ways of approaching information about another culture. The first and strongest impressions are made at the first level from highly noticeable, superficial aspects of another culture. These impressions spawn stereotypes such as "Americans are violent people, and they all have guns." At the second level, highly contrastive traits come into focus, and comparisons are made; for example, "American young people are not as closely tied to their families as Chinese young people." At both of these levels, there is tacit ethnocentrism: "Americans are violent people. They all have guns (they all wear bullet-proof vests, but we Chinese don't have to);" "American young people are not as closely tied to their families as Chinese young people (and of course, the Chinese way is better and more 'natural')."

The third level is awareness of the other's point of view—an "other-centric," rather than ethnocentric, approach to information received. At this level, news from America about guns and violence might be approached in this way: "Americans have historically preserved the right of the individual to bear firearms for recreation and self-defense, born of a spirit of independence and self-reliance. However, in the present socioeconomic situation, gun control is becoming a major concern for most Americans." Or, on the contrast between Chinese and American youth, "Every society must strike a balance between the control of parents over children and the autonomy of the child. In some societies parents have more control; in some societies, children have more control. Both ends of the spectrum have their strengths and weaknesses."

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Given students' natural tendency toward ethnocentrism and stereotyping, increased empathy toward and sensitization to other cultures seems a basic need. One way to meet this need, as illustrated in the preceding examples, is to introduce concepts of cultural values, universals, and relativity.

### ***TOWARD A TAIWANESE APPROACH TO CULTURE STUDY***

Ethnocentrism may be understood as a sense of ethnic/cultural superiority or merely as a preference for one's own cultural ways. The concept of cultural relativity is not only intended to counterbalance a sense of cultural superiority, but also to counterbalance a sense of cultural inferiority, or weak sense of cultural identity. This is particularly relevant to Taiwanese students, who have inherited the legacy of a culture dominated by outside forces. An emphasis on "the importance of English," the influence of American media on Taiwanese youth culture, and the shadow of ROC-PRC tensions raise questions about Taiwanese cultural identity. As students approach the study of Western cultures, do they possess a solid, positive concept of what it means to be "Taiwanese?" Are Western cultures presented as "models" to be imitated? Do students know the strengths of Chinese/Taiwanese cultures vis-a-vis Western cultures? The study of culture is not merely the study of foreign ways. It is the study of the patterns of life that evolve as societies strive to meet universal challenges. Attention should be given in the culture class to the strength, value, and uniqueness of the Taiwanese way of life.

In the words of Harry C. Triandis (1994),  
Almost all that we know systematically about social behavior was derived by studying individuals and groups from [Europe and North America]... Most cross-cultural researchers, including myself, are Western men; we all have difficulties in escaping our ethnocentric (my culture is the standard of comparison) and androcentric (my gender offer the only valid perspective on an issue) biases. We can try to control such biases, but the choices of problems, theories, and methods are likely to reflect such biases (p.xv; p.85).

The preponderance of course materials on culture come from Western publishers and reflect a cultural bias. In the interest of promoting a stronger sense of Taiwanese cultural identity, local cross-cultural research should be incorporated into the culture class.

Examples that illustrate concepts are the raw materials of culture teaching and learning. Following are examples found in AFLD students' notes illustrating 6 types of cultural misunderstandings<sup>2</sup>. The examples are in italics:

1. Differences in classification: *Bulls in USA vs. bulls in Spain*
2. Same form, different meaning: *Drinking milk in USA vs. drinking milk in France*
3. Same meaning, different forms: *Taxis in USA vs. Taxis in Izfahan*
4. Different is wrong (ethnocentrism): *Americans like black coffee, foreigners think it tastes bad*
5. Same form and meaning, different distribution: *Different uses of sugar in North and South America*
6. Overgeneralization: *American women have loose morals*

These six concepts are foundational in cross-cultural comparison, and yet the examples presented perpetuates a notion that “culture is something foreign countries have.” A set of examples contextualized for Taiwanese students might look like this:

1. Squid, chicken feet, sweet potato leaves and other plants and animals classified as food in Taiwanese vs. American English classifications
2. Use of deodorants in Taiwan vs. USA
3. Taiwan's hand gestures for numbers vs. hand gestures in USA
4. Taiwanese adults often live with parents; this appears strange to Americans
5. Sugar in ice cream in Taiwan vs. USA
6. Taiwanese men spit betel nut on the street.

Part of the work of teachers of culture in Taiwan should be to develop a body of indigenous materials, examples, literature, etc.

## DEFINING GOALS

Proceeding from a brief analysis of student needs, we now propose an outline of specific learning goals for the AFLD culture component. H. Ned Seelye, in his very popular book, Teaching Culture (1993), lists six concise culture learning goals:

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<sup>2</sup> 6 types of cultural misunderstandings from “How to compare two cultures” by Robert Lado in Linguistics Across Cultures (1957, pp. 110-123; in Valdes, 1986); taken from a Yunlin College of Technology student's class notes.

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1. Interest. Cultivation of curiosity and empathy toward target cultures.
2. Who? Understanding of role expectations and sociological variables.
3. What? Understanding of perception and cultural conditioning.
4. Where and when? Understanding of situational variables and conventions.
5. Why? Understanding of basic needs and the interrelationship of cultural patterns.
6. Exploration. Ability to research and evaluate generalizations.

In the next and final section of this paper we will modify this list of goals and apply them to the AFLD situation. Note that these goals require a solid grounding in social sciences. Following is a survey of authors and ideas that are continually referenced in the field of language and culture studies. These are some of the primary sources from which we draw culture learning goals:

### **CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY/ETHNOLOGY**

- Geert Hofstede (1980, 1991): Four dimensions of national cultures (The IBM studies; see also Hofstede and Bond (1988): Confucian values)
- Edward T. Hall (1959, 1966, 1976): Cultural dimensions of time and space
- Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961): Values orientations
- Bronislaw Malinowski (1944): Basic needs, contexts of situation and culture
- Francis L.K. Hsu (1981): Chinese-American comparison

### **LINGUISTICS/SOCIOLINGUISTICS**

- Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf: Linguistic relativity and later revisions (see Gumperz and Levinson, 1996)
- Robert Kaplan (1966), Ulla Connor (1996): Contrastive rhetoric
- John Gumperz (1982), Deborah Tannen (1984): Discourse analysis/Conversational style
- Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1973): Universal politeness phenomena

### **PSYCHOLOGY/SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY**

- Harry C. Triandis (1972): Individualism and collectivism
- Abraham Maslow (1954): Hierarchy of needs

### **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION**

- H. Ned Seelye (1993): Teaching culture
- William B. Gudykunst and Stella Ting-Toomey (1988): Intercultural communication

## **SIX GOALS AND AN ILLUSTRATION**

Following is an outline of six AFLD-specific culture learning goals, the rationale for which has been the argument of this paper. Seelye's goals are subsumed in this list:

1. Cultivate Awareness of the Cultural Dimension
2. Introduce Analytical Concepts and Tools
3. Identify Cultural Universals
4. Identify Cultural Particulars
5. Introduce a Scheme for Cross-cultural Comparison and Conflict Resolution
6. Cultivate Intercultural Competence

To illustrate these six goals, we take as a cultural object two words—“*Hello teacher!*”—often used in the context of a greeting speech act between a Taiwanese student and an American teacher. The main headings are the key goals; the subheadings are some important related content areas. A brief definition of each term (in italics) is followed by a discussion of how the learning goal bears upon the cultural object. Keep in mind that *any* cultural object may be treated here.

### 1. AWARENESS

Cultural awareness is the realization that culture influences everything people think, say, and do; it is awareness that every person, object, and event has a cultural dimension which is usually not perceived until different cultures are juxtaposed.

How much awareness do students have of the cultural, sub-cultural, and situational dimensions of “Hello teacher?” Is the knowledge they possess broad-based and integrated? Are they aware that...

...their own cultural background has given them particular attitudes, values, and beliefs: e.g., a concept of teacher as honorable person in society by virtue of his/her position, while the foreign teacher being greeted has a concept of teacher as a professional title used to describe the role he/she plays at work?

...several other sub-cultural factors bear upon this greeting, such as expectations of how students should greet teachers; males/females; teenagers/adults, etc.? Or are they aware that within the teacher’s culture there are many subcultures, each with peculiar movements, attitudes, accents, and greetings?

...the situation dictates the words, movements, and tone of voice they choose; each of these affecting the illocutionary value?

#### a. Stereotypes

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Stereotypes are conceptual categories with which we make sense of the world; they are “rigid impressions.” The task in building awareness is to break these impressions up and create broader, more flexible categories.

What stereotypical notions will this speech act evoke in the minds of Taiwanese students and in the minds of American teachers? A student may think: “American teachers are irreverent, rebellious, and opinionated, and don’t merit the respect due to their position; I greet the teacher with her proper title and she doesn’t appreciate it.” An American teacher may think: “Chinese students are self-abasing, slave-like, and cannot think for themselves. “They call me ‘teacher’ as if all I am is the role I play; they don’t respect me as an individual.”

### **b. Ethnocentrism**

*Ethnocentrism is the habit of judging all experiences according to one’s own cultural norms or standards. The appropriateness and effectiveness of an utterance in a given situation is immediately measured against one’s own cultural background.*

How willing and/or able are students to accept different ways of viewing and using foreign greeting speech acts as equally valid? In American English, the most appropriate way for a student to greet a teacher in most contexts is “Hello, Ms. Jones,” or “Good morning, Mr. Smith.”

## **2. SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ANALYTICAL TOOLS**

*The cultural dimension cannot be discussed coherently without drawing on analytical concepts from the social sciences. Objects and events have no meaning apart from the entire cultural, social, personal, and situational context in which they exist; social science provides the tools with which to analyze contexts.*

What technical anthropological and sociolinguistic concepts should teachers and students apprehend to analyze “Hello teacher?” and its contexts? We have already made reference to cultural, sub-cultural, and situational levels at work in this speech act. The greeting may be “Good evening, Professor Barrett,” or “Hello, Doctor Livingstone,” depending on academic status. We can also consider how this greeting might change as the interlocutors become more familiar with each other, as after graduation, or at a pub, or in a romantic context.

### **a. Definitions of culture**

*“Culture” should be removed from its common connotations of “civilization” and “refinement,” and brought down to the technical sense: culture is everything and anything shared among a large group of people. Culture “is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede 1991, p. 5).*

What are the meanings of the speech act “Hello teacher!” shared in the students’ culture? How much awareness do students have of their “mental programming?” The study of culture goes far beyond memorizing a polite greeting so one can act like a “cultured person;” it touches everything in daily life.

**b. Enculturation<sup>3</sup>, perception and cultural identity**

*Enculturation is the process of learning culture from family and society; perception and identity are shaped through enculturation.*

How much thought have students given to the meanings they intend and perceive when they say “Hello teacher?” What are the implications of this for a student’s sense of identity? When we start talking about “mental programming,” we begin to touch the core of the self and identity. This begins the awareness that we are products of our culture; self-awareness is a key to cultural awareness. We perceive things the way we do because of our cultural background.

**c. Sociological/sub-cultural and situational variables**

*Culture encompasses society and situation. Meaning is dependent on sociological and situational variables—who says what to whom in what situation.*

How many variables of status, role, and situation can students handle competently in a foreign language? How many do they know in this particular speech act?

**d. Context and communication processes**

*Communication is a process shared within a cultural, social, situational, and personal context; it is verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal, and involves encoding and decoding symbolic messages and feedback.*

How well can students “read” various nonverbal and paraverbal messages embedded in this speech act? Words are not the only message being sent. Tone of

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<sup>3</sup> similar to “acculturation,” with the difference that “acculturation” may also refer to the process of learning a second culture; “enculturation” refers only to learning a first culture from birth.

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voice, proximity, and even smells (deodorant), or body temperature, are nonverbal messages affecting this greeting. Feedback is equally significant, as the teacher might respond sarcastically, “Hello student,” or casually, “Yo. Wha’sup,” bringing new and unexpected meaning into the communication.

### **3. UNIVERSALS**

The myriad manifestations of human behavior are motivated by a small number of universal basic needs. Life presents the challenges of nature, other people, and the self; the way a society meets these challenges results in particular cultural patterns. Seeing any activity in this light brings the similarities among all cultures into focus and fosters a sense of cultural relativity.

What cultural universals govern this speech act? Politeness—apologizing, requesting, greeting, etc.—is a universal phenomenon, and can be traced to a basic human need for acceptance and respect. Recognizing cultural universals is a step toward recognizing cultural relativity—the idea that different cultures aren’t good, bad, right, or wrong, but only different.

### **4. PARTICULARS**

Cultural patterns and worldview, rooted in values and beliefs, are the products of particular environmental, historical, technological, and other factors. Understanding these factors fosters intercultural sensitivity.

What is not universal is the form in which this greeting is couched and all the history and tradition behind it. What are the values and beliefs involved in *Hello teacher?* What are the appropriate forms of this speech act in Taiwanese/Chinese and North American cultures? What are the Great Traditions from which these greetings flow? This is where specific knowledge about the target culture comes in—significantly *after* an introduction to stereotypes and ethnocentrism.

### **5. COMPARISON, CONTRAST, AND CONFLICT**

Comparing cultures is a delicate balancing act in which contrasting attitudes, values, and beliefs are placed on a continuum of equal but opposing “goods.” There are positives and negatives on each side of the continuum. Attention should be paid to the emotional dimension of attitudes, values, and beliefs and the potential for conflict in cross-cultural encounters.

What happens when the original forms of this speech act are transferred from one culture to another? What misunderstandings might arise? How can differences in attitudes, values and beliefs be reconciled? What taxonomies might serve to put these into perspective? Recalling the negative stereotypes mentioned under the first goal, we might diffuse the conflict in values by putting them on a continuum of equal but opposing “goods” present in every society, but given different cultural weights:

FIGURE 1.

<p>“張老師好”</p> <p>A person’s position and titles are important; the office gives the individual value.</p> <p>It is good to maintain a respectful distance between people of unequal status.</p>	<p>-----0-----</p>	<p>“Hello, Mr. Johnson”</p> <p>A person’s performance and achievements are important; the individual gives the office value.</p> <p>It is good to minimize distance between people of unequal status.</p>
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A degree of both sides of this values continuum is present in every culture, but cultures tend to lean toward one side or the other. Either approach meets basic human organizational needs. Recognizing the relativity inherent in values is a step toward ameliorating conflict.

**6. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

*Intercultural competence is the cultivation of attitudes, traits, and skills which enable one to effectively interact interculturally. The symbols “head, heart, and hands” represent a holistic set of intercultural competencies:*

**Head:**

- Awareness of culture differences and culture-bound perceptions
- Conceptual analytical tools
- Specific cultural knowledge

**Heart:**

- Broadmindedness: willingness to widen existing conceptual categories
- Open-mindedness: willingness to accept/tolerate different attitudes, values, and beliefs
- Confident sense of identity: full ownership of one’s own cultural heritage as well as membership in the “global village”

**Hands:**

- Flexibility: ability to creatively adapt to new situations
- Versatility: conversance in many aspects of target cultures

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**(Kaoru Y. Oba, 1997)**

**What attitudes, traits, and skills are needed to appropriately and effectively perform this speech act in an intercultural context? Understanding of the situation and the cultural and sub-cultural milieu behind it requires specific knowledge, openness to something new, and interpersonal communication skills. Certainly, a student needn't study all of this before going out and greeting a teacher in a hallway. But if there is so much underlying something so small, then how much must there be underlying a work of literature, a television show, or a cross-cultural relationship? Cultural awareness is awareness of a whole dimension underneath the languages we speak.**

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# **Language is not Enough—Foreign Language Instruction, Culture and Doing Business with Europe**

**Angelika Mayer Loo**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Including culture in the foreign language curriculum is no longer a mere option but a must in preparing students for international interaction, especially in a professional and business context. This presents a veritable challenge when faced with multi-faceted Europe. This paper addresses selected issues in business communication and approaches of including them in foreign language teaching.

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In the past, contacts between people from different parts of the world were usually limited, and the study of foreign languages was largely regarded as a means of accessing other nations “products of high culture,” such as literature and the arts in general, as well as philosophy, history and statesmanship, or, especially in the last century, learning about advanced technology.

Without a profound understanding of the socio-cultural backdrop that brought about these products of high culture, some significant changes occurred during “translation.” This, however, did not usually have any adverse consequences since there was no need for agreement on these issues as a prerequisite for further action. With the increase in international interactions—especially, but not only—in the business sector, a much larger proportion of people is now internationally engaged in reciprocal, as opposed to largely one-way, communication. And, as communication theory tells us, SUCCESSFUL communication hinges on the fact that one interlocutor’s communicative intention be perceived by the recipient as it was intended in the first place (Vogel & Vogel, 1975, p. 30).

### **LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

When communicating in a foreign language, one may indeed produce perfectly correct sentences, but be quite unaware of differences in pragmatics or discourse structure. Referring to differences regarding conversational principles, a British English teacher in Germany once wrote a paper called—“Did You Have a Good Journey?” “Yes.”—The perfectly polite and friendly German “Ja,” when literally translated into English, turned into a rude and boorish “yes.” Language is not enough.

How, then, is language related to culture? Culture is a system of symbols which is both the result of and a basis for categorizing and interpreting experience (Murphy, 1988, p. 151). The semiotic approach sees “linguistic signs ... as signs of other signs which constitute culture,” and the pragmatic approach stresses the fact that “language is a form of behavior which varies from culture to culture, from individual to individual” (Murphy, 1988, pp. 150-151) and from context to context.

This last remark cautions against a trap not so easily avoided in comparing cultures: stereotyping and oversimplification—neglecting the fact that there are intracultural differences and “subcultures” and that some of these may even be more consistent across cultures than within the mainstream majority culture. Circumnavigating this calamity is one of the challenges in teaching language-cum-culture.

## **DOING BUSINESS WITH EUROPE**

Preparing foreign language students for business interactions with Europe is a formidable task rendered all the more difficult by the continent’s huge diversity. Nevertheless, some key areas of concern can be identified, and approaches of addressing them in the foreign language curriculum can be evaluated. The key areas proposed here are the time factor, negotiating and presenting an image, as well as motivation and trust.

### ***THE TIME FACTOR***

Handling time, schedules and appointments is one of the decisive factors in South-North, East-West business communication, but one of the few to give this due consideration are Hartzell and Hall. Hartzell (1988, pp. 53-54) has named the different modes of operating in time a “Go with the Flow” perception of obligation as opposed to a “Planned Specific Action” mode, where agreements are being perceived as promises. Hall (1991, pp. 332ff.) calls these different modes of operating in time “monochronic time”—which he describes as “events scheduled as separate items, one thing at a time, as in Northern Europe,” and “polychronic time,” an involvement in several things at a time, as, for example, in Mediterranean countries.

Polychronic time orientation is described as being flexible, stressing the involvement of people, and conducive to a good flow of information, whereas the monochronic time mode is being characterized as placing a premium on scheduling which, in turn, mirrors priorities, and on the adherence to prearranged schedules (Hall, 1983, pp. 46-50). When monochronic and polychronic time orientations interact, misunderstandings due to the attribution

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of motives occur. Meanings may be assumed which had not in the least been intended or, in fact, been conveyed, as shown in the following case:

### ***DIFFERENT TYPE SCRIPT***

Case A: A Taiwan-based overseas Chinese intended to buy goods from a Swiss supplier. A friend was found to translate the inquiries into German, and a fax was sent. Three days later, a reply arrived, and the next fax to Switzerland, amongst other things, extended a warm invitation to the manager to visit Taiwan. The manager accepted the invitation remarking that he had already scheduled a business trip to Asia in July and would be happy to include Taiwan. When it became known that no interpreter would be available in July, a fax was sent asking the Swiss manager if he could come in June instead. He has never been heard from since.

The culturally appropriate strategy is being shown in the dialogue from a beginners' textbook of German: apologies and giving a reason.

A – Krüger...

B – Hier ist Gerd. Grüß dich! Du, Sybille, was hast du eigentlich Mittwoch nachmittag gemacht? Wir waren doch verabredet.

A – Mensch, tut mir leid. Dads habe ich total vergessen. Da habe ich ferngesehen. (Aufderstraße, 1992, p. 83)

A – Krueger...

B – Hello, this is Gerd. Where on earth were you on Wednesday afternoon? We had arranged to meet, you know.

A – Oh dear. *I am sorry. I completely forgot* all about it. All I did was watch TV.

### ***NEGOTIATING AND PRESENTING AN IMAGE***

Acquaintance time, i.e. the time before one can begin business, varies across cultures. Most Northern Europeans will need little in the way of preliminary contact, and doing business as well as getting acquainted may be considered parallel activities. One would therefore usually also be happy to discuss business over meals. In most Mediterranean countries, in France and even in the German-speaking parts of Switzerland, this is not very acceptable. Doing business there is usually accompanied by time-consuming, formal hospitality,

and the conversation may turn to anything BUT business. Case B offers a glimpse of what this may mean when teaching Business Spanish.

**Case B:** A Spanish teacher at a business school was once asked why her classes for prospective managers in sales and marketing included so much about the arts, both in the Spanish-speaking countries as well as in Taiwan. Her reply: How else could these future managers establish themselves as persons of culture in conversations during meals and other business-related socializing?

Once at the negotiating table, an agenda will commonly be followed and worked through step by step. The standard procedure is to reach agreement on one item on the agenda, and only after this has been achieved to then move on to the next. Bargaining is therefore expected regarding each item on the agenda. In many parts of the world, there is also negotiation of items, but settling is being done as a whole. Example C fails to point out itemized discussion and resolution.

**An: Bereichs- und Hauptabteilungsleiter  
Betr: Tagesordnung f. Wochenbesprechung 10. KW**

**Termin: Freitag, 7.3.97, 8.00-10.00 Uhr, Besprechungsraum Geschäftsführung**

**Teilnahme: alle Bereichs- und Hauptabteilungsleiter, Frau Detlefsen in Vertretung von Herrn Zörgiebel (erkrankt)**

**Top01: Messebeteiligung interpack Düsseldorf**

**Top02: Betriebsprüfer**

**Top03: Test der Komponenten aus Thailand**

**Top04: neue Steuerungskomponenten (Bericht Frau Dr. Kunze)**

**Top05: Besuch Jerr Artiga, Fa. Sitempa S.A. Bibao**

**Top06: Überstunden in der Montage**

**Top07: Liefertermine in den Sommermonaten**

**Top08: Personalabbau in der Komponentenfertigung**

**Top09: neues EDV-programm für die Auftragsabwicklung**

**Top10: Betriebsausflug**

**Top11; Sonstiges**

**To: Area and Department Managers**

**Re.: Agenda Weekly Meeting 10**

**Date: Friday, 07/03/97, 8-10 a.m. Exec. Meeting Room**

**Attend.: all Area and Department Managers,**

**Ms. Detlefsen for Mr. Zoergiebel (on sick leave)**

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**Item 1: Representation, interpack Trade Fair, Duesseldorf**

**Item 2: Auditor**

**Item 3: Testing components from Thailand**

**Item 4: New controls components (report Dr. Kunze)**

**Item 5: Visit Mr. Artiga, Sistempa S.A., Bilbao**

**Item 6: Overtime in assembly**

**Item 7: Delivery dates during summer months**

**Item 8: Personnel reduction in component production**

**Item 9: New computer programme for sales department**

**Item 10: Annual company excursion**

**Item 11: Miscellaneous**

**(Funk & König, 1996, p. 64)**

Most European negotiators will come to negotiations with a fixed idea about their minimum requirements and maximum concessions, and will try hard to settle within this range (Engholm, 1991, p. 160). Most Northern Europeans will not relish lengthy meetings; that is why they tend to value detailed preparation, focussed discussions, and tangible discussion outcomes, and taking these expectations into consideration greatly enhances one's image (Mead, 1990, p. 146).

