

International Cultures in the Framework of World Englishes: What Should EFL Teachers Do?

Fan Fang

English Language Centre, Shantou University, China

The worldwide spread of English as an International Language (EIL) is obvious. In particular, parallel with the increasing popularity of English teaching and learning in countries where English is regarded as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), Anglo-American culture has likewise been spread. A case in point is China, the country with the world's largest population of English learners, where English has gained a remarkable and high status. Using a questionnaire, this study first investigates views on teaching and learning culture among students of a key provincial public university in Southern China. Following up with triangulation through selected interviews and focus group discussion, the paper furthermore presents certain reasonable models for teaching culture in China today. The findings will be analysed and discussed in terms of teaching and learning culture within the framework of World Englishes (WE) in China. This paper finally concludes that it is important to teach both the international cultures of 'Englishes' and the source culture alongside each other.

Key words: World Englishes, culture teaching, EFL, multiculturalism, intercultural communicative competence

INTRODUCTION

An Overview of World Englishes

The wide spread of the English language has established it as the language of international communication (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Kramsch, 2006). As a lingua franca (ELF) or an international language (EIL) (Crystal, 1997; Jenkins, 2007; McKay, 2002) used worldwide, more and more varieties of English have formed and developed with numerous distinctive features (McArthur, 2002; Trudgill & Hannah, 2002). Kirkpatrick (2007, p. 155) points out that ‘English is used as a medium of communication by people who do not speak the same first language’ (see also, e.g., Melchers & Shaw, 2003). Thus, it is universally recognised that the language situation has changed dramatically and led to new and penetrating insights into a variety of issues relevant to world events – for example, the discussion of ‘Standard English’ (Gupta, 2006; Trudgill, 1999) and English imperialism (House, 2003; Phillipson, 1992).

However, not only does the development of English in today’s globalised world seem inevitable, but it is also inadvisable and probably futile to reject the trend. Hu (2005, p. 27) points out:

English is today the language of world politics, trade, finance, the Internet, and global communications, gaining ever-increasing dominance in the media, the world’s tourist, sports and leisure industries, and especially in the international scientific community, more than half of whose journals are in English.

The spread and use of English is also prominent in countries such as Singapore, India and Nigeria, where English is traditionally regarded as a second language (ESL) standing at the Outer Circle (though English is used as the native language of quite a number of people in these countries, see Kachru, 1985, 1992a for his WE Model, see also Figure 1 for Kachru’s Three Concentric Circles of Englishes and Figure 2 for his new model of WE).

English in these countries is most likely used as a ‘contact variety’ (Gupta 1992, 1998) in both formal and informal settings. The term ‘New Englishes’ (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Mufwene, 1994; Schneider, 2003) is also used to refer to such ‘indigenised’ or ‘nativised’ varieties. It is natural that these varieties of English are used as a way of exhibiting social identity (Kachru, 1992b; McKay, 2002).



FIGURE 1
Kachru's Three Concentric Circles of Englishes



FIGURE 2
Kachru's New Model of WE Representing the Community of English Speakers,
Including a Side Range of Proficiencies (cited by Graddol, 2006)

The Variety of English in China

China, as a country stands at the Expanding Circle, has the largest population of English learners with an estimated number of more than 250 million during the first decade of the new millennium (Chen & Hu, 2006; Jiang, 2003), and the number has reached ‘approximately 350 million of whom also speak some kind of English’ (McCrum, 2010, p. 6). With China’s joining of the WTO, holding of the 2008 Olympic Games, and the 2010 Shanghai Expo, English is becoming more and more important and prevalent (Adamson, 2004; Bolton 2003; Hu, 2004). Though English has gained unprecedented status in China, the variety of English there tends to be ignored. However, as the first taught and learned foreign language in China, English learners ‘make great efforts to adjust to the need of English in today’s society’ (Fang, 2008, p. 46).