Of all communication styles in negotiating, the British and the Austrian are considered some of the most polite and flexible (Hellweg et al, 1991, p. 188; Hill, 1998, p. 190). French, German and Russian styles are much more argumentative and less flexible. In Latin and Mediterranean countries, debate is often relished, giving participants an opportunity to display their reasoning skills, eloquence and cultured style. Debate may entail more or less openly disagreeing with and arguing against what has been said before, and perceived shortcomings of another's presentation or stance may, in fact, be pointed out, as seen in Example D. The intention here is filling the gaps in a pattern of thought which values "objective" reasons and motives. Thus, the participants' abilities in stating and explaining their motives will, in fact, enhance their standing.

**EXAMPLE D****Was passt zusammen?**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>A Warum haben Sie Ihre Bewerbungsunterlagen so spät abgeschickt?</p> <p>B Warum haben Sie den Korrespondenztest nicht ausgefüllt?</p> <p>C Warum haben Sie bei der Besprechung gefehlt?</p> <p>D Warum haben Sie Keine Wünsche für den Praktikumsort genannt?</p> <p>E Warum Brauchen Sie Keine Arbeitserlaubnis?</p> <p>F Warum wollen Sie eine Zeit lang in Deutschland arbeiten?</p> <p>G Warum soll Ihr Fortbildungsprogramm erst im Juni beginnen?</p> <p>H Warum wollen Sie unbedingt nach Dresden?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ich bin mit allem einverstanden.</li> <li>2. Ich wusste nicht, dass das notwendig ist.</li> <li>3. ist für mich eine wichtige Erfahrung.</li> <li>4. Übersetzung der Unterlagen hat so lange gedauert.</li> <li>5. war Krank.</li> <li>6. hatte sehr viel Arbeit und keine Zeit.</li> <li>7. kann ich Material für meine Diplomarbeit sammeln.</li> <li>8. bin EU-Bürger.</li> <li>9. wollte vorher einen Sprachkurs besuchen.</li> <li>10. habe ich ganz vergessen.</li> <li>11. Ich muss vorher noch eine Prüfung ablegen.</li> <li>12. Ich musste erst einmal die Finanzierung Klären.</li> </ol> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**A) PLEASE MATCH**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>A Why did you send your application so late?</p> <p>B Why did you not fill in the correspondence test?</p> <p>C Why did you not attend the meeting?</p> <p>D Why did you not specify where you would like to go for your practicum?</p> <p>E Why don't you need a work permit?</p> <p>F Why would you like to work in Germany for a while?</p> <p>G Why would you like your training to start as late as July?</p> <p>H Why do you insist on going to Dresden?</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I will accept any decision.</li> <li>2. I didn't know this was necessary.</li> <li>4. Getting the documents translated took a long time.</li> <li>5. I was ill.</li> <li>6. I was very busy at work and didn't have the time to do it.</li> <li>7. I can collect material for my thesis.</li> <li>8. I am an EU citizen.</li> <li>9. I wanted to attend a language course beforehand.</li> </ol> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

(Becker, Braunert & Einfeld, 1997, p. 23)

**MOTIVATION AND TRUST**

Both motivation and trust play an important role in negotiation as well as conducting business in general. When it comes to trust in a business relationship, in Western and Eastern Europe, status, position and background as well as personal liking may play a more important role, whereas in Northern Europe, including German-speaking Switzerland, the company's history and reputation, in addition to a proven ability of adhering to contracts and specifications, will be greatly valued. The latter will safeguard the local manager's personal credibility and professional standing, for he will be held accountable for any problems which may occur (Friday, 1991, pp. 174ff.).

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It is said that in negotiating as well as motivating, the French tend to rely on effect, the British on style, and the Germans on substance (Hill, 1998, p. 184) - quality, precision, and well-researched facts and figures. German firms tend to be “difficult” customers since they require a great deal of data and detailed information before opting for a purchase. As suppliers, however, they will reciprocate in kind. With a twinkle, the European Communications Group (Hill, 1997, pp. 357-358) has designed an information sheet of advertising, i.e. motivating and inspiring trust, in different European countries.

Great Britain



**The Queen's Wrench**  
By royal appointment

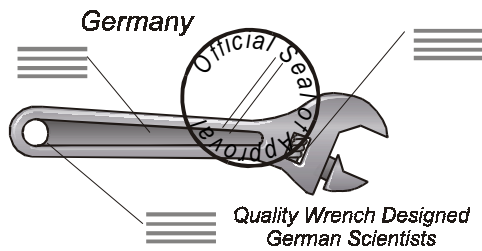
France

Only from the Catherine Deneuve line of fashion tools of Paris.

*Le Wrench*



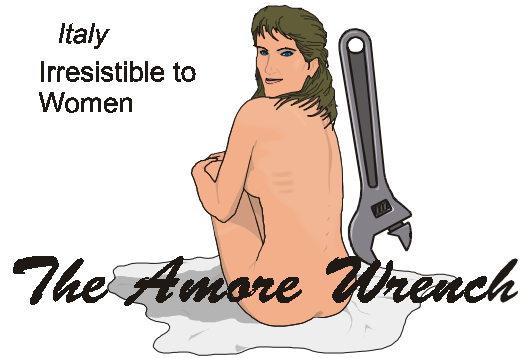
*Exquisite*



**Approved by German Wrench Institute**

Italy

Irresistible to Women



Belgium

The linguistically correct wrenches exactly the same but totally different

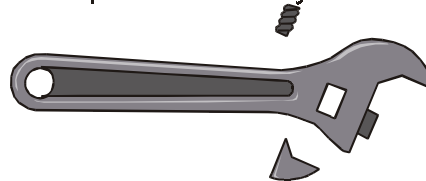


**The French Speaker's Wrench**

**The Flemish Speaker's Wrench**

Netherlands

Half price: Assemble yourself



**The Dutch Economy Wrench**

Switzerland

The most effective investment tool in Europe

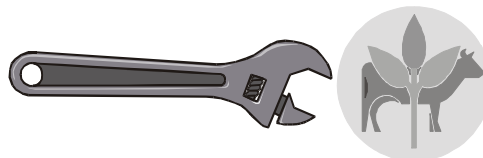


**The Swiss Army Wrench**

Adapted from Hill, 1997, pp. 357-358

Sweden

The environmentally safe, socially progressive Swedish wrench



**It Doesn't Hurt the Environment**

## APPROACHES OF INCLUDING CULTURE IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

### 1. TEACHER AWARENESS

Many of the more recent textbooks for English as a foreign, or indeed international language have, implicitly or explicitly, included cultural issues. Yet Lafayette (1991, p. 142) still calls for a more systematic approach to culture with regard to teaching materials. Older textbooks leave something to be desired here,

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and this is especially true for the second foreign languages. Teachers sensitized to issues of successful cross-cultural communication can put their awareness to good use by 1) drawing students' attention to communicative strategies which seem surprising for local learners, and by 2) identifying salient topics merely mentioned in passing in the textbook—topics which warrant elaboration at an appropriate time in the course.

### ***2. LEARNER-CENTEREDNESS***

A survey conducted last year among the foreign language students at National Taiwan University revealed that approximately 30% were studying the second foreign language because they wanted to know more about the culture. But what aspects of the culture are they interested in? The textbook may not know it, we as teachers may have a vague idea. But this is what one of my former colleagues, an English teacher teaching presentation skills, did: She asked her students to choose a country which they wanted to present about, and instructed them to find information about that country which they found interesting. This approach echoes Murphy's perception that "cross-cultural understanding can only occur if the affective dimension of cultural acquisition is integrated with the cognitive dimension" (1988, p. 152).

### ***LANGUAGE AND DIFFERENTIATION***

The danger of stereotyping when teaching about culture has been mentioned before, but some textbooks' strong points lie in the fact that they include the different standard varieties of the target language regarding vocabulary, phrases and accents (on audio materials), and this very clearly points students to the fact that the target language is being used differently and across several, rather distinct, cultures (i.e., in the English-speaking world, but also, as far as German is concerned, Northern and Southern Germany, Austria and Switzerland). The textbook further points to context-related speech, degrees of formality, for example, and age-related language use, thus making it very clear that culturally appropriate language use is incompatible with a view of the other culture as monolithic.

In summing up, one may conclude that it is not sufficient for textbooks (and teachers) to provide the appropriate linguistic material only, but that more attention should be paid to include salient cultural information, including the meanings which may be conveyed by certain linguistic and non-linguistic behaviors. Example E provides information, but only very basic meaning:

**Punctuality:** In the German-speaking countries, being late for an appointment (meeting, rendezvous) is (considered) impolite. Being late for up to 15 minutes may still be tolerable. The degree of punctuality required depends on the situation. Young people are more easygoing in this respect than the older generation. Guests at a dinner are likely to be expected to be more punctual than guests at a party. Absolute punctuality is required for professional appointments.

**Canceling arrangements for invitations:** When unable to keep an engagement for an invitation, a call must be made and a reason (e.g. emergency) given (Funk & König, 1996, p. 94).

Where textbooks do not meet these specifications, teachers are called upon to ask pertinent questions (e.g., different ways of working through an agenda), thus empowering their students for successful cross-cultural communication. In foreign language teaching today, language is not enough.

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Her publications include

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## Section4: Teaching Language

No matter one's background or research interests, we all end up in Taiwan classrooms teaching. The reality of teaching in Taiwan often comes as a shock to newly arrived teachers and puzzles outsiders looking in. The uniqueness of the Taiwan language teaching experience is filled with good and bad points. On the good side, it often appears that everyone in Taiwan is studying English! It is not unusual for a Westerner walking through Taiwan's streets to be approached and asked about starting an English class. This enthusiasm for learning a foreign language, for whatever reason, is simply unmatched in the United States, where foreign languages are often avoided. On the negative side, Taiwan language teaching, and language students, often seem to be stuck in a time warp where teaching methods and materials are from previous decades.

Chris Murphy introduces his research on cram school English settings, which have been overlooked by researchers. The fact that language cram schools are so common in Taiwan that they can make up their economic sector may have something to do with this academic oversight. Murphy's findings are a first step to understanding what teacher and student orientations are in these commercial learning settings. Contrasting these findings with the findings of Warden & Liu (p. 67), point to the quite different settings that language learning in Taiwan can exist in, and the need to understand these settings better.

Caroline C. Hwang gives some very useful insights into the application of teaching authentic materials in Taiwan classrooms. Most interesting are Hwang's observations of how present materials are either overly *goody-two-shoes* oriented or *Hollywood—myth* oriented. Examples of these extremes can be seen in situations where Taiwan people encounter Westerners and start a conversation with either *How do you like Taiwan?*, or *Taiwan sucks man, right?* Both of which are such caricatures of natural English communication that the foreigner is often at a loss to respond. Hwang's suggestions lay a solid foundation for teachers trying to avoid such extremes and allow students to get a realistic handle on the culture that goes with the language.



# **Adult EFL in the Buxiban: A report on an investigation into the appropriacy of Western language teaching methods in Taiwan's private English language schools**

**Chris Murphy**

## **ABSTRACT**

There is a considerable body of literature on the question of the appropriacy and effectiveness of Western language teaching methods in Asian contexts and particularly in Chinese or Confucian-influenced societies. Generally discussion has focused on the contrast between contemporary language teaching methodologies such as the communicative approach and traditional Confucian-influenced classrooms.

Much of this literature has been based on the extensive personal experiences of the writers although a number of structured classroom studies have been conducted. Structured studies have been completed in mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. In Taiwan the studies have so far been confined to the formal tertiary education sector. This study, however, was conducted within the informal English language system in Taiwan—the private English language schools, often called “cram schools” or referred to by their Chinese name of *buxiban*.

The research involved an in-class investigation where a study group of 12 students rated 21 classroom activities over a two-month period. A questionnaire was completed by the members of the study group as well as a number of other adult *buxiban* students and foreign teachers. The questionnaire sought to identify Taiwanese students' attitudes to learning English and the differences, if any, between their attitudes and those of their teachers. The classroom study sought to test the extent to which the attitudes and preferences expressed in questionnaire responses correlated with actual classroom practice.

The findings of this study suggest that generalizations about Taiwanese students' language learning preferences are fraught with difficulties and that the picture is considerably more complex than it may at first appear. Despite some differences between Taiwanese students' views and the views of their Western teachers, there are many similarities and the similarities are of greater interest than the differences. Furthermore, while discussion-based activities tended to be highly rated by the students in the study group, it seems probable that classroom activities of any kind (teacher-centered, student-centered, role-plays, text-based activities, grammar-based activities, game-oriented activities) will meet with general student approval as long as they are well-presented and of good quality. Adult “Chinese” students of EFL are not a monolithic entity as they are sometimes depicted.

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### **BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROJECT**

In Taiwan there is tremendous interest in the learning of English. Adult students who have graduated from the high school and university systems in this country, where there is a heavy emphasis on grammar and close analysis of the language, may have a good level of written English but often find that their conversational skills are very poor or are inadequate to their professional or personal needs. This prompts many to attend “conversational” English classes in the evenings at the private English language schools or *buxiban* which abound here. The boldest and the bravest of these students elect to take their classes with a “foreigner” or native-speaker, who usually knows no Chinese and who is confined to teaching entirely through the direct method. For a large percentage of these students, such classes represent their first ongoing interaction with a “foreigner” and the experience offers many challenges. One of the challenges is the unfamiliarity students may have with Western approaches to language teaching, to the role of the teacher and to such methods as communicative language teaching.

One method of defining the “communicative approach” has been to cite Canale and Swain’s 1980 text on the subject. This was certainly the definition used by Burnaby and Sun (1989) and Ellis (1996). Nunan (1996b) and Holliday (1994) have seen the method in broader terms, suggesting that “the communicative approach,” is a label now applied to almost any kind of language teaching which involves pair-and small-group work.

However it is defined, the soul-searching and reflection of educators who have confronted at the coal-face the contrast of Eastern and Western approaches is reflected in the titles of recent works:

*Is a communicative approach practical for teaching English in China? Pros and cons,* (Anderson, 1993)

*An American Teacher in China. Coping with Cultures,* (Kretschmer, 1994)

*Chinese learners of English: A different view of literacy?* (McKnight, 1994)

*Breaking with Chinese cultural traditions: Learner autonomy in English language teaching,* (Ho and Crookall, 1995)

*Reconciling communicative approaches to the teaching of English with traditional Chinese methods,* (Rao, 1996)

The experiences of these teachers in China and Hong Kong, are manifestations of an experience common amongst native-speaking EFL teachers in the so-called “Confucian-influenced” societies. Specifically, many discover that the Western methods they have found successful in more familiar cultural contexts are not well received by Chinese students. Maley has stated that “Chinese students and foreign teachers rarely share the same views on the nature of the teaching process” (1986, p.104).

This has led a number of researchers to conduct specific investigations of Chinese (including Taiwanese) students’ language learning preferences (see Jones, 1995; Sy, 1995; Yang, 1993). Other studies have looked at Chinese teachers’ attitudes to language teaching (see Burnaby and Sun, 1989; Lai, 1993; Richards, Tung and Ng, 1992). One study looked at the attitudes of Western teachers of Chinese students (see Richards, 1996).

It is apparent that many educators working in cross-cultural teaching situations have grappled with the issues that arise and have attempted to come to terms with the conflicts involved. The research project described in this paper sprang from similar motivations. It examines students in a setting which has not been the subject of previous research, namely, the Taiwanese *buxiban*.

## DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

One of the original hypotheses underlying this project was that a native-speaking EFL teacher who has an improved understanding of the learning needs and preferences of their students will be better able to meet those needs or to improve their teaching by devising strategies which take account of them. This does not necessarily mean “giving the student what the student wants” although it may and, in the context of adult conversational classes such as those common in Taiwan, this may be a perfectly legitimate strategy. Unlike language students at tertiary institutions who are working towards the conferment of a formal award, most students of *buxiban* conversational classes are studying for personal improvement, for interest or “for fun.” They are not restricted by the parameters of a formal curriculum and “giving them what they want,” insofar as

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it were ever possible and insofar as what they wanted could be determined, may make perfect sense.

### **THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The first objective of this project was to identify the types of language learning classroom activities preferred by a cross-section of adult learners of English in Taiwan's *buxiban*. The second was to compare these preferences with those of the students' native-speaking teachers. It was determined that these objectives would best be met through the administration of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was also intended to serve as a means of determining the extent to which the study group described below was representative of the wider student population.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections: A background information section with one version for students and one for teachers, a section entitled, "What is important for success in English language learning?" and another section entitled, "What is most and least important to do in an English class?" The sample number of students (66) was small and the teacher sample (25) smaller again. This was due in part to the nature of the English teaching environment in private schools in the provincial city (population about 100,000) in which the researcher lives.

Limitations of space will not allow for a detailed reporting of all results from the questionnaire so discussion here will be largely confined to the more relevant third section.

### **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

The second part of the research project sought to determine how certain classroom activities were rated by adult students. One of the hypotheses behind this objective was that the classroom implications of questionnaire responses may not be entirely clear. Furthermore, it is possible that responses to a pen and paper questionnaire and reactions to actual classroom practice may differ or that attitudes may change over time. It is possible, for instance, that students who, at the start of a language course, see the language learning process in a

certain way or express interest in particular teaching activities and approaches and a lack of interest in others may do so because of unfamiliarity with the alternatives. It could be that attitudes change with exposure to alternatives. This is a phenomenon which has been observed by a number of writers (see Jones, 1995; Nunan 1996a; Yang, 1993) and which also appeared worthy of investigation.

Early in the project a determination was made that such hypotheses should be tested in the authentic classroom environment. As Holliday has pointed out, “controlled experiments in clinical conditions... can tell us a great deal; but out in the real world these findings only scratch the surface.” (1994, p.5).

However, the negative side of this equation is that it is much more difficult to connect causes with effects and to ensure that data are “uncontaminated.” Certainly, as this study has highlighted, the classroom is far from a clinical research environment and the best the researcher can hope is to apply common sense, use good judgement and exercise a measure of impartiality in a complex web of circumstance. These were certainly the objectives of the present researcher and, in the final analysis, it will be for others to judge the extent to which they were achieved.

#### ***END OF COURSE COMMENTS***

In order to allow comments to be made in a less structured format, students in the study group were asked to complete an end of course evaluation. This instrument comprised six questions of a more open-ended nature and students were invited to give written responses in English or Chinese.

#### **RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

There were 12 students in the class under study but a total of 66 students responded to the questionnaire. One of the purposes of the questionnaire was to assist in determining how representative the study group was of the wider student population. Of course, with 12 members, the study group constituted a small sample but there is evidence of a high degree of correlation between the profiles of the study group and the all-student group. For instance, there was a

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comparable preponderance of females over males (64 to 26 percent in the all-student group; 67 to 33 percent in the study group) and a similar average length of time had been spent studying English (9.2 years in the all-student group; 10.5 years in the study group).

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF STUDY GROUP STUDENTS' AND ALL STUDENTS' REASONS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH**

	Study Group		All Students	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Better job	0	0	14	21.2
Enjoyment	5	41.7	12	18.2
Interest in languages	5	41.7	16	24.2
To study or live abroad	1	8.3	9	13.6
To travel	0	0	11	16.7
Interest in foreign culture	1	8.3	3	4.5
To pass exams	0	0	1	1.5
To make foreign friends	0	0	0	0
Non response	0	0	0	0
TOTAL:	12	100	66	100

Study Group = 12

All Students = 66

For both groups, the most important reasons given for learning English were the non-instrumental factors of interest and enjoyment, although this was even more true of the study group than the all-student group (see Table 1). However, both groups shared very similar feelings about the importance of learning English and the level of enjoyment they derived from it. Of all student respondents, only seven students (less than 11 percent) indicated that learning English was not important. Forty-seven percent indicated that it was “very important.” Only 10 of the 66 students surveyed (some 15 percent) indicated that they did not usually or always enjoy learning English.

These results indicate the students surveyed derived significant levels of enjoyment from learning English and that they were highly motivated. Moreover, for both groups but especially for the study group, the non-instrumental factors of interest and enjoyment were the reasons most given for learning the language.

A finding which was surprising in light of some of the assumptions behind this research was the high degree of similarity between the views of students and

teachers on the relative importance of the six language skill areas shown in Table 2. The figure shown next to each skill area is the average ranking ascribed to it. A lower number indicates a higher order of importance. These results were in a number of ways similar to those of Sy's (1995) survey of 245 students from a number of Taiwanese universities. As with the respondents here, Sy's group also ranked grammar the least important of the six skill areas.

**TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF ALL STUDENTS' AND ALL TEACHERS' RANKINGS OF SIX LANGUAGE SKILL AREAS**

ALL STUDENTS		ALL TEACHERS	
LISTENING	1.9	LISTENING	1.7
SPEAKING	1.9	SPEAKING	2.3
VOCABULARY	3.7	VOCABULARY	3.3
READING	3.8	READING	3.7
WRITING	4.9	WRITING	4.7
GRAMMAR	4.9	GRAMMAR	4.7

NOTE: All Students = 66 All Teachers = 25

Section Three of the questionnaire asked respondents, "What is most and least important to do in an English class?" Respondents were given a list of 35 items that could be considered important in an English language classroom. They were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale using the following descriptors: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree or Strongly Agree. Results from the questionnaire are summarized in the table reproduced in Appendix A.

In processing data from the questionnaires, a score of 1 was ascribed to a "Strongly Disagree" response, a score of 2 was ascribed to a "Disagree" response and so on up to 5. Teachers' and students' data were entered on separate spreadsheets and the figures shown in Appendix A are the averages of all responses in each group.

On individual items, the difference in the average scores of all students on the one hand and all teachers on the other, ranged from 0 at the low end to 0.98 at the high end. Given the distribution of scores, a relatively non-significant difference was within the range of 0 to 0.18. There were 15 items in this range. There were seven items where the difference in scores ranged from 0.2 to 0.39. This was a relatively slight to moderate difference. There were 13 items where the difference in scores ranged from 0.43 to 0.98. This was a relatively significant difference.

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The five items which received the highest average responses from teachers were: “Playing English language games or using simulations” (ranked 1st of the 35 items with an average score of 4.52), “Discussing problems or questions” (ranked equal 2nd with a score of 4.48), “Having fun in class” (ranked equal 2nd with a score of 4.48), “Free conversation” (ranked 4th with a score of 4.32) and “Talking in small groups with the teacher” (ranked 5th with a score of 4.21). These items could all be characterized as indicative of a preference for a decentralized classroom dynamic where student contributions were welcome.