The long history of ‘Chinese Pidgin English’ (CPE) (Lang, 2005) has made an impact on the amalgamation of English and Chinese. Many original Chinese words have entered into the English language, such as *jiao zi*, *kowtow*, *feng shui* and even *drinktea* (Harlow, 2006). In particular, in the last two decades, more and more words derived from English have also slipped into Chinese, such as *tips* (tiē shì), *shampoo* (xiǎng bō), *yoghurt* (yōu gé), *honeymoon* (mì yuè) and *white collar* (bái lǐng). Given that the phrase *Long Time No See* comes directly from a Chinese idiom and is now regarded as ‘Standard English’, other directly translated Chinese English idioms may be argued as being on the track to join the big English family in the framework of WE (Fang, 2008). Although people may have different attitudes towards the development of English in China, it is beyond dispute that English promotes the exchange between China and the outside world, the results of which are beneficial to China’s foreign trade and economic development (Adamson, 2004; Bolton, 2003). As McArthur (2002, p. 353) points out, ‘English is massively the principal foreign language taught (and sought after) in the PRC, where it has high status as the global medium of education, travel, entertainment, e-communication, and business’.

A PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS CULTURE TEACHING

The Role of Culture Teaching in the EFL Class

A number of experts in the field have argued that language and culture cannot be taught separately (Alptekin, 2002; Byram, 1997; Corbett, 2003; Kramsch, 1993) and emphasised the need for and the important role of culture teaching in the ESL or EFL class (McKay, 2002; Nieto, 2002; Rao, 2006; Tang, 2006). Though it is not an easy task to define 'culture', since many perspectives are of necessity wrapped up in this concept, culture can be viewed from the angle of cultural materialism to display different facets, such as 'psychology, cognition, symbol and linguistics' (Moran, 2001, p. 23). Moran (2001, p. 24) believes that there are five dimensions to all cultural phenomena and gives the following definition:

culture is the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives on the world, and set within specific social contexts.

Kramsch (1998, p. 127) defines culture as 'membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting', while Corbett (2003, p. 20) believes that

the 'culture' of a group can be considered the *relationship* between its core beliefs and values, and the patterns of behaviour, art and communication that the group produces, bearing in mind that these beliefs and values are constantly being negotiated within the group.

Culture, especially in a globalised world, can be viewed and summarised as shared ideologies in different communities, which, might not always be accepted but should be respected as social values in different specific ethnic

groups. Culture and language are inseparably connected with each other, because cultural concepts are always involved during the process of language learning. As the keystone connected with language, culture teaching plays a significant role and should not be ignored in language pedagogy in the framework of WE. It is also believed that culture teaching can 'help the students transcend their own culture and see things as the members of the target culture will, and emphasise the inseparability of understanding language and understanding culture through various classroom practices' (Hu, 2001, p. 235).

Reasons for Teaching Culture in the Framework of World Englishes

It is an undeniable fact that with the spread of the development of the English language, Anglo-American culture has also been developed widely and rapidly. More and more people learn and know how to speak English and become 'bilingual' (at least to some extent); however, to what degree must such people strive to be bicultural in order to be considered qualified language 'users'?

Currently, the English language plays a role as a lingua franca and no longer belongs only to native speakers of English, and neither does the root culture itself. As the language is being used to connect speakers worldwide, English users naturally tend to share their cultures in the international arena of communication. Therefore, McKay (2002, p. 1) points out that English, as an international language, 'cannot be linked to any one country or culture; rather it must belong to those who use it'.

Concerning the role of culture teaching with language learning in the framework of WE, Alptekin (2002, p. 58) believes that 'learning a foreign language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target

language culture¹ and its speakers'. Teaching culture within this background can also be a complementary method of English pedagogy for students to reflect on and rethink their own culture through the learning process, which, to some extent, can help to avoid distorting the 'source culture'² and 'target culture' with concepts such as 'cultural ethnocentrism' or 'cultural inferiority'. Moreover, culture, as a motivation for language learning (Byram & Morgan, 1994; Chen, Warden, & Chang, 2005; Genc & Bada, 2005), can develop students' overview of intercultural communication in the era of globalisation and multiculturalism through an amalgamation of language and culture teaching.