According to Burnaby and Sun, the “Chinese approach“ to the need to acquire English language skills “has been to draw on China’s scholarly traditions” (1989, p.222). On the mainland, they say, this has led to an emphasis on the study of grammar and literature and in-depth analysis of literary texts. To some extent, this appears to have been true of the Taiwanese students who completed this questionnaire. The traditional Chinese interest in accuracy (Maley, 1984, p.164; Matalene, 1985, p.796) was reflected by the high response given to “The teacher correcting students’ spoken errors” (ranked 2nd with an average score of 4.36) and to “The teacher correcting students’ written errors” (ranked equal 3rd with a score of 4.27). However, a number of responses were not consistent with a traditional Chinese approach.

A response which may be surprising and is certainly at odds with the image of the stereotypical Chinese student was the high level of importance students attached to two apparently non-traditional items: “Having fun in class” (the highest rated item with an average score of 4.59) and “Playing English language games or using simulations” (the 5th highest rated item with an average score of 4.17). In this respect, students were in close agreement with their teachers who rated these items first and equal second of the 35. However, students attached even more importance to “having fun” than did their teachers. The students’ score of 4.59 exceeds the teachers’ 4.48. This result was in contrast to some findings and observations made elsewhere (Burnaby and Sun, 1989, p.229; Rao, 1996, p.467) but consistent with the Hong Kong experience of Ho and Crookall (1995).

Also the view that pertains that “Chinese” students tend to be passive recipients of information disseminated by their teachers (Rao, 1996, pp.462-3) was not supported by the very low importance attached to “Lecture-style classes where the teacher talks and the students listen.” This was the lowest rated of all items in both teachers’ and students’ responses, receiving average scores of 1.68 and 1.80 respectively. In both cases, this was considerably lower than the next lowest rated item; for students: 1.80 compared to the next item, 2.88, and for teachers the difference was even greater: 1.68 compared to 3.44.

Structure appears to have been valued highly by both teachers and students but in slightly different ways. For instance, amongst students’ responses, “A sequenced progression of activities and goals through the course” was ranked 3rd of the 35 items with a score of 4.27. Amongst teachers’ responses, this item was 18th with a score of 3.88. However, teachers attached a high level of importance to “Specific teaching and learning goals for the whole course” (6th of the 35 items). This was ranked 13th amongst students’ responses but, curiously, it received the same average score of 4.20.

Some other student responses were indicative of a “traditional Chinese” view of the language learning process and were in contrast to the views of their native speaking teachers. For instance, students gave a rating considerably higher than teachers to “Being given new words, structures or idioms to memorize” and to “Doing homework.” Teachers valued “Free conversation” considerably more highly than students.

Students generally valued activities that involved a teacher more highly than comparable activities which did not. This was evident in the higher importance attached to “Talking one-on-one with the teacher” than to “Talking one-on-one with another student.” It was also true of “Talking in small groups with the teacher” and “Talking with a small group (3 to 4 students).” These ratings appear consistent with the traditional Chinese view of the teacher as a valued and respected resource and also as a native-speaking model of correct pronunciation (Jones, 1995, p.13; Liu, 1977, p.14; Yang, 1993, p.3).

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However, while these responses were consistent with some stereotypes of the Chinese student or with “traditional Chinese” education, contrary trends were also evident. “Doing tests” and “Testing to see that these goals have been achieved” were lowly rated by both students and teachers. Although teachers attached a considerably higher importance than students to “Discussing problems or questions,” students still valued this activity relatively highly. “Working from a class text book” received the same average score from both groups and a similarly low ranking. This was surprising in light of the widespread view about the traditional Chinese reverence for the written word (Maley, 1986, p.103).

### ***CONCLUSIONS FROM RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE***

There is evidence that students’ views are in certain ways consistent with aspects of “traditional Chinese” education and in contrast to those of their teachers. The most significant of these differences were related to memorizing new material, doing homework and free conversation. In each of these cases, students’ responses indicated a more conservative or traditional approach than those of the teachers. Other differences may be explained away or are less significant but these differences remain and must be accounted as amongst the points on which Taiwanese students and “foreign” teachers may disagree.

Nevertheless, some results are not consistent with this trend nor with a “jugs and mugs” representation of Chinese education. Students and teachers agreed on the relatively low importance of tests and of working from class text books. Discussing problems was more highly rated by teachers than students but it was still relatively high amongst students’ responses.

Moreover, of all trends and indications evident in the data, the most telling is the high importance attached by both students and teachers to having fun in the language classroom and to playing games or using simulations. At the same time, a very low level of importance was attached by both groups to lecture-style classes. Agreement between groups on these items was high and appears to be the clearest and most significant of the findings from this section of the questionnaire.

Students' interest in having fun and using language games in the English classroom is consistent with their responses to the first section of the questionnaire where they indicated that they derived a high level of enjoyment from their learning of the language. As was pointed out earlier, only 10 of the 66 students surveyed indicated that they did not usually or always enjoy learning English. Furthermore, 42.4 percent of all students identified their main reason for learning English as enjoyment or interest in the language.

The presence of differences between the responses of students and teachers is hardly surprising. Of greater significance, is the high level of agreement between groups in a number of important areas. The findings of this questionnaire are in marked contrast to some stereotypes of "Chinese students" and suggest that adult learners of English in Taiwanese *buxiban* enjoy and are interested in language learning and that they may be more receptive to Western approaches than is the case for their mainland cousins or their counterparts in formal tertiary institutions.

## PROFILE OF THE STUDY GROUP

Based on an examination of the study group's responses to section three of the questionnaire, activity preferences amongst them were well-spread across three possible positions. There were five respondents whose views could be categorized as either weakly or strongly traditional. There were three who demonstrated eclectic preferences and there were four students whose views could be considered either weakly or strongly non-traditional. Given that three students held the "middle ground" here, it is not clear that there was a majority opinion one way or the other within the class based on the questionnaire responses.

The classes of the study group were conducted in the evenings twice a week and continued for two months. A class of 12 students would be at the high end of the average for adults studying in the evenings in this part of Taiwan. Although twelve students commenced the course, two discontinued their attendance before its conclusion and it was rare for all the remaining students to be present on any single night. The highest number of students in attendance at any time was

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eleven (which occurred only twice) and the average number of students present when activities were rated was 7.5.

In the experience of the teacher-researcher, the intermittent nature of some students' attendance is typical in classes of this kind. For the purposes of the research being conducted, it would have been highly desirable to have had all students present at every class. If this had been achieved, results or ratings of different activities would have been more readily comparable as the same students would have given all responses. In the event, this was not possible given the nature of the environment, that students had their own lives to lead and that they were often busy with work or other commitments.

### **THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

Over the two-month period of the study group's class, 21 classroom activities were used and rated by the students. All these activities were selected, substantially adapted or devised by the teacher because he thought they would be successful based on his perceptions of what "works" in Taiwanese adult English classes. The implication of this is that all activities reflect his personal view of what constitutes effective language teaching. Therefore, the results of this study need to be prefaced by the comment that other teachers may have obtained equally good or better responses to activities and approaches very different from those employed by this teacher.

### ***CLASSROOM ACTIVITY RATINGS***

Students were asked to rate the classroom activities on three scales. These scales related to the following three questions:

**How helpful or useful was the activity?**

**How suitable was the level of English used in the activity?**

**How interesting was the activity?**

At the end of the course, an average of student ratings was calculated for each of the 21 classroom activities. These average ratings were used to indicate the students' relative order of preference for the 21 activities.

In order to assist with the process of identifying trends in the classroom activity ratings and testing hypotheses about similarities in activities which students rated more or less highly, activities were categorized by type. Activities were categorized according to whether they featured high levels of the following:

Discussion  
Humor  
Role-play  
Small-group tasks  
Student interaction or movement  
Student-talk  
Teacher-centered  
Use of a written text

Eight activity types were identified in the 21 activities although a number of activities were of more than a single type. For instance, an activity that was discussion-based may have also involved high levels of student-talk or the use of small groups. Furthermore, activities may have included separate phases, e.g. an introductory or teaching phase and a controlled practice phase followed by free practice. The introductory and controlled practice phases may have been highly teacher-centered whereas the free practice session might have been highly student-centered.

Table 3: Summary of Activity Type Analysis, shows the activity types listed in order of average student ratings for all activities of each type. The number of activities of each type and it can be seen that activities involving high levels of student-talk were the most frequently employed. The average ranking was derived by averaging the rank order of activities of each type after the 21 activities had been sorted on students' average ratings. The individual rankings of all activities of each type are also shown. The average ratings were derived from students' evaluations on the three scales of the Classroom Activity Ratings.

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**TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY TYPE ANALYSIS**

Activity Type	Number of Activities	Individual Rankings	Average Rank	Average Rating
Discussion	7	1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 13, 14	6.7	25.2
Humor	6	1, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18	10	24.6
Teacher-centered	4	7, 8, 11, 12	9	24.3
Text-based	4	7, 8, 11, 16	10	24.2
Role-play	4	3, 11, 12, 19	11	24.2
Small-group tasks	7	1, 2, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21	11.3	24.2
Student-talk	11	2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21	11.9	24.2
Student interaction	4	9, 15, 17, 18	15	23.9

It may appear from the figures that the average ratings do not indicate a clear preference for activities of any particular type. However, it should be noted that the ratings shown in this table are based on an average of averages and that the range of difference in the original ratings was not high. The highest average rating for any activity was 26.67 and the lowest was 21.57, a difference of only 5.3. The average rankings appear to give a clearer indication of student preferences and are consistent with other analyses of results.

Nevertheless, the point should also be made that students did not tend to rate activities of any particular type highly in all cases. Even the highest rated activity type included a reasonably wide spread of individual rankings. This would tend to indicate that students judged activities on their merits and did not rate them according to pre-conceived notions of preferred types. If, for example, a discussion-based activity worked well, it was highly rated; if it did not work well, it was lowly rated. This is a result which would suggest that well-presented activities of any kind have a good chance of meeting with general student approval. It also suggests that representations of whole methodological types as inappropriate for Taiwanese students belie the complexity of the classroom reality.

Data were also analyzed in other ways. An index of 12 “activity elements” was devised. The five most highly rated activities were then compared with the five lowest rated activities. The ten highest rated activities were compared with the ten lowest rated activities. These analyses returned somewhat different results

but the clearest conclusion from both was that activities involving high levels of discussion appeared to be the most highly rated by students.

The top half-bottom half comparison of activities indicated that the use of discussion had a strong positive impact on activity ratings. In this instance, the positive impact was equal to that for the use of a written text. The strongest influence was found to be a negative effect on student ratings if the activity had been often used by the teacher before. A high level of student-talk was found to have a negative impact on student ratings although this was not consistent with results from other analyses such as the top five-bottom five comparison. In that comparison, the positive impact of discussion was even more pronounced and was by far the most important positive influence.

Other results were more equivocal and apt to be affected by conflicting evidence or the particular method of analysis. The lack of clear trends tends to give further support to the proposition that students approached activities on a case by case basis rather than from particular methodological perspectives and that they were willing to judge each on its merit.

## **STUDENTS' END OF COURSE COMMENTS**

The students' end of course comments provided a useful means of cross-checking with other responses and, by inviting extended comments, enabled students to explain their own reasons or motivations rather than having these ascribed to them by the researcher. The written comments also highlighted one of the dangers of dealing with numerical averages of responses to questionnaires in that it is easy to forget that the "average" is not an entity in itself. Amongst the study group, there was a considerable range of views, some of which were potentially conflicting. In which case, we are reminded that for most teachers most of the time teaching is a matter of steering a middle course and hoping to provide most students with most of what they want or need.

Discussion was again a recurring theme in students' end of course comments. This and the idea of "interacting" with other students were mentioned as favored activity types by six of the nine students who completed this form. The next

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most-mentioned activities were role plays which were preferred by three students. “Interaction”, it should be noted, in this instance is defined more broadly than it was in the earlier analysis of classroom activity ratings where it was linked with physical movement. In the students’ comments, “interaction” included the less physical aspects of sharing opinions and getting to know their classmates.

Overall, comments were very positive and reflected favourably on the group dynamics amongst the students. From the personal perspective of the teacher-researcher, some of the most encouraging comments were made about the comfortable atmosphere in the class. One student’s comments were typical of a number:

The class helped me open my mouth and use English to communicate with others so that I do not feel as scared to do so as I was before.

### **ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES WITHIN THE STUDY GROUP**

In order to determine the extent to which students’ classroom activity preferences could be predicted from views expressed at the start of the course, further analysis was conducted on the individual responses of each student in the study group. Responses to the questionnaire were compared with individuals’ classroom activity ratings and to comments made in the end-of-course feedback instrument.

The clearest conclusion that could be drawn from this individual analysis is that there was a reasonable level of consistency between the three instruments used. However, predicting the nature of the connection between questionnaire responses and preferences in classroom activities was more problematic.

Because not all students were present for all activities, it is possible that the trends in individual activity preferences may have differed from the trends in the activity preferences of the class as a whole. Accordingly, the classroom activity ratings of each student were examined separately to identify individual trends. This analysis showed the preference of the greatest number of students (six) was for discussion-based activities. The next most evident preference was for

activities involving elements of humor (four students). Other clear preferences were indicated for activities involving high levels of student-talk and group-work (two students in each case). Two further students' responses indicated no clear preferences. There were three activity types for which students' responses indicated a negative reaction; those were teacher-centered (two students) and text-based (two students) activities; one student's responses also showed a negative reaction to role-plays.

Discussion-based activities and activities with elements of humor were the activities preferred by the greatest number of students in the study group and this confirmed results from other analyses of the data.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

It is important to note that the classroom activity component of this study did not seek to determine which kinds of activities were unsuccessful or would not work with Taiwanese students of English. Nor is it possible to make any such conclusions from the data produced. What can be concluded is which activity types were relatively more successful than a number of other activity types. In the case of the study group, the activities which had the greatest chance of being highly rated by students were discussion-based.

The study was, of course, limited in scope and must be viewed within the context of other research conducted elsewhere into the language learning preferences of "Chinese" students. Moreover, it is entirely conceivable that another teacher using a very different range of activities could have achieved equal or greater success than this teacher. It is equally possible that another teacher using the same activities could have returned better or different results or that the same teacher-researcher using the same activities with a different group may have had very different results. These are only some of the possible permutations complicating research work in an authentic classroom setting.

There is, of course, always the possibility of further research, either with the same or improved investigative methods. In particular, with regard to the classroom activity ratings, a longer term study would provide a greater body of

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evidence which should mean conclusions were more easily drawn. A larger study could involve other teachers and, while this could increase the difficulty of associating causes with effects, it would also increase the variety of teaching styles and approaches to which students were exposed.

A larger study group would also increase the body of evidence available. However, once the study moved from the confines of a single teacher and a single class, a vista of new complications would open. Whether these complications would be sufficient to undermine the integrity of the data is a matter for consideration and one which may require more rigid research protocols.

Nevertheless, what the data gathered do show is that the students in this study were highly motivated to learn English and derived considerable enjoyment from it. Contrary to some expectations, it does not seem that “Western” language teaching methods are inappropriate in the context of Taiwan’s private English language schools. This is especially so if “Western” methods are defined as those involving, on the one hand, high levels of game-playing, discussion, student-centered and fun and, on the other hand, low levels of explicit grammar instruction, few tests and an absence of lecture-style classes.

Evidence from this study suggests the views of Taiwanese students are not so different from those of native-speaking teachers of EFL and, in fact, there are many important points of agreement. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, the results of the classroom activity rating component of this study suggest that students do not judge activities according to pre-conceived notions but assess them on their merits. In which case, well-presented activities of any kind are likely to be well-received.

Finally, it seems appropriate to conclude with the comment of one student in the study group who wrote, “it’s fun to learn English through interesting activities”. This is a comment which is consistent with the personal experience of this researcher and, while it admittedly takes a little time for a newly-arrived “foreigner” to learn what students in this country do and do not like, this study suggests that a native-speaking teacher who is willing to make allowances for

certain cultural norms and expectations will have a very positive experience teaching English to adults in Taiwan's *buxiban*.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The author would like to thank all the students and teachers who participated in this study, particularly the members of the study group, who gave freely of their time and opinions. He gratefully acknowledges the advice and assistance throughout this project of his academic supervisors at Deakin University, Dr Alex McKnight and Ms Ninetta Santoro. He would like also to thank Associate Professor Clyde Warden of Chaoyang University of Technology for inviting his contribution to this conference and for remembering the sometimes forgotten face of English teaching in Taiwan-the *buxiban*.

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### APPENDIX I

**TABLE 4 RESPONSES TO SECTION 3 OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE, SORTED ON STUDENT AVERAGE.**

Item	Student Average	Teacher Average	Difference	Student Rank	Teacher Rank
21. Having fun in class.	4.59	4.48	0.11		3
27. The teacher correcting students' spoken errors.	4.36	3.80	0.56		23
4. A sequenced progression of activities and goals through the course.	4.27	4.16	0.11		11
28. The teacher correcting students' written errors.	4.27	3.88	0.39		18
22. Playing English language games or using simulations.	4.17	4.52	-0.35		1
23. Practicing how to say important sentences.	4.17	3.80	0.37		22
12. Talking one-on-one with the teacher.	4.15	4.20	-0.05		8
13. Talking in small groups with the teacher.	4.12	4.21	-0.09		5
33. Writing down new words	4.12	3.92	0.2		17
26. Reading newspaper or magazine articles written in English.	4.09	4.16	-0.07		10
24. Reading stories written in English.	4.03	4.20	-0.17		9
15. Discussing problems or questions.	4.02	4.48	-0.46		2
3. Specific teaching and learning goals for the whole course	3.98	4.20	-0.22		6
14. Talking with the whole class.	3.98	3.84	0.14		21
25. Reading letters written in English.	3.95	3.88	0.07		20
2. Specific teaching and learning goals for each lesson	3.94	3.76	0.18		24
17. Being given new words, structures or idioms to memorize.	3.94	2.96	0.98		31
11. Talking with a small group (3 to 4 students).	3.91	4.04	-0.13		14
34. Writing sentences or short answers to questions.	3.91	4.00	-0.09		15
18. Doing homework.	3.89	2.92	0.97		33
20. Using oral drills and repetition.	3.86	3.96	-0.1		16
8. Answering questions asked by other students.	3.73	4.20	-0.47		7
31. Translating or working with translations	3.68	3.12	0.56		30
7. Answering questions asked by the teacher.	3.65	4.12	-0.47		12
16. Collaborating with other students.	3.65	4.08	-0.43		13
30. Students correcting other students' written errors.	3.64	3.20	0.44		29
29. Students correcting other students' spoken errors.	3.61	3.32	0.29		28
32. Working from a class text book	3.52	3.52	0		25
10. Talking one-on-one with another student.	3.50	3.88	-0.38		19
5. Testing to see that these goals have been achieved.	3.47	3.48	-0.01		26
9. Free conversation.	3.42	4.32	-0.9		4
19. Doing tests.	3.39	2.96	0.43		32
1. A new grammar point to be taught each lesson	3.23	2.48	0.75		34
35. Completing longer written tasks.	2.88	3.44	-0.56		27
6. Lecture-style classes where the teacher talks and the students listen.	1.80	1.68	0.12		35

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# **Enhancing Learners' (And Non-Native Teachers') Intercultural Competence through Current Popular Authentic Materials**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Students who have spent many years on EFL/ELT textbooks, which are produced for non-native “foreigners” (namely, “outsiders”), still exit their classes with a paucity of schematic knowledge of the real English-speaking world. Between the goody-two-shoes EFL books and the ubiquitous Hollywood myths, students have no route to lead to sensitivity and sophistication in the pragmatics of English and its culture(s).

It is proposed that current popular authentic materials, which contain: 1) a wealth of genuine interest and experience in the target culture(s), 2) relevance to learners' lives here and now, and 3) demonstration of realistic and ready-to-use language, be adopted in the English classroom in Taiwan. They are the best resources for guiding students into the logic and phraseology of the English-speaking world. Non-native-speaking teachers themselves can also learn considerably from current popular authentic materials. Consequently, both learners and their non-native teachers' intercultural competence could be greatly enhanced to facilitate globalization of Taiwan's education.

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### **I. Introduction—Was He Possessed?**

Once an American professor of mine, a fluent German speaker, told a story: When he spoke German, his wife commented that he looked different—his chin jutted out; his voice, his gestures, and his expressions all changed. Was he possessed by a German spirit? Well, most of the L2 learners that have achieved near-native proficiency can testify that they, if not feeling possessed, take on a L2 personality while speaking the language. This is highlighted in Acton and Walker de Felix (1986):

The experience of anyone who has come close to mastering a second language surely supports...[t]here inevitably comes a time when learners become aware of their new persona in the new language, when instead of just “acting French,” for example, they start to “be French” unconsciously...perhaps doing things they would never think of doing in their native auras (p. 26).

And Valdes (1986) has pointed out:

The most successful language learners are able to take on the “mindset” of the speakers of the second language, assuming the culture along with the language (p. 2).

Schumann (1978) even suggested that L2 learners would not go far unless they can internalize its culture. In other words, the evolution of the new self in the new language is crucial (Curran 1976).

In the case of a polyglot, most likely he/she has multiple personalities. In my own experience, this shift of self-consciousness occurs when my mind clicks into the L2 mode—I gradually lose the sense of myself as Chinese or Asian when I am surrounded by an L2 milieu, which could be its native speakers or current authentic materials. It is not only the language but also the culture that I have come to be engrossed in. Although I cannot claim to be free from interference of my L1, Chinese, the longer I “stay” in my self-created English language environment the more the “American/English me” emerges. Then, it also takes a while for me to get back into my Chinese identity. My Occidental persona tends to be more assertive and exuberant, while my Oriental persona is more reserved and hesitant. I am not only a cultural being but almost “cultural beings,” thanks to the exposure to and passion for languages and cultures other than my mother

tongue. Despite my less-than-impressive speed in code-switching, I feel equally comfortable in my L1 and L2.

## **II. EXISTING APPROACHES FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION**

The interconnection of learning a foreign language and learning its culture has long been established, as "...the language is almost always learned in a context of understanding the people of another culture. Foreign language curricula therefore commonly attempt to deal with the cultural connotations of the foreign language" (Brown 1986:35). The resources for teaching foreign cultures existing in Taiwan include: 1) courses, 2) study tours, and 3) EFL materials.

### ***COURSES AND TRAINING SESSIONS***

Foreign language programs in Taiwan's colleges offer culture education in courses such as "Introduction to Western Civilization," "International Etiquette" for the purpose of raising students' awareness of international (mainly American or English) cultures and customs. The content of these courses tends to be sweeping didactic generalities, something to be regurgitated onto examinations. Similar training sessions for imparting cross-cultural knowledge have mushroomed in the U.S. in recent years due to the influx of diverse cultures as well as the need for conducting business overseas. All these aim at bringing to the learner's attention other peoples' customs and values in the hope of reaching better understanding or harmonious relationships. Nevertheless, no matter how well-intentioned these courses are, they can hardly avoid stereotyping the target culture, whose traits have to be neatly pigeonholed in teaching modules. In a fairly informative book, *Working with Americans* (Wallach & Metcalf 1995), for instance, there are recurrent "justifications" for the surviving group-oriented mentality in Asian cultures, such as:

Asian cultures evolved out of conditions... They live in small villages, barely surviving... Life was dangerous, with the threat of wars, diseases, famines, and natural disasters... Life was very hard. Society's goal was survival... (p. 27).

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A group-based culture made sense for many traditional Asian civilizations. In poor, crowded, agricultural societies, people had to cooperate to survive. In times when people were living on the edge, when one natural or man-made difficulty could mean a disaster, the small group—the family, the village, or the clan—working together, helped to make sure that life would go on (p. 50).

The sympathetic but condescending tone in these passages gives away the authors' unawareness of the hierarchical systems stemming from the feudalism in Asian history and the exquisite, elaborate sides of Asian cultures.

At best, courses and books furnish learners with single-dimensional knowledge in neat taxonomy about the target culture that “will not lead to full understanding but remain foreign and impersonal rather than communicative and experiential” (Lado 1988:77). In a word, it would be impossible for students to “get a feel of” the target culture through this type of approach.

### ***STUDY TOURS***

To bridge the gap between listening to lectures on and real contact with the target culture, foreign language departments in relatively affluent Western countries, e.g. U.K., impose residence abroad for a year as a requirement of their undergraduate programs (Roberts 1998:51). In Taiwan, this practice is not compulsory. But, as its citizens' incomes are gradually elevated, study tours to countries of the target language are promoted in schools, and agents that organize study tours are flourishing. Traveling in places one has studied about is definitely exciting and educational and also can be a lifelong cherished memory. We as foreign language teachers ought to encourage students to participate in such educational tours. However, not every L2 student in Taiwan has the financial means for these costly trips. Again, these trips tend to be short, ranging from two to four weeks, so they can only take tourist-students to the spectacles in the target culture but can barely bring them into the heart of it.

### ***EFL MATERIALS AND HOLLYWOOD***

Over the last few decades, materials for English instruction in Taiwan have advanced from locally produced grammar-based textbooks to a whole array of function-based EFL (English as a Foreign Language) or ELT (English Language

Teaching) materials imported from English-speaking countries. The new crop of EFL books are attractive in their layouts and instrumental in helping learners to converse, though superficially, in a variety of social situations. However, students who have even spent many years on these textbooks usually exit their classes with a paucity of schematic knowledge of the real English-speaking world. Because EFL materials are written for non-native “foreigners” (namely, “outsiders”), they often present the English-speaking world as an artificial stage-managed ecosystem, as in the movie “The Truman Show.” Many people know that Esperanto, an artificial language invented for promoting intercultural communication, never gained much popularity, but few people, especially in Asia, seem to detect the artificiality in EFL materials. This problem with EFL textbooks is further evidenced by research in the recently thriving field of Corpus Linguistics. For example, both Mindt (1992) and Kennedy (1998) have made remarks of particular relevance:

A comparative study of authentic language data and textbooks for teaching English as a foreign language has revealed that the use of grammatical structures in textbooks differs considerably from the use of these structures in authentic English (Mindt, p. 186).

On the basis of a comparison between a corpus analysis and the linguistic devices taught in textbooks...there can be a significant mismatch between normal use of English and what is taught to second language learners (Kennedy, p. 284).

... [I]t was found that TEFL texts tended to expose the learners to a limited number of clichéd human interest stories involving an atypically high proportion of words.... [T]extbooks ...do not prepare learners of English for genres such as those represented in the news media, reports and manuals of information (Kennedy, p. 285).

Another problem is: The ubiquitous Hollywood has dominated the film industry in Taiwan and, also, cable channels constantly feed American movies and MTV into Taiwan’s living rooms. Students naturally imbibe “knowledge” from flicks and pop-song videos, which tend to teem with exaggerations and fantasies, as well as profanities. The result is like what Lado (1986) has described:

Those who see American movies...often misinterpret the forms of the behavior they observe, and often also they ascribe [these] to the whole culture, the whole population... (p.60).

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Between the goody-two-shoes EFL textbooks and Hollywood's myths there is nothing but a hybrid, incongruous perception of Western societies. How can we, then, expect students to arrive at sensitivity about and sophistication in the pragmatics of English and the culture(s) from which it was generated?

### **III. DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE VIA CURRENT POPULAR AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

There is actually a long-term and in-depth measure that can be adopted—the use of current authentic materials in the foreign language classroom—to create a simulation of living in the target language and culture. Shrum & Glisan (1994) have shed light upon the essentiality of authentic materials:

**Authentic materials provide an effective means for presenting real language, integrating culture, and heightening comprehension (p. 118).**

**Videotexts...bring the living culture right into the classroom (p.117).**

**Another convincing reason to use authentic samples is for their richness in cultural content. Because these texts are prepared for native speakers, they reflect the details of everyday life in a culture, as well as its societal values (p. 30).**

The vivid imagery of everyday life in authentic materials magnetizes learners and the unpredictable nature of their contents tantalizes learners, while the predictability of textbooks, “can be the best way of stifling student learning” (McRae 1991:23). This is why typical EFL classes, lacking the aforementioned intrinsic motivators, are locked in a linguistic/cultural ghetto with an impoverishment of higher-order thinking skills in English. To make a musical analogy, we may say that there are colorful tunes and exhilarating rhythms built in authentic materials, whereas EFL texts speak in a monotone. After being exposed to authentic materials for a period of time, the student will naturally sense the blandness in EFL texts and turn to authentic materials, which provide a great variety of flavors to attract learners into the English-speaking world.

#### ***AN EXPERIMENT OF MINE***

While teaching at Soochow University, during my publishing stint in Taiwan in 1990-1991, I experimented with adopting U.S. college application essays and Andy Rooney's best-selling *Word for Word* (1984) for essential reading in my

“English Composition” classes. Also, I played video clips of U.S. TV shows, mostly news-magazines (with transcripts), in a course I named “Window on America.” From college application essays, my students learned how their American counterparts live, behave, and most critically, think and feel. With Rooney’s essays, they came to appreciate broad (vis-à-vis regionally specific or culturally specific) American humor. Through U.S. TV shows, they became connected to thought-provoking issues and “matters of interest” (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen 1982:15) which they discussed using Taiwan as a context. At the end of one year of exposure as such, feedback from my students showed that they felt remarkably empowered by seeing “the woods” rather than “the trees” as well as by being able to communicate in English on a greater variety of topics. In other words, they were able to “successfully decode messages by applying the semantic strategy, which is based on anticipation and guessing” and employ their “internalized knowledge...for the performance of productive tasks” (Marton 1994:64). The students even asked me to send them more materials of the same nature from the U.S. so that they could continue my “legacy” of pleasure reading of current authentic materials on their own. The most desirable resource-based learning and student autonomy was apparently in place.

## **2. RICH RESOURCES NEGLECTED**

Surprisingly, this common-sense idea of immersing students in current authentic materials to make them quasi-participants in the target culture is not customary in Taiwan. A fixture on the government’s priority list for decades, English education in Taiwan has not generated satisfactory competence—neither in language nor in culture. Obliviousness of the power of current authentic materials may be one of the significant factors.

Authentic reading and videotexts, produced by and for native speakers from an insider’s perspective, contain a wealth of genuine interest and experience in the target culture. Hence, in the case of English education, they are the best resources for drawing students into the culture(s) of the English-speaking world. Unfortunately, they are often shunned by non-native speaking teachers, who constitute the majority of the English teacher population in Taiwan, perhaps due

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to fear of unfamiliar spots that might cause a “loss of face.” Conscientious non-native teachers incorporate realia such as menus, train schedules, party invitations, classified ads, birthday cards, etc. into their instruction. However, these realia lack depth, so they are not particularly useful in guiding students into the logic and phraseology of the English-speaking world. Only first-hand exposure to original thought-provoking materials can bring about an active engagement with the texts and gradually an understanding that cross-cultural training workshops try to approximate. Native-speaking teachers, on the other hand, tend to be polarized, when it comes to authentic materials. Some regard them as too difficult for non-native students and thus avoid them altogether. Other native-speaking teachers might jump into classical literature without taking into consideration that Asian students are devoid of heritage of the Western Civilization and K-12 (kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) native English education, where ample contemporary materials are assimilated. Classical literature is valued by an elite group of students within the English literature discipline but may well be inaccessible to other learners (unfortunately, the majority).

### **3. MAKING APPROPRIATE SELECTIONS**

Among authentic materials, I much prefer current popular ones, because they are superior in relevance to learners’ lives here and now as well as in demonstration of easy but realistic, ready-to-use language. They could be best-selling essays/short stories, TV news-magazines, talk shows, etc. One caution to be exercised, though, is that at the introductory stage the humor and way of thinking in these materials have to be universally appealing, because peculiar remarks/antics could cause frustration in less experienced learners. Nowadays Taiwan imports many current award-winning films and TV shows, especially from the U.S. Some of them are acclaimed for their clever, avant-garde manipulation of linguistic/cultural idiosyncrasies, which usually fall flat on students in Taiwan. For the same reason, I seldom use novels or poems for students’ reading, because they, in general, feature highly stylistic, quaint writings that deliberately twist or even break linguistic/societal conventions to achieve special aesthetic effects. Therefore, it is important to make appropriate

selections of relatively straightforward yet delightfully engaging language and styles, free from abstruse vocabulary and convoluted syntax. As a matter of fact, the language in the majority of current popular authentic materials targets a native level of fifth grade or above. So it would be a misconception to think they should be formidable to non-native teachers.

#### **4. A WIN-WIN SITUATION**

When selecting materials, all it takes is empathy and discretion on the part of native teachers and courage and inquisitiveness on the part of non-native teachers. The latter can actually learn considerably from current popular authentic materials themselves about what is transpiring in the societies and with the people whose language they are teaching. In addition, the non-native teacher has a vantage of “we-they” as opposed to the inherent “we-you” position for the native-speaking teacher. In other words, the non-native teacher can function as an escort and the native teacher cannot choose but assume the role of a curator. If non-native teachers could recognize current popular authentic materials as a route leading to schematic knowledge of the real English-speaking world and thus take their students to that area, both teachers and students would find themselves gradually grow in intercultural competence and eventually become “near-insiders” of the English-speaking world. And they would acquire a potentially enormous range of things to talk about with native speakers. It would be a win-win situation for both.

#### **5. EXAMPLES OF RECOMMENDED CURRENT POPULAR AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

**Book:** Humorous/poignant essays/short stories, e.g. college application essays (personal statements), Andy Rooney’s and Robert Fulghum’s writings, *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series.

**Magazine:** a great variety (Magazine articles are actually the best, because they are most up-to-date and tend to be informative and entertaining. The drawback is that it would be too costly for students to subscribe to them, so using visually unattractive photocopies seems to be the only choice). *Imported*, e.g., People, Life, Time, Newsweek, National Geographic, Reader’s Digest, Time for Kids, GQ, YM, McCall’s, Redbook, Premiere  
*Locally produced* (bilingual) e.g. Time Express, Voice

**Video/Audio:**

“Behind-the-Scenes” on cable movie channels  
(Selected) films with English caption

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### **CNN and ICRT clips**

The above list mainly consists of U.S. publications, simply because I am personally more familiar with them. Here I would like to solicit from other experienced teachers recommendations on current popular authentic materials from other English-speaking countries so as to make the list more complete in the future. As for specific contents, teachers could “shop around” and make selections based on their own and their students’ interests, because only interests and passions can lead to sustainable and autonomous practice over the long haul.

The materials listed above, as a matter of fact, are quite available in bookstores that specialize in imported English books/tapes in Taiwan nowadays. There are also plenty of K-12 (kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade) collections; Scholastic paperbacks, as an example, are pleasantly affordable.

### **6. DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE APPROACHES JUXTAPOSED**

Courses and books usually follow the format of straight, deductive lectures, which provides information, “as an abstract system of meanings,” (Roberts 1998:52) but deprives students of vicarious enjoyment that could be obtained inductively from observing and participating in the target culture. While there are spoken as well as unspoken values in a given culture, the spoken ones can be explicitly delineated with lecturing or subconsciously depicted in storytelling. As an example of explicit delineation, Wallach and Metcalf (1995) have said:

Americans see themselves as doers, people who can and will accomplish things. They talk about being “masters of their own destinies,” meaning through their efforts and hard work, they can make things better.... You can do anything you want, if you want it bad enough (p. 107).

Americans are encouraged from youth to look for creative solutions to problems, to take appropriate risks.... (p.114).

Juxtaposed below is part of an essay by Gumenick (1997), who recounts her brother’s initiative to “gatecrash” into the university of his first choice:

He applied to 14 colleges. He was accepted to all but one, the one he wanted, Brown University...[H]e informed us that he had come up with a plan. He was going to do whatever it took to get into Brown...His plan was to move to Rhode Island near Brown, find a job, and do whatever he could become known in the area. He'd work his heart out, he said, and do the very best at everything...This was a big deal for my parents because it meant agreeing to a year without college, a scary thing for them. But they trusted him and encouraged him to do whatever he thought it would take to achieve his dream...It wasn't long before he was hired to produce the plays at—yes, you guessed it—Brown. Now was his chance to shine, and shine he did...He met teachers and administrators, talked to everyone about his dream and never hesitated to tell them what he was after. And sure enough, at the end of the year, when he reapplied to Brown, he was accepted (pp. 84-85).

Wallach and Metcalf (1995) has also pointed out an important American attribute—humor:

Americans...make a lot of jokes about themselves and others. Americans are famous for their teasing.... (pp. 101-102).

And now let us look at Rooney's (1984) tongue-in-cheek passages in his "Fear of Doctors":

People don't like to go see the doctor because they know they're going to have to take their clothes off. In spite of all the appeal nudity has for us in certain forms...Most people think they look worse than most other people naked. They must have courses in medical schools about how a doctor should tell the patient to take his or her clothes off...Some doctors try to be discreet. They say, "All right now. Let's take our clothes off, shall we, and see what we have here"...I don't know whether men doctors treat women patients any differently than they treat men or not, and I certainly have no information about how woman doctors treat men patients. I doubt very much if you'd catch one of them saying, "All right now, let's take our clothes off." (p. 19).

So, which approach, deductive lecturing or inductive storytelling, is more engaging, and why? It is because induction is an exploratory process, an adventure, which leads to empathy and true understanding.

Ideally, there would be an interplay of 80% inductive and 20% deductive processes in the foreign language classroom. As Valdes (1986) has discovered: "How we appear to others and how we see ourselves may be vastly different." (p. 139). How Americans see themselves goes into EFL books; how Americans think and act can be observed through current authentic materials by learners themselves.

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### **7. LANGUAGE PRAGMATICS AS A MANIFESTATION OF CULTURE/SOCIETY**

In addition to the aforementioned spoken values, there are unspoken values that can only be gleaned from authentic materials. Those are "...the values inherent, but not necessarily specifically expressed..." (Valdes 1986:138) or the "...subtle dimensions of the culture that most second language learners never truly come to grips with" (Acton and Walker de Felix 1986:21). To native speakers, their spoken values are their conscious tenets, something they can tell other people about, while the unspoken values are ensconced in their subconscious. The conscious part, from either the insider's or the outsider's viewpoint, can be related in culture textbooks. By contrast, the subconscious part in a culture often goes unnoticed but is revealingly manifested in its language. As Kaplan (1986:8) has summed in one sentence, "Phenomenology of a community of speakers is reflected in the language...and the language...helps...to shape the phenomenology." On a deeper level, we might argue that it is the sociocultural milieu and collective cognitive schemata that underlie semantic networks. Therefore, "Language...is the most visible and available expressions of that culture...system of thinking, acting, feeling, and communicating" (Brown 1986:34). These expressions, or manifestations, are not typically seen in EFL materials but are richly represented in authentic materials.

Therefore, imbedded in a given culture is its particular rhetorical style and pragmatics, which tend to mystify members in other cultures. For example, "Excuse me," "I declare..." in English (discussed in detail by Mey 1993:165-166) and "Oh. You're back." in Chinese are often considered as foolish by members of other cultures and likely provoke a "Duh" reaction. Interestingly, even between American and British English, their different rhetorical styles can be a case in point, which is illustrated in Hollet (1998):

Recognizing intentions can be particularly tricky when we're communicating across cultures. Societies frequently have different ways of going about their business...Climbing into a New York taxi, I asked, "Could you possibly take us to Greenwich Village?" My American friend pointed out the absurdity of this, saying, "But of course he could, Vicki. Otherwise we shouldn't be getting into the cab. On the other hand I was surprised to hear my friend greeting unknown cab drivers with "How are your doing?" Why did he want to know? (p. 19)

Also, Brown (1986) has observed the peculiar language used in American advertisements:

... [T]he advertising world is a prime example of the use of language to shape, persuade, and dissuade. "Weasel words" tend to glorify very ordinary products into those that are "sparkling," "refreshing"... [I]n the case of food, these products are now "enriched" and "fortified"... [I]n the U.S. there are no "small" eggs, only "medium," "large," "extra large," and "jumbo." Euphemisms...abound in American culture (p. 43).

It seems not only the U.S. but also the U.K. has embraced euphemisms, which are "Power Language"—again a euphemism itself—to Revell and Norman (1998:28-29). Over the past few years, these English-speaking societies have become fascinated with emollient words, e.g. "sacrifice" is replaced by "contribution," "difficulty" by "challenge," "poor" by "underprivileged," "aggressive" by "assertive," "retarded" by "mentally challenged," etc. Without authentic materials, which supply the context of pragmatics such as euphemisms, learners may never get acquainted with the ongoing "politically correct" mania in the U.S. Ironically, the notion of political correctness has taken on a totally different, almost opposite, interpretation in Taiwan—in Zhu's article (1999), the term "politically incorrect" means "despising being a sycophant to the politicians in power." This case has fortuitously illustrated that "culture-specific world views are reflected in language" (Brown 1986:45). Other interesting examples of American pragmatics can be seen in Yule (1985: 98), such as: "Heated, Attendant, Parking" means "a heated parking lot with an attendant to look after the car" and "Baby Sale" means "clothes for babies on sale." Only learners who are aware of such underlying meanings are able to function appropriately in the target culture. Again, the use of authentic materials would be a route leading to such competence, as corroborated by Villegas Rogers & Medley (1988):

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Language samples... reflect a naturalness of form, and an appropriateness of cultural and situational context that would be found in the language as used by native speakers (p. 468).

And Mey (1993) is most articulate in informing what it takes to achieve full communicative competence in the target culture:

... [I]n order to understand another person's wording, I have to participate in his or her contexts, to word the world with him or her...[I]t is a users' language, a users' pragmatic precondition to understanding their context, and to being understood in and through that context (p. 304).

...as you expand your horizon, taking in the different dimensions of another culture.... A new wording process...is taking place in the L2 learner; the old (L1) wording will be experienced...as inadequate for these new processes (p. 153).

### **8. *THE DIVERSE AND DYNAMIC ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD FROM A PANORAMIC VIEW***

Once an American asked me in good faith, "Don't all the Asians speak the same language?" It is actually no laughing matter—because Asians very often hold a similar view toward Western people. The "capitalistic Occidental world," represented by the money-oriented, sly, and promiscuous Americans frequently portrayed in Hollywood films, is often criticized by Oriental countries for its "materialism and moral decadence." Then, where is the "baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet" America (Valdes 1986:140)? The reality is that both ends of the spectrum exist, and there is much more in between. American culture is indeed a spectrum, or a continuum, which is a far cry from polarity. Furthermore, the ever-changing American society can easily make culture textbooks and conventional, distant views antiquated. For instance, Asians in general deem American society to be relentlessly and incessantly rushing toward high-tech extremism, unless they read what Rafferty (1999) has reflected upon:

At the certain level of complexity, I suppose, human consciousness does feel the urge to wipe the slate clean and start all over—to unlearn all it's learned. This is almost a religious impulse. After a hectic, crowded—and probably rather enjoyable—life of sin, you simplify: retire to the monastery or the convent and contemplate, in silence and humble labor, the mystery of existence. At this point in the development of culture, we may be doomed to an endless dialectical alternation between technical complexity and radical austerity (p. 132).

The pursuit of austerity or returning to a more naturalistic, spiritual lifestyle is actually quite prevailing in the U.S. in the present day, as evidenced by the popularity of Robert Fulghum's and Richard Carlson's books. Indeed, Wordsworth and Thoreau will never become obsolete.

With an understanding as such, we can better see why the diversity and dynamics in a culture cannot be freeze-framed in convenient yet static, simplistic teaching modules. Dunnett, Dubin, & Lezberg (1986:153) have also indicated: "...typical English language instructional materials communicate cultural messages from a one-dimensional view."

As a matter of fact, it is quite feasible for students located in the other hemisphere to acquire knowledge of a near-totality of the Western Culture if they are provided with a panoramic view to look at as many possible sides, if not all, of it. The portrayal of various facets, from positive to negative, of the American society can even be exhibited in a single book—each one in the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series as an example. Only this type of portrayal can lead to a broad and in-depth understanding of sociocultural practices in the target culture.

### **9. LEARNERS AS "VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS"**

Deeply seated in L2 learning is its affective nature (Valdes 1986:33). So the greatest advantage of current popular authentic materials lies in that "something must happen, something exciting" (Wallace 1988:145), which can hold the attention and interest of the listener or reader. As a natural consequence, the learner becomes part of the real-world language or situations. We all have the experience of being moved to tears while reading a captivating story or watching a poignant film. Does that ever happen with EFL materials? Why? It is because they are "presented merely as an opportunity to practice a particular sentence pattern" (Wallace 1988:154) and "no one can feel, or therefore think deeply, in an artificial language" (Valdes 1986:1). Pathos only exists in authentic materials, which can create a "virtual reality" for learners. This is why my students at Soochow came to experience what would be close to a brotherly/sisterly bond with the authors of the college application essays—they shared the authors'

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emotions. This affective factor weighs markedly into the effectiveness and long-term retention in L2 learning. Stevick (1998) has put it this way:

**The emotional involvement would have at least two effects. Certainly it would lead to richer and more vivid mental imagery to be stored along with the words...[S]trong feelings of various kinds can cause the resources within one's long-term memory to become more fully, more sharply and more readily available (p. 154).**

Likewise, McRae (1991) has stated:

**...a growth in...intuitive, inductive...learning which involves the student as actively and as personally as possible.... It...requires materials which appeal to the learner. This appeal can take many forms: topical relevance,...visual impact, humor, emotional impact, etc. (pp. 8-9).**

In other words, it is the nitty-gritty in authentic materials that can lead to an insider feel of the target culture. With this insider feel, learners experientially and intellectually step into the shoes of members of the target culture. Former cognitive fossilization caused by psychological distance will be gradually dissolved and replaced by a reorientation of thinking and feeling (Brown 1986:33) in the target culture. Roberts (1986:64) has aptly summed up this process in one sentence: “[C]ulture is something to be ‘caught’ not ‘taught’.”