In sum, teaching culture against the background of globalisation and multiculturalism helps language learners understand cultural diversity (Alptekin, 2002; Corson, 2001; McKay, 2002). Thus, students raise their sense of 'language diversity', which helps them better communicate with different people from different cultures. Teaching culture can raise the cultural awareness of EFL speakers and also re-address the issue of culture to native speakers and guide them to re-think the role of English and international cultures (Genc & Bada, 2005; Guo & Beckett, 2007; Nault, 2006). More significantly, teaching culture can also foster students' understanding of cultural, ethnic and national identity (Hobsbawm, 1996; Kramersch, 1998; Moran, 2001; Nieto, 2002).

Research Methodology and Purpose

Research Purpose

As language and culture will indispensably be taught to language learners

¹ 'Target culture' refers to those cultures of countries where English is spoken as a first language (McKay, 2002, p. 88).

² 'Source culture' refers learners own culture (in this paper, generally, refers to mainstream Chinese culture) (McKay, 2002, p. 88).

in an integrated fashion, this research aimed to investigate students' views and attitudes towards culture teaching in the framework of WE. As well as revealing students' attitudes towards the teaching of English culture (or the teaching of Western culture), this research furthermore aimed to gain insight into students' attitudes and understanding towards the teaching of the source culture.

In language pedagogy, teachers and students may simply focus on learning the target culture, especially for people in the Expanding Circle where English is regarded as a foreign language and is taught and learned in a classroom setting. The dominance of the target culture (generally, in this specific context of the study, say, American culture) and methods of monocultural instruction cannot provide a mutual awareness for both teachers and students towards the source and international target cultures³ (see, e.g., Guo & Beckett, 2007; McKay, 2002). Therefore, as different language communities, in which English is not used as the first language but plays an important role, are formed, the source culture may become more significant for any shared speech community, because speakers in such communities 'have been adopting and adapting English' with their own cultures and identity (Nelson, 1992; see also, e.g., Fang, 2008; Kachru, 1992c; Kirkpatrick, 2007). As one of the key elements in culture study, the source cultures cannot be ignored in the process of language learning. In a globalised world with an atmosphere of multiculturalism, it was hoped that the study would well display a relatively thorough perspective of college students towards culture teaching.

Instrument

A questionnaire (Appendix A) with eight questions concerning culture and its teaching was designed and distributed to students of a key provincial public university in Southern China. Most of the questions are designed

³ 'International target cultures' refers to a great variety of cultures in English- and non-English-speaking countries around the world (McKay, 2002, p. 88).

based on the studies by Guilherme (2002), Nault (2006) and Guo and Beckett (2007) to act as an integrated questionnaire. I adopted and adapted the questionnaire in order to make it suit Chinese students' needs for the study. As for answering the questions, students were given a Chinese version to ensure proper understanding of the issues. Students were given the questionnaire and asked to do it during class break or in the English Activity Centre (EAC) where they can practise their oral English. Each student spent around ten minutes answering the questions according to individual knowledge and understanding. In terms of the questionnaire, 31 students provided additional comments, and a selected group of 6 out of those students were interviewed to share more detailed ideas of culture teaching from their own perspectives. Moreover, a focus group of students with experience studying or working abroad was conducted to further reflect the importance of teaching culture, especially teaching the source and international cultures, which serves to triangulate the data and add depth to the findings.

Participants

Students from both lower- and higher-intermediate levels of English were chosen (students' levels of English were based on a placement test of all first-year students when they entered the university). In this study, lower-intermediate students (N=148) were mostly first-year students, while the higher-intermediate students (N=94) were mostly second-year students. A total of 265 questionnaires were distributed to students of both groups (23 were rejected because of invalid information). The final sample consisted of 242 students. Among the participants, 111 (45.9%) were male and 131 (54.1%) were female. In this study, gender, age and educational background (all the participants are college students aged 18-22) are controlled for a minimum of potential interfering variables to ensure the validity of the study. It was also hoped that with different levels of students chosen, the findings would be more representative, with more comments provided.