### **IV. POINTERS FOR UTILIZING CURRENT POPULAR AUTHENTIC MATERIALS**

#### **1. FAMILIARITY AND CONFIDENCE**

Initial contact with authentic materials might be a somewhat alien experience to non-native teachers and their students. The vocabulary and phraseology in authentic materials is in fact not any more difficult than but could be quite different from those in EFL textbooks, which non-native speakers are accustomed to. (As I have pointed out previously, Corpus linguistics has evidenced this dismal discrepancy.) So they resort to Chinese dictionary definitions and their L1 experiences/attitudes. Thereby comes a mismatch between the knowledge and expectations that learners bring to the text and those of the author(s). Valdes (1986) has described this practice as “...unfortunately...to attempt to superimpose the native culture onto the target language” (p. 121) because “[n]ew second language lexical items...are processed through existing first language schemata” (p. 24). Lacking background

knowledge of their L2 culture, learners may have difficulty in making sense of the subtle parts of a given authentic text. In other words, they may understand what is said but not what is referred to. This is exactly why we need to introduce authentic materials into the classroom; otherwise, intercultural competence may never be developed. What's more, installing this type of training from the beginning would achieve far more impressive results than not launching it until college, which is like releasing bound feet. McRae (1991) has advocated the early use of authentic materials, which he labeled as "representational materials":

If students are introduced to representational materials very early on in the language learning process...a representational component can be built into any language course. A new text or two every week...will give students on-going exposure...(p.21).

He has also talked about teachers' inadequacy in this area:

This examination-oriented mentality on the part of the student is, in great measure, the result of generations of teachers feeling insecure in themselves...And teachers...should be actively encouraged to familiarize themselves with, experiment with, comment on and add to this range of materials. Too often, teachers'...lack of familiarity with the complete range of materials available, and/or lack of encouragement...Teacher unfamiliarity with representational materials and their potential is just as much a drawback to their more widespread use as the teacher inhibition...And unfamiliarity breeds lack of confidence (p. 24).

So, if we flip to the other side of the coin, we would see that familiarity breeds confidence, and "with regular use, representational materials will become an enjoyable and indispensable part of language learning" (p. 21). I believe many students in Taiwan have a hearty aspiration to achieve near-native proficiency in English, but this aspiration will unlikely be fulfilled if EFL materials continue to be overvalued as the destination of English learning.

## **2.CONFIDENCE AS AN ANTIDOTE TO XENOPHOBIA**

Some instrumentally motivated or traditionally educated non-native English teachers might cast a leery eye on the use of authentic materials, as if they were to be thrown into a strange and uncomfortable situation. In the award-winning *The Non-Native Teacher*, Medgyes (1994), a Hungarian who learned English in his own country from other non-native teachers, brought in a personal awareness and conviction:

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All I can offer to those suffering from a fear of exposure is the assurance that there is no point in trying to hide, because we simply cannot hide in the long run. With English rapidly gaining ground, with the spread of mass media and with more and more imported NESTs [native-English-speaking teachers] encroaching on our erstwhile private property, it is hopeless to close the classroom door behind ourselves and hedge our bets... We had better take the initiative and speak out... There are various strategies we apply, mostly unconsciously, to cope with difficult situations in our personal and professional lives. Two patterns of behavior, mastery-mode and survival-mode, represent the extremes of a complex continuum. In mastery-mode, people are eager to obtain new information and master new skills. This implies confronting challenges... In survival mode, people's overall desire is to play it safe, therefore they search for simple, reassuring and stable models... [P]eople in survival mode are rudely awakened from their dream. What they regard as brutal attacks, people in mastery-mode consider to be exciting adventures. (p. 44)

For “people in survival mode,” their unfamiliarity breeds lack of confidence, lack of confidence leads to inhibition, which in turn gives rise to insular mentality, inferiority complex, and even xenophobia. This pejorative chain, in fact, can be easily broken by a positive attitude, free from chauvinism or negativism, adopted by “people in mastery-mode.” Let us backtrack to the American professor of mine for a moment: He speaks German like Germans do—is it because he wants to become German and thus abandon his American identity? No. It may be likened to good actors' deftness for getting into their characters. It is “a willingness to enter...into what can be the exciting adventure of another language and culture” (Valdes vii). With an expanded view on an egalitarian relationship between their L1 and L2 cultures, non-native teachers would actually be more appreciated by students because of their experience in and sensitivity to the learning process of the target language and culture.

### **3. EMANCIPATION FROM THE SLAVERY OF A RIGID BOTTOM-UP STRATEGY**

Maley (1986) has recounted his English-teaching experience in China:

The Chinese attitude towards books is...on a word by word, phrase by phrase basis, explaining points of vocabulary, syntax, type and content... The foreign teacher tends to find this obsessive concern with the fine detail of his language somewhat irritating...for him, reading is...teaching students to extract meaning and information from texts as rapidly and efficiently as possible...(pp. 103-104).

Although an avid advocate of language acquisition through authentic materials, I am not a die-hard believer of top-down strategy, which I consider best to be

complimented by doses of bottom-up instruction. Nevertheless, a slavish obsession with microscopic dissection of a text is indeed irritating and most detrimental to the learning process. Therefore, non-native teachers in particular do not have to be bothered or feel embarrassed by their lack of knowledge, if any, of isolated usage or esoteric allusions in an authentic text. Meanwhile, students should be trained to ignore those spots and instead go about grasping the gist and emulating the language. “If the learner is aided in this process by sensitive and perceptive teachers, he can perhaps more smoothly... increase his chances for succeeding in both second language learning and second culture learning” (Brown 1986:39). On the other hand, non-native teachers should take on the challenge of tackling unfamiliar but pragmatic phraseology in the authentic text, because this is exactly where they can boost their own intercultural competence. During my twenty years of living in the U.S., I religiously talked with native speakers about what puzzled me in newspapers, magazines, TV shows, etc. (I still maintain this habit now, though I try not to overly bother my native-speaking colleagues.) This is the very opportunity for me as a non-native to grow in schemata of the English-speaking world. Also through this habit, I have come to recognize the diverse linguistic styles and legitimacy thresholds among native speakers, so I usually consult not one but a group of finely educated native speakers to reach an “authentic consensus.” Thus, a single native teacher’s opinion does not need to be deified as “the Oracle” (Valdes 146). All in all, the acquisition of schemata is a spin-off from extensive exposure to the target language/culture and emancipation from the traditional word-for-word struggle.

## **V. CONCLUSION—GLOBALIZATION AS A GOAL OF TAIWAN’S EDUCATION**

We English teachers might get a big ego inflation when we read the following statistics in Medgyes (1994):

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English has become the primary language of international communication, the *lingua franca* of the world, and it is rolling ahead like a juggernaut. More people speak English today than have ever spoken any single language in the recorded history of the world...According to conservative estimates, it is spoken by 700 million people; more radical estimates put this figure between one and two billion. Even more strikingly, the number of those who speak English either as their mother tongue or as a second or foreign language has grown by 40 percent since the 1950s (Crystal 1987). English is the official or semi-official language in more than 60 countries over the six continents. (p. 1)

With the increasing prevalence of English as a world language and the rapid growth of international interactions and mutual dependencies, teaching English in a non-native setting nowadays is no longer teaching the language alone, it is in a sense teaching the world. The teacher has an obligation to make their students understand “the culturally derived values, attitudes and outlooks of other people” (Bateson 1972:211). In a “mastery” mode (see Section IV.2), the transition from monoculturalism to bi- or even multiculturalism can be a powerful and profound learning experience, leading to a higher degree of self-awareness and personal growth (Brown 1986:38). Acculturation to a world of diversity opens great vistas and supplies new insights. By learning other peoples’ frames of reference, both learners and non-native teachers win an opportunity to expand their horizons and enter the new global village, because “while we can recognize different world views...we can also recognize...some universal properties that bind us all together in one world” (Brown 1986:47).

The traditional Chinese/Taiwanese culture has not been outward looking. Hence, to achieve globalization in our education, as promoted by the government, will not be an easy task and hopefully will not become merely a slogan. Inquisitiveness and broadmindedness have to be fostered first in the English education in the form of adopting current popular authentic materials, because they would be most effective in enhancing intercultural competence and would therefore better equip us to live in the world in the new millennium.

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Caroline C. Hwang was born in Taiwan, Her first exposure to English during her childhood was overhearing her grandparents from Shanghai occasionally speak the language, Following the “baptism” of years of traditional English instruction in Taiwan and a B.A, in Western Literatures, she went to the U.S. and began her real acquisition of the English language. She obtained her M.A. in Comparative Literature and Ph.D, in Applied Linguistics. She taught in Universities in the U.S. and also worked in England. Twenty years of stay in English-speaking countries has reinforced her enormous pleasure in the language and culture. She is eager to share with learners of English the joy of living (or simulated living) in the language.



## Section5: Multimedia English

The Internet's impact on business, culture, and education, is already incredible. Just a few years ago, we were all talking about the use of video disks and the new language labs in language learning classrooms. These technologies seem clunky next to the Internet's ability to include formatted text, graphics, sound, video, interaction, database data, etc. The instant international nature of the Web is so tempting to language teachers that there are few who have not thought of incorporating it into their classrooms. But the very advantage of the Web, its huge size and ability to connect everywhere, is also somewhat overwhelming. A bit like riding a wild horse, teachers often fear the technology involved, as well as the inability to control what students are actually doing on the Web. Just how to bring this tool into the classroom is the central question addressed by the next three papers.

Chu Min-huai introduces numerous aspects and details of writing on the Internet. Since students today have experience using BBS and email, it seems natural for them to use the same technology for writing English. The application of genres is pointed out by Chu, with the use of examples in business and social communications over the Internet. Chu also points out the ease of correcting errors, or inserting corrections, which stands in stark contrast to the traditional use of red pens and the inflexible assignment paper.

Juonathan Benda's paper follows up with guidelines on using the Web and how students can evaluate the information found there. The issue of information overload is important to the Web, and in the case of our students takes on even broader importance. Because EFL/ESL students often lack the capability of judging source information, in English, they run the risk of simply assuming all information presented in English is equally true and valid. This problem is not only a language learning issue, but one of critical thinking. Benda points out our opportunity to not only use the Web for language learning, but as a springboard for teaching critical thinking and effective research.

Warden and Dinah Tai give a beginning introduction to creating interactive Web pages that can be used for creating quizzes or other class exercises. Concepts of programming are introduced while specific examples are given that can be put to use in your own Web sites.



# **The strategies of Applied English writing: Being Applied to The Internet**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to explore how to combine the curricula and training of the school with the writing on the Internet, taking an example of the writing courses of applied foreign language department. Since the students have few chances to use English on the Internet, the prerequisite is to request the students must contact with the instructors with the Internet or e-mail in the writing class. By this, the instructors can figure out their shortcomings in applying English to the Internet, and further provide some strategies for this matter. The mistake that the students most often make on the Internet is the disturbance of their mother tongue. They are accustomed to translating Chinese into English directly, which makes the sentence not only illogical but also ungrammatical. Strategy I is to strengthen the training of the basic sentence patterns that the students often employ. Besides, the students cannot condense their ideas into conciseness, thus their writing on the Internet falling verbose and loose-structured. Strategy II is to train the students how to condense their ideas into conciseness. The students are due to the pressure of time that they have to try their best to keep the reader's interest. Simple and readable grammar can help the reader to comprehend the user's messages. Strategy III is to advise the students what grammar should circulate on the Internet. The outcome of the study can be expected to have an effective assistance on the students who use English on the Internet.

## **INTRODUCTION**

On account of the prevalence of the Internet, it shortens the distance among countries, and makes it convenient that those who use different languages communicate with one another. English is the most popular and current language on the Internet. Those who use the Internet are required to have the basic ability to utilize English. Communicating on the Internet is supposed to be convenient, swift, and concise; therefore, there seems to be some differences between the language on the Internet and that on composition. How to reach the demand of the above mentions becomes an essential matter. This paper aims to explore how to combine the curricula and training of the school with the writing on the Internet, taking an example of the writing courses of applied foreign language department. Since the students have few chances to use English on the Internet, the prerequisite is to request the students must contact with the instructors with the Internet or e-mail in the writing class. By this, the instructors can figure out their shortcomings in applying English to the Internet, and further provide some strategies for this matter.

At the beginning of this paper, it is essential for me to introduce something about the course—Applying English Writing to The Internet. Most of the students using the Internet, as far as I know, do nothing but have a gossip with others. Almost few students employ it to implement a more practical task, not to speak of the discussion and exploration of learning. This does not mean students can use it only for scholarship; they are, of course, permitted to have a chat with others without any specific intention. Like a coin, the Internet has two sides: One is positive, the other negative. In case of using it only to talk nonsense, it not only does harm to students but squanders their time and, what is worse, makes them flunked out. Owing to using it for gossip, the language students apply is their mother tongue—Chinese. English is known to us for an international language. It is, similarly, wildly used and accepted on the Internet. Try to imagine that if you want to communicate with a foreigner on the Internet, your poor English will make it misunderstood as well as maladroit. Students have few opportunities to talk in English on the Internet. The first step for the course is to require

students that they talk with you in English on the Internet, by which you can find out some problems and further provide some strategies for them.

Most of the colleges and universities, at present, offer few courses in “English Writing on The Internet,” including the college I serve at. What measure I take is this course attached to the composition class. I will appropriate some periods from the composition class to instruct the students how to write on the Internet. Prior to formally teaching this course, I must find out some problems from the students, and thus they are requested to take turns talking to me in English on the Internet from three to five minutes. I will pick out various topics to converse with them, so that I can find out some drawbacks of theirs by which I am able to draw up some strategies for them.

### **STRATEGY I: DEXTEROUS APPLICATION OF BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS**

It is, before commencing this part, necessary to distinguish English writing on the Internet from general English composition. The former must be simple, convenient, and swift; the latter seems to have a wider and greater space which a writer can exert. Seeing from this view, the sentence patterns on the Internet must be different from those in composition. The ways how to skillfully use basic sentence patterns which meet the demands as stated above play a crucial part in applying English to the Internet. The students talking to me on the Internet, I experience, have a lack of basic sentence patterns suitable for talking on the Internet. They, therefore, appear not to be able to respond instantly to me. In addition, they are used to translating Chinese into English directly, which makes the sentence not only illogical but also ungrammatical. Focusing on their shortcomings, I devised a variety of basic sentence patterns fit for the Internet for different purposes, inclusive of asking for information, selling, job hunting, looking for help, and making friends.

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### A. ASKING FOR INFORMATION

#### A CONCISE BEGINNING

1. I am looking for + 所需的資訊.
2. Has anyone used + 產品名?
3. Does anyone know about + 所需的資訊?
4. Could someone please recommend + 所需的資訊?
5. I need information about + 所需的資訊.
6. Does anyone have any suggestion or recommendation for + 所需的資訊?
7. I am doing a survey or research for + 用途. If you have any information about + 所需的資訊, please inform me.

#### EXPLANATION FOR THE NEEDED INFORMATION

1. I can use + 東西/資訊 for + 用途. I remember there is one for + 用途. Is this still available or something like it? Where can I get / buy it? I urgently need + 東西/資訊 for + 用途.
2. If you have any suggestion or recommendation for my + 東西/資訊, please tell me why you choose it. What features or what attributes made you use it?
3. The + 東西 is / are specially designed for + 用途/人. I have not been able to find out anything through my normal + 地方. If you have any suggestion, would you please tell me?
4. I have come across + 公司行號 which offers / produces + 產品 at the price which seems to be reasonable. Has anyone used + 該產品 or had any dealings with the + 該公司行號? Would you please give me your valuable experience / ideas for it?
5. I am trying to find a newsgroup that discuss + 討論話題, but don't know whether one exists or not. If anyone has any information about this, please inform me.
6. I am doing a questionnaire for + 用途. If you take some minutes to complete it, I will be much obliged to you.

#### A THANKFUL CLOSE

1. I would much appreciate any information.
2. Any information leads greatly appreciated.
3. Thanks for your information.
4. Help!
5. Thanks in advance.
6. Any ideas? Thanks a lot.
7. Please forgive me if this passage ends in the wrong place.
8. Please respond to me / us by + 日期. Thanks a lot.

### B. SELLING

#### A CONCISE BEGINNING

1. For sale: 列上你的產品和它們的價格.
2. We are looking for distributors to sell our + 產品.
3. This information is to convey the + 商展名 trade fair at / in + 地點 on + 日
4. 期.

5. We have recently started our own business on + 產品.
6. 公司名 is a new + 產品 company. We are looking for investors with a strong
7. interest in + 該產品.
8. We sell + 產品 nationwide by mail.

#### INTRODUCTION FOR THE PRODUCTS

1. All items listed are new (or used) and in working condition. They are made in + 產地名, under strict quality control. Each order will charge freight and handling
2. fee + 價格 (or Their prices have included freight and handling fee).
3. The product is + 產品的種類 called + 產品名. 說明產品內容及優點. You can have a trial sale on our products. Trust me that this product indeed allows you to profit a lot.
4. The international fair will take place at + 地點 from + 起始日期 to + 截止日期, including + 參展項目, etc. It is estimated that there will be 100,000 people visiting it, including government purchasing agents, buyers and suppliers at home and aboard. Besides, there will be various programs, including press meetings, conferences and all activities held by exhibitors.
5. Our products include + 產品名 made in + 產地名. We also carry lots of + 相關產品. We are planning to open our market in + 國家/地方名.
6. e. Our first project has already caused lots of attention and has no doubt been a
7. success in the + 產品 market. Because of increasing our capital for the next project, 該公司名 is looking for funds to finish it. If you are interested in
8. investing a young, potential firm with a good vision for + 某市場目標, please get in touch with + 該公司名.
9. f. The products we run include + 產品名. Catalogues are available by e-mail or mail if you need. Our prices are reasonable and competitive.

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### CLOSE

1. If you are interested in any or all of this, make an order to + 負責人或公司名 via e-mail + 網址 or at + 電話號碼.
2. If you need more information or have any question about our products, please contact us via e-mail + 網址 or at + 電話號碼.
3. If you are a + 產品 company, don't miss this opportunity to visit the international fair.
4. d. We look forward to setting up a close cooperative relation with you.

### C. JOB HUNTING

#### A CONCISE BEGINNING

1. 職位名稱 is / are wanted in + 公司名.
2. We are ready to release a new + 產品名. We need + 職位名稱 for + 產品功能.
3. Dear Sirs and Mesdames: My name is + 姓名 at the age of + 年紀. I am a
4. graduating student of + 科系名 at + 學校名. I specialize in + 研究領域
5. and am interested in finding a job opportunity as a + 職位名稱.

#### SUPPORTING DETAILS

1. 公司名 is a + 公司分類 company specializing in + 公司經營項目. We have several + 職位 available with decent salaries and sound welfare system. Positions are available in + 公司地點. Applicants are required to have + 技能 / the experience of + 工作性質.
2. This position requires you with the degree of + 學位, the major in + 研究領域, the ability to process + 工作性質. Positions are available in + 地點. Applicants under the age of + 年齡 are preferred.
3. Though I have no actual working experience on this position, I am confident that I can be qualified for this job. I will do my utmost to serve on this position if you are willing to offer me an opportunity.

### CLOSE

1. Applicants should send resume by e-mail to + 網址, by fax to + 傳真號碼, or by mail to + 公司地址或郵政信箱.
2. I hope I have pleasure in interviewing with you. I look forward to hearing from you.

### D. LOOKING FOR HELP

#### CONCISE BEGINNING

1. I need help with + 所需要的幫忙.
2. I am looking for someone who can help me in + 所需要的幫忙.
3. Who can kindly assist me in + 所需的幫忙?

#### EXPLANATION FOR THE HELP YOU NEED

1. I have been trying to + 所做的事情, but I fail. I used + 方法/工具/材料, but it seemed to be in vain. Does anyone know how to solve / deal with + 所需的幫忙?
2. I am troubled with + 所需的幫忙. Could someone please recommend + 某種專業人才 to + 所需修理的東西, which is produced by + 製造商? But it seems to stop producing + 該項產品.

3. This complicated + 學科問題 confuses me. Does anyone have any idea for solving + 該項問題? If anyone can or would like to solve + 該項問題, please post a solution on the Internet or send e-mail to + 網址.

#### A THANKFUL CLOSE

1. Any information would be greatly appreciated.
2. If you have any information, please let me know via e-mail + 網址.
3. I am relatively new at + 某問題 and would appreciate any help.

#### E. MAKING FRIENDS

##### CONCISE BEGINNING

1. Hi there. My name is + 姓名 and I am from + 地名 + in + 國名. I am + 年紀.
2. I am a + 國人 who had lived in + 地方名 for + 時間. I have a wonderful memory of + 該地方 and would like to correspond with people living in + 該地方.
3. c. I am a + 學校等級 student majoring in + 學科. You can call me + 名字.

##### INTRODUCTION OF INTERESTS AND NEEDS

1. I enjoy + 興趣 and love + 嗜好. I am interested in writing e-mail with people from all over the world. I hope those who have the same interests and hobbies can send e-mail to me.
2. I am now a + 身分/地位 in + 所住的地方. I am much interested in + 某地方 but have no current detailed information about + 該地方. Maybe I am likely to visit it again recently, so I sincerely ask those who live in + 該地方/ are familiar with + 該地方 send e-mail to me.
3. I am now learning + 某種語言. I am looking for + 某國的 pen pals, so that I can learn more about the country and language. My + 該種語言 is not very good. I hope I have a chance to correspond with you and further I can improve my + 該種語言 by sending e-mail to you in + 該種語言.

##### CLOSE

1. I look forward to hearing from you. All e-mail will be replied.
2. I hope to get in touch with those in + 某國.
3. If you are kind to help me, please send e-mail to me and let me know your + 網址. Hope to hear from you very soon.

Above are designed sentence patterns widely used on the Internet. These sentence patterns furnish students for primary references. In case the students are capable of writing a satisfactory e-mail or communicating well on the Internet, they can, of course, develop their peculiar thinking into organizing a qualified one. Otherwise, they are required to practice writing in the light of these basic sentence patterns. At first, an instructor can demand the students reorganize these sentences into a well-organized e-mail in accordance with different topics he assigns. They keep on practicing these until they are able to

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employ these ingeniously. These sentence patterns aim not to restrict their independent thinking but to give them a rudimentary assistance for developing their independent thinking.

### **STRATEGY II: AN EXPRESSION WITH CLARITY AND CONCISENESS**

Writing on the Internet conveys nothing but an interaction between users and readers. The first step for a user on the Internet is to build up a smooth channel with the other side. From the past to the present, the most formal communicative means is generally considered in the form of a letter. To express a sense by writing emphasizes the precision of exerting words and sentences. Different intentions for a letter will give rise to different written rules and styles. Contacting on the Internet, like that on telephone, embodies a simultaneously communicative bridge to connect the two sides. It is thought that a qualified writing on the Internet serves three basic purposes: to advise the reader, to make a good impression on the reader, to motivate the reader into doing something. The first and most indispensable step is to advise the reader—to specify ideas and facts as exactly as possible from your mind to that of your reader. An accurate information conveyance can achieve the second purpose—to impress the reader deeply. The above two purposes can allow the occurrence of the third one—to motivate the reader into doing something. Communication with the three elements does good to create an atmosphere that helps you get well in touch with your reader.