FINDINGS

TABLE 1
Students' Attitudes and Perspectives towards College English Teaching of Culture

Questions	Options	L-Inter. Students (%)	H-Inter. Students (%)	Chi-Square Test
Do you like to learn about cultures during the process of English learning?	Yes, very much	20.9	30.9	$X^2=4.731$ $p=0.193>0.05$
	Yes, to some extent	64.9	60.6	
	No, not particularly	12.2	6.4	
	No, not at all	2.0	2.1	
How important do you think culture is in the process of College English Teaching?	Very important	24.3	20.2	$X^2=2.534$ $p=0.469>0.05$
	Important	65.5	64.9	
	Not very important	9.5	14.9	
	Not important at all	0.7	0	
During the process of English learning, is the instructor concerned with teaching culture?	Usually concerned with it	8.8	18.1	$X^2=6.493$ $p=0.039<0.05$
	Sometimes concerned with it	69.6	69.1	
	Seldom concerned with it	21.6	12.8	
	Never concerned with it	0	0	
Which of the teaching methods do you think is the most effective way to learn culture (First Choice)?	Textbooks	7.4	6.4	$X^2=1.385$ $p=0.5>0.05$
	Instructions	16.9	22.3	
	Movies	64.2	57.4	
Do you feel satisfied with college English teaching of culture?	Very satisfied	2.0	0	$X^2=8.633$ $p=0.071>0.05$
	Satisfied	19.6	27.6	
	Generally satisfied	50.7	55.4	
	Not very satisfied	26.4	14.9	
Do you think that teaching Western culture only can meet students' needs during the process of teaching culture?	Not satisfied at all	1.3	2.1	$X^2=1.516$ $p=0.469>0.05$
	Yes	10.1	8.5	
	No	71.0	66.0	
Do you think it is necessary to instruct the source culture (namely the mainstream Chinese culture) in your English class instruction?	No idea	18.9	25.5	$X^2=1.524$ $p=0.677>0.05$
	Very necessary	23.1	29.2	
	Necessary	68.1	64.5	
	Not very necessary	4.7	4.2	
Do you think it is necessary to instruct international cultures in your English class instruction?	Not necessary at all	4.1	2.1	$X^2=4.994$ $p=0.172>0.05$
	Very necessary	29.5	24.6	
	Necessary	60.3	70.1	
	Not very necessary	4.1	4.2	
	Not necessary at all	6.1	1.1	

Table 1 summarises students' attitudes and perspectives towards the teaching of culture in college English in light of the study's results. For preference of understanding culture, 20.9% of students of the lower-intermediate level and 30.9% of students of the higher-intermediate level prefer learning culture very much in the process of learning English. 64.9% of students of the lower-intermediate level and 60.6% of students of the higher-intermediate level would like to be exposed to teaching of culture to some extent (based on the Chi-square test, there is no significant difference between the two groups). However, quite a few of them (14.2% from the lower-intermediate level and 8.5% from the higher-intermediate level) still feel some reluctance towards the concept. It can be predicted that some students liked to be exposed to culture because they believe that the process of learning different aspects of English culture acts as a catalyst to motivate language study. More importantly, some students also commented that learning foreign cultures could lead them to reflect on their own culture, through which the students could get the essence of the target culture through comparison.

Regarding the students' attitudes towards the importance of teaching and learning culture, around 90% of the students in the lower-intermediate and more than 85% of the higher-intermediate group gave positive answers (the same as the first question, there is no significant difference between the two groups – students regarded the concept of culture teaching positively). Generally speaking, students formed an agreement that culture teaching and learning are necessary for better intercultural communication and help them understand language and cultural diversity in today's globalised world. Some students with language-related majors pointed out that the significance of culture teaching and learning was to help them understand the usage and history of the language, which similarly, could strengthen the understanding of the target culture.