The prerequisite to attain these purposes is an expression with clarity and conciseness. Clarity always serves as the most fundamental factor for contacting on the Internet. It is of great importance that you choose the most appropriate words to express your ideas. Try to imagine that you have an obvious and rigorous thought that you would like the reader to understand, but if you misuse words to deliver it, your reader may mistake with an evil consequence for yourself. To express their ideas exactly, the writers on the Internet had better not employ general words when specific words can accurately carry a sense. An instructor, at this moment, can give the students an example how to pick out a

proper word. Below is an example: In each of the following pairs of verbs, try to underline the more specific one.

1. to begin ---- to establish
2. to proceed ---- to do
3. to consider ---- to deliberate
4. to classify ---- to separate
5. to produce ---- to manufacture
6. to change ---- to reform
7. to send ---- to deliver
8. to phone ---- to contact
9. to carry out ---- to act
10. to tell ---- to specify

AN INSTRUCTOR CAN PROCEED TO OFFER STUDENTS A SENTENCE EXAMPLE FROM WHICH TO PICK OUT THE MORE SPECIFIC ONE:

- (1) Your    has reached to us. (A) information (B) communication (C) letter Ans: C
- (2) I will    you as soon as possible. (A) get in touch with (B) contact (C) call Ans: C
- (3) We are    our latest catalogue to you under separate cover. (A) sending (B) mailing Ans: B
- (4) We will    your letter soon. (A) reply (B) react (C) deal with Ans: A
- (5) Professor Johnson's speech was   . (A) good (B) instructive (C) valuable Ans: B

The next measure an instructor takes should develop the above written concepts into a passage from which to substitute the specific words for the general ones.

Below is a paragraph written by vague words:

Regarding your information on October 21, we first wish joy to you on your proposal to change the climate of our sales department. The project seems worth doing. Thus, it seems to me that your plan should be sent to our board at their next meeting. I will contact you at an early date when they discuss whether they adopt it or not.

Rewrite the above paragraph into the following one with specific words:

Regarding your letter on October 21, we first congratulate you on your proposal to reform our sales department. The project seems workable. Thus, I think that your project should be considered by our board at their next meeting. I will write to you as soon as possible when they decide to adopt it or not.

Only by using concrete words can writing on the Internet have an effect of clarity. A writer sees his way to expressing his ideas accurately, to avoiding making them tangled. Writing on the Internet aims to inform the reader what

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you wish to convey; if not, it will degenerate into an inconspicuous message which probably misunderstands your reader and further does harm to yourself.

Conciseness acts as the basis of clarity. Writing on the Internet cannot develop as long as a love letter in that a writer will, while being on the Internet, face the pressure of time. There is no other room to let you write inflated words. A writer is required to condense his ideas rather than extend them. As stated in Strategy I, well-organized sentence patterns can help to condense ideas into conciseness. A concise sentence consists of the fewest words without losing effectiveness, clarity, and courtesy. The first step for a concise sentence is to cross out unnecessary words and phrases:

(A) Please be informed that your L / C (Letter of Credit) arrived on April 6. (10 words)

(B) I wish to tell you that we received your payment on August 8. (13 words)

(C) We cannot reduce the price of our goods because of the fact that their qualities are higher than those of any other one in the market. (26 words)

(D) I personally think that the price seems to be higher. (10 words)

(E) Our manager, whose name is Jack Johnson, is leaving for Paris for the purpose of an international business meeting. (19 words)

Rewrite the above sentences:

(A) Your L / C arrived on April 6. (6 words)

(B) We received your payment on August 8. (7 words)

(C) We cannot reduce the price of our goods because their qualities are higher than those of any other one in the market. (22 words)

(D) I think the price seems to be higher. (8 words)

(E) Our manager, Jack Johnson, is leaving for Paris for an international meeting. (12 words)

From an efficient point of view, “please be informed” in sentence A, “I wish to tell you” in sentence B, “because of the fact that” in sentence C are wordy phrases. “Personally” in sentence D is not essential for the verb “think” since an opinion is absolutely personal. In sentence E, “Our manager, whose name is Jack Johnson,” can be rewritten as a more concise phrase—Jack Johnson (apposition)—from an adjective clause. Furthermore, the preposition “for” itself meaning purpose can replace the phrase “for the purpose of.”

To cancel unnecessary words and phrases is still not adequate to be concise. One who is engaged in the act of writing is apt to write redundant words

imperceptibly. Redundant words hinder the sentence or even the whole article from smooth development. It is necessary to delete them in correspondence with conciseness. The following words circled can be omitted either the former or the latter:

- (A) Please check out your offer **over again**.
- (B) He insists that his proposal be **right and proper**.
- (C) After **thinking and considering** about your offer, we decide to refuse it.
- (D) **Each and every** college students should be taught the **basic fundamentals**.
- (E) We have been trying all **ways and means** to develop a **new and original** product.

The ways how to avoid writing redundant words consist in the precise usage of words. Hardly had a writer not been able to figure out how to use the word when he looked it up in the dictionary. When consulting its usage, he must locate the most suitable and logical sense to match it, by the way to learn its synonyms and antonyms. Such doing facilitates the means how to avoid writing redundant words. Moreover, a writer can read a variety of English articles, so that he may no less increase his vocabulary than absorb reading experience. Instead of memorizing a word without referring to its context, the best way to apprehend the usage of a word is to put it into its context, i.e., to learn it from sentences. Redundant words, in this way, would keep aloof from your writing.

### **STRATEGY III: KEEPING THE READER'S INTEREST**

The user on the Internet always perceive the pressure of time for which they have no choice but to keep the reader's interest as well as to condense their ideas (as mentioned in Strategy II). Providing that the user cannot precisely convey what he intends to express and, what is worse, his talk becomes a circumlocution, his reader must feel dull and eventually leaves the line. In other words, the messages he imparts degenerate to be verbose and unattractive. The means how to motivate the reader's interest occupy a crucial status in communicating on the Internet. Here I tend to eschew focusing on the significance of what topic the user chooses. Instead of concentrating on the topic, I am more inclined to touch the problem of grammar, i.e., what grammar is supposed to circulate on the Internet?

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The difficult-or-easy extent of grammar can determine if the reader will be intrigued by the user's information. The reader will sense more unintelligible the more difficult the user adopts grammar. Abstruse grammar will encumber the reader from comprehending the messages the user conveys. Most of Taiwan's students look on abstruse grammar as a vital component of a qualified article. On account of this, a substantial content is not always found in their articles. A magnificent expression is inevitable to detract the substance of the content. What grammar should circulate on the Internet plays a pivotal point to keep the reader's interest.

Communicating on the Internet principally means the messages given to the reader through the circulation of the Internet. The user on the Internet will be confined by the pressure of time, and therefore he must do his utmost to make the reader understand his messages as soon as possible. Judging from this view, the grammar used on the Internet should be simple and readable, so that the reader cannot be perplexed with it and need not spend much time consulting the grammar books. Whether an instructor should appropriate some time to specify grammar in this course appears to become another problem. This course is performed in the third grade of five-year educational system and the freshman of two-year educational system at junior college. These students having received basic grammar training seem not to require formal grammar teaching in this course. Moreover, our department offers grammar curricula for the students. It is suggested that an instructor take his students' articles on the Internet as examples in which to pick out grammatical errors and to point them out to the students.

Below is an example in which the students are required to present their opinions on the indiscriminate trapping and killing of wildlife in Taiwan within 200 words on the Internet and they must finish their short articles within twenty minutes: (The underlined are mistaken; the parenthesized are corrected.)

Because people in Taiwan don't understand the importance to protect (of protecting) wildlife, so (erase so) the wildlife in Taiwan are (is) in a poor environment (situation). We Chinese are fond of eating wild animals and consider (regard) them as nourishment which can make human bodies stronger, thus (and thus) there are many animals murdered (killed) by Taiwan people. People enjoy eating various wild animals, such as tigers, bears, rhinos, birds, and so on (erase *and so on*). There are few (fewer and fewer) birds flying in the sky, few (fewer and fewer) tigers running in the wild, and few (fewer and fewer deer) deer and rabbits in the forest. It is not difficult for us to see them at the market for sale. How poor they are! We should try, I think, every possible way (every way possible) to preserve wildlife. First, none (no) people allowed to murder (kill) wildlife. Second, the concerned authorities (the authorities concerned) should punish those who murder (kill) wildlife. Third, we should pay very much attention to these animals to keep them from eaten (being hurt). If we can do this, the (erase *the*) nature will wear a brilliant smile forever.

**Without doubt, some grammatical errors can be easily found in this article. The responsibility to point these errors out to the students does not fall into the instructor but the students themselves. The instructor can take his students' articles as examples in which the students are asked to find out grammatical errors. Then the students take turns correcting them or suggesting how to improve them. This article becomes an open text where all the precise corrections can be allowed. The duty of the instructor is to give his opinions to the students if their corrections are not proper, but he never indicates grammatical faults in advance. Not only can this illuminative way help the students find out their grammatical mistakes, but also it can instruct them how to write on the basis of correct and simple grammar on the Internet. Accurate and simple grammar can pave the way for smoothly reading, which can have a great help to keep the reader's interest.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**The prevalence of the Internet stimulates the need for English. An ESL student is thought to have the ability not only to speak English but also to write in English on the Internet. More and more trading companies establish cooperative relations with one another through the Internet. In other words, e-mail or communicating on the Internet has gradually superseded traditional business letters. The Internet can shorten the time of messages sent to another place as well as expend less money than traditional mail. English is the most prevailing and circulating language on the Internet. If you can not have the basic capability to utilize English, you are more likely to be excluded from the Internet, for which you may lose your competitive abilities. Because of the pressure and the**

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**limitation of time on the Internet, those who use English on the Internet must seize some secrets as mentioned above. This course, in this way, can work its way by means of the students who can do a good job on the Internet.**

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# The Internet Research in English Problems and Solutions for EFL Students

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## **ABSTRACT**

While many educators agree that the Internet has given students of English as a foreign language great opportunities for finding and using information from all over the world, EFL teachers need to recognize that more needs to be done to train students to find and evaluate information on the Internet. In this essay, I address some of the issues involved in teaching EFL students how to do efficient, productive research on the “English The Internet.” I describe methods and concepts that teachers should be teaching to help students make determinations about the quality of information provided—using search engines and navigating hyperlinks, using what context is available on a Web site (for example, URLs, language, and hyperlinks to and from the site in question), and using a kind of rhetorical analysis to evaluate the trustworthiness of the Web site’s author. I argue that at the heart of teaching students to find information on the Internet is the task of helping them develop cultural and critical literacies that enable them to understand and critique the origins of both the information provided and the audiences invoked.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For students and teachers in Taiwan whose libraries are deficient in up-to-date and accurate English-language materials, the Internet can be a veritable *deus ex machina*; so much English-language material is available that we face an “embarrassment of riches” (Wallach, 1999). However, teachers and students also need to recognize the importance of choosing information and data with great care, and need to work together to develop the skills necessary to manage the data overload. Articles and books have been written about the quality of The Internet-based information (Devlin and Burke, 1997; Chau, 1997; DeZelar-Tiedman, 1997) and about teaching the Web to students (Halverson, 1997; Arnold and Jayne, 1998; Harris, Harris, and Hannah, 1998; Murphy and Pascoe, 1996) and the Web itself contains suggestions for students and researchers who want to evaluate information on the Internet (Kirk, 1998; Tillmann, 1997). These sources all stress the importance of critical thinking skills in searching for and evaluating Web<sup>1</sup> sites.

However, critical thinking, as Dwight Atkinson argues, can be described as a skill that operates at the level of social practice, subject to the cultural norms of particular communities of people (1997, p. 73). As such, critical thinking is under-theorized and teachers need to approach the teaching of critical thinking with an awareness of the cultural knowledge that is assumed by some people who recommend such practices. Thus, students not only need to be taught a vague set of “critical thinking skills” about the Web, but they also need to be introduced to a context of language and culture which is assumed by many of those who write about critical thinking and research. In other words, they need to be taught *why* they should ask critical questions of their sources as well as what questions to

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<sup>1</sup> You’ll note that I use the terms “The Internet” and “World Wide Web” (or “Web”) almost interchangeably. This is not because I don’t know the difference between them; it is rather because, for most research purposes, the Web (as Aniko Halverson notes) “offers a more flexible means of presenting The Internet information resources” than other The Internet applications like Gopher and Ftp do/did (Halverson, 1997, p. 68). Consequently, the Web is overshadowing or subsuming other The Internet information tools.

ask. While this is recognized as important, I have not yet come across much information about how students of English as a foreign or “other” language should be taught these skills in the context of The Internet research. In this essay, I will describe some concepts that teachers should be teaching to help students make determinations about the quality and appropriateness of information provided on what I call the “English The Internet,” and I will introduce some methods that students can use to that end.

### ***THE CONTEXTS FOR THE INTERNET RESEARCH SKILLS TEACHING***

I want to discuss the teaching of The Internet research skills in the context of an EFL research methods course. I want to limit the context for several reasons, not the least of which is that this is the kind of course I teach. However, there are other strong reasons for this kind of context. As librarians Tillman (1997) and Arnold and Jayne (1998) argue, it is difficult to get a grasp of the strengths and weaknesses inherent in The Internet-based information without an understanding of the (sometimes similar) strengths and weaknesses of paper-based information (Arnold and Jayne, 1998, p. 44). Teaching The Internet research skills alone when students do not yet have an understanding of “paper-based” research skills (finding and evaluating books, articles, and other materials) risks feeding into a misplaced faith that students might have in the superiority of computer-mediated information. Even when students are taught about “paper-based” research, they sometimes over-rely on the Internet. I often have students come to me and say that they have or have not found anything on their research topics, and when I ask them where they’ve looked, they say “on the Internet.” This reply tells me two things: they are probably not searching correctly and they’re looking in the wrong place first (that is, the Internet). Thus, I will begin with a brief discussion of the need to introduce students to the similarities and differences between paper-based or commercially published online information and The Internet-based information (or, to be more precise, The Internet publishing).

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### **CULTURAL LITERACY**

The development of an understanding of the differences between different kinds of published texts is a kind of cultural literacy, in that an understanding of the growth of academic publishing, and especially referee processes, is in part a product of the Western educational system. While students in Taiwan have an innate respect for books, or for a person who has published a book, they seem to have more difficulty identifying exactly why they should have this respect. An example of this is a common warning given to children: 「小孩子不可以吃雞爪，長大不會讀書」 (the idea being that if small children eat chicken feet, they won't respect books—instead, they will “claw” at the books carelessly like a chicken would). Taiwanese students, as is commonly observed, read books, study books, and memorize books, but are usually not given the opportunity to develop an understanding of the origins of those books. Students need to be taught how books (including textbooks) are produced; only then can they develop a stronger understanding of the similarities and differences between “paper” publishing and The Internet publishing.

“Paper” publishing is a demanding process that involves many people, a good deal of money, and complicated apparatuses of control and stuff. In the United States, for example, publishing in most cases requires a substantial outlay of money on the part of the publishing company, so that what writers produce is “filtered” to ensure that what is produced is dependable, authoritative, well-written (whatever these 3 adjectives mean) and will sell (at least to libraries). In many cases, the costs of publishing (and hence the “filtering” system or, as it is usually called, “gatekeeping”) can be avoided in The Internet publishing.<sup>2</sup> Although there are many refereed publications on the Internet, and many paper-based publications have either moved to the ‘Net or added Web-based counterparts, there are also a lot of “native” Web texts (texts written to be

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<sup>2</sup> One way, by the way, to make students understand the differences between publishing a book and publishing on the Internet is to teach them to make a Web page. When they realize how easy it can be, versus how difficult it would be to get a book published, they'll have first-hand knowledge of the differences.

published directly on the Internet) and privately published (or “vanity press”) The Internet documents, whose information can range from the authoritative to the rumor mongering. An example, from a few years ago, illustrates the danger of people not knowing the clear differences between web-based information and more authoritative information: reporter Pierre Salinger’s use of The Internet sources in his investigation of the TWA Flight 800 accident hurt his prestige (cf. Sundar, 1998, p. 65 n.1).

And with the increasingly easy access that people have to the software necessary to make a good Web page, it’s not so easy to tell from the form of the text whether or not it’s authoritative or not. Recently, the *New York Times* reported that a man copied the Web page design of the Bloomberg financial news service and posted a false news report stating that Pairgain Technologies, a telecommunications company, “would be acquired by an Israeli company, ECI Telecom, for \$1.35 billion, or about twice its market value at the time. During the day, the value of PairGain stock rose as high as \$11.125 from a closing price the day earlier of \$8.50” (FBI arrests man, 1999, April 15). Besides perpetrators of The Internet-based fraud, there are also well meaning people who put erroneous information on the Internet. The difficulties that students might have finding and evaluating The Internet-based information are thus not necessarily due to a failure on the students’ part; the Internet itself is a mess. The first steps outlined below, therefore, work toward the goal of helping students find and read what they’re looking for on the Internet.

## **FINDING THINGS ON THE INTERNET: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS**

What problems might EFL students have regarding research on the English The Internet? How do these problems compare to those faced by native speakers of English? Following are some of the problems EFL students might face, based on my experiences teaching The Internet researching skills to university-level EFL students. They can be divided roughly into using search engines (“pre-click” evaluation) and interpreting and evaluating Web pages (“post-click” evaluation).

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### **USING SEARCH ENGINES: "PRE-CLICK" EVALUATION**

EFL students might have difficulty using search engines (entering search keywords, determining whether or not a result is relevant). Native speakers of English need to learn this, too, but EFL students have more of a problem in that their vocabularies are more limited.

There are a wide variety of tools available for students to use to search. These are commonly known as "search engines" (Alta Vista, Webcrawler, for example); some search engines also contain subject directories--hierarchical indexes to various topics (for example, Health > Traditional Medicine > Chinese > Acupuncture). Sometimes directories contain rated sites, sometimes they don't. Some directories/search engines use human-entered data (Yahoo and About.com, for example), and some use "spiders" or "bots" (automated computer programs) to search for Web pages. Teachers need to instruct students in the choice of a search engine or a directory. Zorn, et. al. (1996, May) and Rettig (1996) provide good (but slightly dated) information on how search engines search for and evaluate information on the Internet. It's important to tell students about how to use particular search engines--they're not all created equal; how you search on one engine might be completely different from how you search on another. Search engines allow the use of Boolean operators, some don't. Students need to know that they shouldn't be afraid to look at the "help" screens provided by the search engine service.

One important factor to consider in deciding between search engines and directories is the students' language ability, especially their active vocabulary. Probably all of us have had the frustrating experience of entering a search item and then coming up with a bunch of sites that are, at best, only tangentially related to what we were looking for. I had a student, for example, who was looking for information about the socialization of Japanese girls and ended up at a pornographic Web site. For students whose active vocabularies are not especially strong, a directory lookup can be more forgiving than attempting to choose the most appropriate terms to type into a search engine. Students whose vocabularies related to their topics might be weak (they might have difficulty

coming up with related words or synonyms, and dictionaries--especially translation dictionaries--might lead them astray) can utilize their receptive vocabularies to follow a path to find site that might be related to their topics.

It can also be frustrating for students to use directories, for two reasons. First, as librarian Hope Tillman (1997) puts it, while search engines “may bring up lots of screens of bad hits, that really does not matter if you get to what you want on the first screen of hits.” Secondly, different directories on the Internet organize their information differently--Infoseek and Yahoo, for example, have “APEC” in different directory structures (“Business > Int’l commerce > Trade > Organizations > Asia > APEC” for Infoseek and “Regional : Regions : Asia : Business and Economy : Organizations : Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)” for Yahoo). It’s important to encourage students to take the time to look carefully through different possible directory structures to find what they want. Perhaps the best choice is to use a combination of the directory and search (within a subdirectory/subtopic) to find sites related to their topics. (This can also be frustrating, sometimes, though, because the topic might not be in the category the student thinks it should be in—I once looked for “breadfruit tree” under “trees” but couldn’t find anything. One of my students found it under “food.”)

One of the things that I emphasize to my students is the need to go slowly—you can waste a lot of time by hastily clicking on the first site on the list. I usually do a search in front of my students, showing them how I read and evaluate each item that comes up before clicking on any one particular link. Most search engines will give you at least a brief description of the site listed—using information in a META tag (a way of adding information that will not be shown on the Web page itself) or the first 250 characters of the web page. These descriptions, in addition to the URL of the site, can usually tell you enough information to make an intelligent decision. It’s therefore also important to instruct students in how to read a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) in order to find out the origin of the web page.

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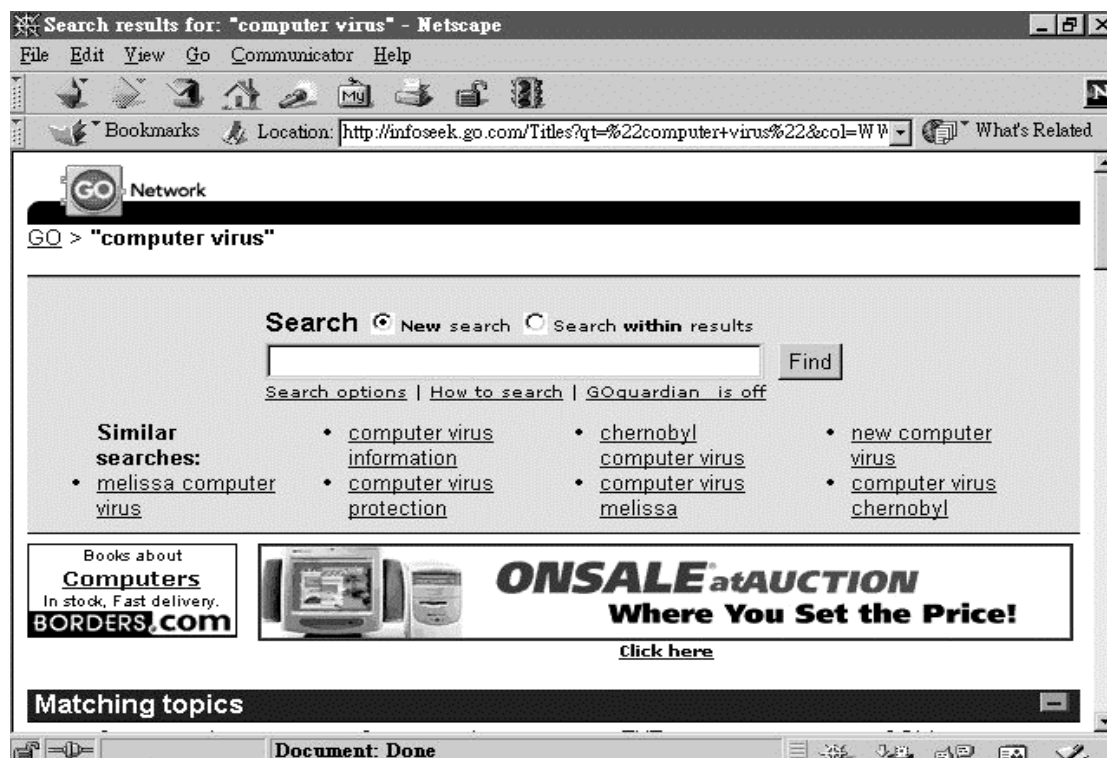
A final comment about search engines: at some point, we have to decide what's more important: analyzing what we find or finding something to analyze. In some cases, teachers might *give* students links to follow (cf. Arnold and Jayne, 1998, p. 46). In other cases, we could give students "stored searches" in the form of a link to an already completed search (cf. Singh, Gedeon, and Rho, 1998, Spring, p. 92ff). These would link to dynamic pages, in the sense that the contents of the linked-to page would change from time to time, but it would save students the trouble of inventing terms to type into the search form. For example, a link to a page like

[http://infoseek.go.com/Titles?qt=%22computer+virus%22&col=WW&sv=IS&lk=noframes&svx=home\\_searchbox](http://infoseek.go.com/Titles?qt=%22computer+virus%22&col=WW&sv=IS&lk=noframes&svx=home_searchbox)

would lead students to a page of links to sites related to computer viruses (this page happens to be the search results for an Infoseek search). A stored search has the additional advantage of modeling to your students which search terms might be effective for a particular topic. You can point out to them which terms were used to get the results.

FIGURE 1. THE FIRST SCREEN OF INFOSEEK'S SEARCH RESULTS PAGE FOR A SEARCH ABOUT

([HTTP://INFOSEEK.GO.COM/TITLES?QT=%22COMPUTER+VIRUS%22&COL=WW&SV=IS&LK=NOFRAMES&SVX=HOME\\_SEARCHBOX](http://infoseek.go.com/Titles?qt=%22COMPUTER+VIRUS%22&COL=WW&SV=IS&LK=NOFRAMES&SVX=HOME_SEARCHBOX))



### **FINDING AND READING WEB PAGES**

As mentioned above, students might have difficulties reading URLs. This is also a problem for native speakers of English, but Taiwanese EFL students again suffer because of their limited English language proficiency and because of various differences between English and Chinese punctuation rules. Further, Taiwanese EFL students might be less sensitive to the protocols of typing URLs—they often leave out punctuation marks, type in incorrect letters, and make other errors that frustrate their attempts at accessing online information in an efficient manner. (An example of how such errors might be used by unscrupulous businesspeople: *Newsweek* recently reported on some pornographic sites which took advantage of users' typos—these sites registered domain names like “wwwcitibank.com (note the absence of the dot after ‘www’)”, counting on people to make mistakes when typing in URLs (Sigesmund, 1999, April 21). It's therefore important to teach students to be careful about the URLs that they type in.

URLs are also important in what they tell us about who wrote the Web page/site and the relationship of the Web page/site and the server that it's on. Nick Carbone at Colorado State University teaches his students to “work” the URL in order to find out more about this relationship (Carbone, 1999, “Tips”). I will discuss this more in a later section; for now, it is enough to say that students should be made aware of the meanings of domain names like .com, .gov, .edu, and .net. Further, they should know how the directory structure of a URL is listed so that they can find something related to what they are looking for in the event that the page they want to go to is no longer available. For example, if a student goes to <http://mail.thu.edu.tw/~benda/spring97> and gets an error message, she should know how that deleting the last part of the URL will take her to <http://mail.thu.edu.tw/~benda> instead.

Possibly more important than trouble with URLs, EFL students also often have problems reading Web pages. For example, EFL students are often less clear about what the actual content of a particular Web page is; I have often seen students clicking on links that will take them away from the site that they have

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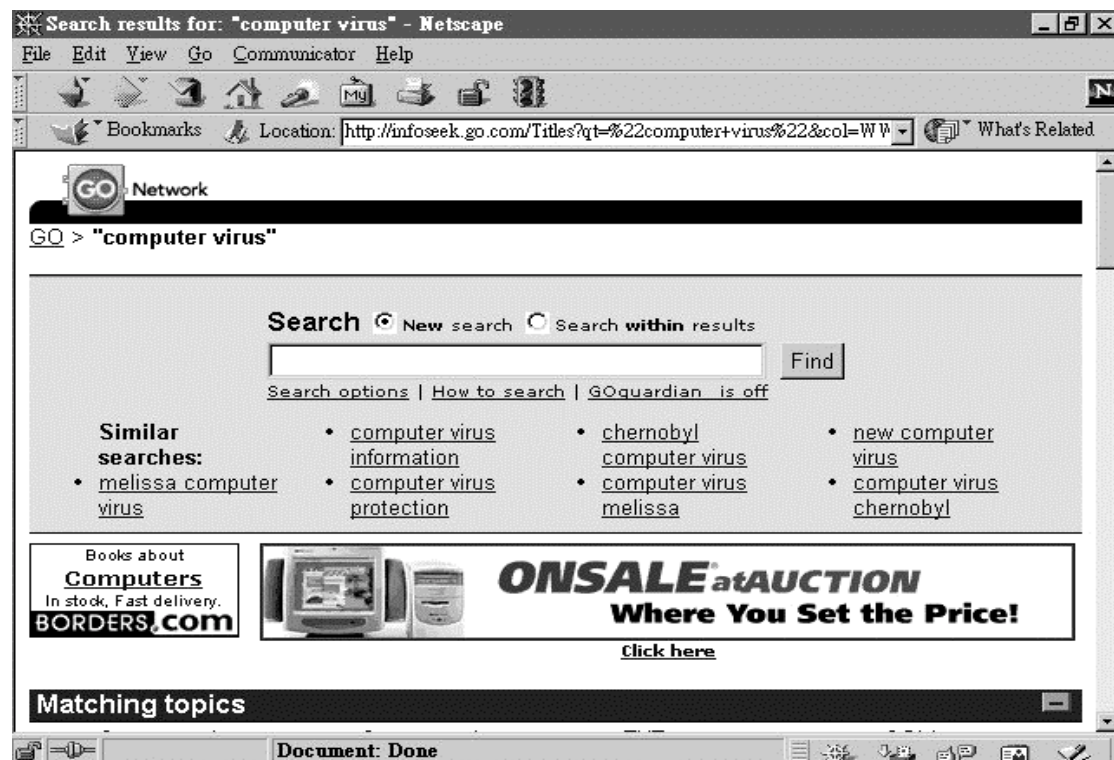
found before they have done a thorough investigation of that site. Usually the students are clicking on advertising without knowing it. When students are navigating through English-language Web sites, it is often more difficult for them to separate the site's content from, say, its advertising. Thus, they click on advertising (some of which is cleverly disguised as content, some of which is bright or colorful eye candy) without really taking in the content of the page. In fact, they generally have problems moving around in hyperlinks--maybe EFL students need more help with this--they might not quite grasp the context for the "jumps" as well as native speakers.

For an example of this problem, on the Infoseek "computer virus" page mentioned above, the first screen is comprised party of advertising and partly of links to "similar searches." Note, for instance, the Borders.com advertisement in the lower left-hand corner of Figure 1: it contains one of the words used in the original search, which might lead students to believe that that link would lead them in the right direction. (Note also the imperative "Click here" underneath the advertisement for online auctions.)

In response to these potential problems, we need to show clearly to students how a Web page is organized—what its constituent parts are. Obviously, this varies from Web page to Web page, but there are some general statements that can be made about content. For example, we know that most Web pages have a title of some sort near the top of the page. This is helpful because students can get confused as to which is the title of the Web page—since a title is an important clue to describing the contents of the page, not knowing what the title is can lead to confusion about what the contents are. I recommend pointing out to students the title that is usually within the heading section of the page (the heading section consists of whatever is placed between the tags <head> and </head>, and the title that is placed in the heading appears above the task menu). This can be compared with the content in, say, the top half of the first screen of the Web page. In Figure 1, for example, the heading says "Search results for: 'computer virus'", which tells us that the page will consist of a listing of sites related to the subject of computer viruses.

Students also face difficulties trying to find things in subdirectories--guessing how a particular Web site's information is organized (in university Web sites, for example). Again, this can be a problem that native speakers face, but it is exacerbated in EFL students by their language level and unfamiliarity with the organization principles that may (or may not) be followed by the people constructing the Web site. One solution, mentioned above, is to teach students how to read URLs. In addition, teaching students how to look for (and interpret) site maps (see Figure 2), how to bookmark pages that they have already found (and how to save bookmark files to a floppy disk), and how to use a site's search engine to find additional information can all help reduce students' difficulties in finding and reading The Internet-based information.

**FIGURE 2. THE FIRST SCREEN OF THE SITE MAP PAGE FOR SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY. NOTE HOW THE INFORMATION IS ORGANIZED INTO CATEGORIES. (HTTP://WWW.SYR.EDU/SITEMAP2.HTML)**



### **"POST-CLICK" EVALUATION**

After finding and reading The Internet-based information, Taiwanese EFL students might have difficulties critically evaluating the content of Web sites. This last difficulty is a result, on the one hand, of the newness of The Internet

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information technology, and on the other hand, of the student's lack of understanding of the culture(s) of English information (the contexts in which the texts are situated).

There are many sources which give instructions about how to evaluate Web sites, but most of them say basically the same thing as Kirk (1998), who lists the following six "criteria for evaluating all forms of information" and then applies it to the Internet: 1) authorship, 2) publishing body (the server, organization, etc.), 3) point of view or bias, 4) referral to other sources, 5) verifiability, and 6) currency. For EFL students probably the most difficult of these criteria to use is point of view or bias. Some Web sites may contain subtle biases that even highly educated native speakers of English might not notice. Kirk mentions some of the signs of bias, such as a document's location "on the Web server of an organization that has a clear stake in the issue at hand," or "on the Web server of an organization that has a political or philosophical agenda," but these signs are less obvious to non-native speakers than they would be to native speakers. Many students who are doing research using English-language sources have little background in the kinds of political and social conversations or conflicts going on in the place where the texts were produced. They might not be aware of the political leanings of the *National Review* or *Time*; it is even less likely that they will be able to evaluate an The Internet-based essay about a controversial issue by looking at the possible biases of the organization or of the server providing the space (and this is probably a moot point in the cases of servers like Geocities).

There's no easy answer to the problem of students developing the literacy necessary to locate signs of bias or point of view except to tell them to "do more reading." Finding out about information (or misinformation) providers simply takes time. In addition, students need to interact (or at least lurk) with others on the Internet, in order to acquire greater literacy regarding their selected topic. For this reason, I require my students to join an e-mail discussion group (or "list") related to their research topic, in order for them to begin to develop the "lingo." Many such lists can be found through e-mail list search engines at [www.liszt.com](http://www.liszt.com) or [www.tile.net](http://www.tile.net). Using lists has the additional benefit of exposing students to a variety of opinions, levels of expertise, and personalities. It's

important for them to understand that the Internet is a network made up of *people* and not just of computers. The underlying *humanity* of the Internet is what makes it interesting, frustrating, and not always authoritative (all at the same time). Students (and teachers) need to recognize that the information provided on the Internet is not always unbiased or objective. It should be obvious that this approach to research requires time—one cannot expect one’s students to engage in this kind of depth of investigation for a paper that is due in two weeks.

In addition to Kirk’s criteria and my suggestions regarding e-mail discussion groups, following are some questions that students can/should be taught to ask themselves when thinking about using particular Web sites in their research:

1. *Who is the author?* Students should be taught how to identify the author of a particular Web document. Nick Carbone mentions, for example, in his “Tips” handout how students can “work the URL,” moving up directory levels to find who the author is, if it’s not obvious (Carbone, 1999, “Tips”). If an individual author cannot be identified, students should look for an organizational author (the U.S. Department of State, for example). My usual comment to students who cannot find either kind of author is that they should be very suspicious of the source.

To use an extended example: a few years ago, there was a lot of talk about getting computer viruses through e-mail. Out of curiosity, I decided to look on the Web to find some information about viruses. Among the sites that came up on the search engine’s results was a site by a person by the name of Rob Rosenberger ([www.kumite.com/myths](http://www.kumite.com/myths)). I had never heard of him before, but I went to his site anyway. On his site, he offers a lot of information about computer viruses, some of it a bit controversial (for example, he comments on “scare tactics” that some computer-virus-prevention companies use to sell programs). Red flags went up in my head, so I looked around for any information about Mr. Rosenberger himself. Fortunately, he has a page with the name of something like “Learn about Rob before you start taking his advice” where he tells readers who he is and why people should consider him trustworthy. (In rhetoric, this is called *ethos*, personal reputation—he is showing that he is both knowledgeable and benevolent.)

2. *Who is the intended audience?* Discovering who the audience is can be difficult sometimes. To discover who the intended audience might be, students can look at the text itself for clues—is the language very technical? Are any “allies” or some “opposition” referred to or addressed? Is there a clear “we” or “you” referred to in the text? Students can also look at the date of the page to attempt to determine what kinds of events were happening at the time the page was created (this will help in determining the context for the Web site).

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3. *What do you think was the author's purpose for creating this Web site?* This partly depends on the answers to questions 1 and 2. Sometimes the purpose is clear: the site might have been made in response to a class assignment; the site might be advertising a product; the site might have been designed by an organization in order to disseminate information (or propaganda?) related to that organization's purpose. Sometimes the purpose of a site is unclear, or a site has more than one purpose. In this situation it is very important that students find out as much as possible about the site's author or authoring organization in order to judge what the purposes might be.
4. *How does the author support his/her opinions? Are the opinions supported by documented information, or are they "just" opinions? What kinds of facts are used to support the opinions of the author? As with non-Internet sources, students can be asked to find the main claims and support for each claim. Carbone (1999, Tips) lists some good questions for students to ask in this regard.*
5. *What organization is sponsoring this Web site, and why?* This question is often related to questions 1 and 3. Some Web sites are sponsored by organizations in order to spread information about that organization or to disseminate information about an issue of concern to that organization. Others sponsor Web sites for moneymaking purposes. Geocities, for example, allows people to sign up for free for eleven megabytes of space. The only limitations are that no pornography is allowed and the author must allow Geocities to place its advertising on the author's Web site.
6. *What kinds of links are made to and from this Web site?* A link from the site to another is a kind of citation—to some degree, the author of the Web site is validating what was written on that other site. (The author might be linking to something he or she disagrees with or disparages—this is also important to note.) It might also be important for student researchers to know who links to the author's site—this can be done by typing the URL in a search engine's form to see what pages are connected to the author's page.
7. *How likely is it that the Web site will be there when you try to go back to it?* Some pages have an extremely short lifespan—students looking for an article that was featured on the "front" page of the *New York Times* Web site, for example, would do better to bookmark the article itself rather than bookmark the front page, since that page changes every few minutes. Student-written Web sites are notorious for disappearing, since the authors' accounts are deleted after they graduate. If there is any doubt in one's mind about the possibility of the site being there the next time a student attempts to connect to it, the student should be encouraged to download the relevant pages onto a disk (being careful to write down the URL).

Kathleen McCormick (1994) gives the following definition of what doing research should be for a student:

Students must learn that a simple suggestion of truthfulness does not determine the validity of a position, for the idea that language can transparently and transcendently depict the real is an illusion. All discourses, from advertising to history to the tenets of common sense, are inscribed in ideology. They are perspectival, and none is value-free. But criteria do exist for evaluating diverse arguments. One can judge positions by their social and historical effects rather than by their claim to absolute truth. Students performing these evaluations must situate the arguments they encounter in larger historical and ideological contexts and ask such questions as Who holds this position? Who benefits from it? and How has it evolved over time? This approach requires students to address topics that are contestable.... to pay serious attention to marginalized as well as dominant positions, and to determine for themselves the criteria by which they will judge the effects of these diverse positions. (p. 48-9)

The questions I have written above are an attempt to get students beyond the stage of asking if the source is objective or not. They are the result of the recognition that, especially for Web sites, the question of whether or not a source is objective is no longer the most helpful or productive question to ask. It's worth asking, in fact, what exactly would constitute an *unbiased* or *objective* source (or piece) of information.

Rhetorician Kenneth Burke talks about identity in terms of goals as well as background—who you are at any given moment is as much a function of where you're going as where you're from. Students can make use of this insight in their research. Students, in other words, need to be trained to understand where the writer and the audience of a particular document are “coming from” (what their backgrounds are) and what their goals are (“where they're going”). Especially with The Internet-based information, which always seems to be changing or going somewhere, questions of direction (coming from, going to) seem to be the most productive ones to ask.

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I wish to thank Clyde Warden and the organizers of the Conference on Culture and Communication. I also wish to thank my wife, Linda Chia-ling Chiu, for her help and support.

# Getting Your Class on the Web & Creating Interactive Online Activities, Assignments and Quizzes

Clyde A. Warden and Dinah Tai

*Chaoyang University of Technology*

Sample code at [www.cyut.edu.tw/~warden](http://www.cyut.edu.tw/~warden)

## ABSTRACT

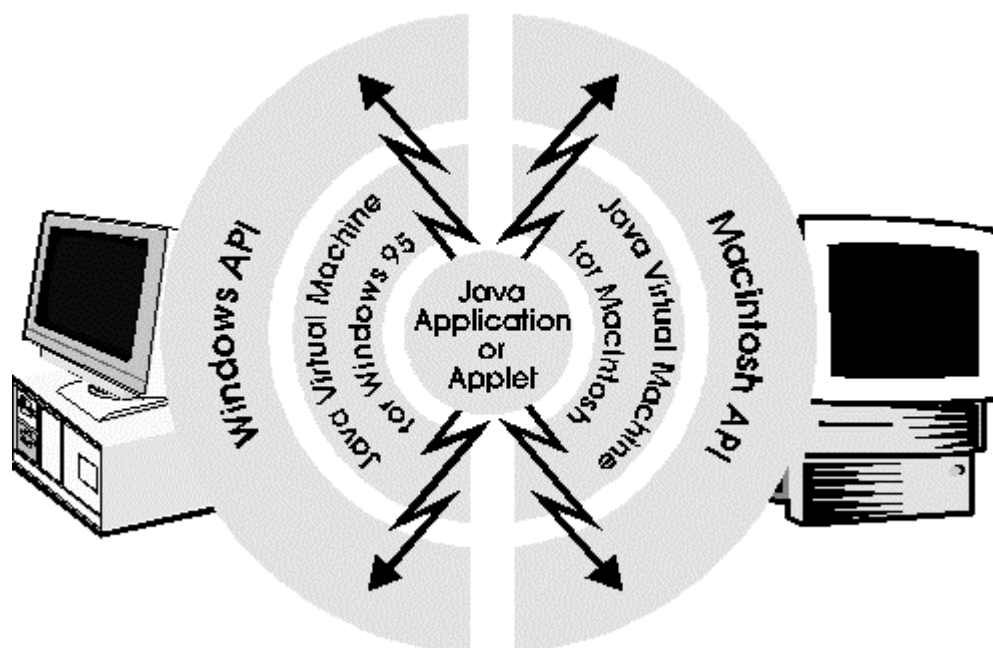
Of special interest to us all is the rapid ascendancy of the World Wide Web. Java is a vital ingredient in the recipe for web integration into mainstream commerce and education. Using Java in the creation of what we traditionally think of as *applications* is only one aspect of what Java can do. Web page creation and layout, user interaction, information delivery, and software/hardware cost structures are all enormously affected by the integration of Java.

Examples given in this paper can be directly implemented on any user's computer, through a web browser (even if not connected to the Web). They are not limited by platform/operating system incompatibilities. To begin, code examples will be given in JavaScript, which can be directly copied into your web pages and run from inside a browser. This use of JavaScript can bring interaction to your web pages as well as be a good introduction to Java programming. Java applet examples can be downloaded from my web site and run locally or placed in your own web pages.

**WHAT IS JAVA?**

Traditionally, a program must be rewritten for each computer type and OS (Operating System) the program is to be run on due to differences in APIs (Application Program Interface). A Mac OS does not respond to the same programming commands a Windows OS does. This interface between program code and OS is the API. As we all have experienced, programs written for Apple computers will not run on Windows computers or on UNIX for that matter. Even differences in OS versions can prevent programs from running properly. Java programs run an end pattern around the user's OS by executing inside a virtual machine, a kind of independent OS created in the user's computer (see Figure 1). The goal of Java programming is to write once; run anywhere, any time, forever.

**FIGURE 1. JAVA EXECUTES THROUGH A VIRTUAL MACHINE**



**INTERACTION**

Fundamentally, Java can create applications (programs) that match or surpass anything we have seen previously in commercial software. It is simply a very

robust programming language. However, what most of us have seen of Java, to date, is not its application building abilities, but applets on web pages. Because Java is well suited to modern networking protocols, programmers have found it easy to create small programs, called applets, that display on web pages. These Java applets can only be executed from inside a web browser. Applets are most often seen, these days, as animation on web pages. Increasingly, Java applets are used for directly interacting with users. There really is little difference between what we traditionally think of as an application and an applet beyond the fact that an applet can only exist on a web page.

Remember that web pages are static and the HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) used to create them is not a programming language. With Java, web pages can contain programs (applets) that fundamentally change what web pages do. Previously, the most a one could do on the web was jump through hypertext links, going from one static page to another static page. Now, a user can jump among interactive pages, running applets along the way, with no worry about PC type, OS version or local machine capacity. There are numerous proprietary solutions to this static problem, such as Shockwave, which can add animation to Web pages, or even additions to certain brands of Web browsers. But these approaches require additional software to be obtained, and will not withstand the test of time in the way a true programming language does. Finally, such approaches are somewhat counter to the open nature of the Web, which benefits us all, as opposed to creating a hodgepodge of proprietary requirements.

### ***ECONOMICS***

With update cycles that strain even the most generous budgets, valid questions can be raised concerning the cost/benefit ratio of computers in language classrooms today. Java fundamentally changes that ratio in favor of computer-based education. Any program written in Java can be executed on any machine that contains a Java virtual machine. Presently, this means any computer capable of running a Java enabled web browser. To date, Netscape has the best coverage, with browsers for most major computer platforms and systems, including older ones such as Windows 3.1. In the near future, any newly released

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OS will contain the Java virtual machine so that Java applications can be run without the need for special installations or browsers. In the classroom, this means a room full of older machines, running “outdated” and different systems, which would traditionally be written off, can be given a new life. In fact, because Java software is actually running in the Java virtual machine, there is no need to worry about hardware or OS versions.

Even questions surrounding networking are more easily overcome with the use of Java. Applications or applets can be accessed over normal web connections, through local area networks or even distributed on floppy disks.

### ***VIRUS THREATS***

Issues surrounding viruses are extremely important to anyone responsible for a computer lab. We often take extremely conservative stands in the hope of avoiding the immense troubles associated with computer viruses. It is no surprise that teachers express concern over running applications and applets on the Web. At a time when simply opening a Word e-mail attachment can spread a macro virus, the level of anxiety is naturally very high. The good news is that Java is 100 percent virus free and cannot spread a virus to a user’s machine. The key reason for this security is the Java virtual machine. Every command sent to the user’s computer must first travel through the Java virtual machine where it can be carefully inspected and rejected if it exhibits errant behavior. Additionally, browser security is very strict and does not allow Java applets to write to a user’s hard disk beyond a few specialized file types.

### ***PROGRAMMING OBJECTS***

On the most fundamental level, objects are chunks of built in code that you can use at any time with no need to write code on your own. Objects are well suited to the event driven interfaces we have become accustomed to. Events are actions that a user takes, such as clicking a button. Event oriented programs allow the user to click a button at any time. Line oriented programming first prompts the user and then waits for a response. Event driven programming is more of a philosophy than a result of some programming language. It is possible to create event driven programs with line oriented programming, but it is very difficult.

Because of this difficulty, line oriented programs most often lead the user step by step. Keep in mind, however, it is up to the programmer just how much interaction versus linearity exist in a program. The age of event driven programs was ushered in by the Mac and is now the source of the Web's popularity.

The first step to Java programming is understanding what objects, in programming, are all about. There are numerous strict definitions of what makes up objects in object oriented programming, but for the sake of simplicity, I will take a more general look at programming objects and object-based programming.

Objects, or the code they represent, are often part of the OS (operating system) and can be activated through the API (Application Program Interface). Java's advantage is that the API for Java programs is the same no matter what computer or OS is being used to run the Java program (see the last column in this series for more details). Java is by no means the only programming language that uses objects. VisualBASIC first popularized what has become the standard programming approach to visual programming. It is a good place to start by contrasting the traditional BASIC with a more object-based BASIC.

### ***A BASIC COMPARISON***

The code in Listing 1 is a sub for creating a box on the screen when using traditional BASIC. Every time a box is needed, this sub is called with the parameters of where to locate the box and the dimensions of the box. Since BASIC does not have a clue of what boxes are or what they do, this code is required for everything from dialog boxes to buttons. In contrast, an object programming language has already defined different types of boxes. Figure 2 shows a button from the programming language VisualBASIC. Rather than writing code, the button is simply dropped onto the program form.

To the right of the button is the properties list window. The properties windows is split into two parts. On the left half is a list of all the individual properties, of the button just drawn, which can be modified. On the right half are the corresponding present values of the properties. For example, the code name

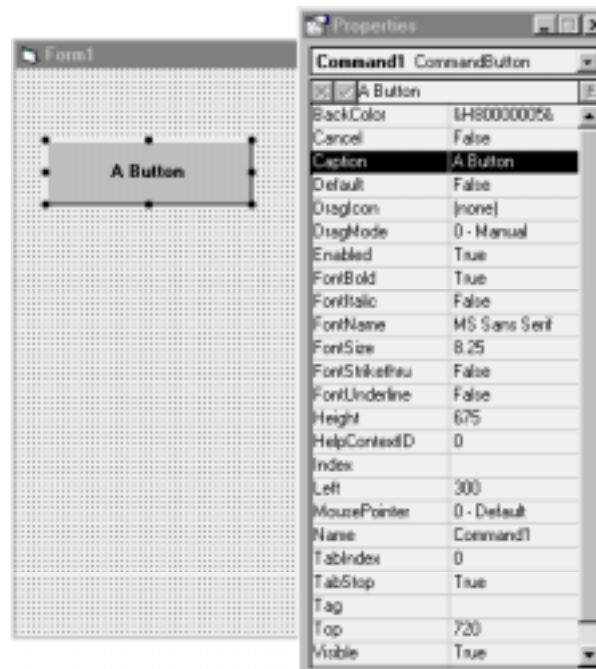
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given to the button in Figure 2 is *command 1*, while the caption (the text actually shown on the button) is *A Button*. Any of the properties can easily be changed during this design stage.

### LISTING 1. A BUTTON IN BASIC

```
SUB DrawBox (row1%, col1%, row2%, col2%)
wide% = col2% - col1% - 1
`Across the top
LOCATE row1%, col1%, 0
PRINT CHR$(201);
PRINT STRING$(wide%, 205);
PRINT CHR$(187);
`Down the sides
FOR row3% = row1% + 1 TO row2% - 1
    LOCATE row3%, col1%, 0
    PRINT CHR$(186);
    PRINT SPACE$(wide%);
    PRINT CHR$(186);
NEXT row3%
`Across the bottom
LOCATE row2%, col1%, 0
PRINT CHR$(200);
PRINT STRING$(wide%, 205);
PRINT CHR$(188);
END SUB
```

FIGURE 2. A BUTTON IN VISUALBASIC



While it is clear that the visual programming technique saves time in coding, this is not the most important feature. When a program executes, any of the initially defined properties for the button in Figure 2 can be changed by simply referring

to it. For example, the caption could be changed from *A Button* to *OK* with the code:

```
command1.caption = "OK"
```

With this line of code, the button's caption will change on screen immediately. In traditional BASIC, all the code to draw the screen would have to be run again with a few changes to update the button's caption. In object-based programming, the opportunity for programming errors is greatly reduced as the amount of code the programmer must deal with is reduced. In Java programming, objects and properties always go together with the object name followed by a period and then the property name.

To get the feel for object programming, we can try some JavaScript in an HTML document. Listing 2 is everything you need to get started. Simply copy every line into an empty text document. Make sure to save the document as text only and name the file test.html (or any name you like, but include the ending .html). After saving the file, open your Java compatible Web browser and check out the results by opening the file through the File, Open menu choices (both Netscape and Explorer are acceptable). Comments in the code are preceded by // and are not actual JavaScript code.

#### LISTING 2. WEB PAGE USING JAVASCRIPT OBJECTS

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC>
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>CAELL Java</TITLE>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
<!-- hide this script from non JavaScript browsers
function check(){ //here is the code that runs when the Try button is
clicked
if (document.frmQuestion1.slcVerb.selectedIndex != 1){ //1st in list
is 0 (the ??? choice), so ran is 2nd
var response = "Sorry, that's not the correct verb form." ; // the
variable "response" contains a message to user
response += "\n" //this is a new-line character;
response += "Try again."; // if the answer is not correct, this
response is used
}else{
var response = "That's right!" ; // if the answer is correct, this
response is used
} //closes the else statement
alert(response);
}
// finish hiding from non JavaScript browsers --></SCRIPT></HEAD>
<BODY>
<FORM NAME="frmQuestion1">
<P>1. Jack and Jill
```

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```
<SELECT NAME="slcVerb">
<OPTION VALUE="">????</OPTION>
<OPTION VALUE="">ran</OPTION>
<OPTION VALUE="">run</OPTION>
<OPTION VALUE="">running</OPTION></SELECT> up the hill.<INPUT
TYPE="BUTTON" NAME="btnTry" VALUE="Try" ONCLICK="check()"></P>
</FORM></BODY></HTML>
```

The resulting Web document (Figure 3) shows how JavaScript programming can bring interactivity to a Web page. You can avoid typing by visiting my Web site and copying the same code. Also included at that site is a more detailed explanation of the JavaScript and HTML code.

FIGURE 3. RESULTING WEB PAGE INTERACTION



## PROPERTIES OF OBJECTS

Objects simply are the things you can see on a Web page. If my home page has my pet dog's photo, that image is an object. In HTML, the image would be coded as: `<IMG SRC="mydog.gif">`. We usually would not think of this image as an programming object because on a static Web page there is no need to address it. If a dynamic Web page is the goal, however, we need to know how to address this object in order to change its properties.

Object names are usually taken care of by the browser. The first image on a page is always named: *window.parent.document.images[0]*. What this object name shows us is the JavaScript object hierarchy with the image placed last. Since an image is part of a document, its name is included. The general label of *document* can be used, or an actual name, if the document object has been assigned a name. Because a browser allows multiple windows to be open, and JavaScript can be used to address objects on any open window, it is a good practice to include the *window* label. Most common is the *window.parent* label, specifically looking at objects in the window where the code is executing from. Lastly, the index *[0]* assigns numbers to the images on the page in the order they appear, starting with 0 and increasing one integer for each additional image.

When coding HTML, all I need to do is specify the location of my dog's image file, the SRC. The SRC is not an object, but a property of the object *window.parent.document.images[0]* object. So what we see on my home page is an object whose graphic source location (SRC) property has been set to my pet's photo. This separation of objects and properties is what makes dynamic Web pages possible since objects placed on a page cannot be added or removed, but their properties can be dynamically changed. The line, *window.parent.document.images[0].src="myself.gif"* would change the graphic displayed on the Web page from my dog, to myself.

### A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE: HTML

For this example, I have created eight graphic files, four Chinese characters and four matching English words. When replicating this example, remember to

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change the graphic file names in the JavaScript code to match your file names (be careful to avoid letter case errors).

To begin, I make a simple page that includes the four Chinese graphic files, coded simply as: <IMG SRC="file name goes here">.

FIGURE 4. A WEB PAGE WITH OBJECTS



The graphics located on the Web page are the SRC property of four objects: *document.images[0]*, *document.images[1]*, *document.images[2]* and *document.images[3]*. To make the images change, an event must be triggered. This can be done when a user moves the mouse cursor over one of the graphics (an onmouseover event). To code this in HTML, first enclose each graphic image with an anchor so that the cursor will change to a finger when over an image: <A HREF="HTML page name goes here"></A>. The HREF should be set to the page you are creating so that if clicked, the link will simply reload the same page.

When the onmouseover event is triggered, a function can be run, which I have named: *ChangeImage()*. Similarly, when the mouse moves away from a graphic it triggers an onmouseout event that links to a function I have named *ChangeImageBack()*. The resulting HTML code for each graphic looks like this (names and index numbers must be changed to match each graphic):

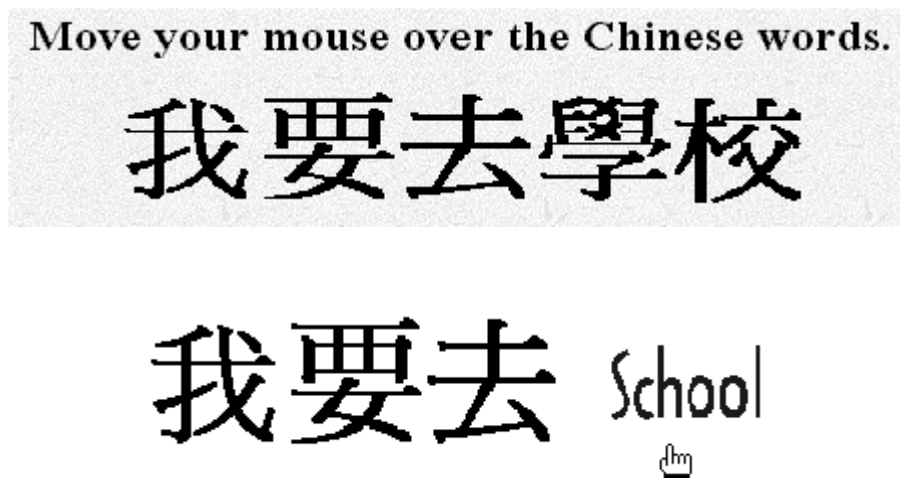
```
<A HREF="index.html" ONMOUSEOVER="ChangeImage(0)"  
ONMOUSEOUT="ChangeImageBack(0)"><IMG SRC="ci.gif" BORDER="0"></A>
```

## JAVASCRIPT CODE

The JavaScript coding (see Listing 3) begins by loading the English images that will replace the Chinese images when the mouse moves over them. New objects are created to hold these images, which shows that objects can exist but do not need to be displayed on a page. For each image, an image object is created with the code: *ObjectNameYouChoose = new Image()*. Next, the new object's SRC property is set to the graphic it will represent: *ObjectNameYouChoose.src = "GraphicFileName"*.

The next step is to create the functions that change the object's graphic from the Chinese to English and back again as the mouse moves over and away from a graphic. This is done with an *if* statement that uses the object's index number to execute the correct line of code. If the user's mouse moves over the last Chinese word, which is actually two words together, then the ONMOUSEOVER event is triggered and executes the function *ChangeImage(3)*, sending the index number 3 because the object number is 3. The object's graphic is changed by setting its SRC is equal to the equivalent English object's SRC: *window.parent.document.images[3].src = EngSchool.src* and when the mouse moves away, the ONMOUSEOUT event is triggered and the object's SRC set back again: *window.parent.document.images[3].src = "cschool.gif"* (because the Chinese graphic was loaded with the page, it will still exist in a buffer, so we do not need to have it placed in another object to preserve it).

FIGURE 5. RESULT OF CHANGING A PROPERTY OF ONE OBJECT



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### LISTING 3. WEB PAGE USING JAVASCRIPT

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML>
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>CAELL Programming Objects</TITLE></HEAD>
<BODY BGCOLOR="#8080FF">
<H1 ALIGN="CENTER">Here is an example of changing the properties of
objects in
JavaScript code.</H1>
<H2 ALIGN="CENTER">Move your mouse over the Chinese words.</H2>
<P ALIGN="CENTER"><A
HREF="index.html" ONMOUSEOVER="ChangeImage(0)"
ONMOUSEOUT="ChangeImageBack(0)"><IMG
SRC="ci.gif" BORDER="0"></A><A
HREF="index.html" ONMOUSEOVER="ChangeImage(1)"
ONMOUSEOUT="ChangeImageBack(1)"><IMG
SRC="cwill.gif" BORDER="0"></A><A
HREF="index.html" ONMOUSEOVER="ChangeImage(2)"
ONMOUSEOUT="ChangeImageBack(2)"><IMG
SRC="cgo.gif" BORDER="0"></A><A
HREF="index.html" ONMOUSEOVER="ChangeImage(3)"
ONMOUSEOUT="ChangeImageBack(3)"><IMG
SRC="cschool.gif" BORDER="0"></A></P>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
<!--Hide from non Java browsers
//preload images
EngI = new Image();
EngI.src = "ei.gif";
EngWill = new Image();
EngWill.src = "ewill.gif";
EngGo = new Image();
EngGo.src = "ego.gif";
EngSchool = new Image();
EngSchool.src = "eschool.gif";

function ChangeImage(ImgNumber){
if (ImgNumber == 0)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src=EngI.src;
if (ImgNumber == 1)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src=EngWill.src;
if (ImgNumber == 2)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src=EngGo.src;
if (ImgNumber == 3)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src=EngSchool.src;
} //end ChangeImage function
function ChangeImageBack(ImgNumber){
if (ImgNumber == 0)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src="ci.gif";
if (ImgNumber == 1)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src="cwill.gif";
if (ImgNumber == 2)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src="cgo.gif";
if (ImgNumber == 3)
    window.parent.document.images[ImgNumber].src="cschool.gif";
} //end ChangeImageBack function
//--></SCRIPT></BODY></HTML>
```

**By copying Listing 3 into a text file, and saving it with an html extension, you will be able to experiment with switching graphics on your own Web pages. Just be sure to rename the file names to match your own graphics. You can visit my Web site and see the result in action.**

## METHODS OF OBJECTS

This section concludes the introduction to the three fundamental parts of object-based programming with coverage of methods (see previous issues for introductions to objects and properties). Objects are similar to your house since they both have many features or properties. Having a house is nice, and it serves a basic purpose, but it would be much more useful if the properties of your house could be manipulated, i.e., you could switch on and off the lights, open and close the doors and turn on and off the water. Let's consider preparing the baby's bath water. Changing the appropriate properties of the house would require a few steps to achieve the desired result. In Java terms, we could think of preparing the bath this way:

```
window.document.myHouse.water = "on"
window.document.myHouse.watertemp = "warm"
window.document.myHouse.watersize = "small"
```

The properties of the myHouse object include water, watertemp and watersize. If drawing the baby's bath water is done often, it would be convenient to have a single action that completed this process. In JavaScript, object methods do just that and save your coding effort. Continuing the example, the bath water could be prepared using a method like this:

```
window.document.myHouse.bath(baby, warm, small)
```

The object here is still the house, but now the object has the ability to understand what a bath is. The bath is prepared by adding the method name to the end of the object. This addition looks just like a property except for the parentheses. Inside the parentheses are placed the arguments that are passed to the method (the order of method arguments are specific to each method and separated by commas with no spaces). While this example may appear a bit confusing, don't worry, the methods for an object are predetermined and limited.

If we really did have a house object, we could check the owner's manual to see a list of the building's properties as well as its methods. That list might look something like this:

```
House object properties list: color, temperature, power, residents,
address, bedrooms
House object methods list: bath(), garage(), cook(), television()
```

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Each method would then have a chapter in the user's manual that introduced exactly how it worked. The television method could have these instructions:

```
television(time,channel,program,volume)
```

It all seems easy enough, and really it is that simple. Additional instructions would tell us exactly how to format the arguments:

```
television(hhmm.mmyyyy, [value1-100], String[, value]);
```

Methods are very picky about receiving just the right type of information in just the right place. If any part is left out, there could be an error. Arguments contained in brackets are optional. It is not at all uncommon to have optional arguments, but we must remember that the positions of following arguments need to be maintained. In this example, the television channel may be included or left out. If we left it out, the method would be called in this way:

```
myHouse.television(1230.641998,,"I Love Lucy",10);
```

Notice the location for the channel, between the two adjacent commas, with no value. Arguments that are not optional cannot be left out in this way, although they can sometimes be given empty values. If we did not bother to name the television program, the argument would look like this:

```
myHouse.television(1230.641998,32,"",10)
```

### ***METHODS IN ACTION***

The Window object is at the top of the JavaScript object hierarchy (see Listing 4) which is used when addressing objects. Remember we need to precede the name of an object with the name of the object it is contained in. In this example, we will work with the Window object, so no preceding names are required. We could give our window an actual name, or just call it by its default name of "window."

This object has a number of properties and methods (see Listing 5). One very useful method of the window object is opening a new window. The open window method follows this structure:

```
window.open(URL, windowName [, "windowFeatures"]);
```

The features that can be included in the windowFeatures argument must be separated by commas and collectively enclosed in a single pair of quotation marks. The argument may include:

toolbar, location, directories, status, menubar, scrollbars, resizable, copy history, width, height

Since all these features are really just one collective argument being passed to the method, they follow a specific formatting style. Any of the options can be written like this: `toolbar=0`, which means do not include a toolbar in the new window (the same can be done by simply not including the option). Turning on an option is done by setting the option equal to one: `toolbar=1`, or by just including the option: `toolbar`.

```
window.open("", "My New Window", "");
```

This line will open a new window with no connection to a URL address, titled "My New Window," and with no toolbar, status bar or any of the other features possible. The width and height features are set equal to integers to give the window the dimensions you want. By copying the code in Listing 6 to a blank text document, you can see just how useful this Window method can be (remember to save the document as a plain text only file and give it the ending .html).

#### LISTING 4. THE JAVASCRIPT OBJECT HIERARCHY

```
Window
|_Location
|_History
|_Frames
|_Navigator
|_Document
|___Anchor
|___Applet
|___Link and Area
|___Image
|___Form
|___Button
|___Checkbox
|___FileUpload
|___Hidden
|___Password
|___Radio
|___Reset
|___Select
|___Submit
|___Text
|___Textarea
```

#### LISTING 5. PROPERTIES AND METHODS OF THE WINDOW OBJECT

Properties: frames, length, name, opener, parent, self, top, status, defaultStatus  
 Methods: alert(), blur(), close(), confirm(), focus(), open(), prompt(), scroll(), setTimeout(), clearTimeout()

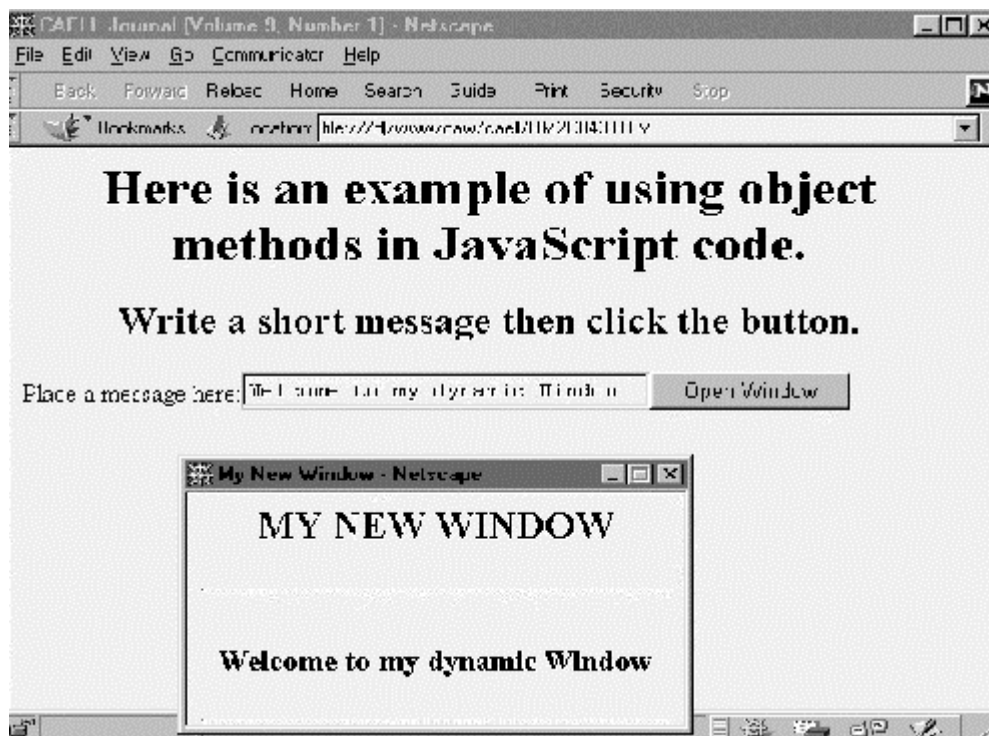
#### LISTING 6. HTML DOCUMENT THAT OPENS A NEW WINDOW

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML>
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>CAELL Programming Methods</TITLE></HEAD>
```

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```
<BODY BGCOLOR="#8080FF">
<H1 ALIGN="CENTER">Here is an example of using object methods in
JavaScript code.</H1>
<H2 ALIGN="CENTER">Write a short message then click the button.</H2>
<FORM NAME="frmInteraction">
<P>Place a message here:<INPUT TYPE="TEXT" NAME="txtQuestion"
SIZE="30"><INPUT
TYPE="BUTTON" NAME="btnOK" VALUE="Open Window"
ONCLICK="OpenNewWindow()"></P></FORM>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
<!-- Hide from non Java browsers
function OpenNewWindow(){
myMsg = window.document.frmInteraction.txtQuestion.value;
myNewWindow=window.open("", "myNewWindow", "toolbar=no,menubar=no,direc
tories=no,scrollbars=no,width=300,height=200");
myNewWindow.document.write("<HTML><HEAD><"+ "TITLE>My New
Window<"+ "/TITLE><"+ "/HEAD>");
myNewWindow.document.write("<BODY BGCOLOR=#0000FF\
TEXT=#FFFF80\ "><"+ "/BODY>")
myNewWindow.document.write ("<H2><CENTER>MY NEW WINDOW<" +
"/CENTER><" + "/H2><P><HR>");
myNewWindow.document.write ("<H3><CENTER>"+myMsg+"<" + "CENTER><" +
"/H3><P><HR>") ;
} //end OpenNewWindow function
//--></SCRIPT></BODY></HTML>
```

FIGURE 6. RESULTING EXAMPLE PAGE THAT CREATES A NEW WINDOW



The goal of this paper, has been to offer differing degrees of complexity in an introduction to JavaScript use in your Web pages. We hope this paper can be a starting point for you to explore this exciting opportunity to create interactive Web pages and take an active part in the expansion of the Web.

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