We might draw an opinion that teaching and sharing cultural tokens needs a mutual concern from both teachers and students. Fortunately, in EFL classrooms in China, the concept of culture teaching is not ignored by instructors. At the very least, English instructors spend some time focusing

on culture teaching. At the lower-intermediate level, more than 75% of students gave a positive answer regarding their instructors while at the higher-intermediate level the response was more than 85%. According to the Chi-square test, we found that instructors of the two groups showed a different focus ($p=0.039<0.05$) towards culture teaching. According to these results, it can be assumed that teachers at the higher level pay more attention to culture teaching. It can also be implied that students at the lower level may not be able to understand some concepts of culture in the English class.

By comparison, when talking about the most effective teaching method for students to learn culture, textbooks were paid less attention and got a lower priority than expected. However, watching movies, which was chosen by more than 64% of students at the lower-intermediate level and more than 55% at the higher-intermediate level, was ranked as the students' first choice. Other options, such as reading, on-spot learning, surfing the Internet, and talking with foreigners were also mentioned.

When it comes to students' satisfaction level towards culture teaching, although more than 70% of the lower-intermediate group and more than 80% of the higher-intermediate group announced a positive attitude, there are still around 25% of students at the lower-intermediate and 15% of students at the higher-intermediate who did not feel satisfied with this concept (based on the Chi-square test, there is no significant difference between the two groups). Therefore, it is still necessary to re-evaluate and re-design the effectiveness of culture teaching and try to integrate culture teaching into the process of college English teaching. Two selected typical comments concerning culture teaching in general from interviews are as follows (as for interviews, students were asked and answered questions directly in English):

From my point of view, one can never learn English well without knowing about its culture. I enjoy learning Western culture through watching movies, reading books and chatting with the native people. Learning the culture makes my English learning more interesting and effective, and it will be extremely helpful if I go to an English-speaking country in the future, if I have the opportunity. (Comment-01)

In fact, English is one part of English culture. Especially for we college students, the purpose of learning English is to communicate effectively. For instance, people may say the same things with different tones, gestures or facial expressions. We may understand every word of them, but still cannot figure out the meaning as a whole. Then what is English used for? College students should be taught not only the vocabulary and grammar, but more importantly, how to use English. I think what teacher should do is to provide an environment for the students to learn. Anyway, only when the students recognise the importance of culture learning can they learn English well. (Comment-02)

In a pedagogical perspective of teaching Western culture, source culture and international cultures, it is clear that a considerable number of students are aware of the importance of teaching the source and international cultures, and do not merely focus on the so-called 'Western culture', in the era of multiculturalism (as can also be seen in the Chi-square test, both groups of students shared a similar attitude towards to these concepts). More than 70% of students at the lower-intermediate level and more than 65% of students at the higher-intermediate level believed that teaching Western culture alone could not meet their needs during the process of teaching culture. Students also see the importance of teaching the source culture and international cultures. More than 90% of the students at both levels said that it was necessary to present their own culture within the framework of multiculturalism. Students noted that teaching the source culture could help them realise their own cultural and national identity, from which they could reorient and rethink their own culture. Concerning the teaching of international cultures, around 90% of students at the lower-intermediate level and around 95% of students at the higher-intermediate level understand the necessity for it. Students pointed out that because of cultural diversity, different cultures could not exist alone. It can be implied that cultural diversity requires teachers to teach international cultures and customs to students, though the sense of cultural tolerance, as one key aspect on intercultural communication, could also be developed through cultural contrast and comparison. Another two comments on teaching culture within

the framework of multiculturalism are also listed as follows:

On the premise of a background in multiculturalism, students can get a clear perspective of cultural diversity in the global village. As a consequence, students have access to various civilisations which can expand their horizons. Moreover, it is unlikely for the source culture to develop only by itself and there must be a link between the source culture and foreign cultures. This makes sense in that not only do students get to know the relationship between the source culture and foreign cultures but also learn to respect them. (Comment-03)

On the one hand, it is a fact that some individuals become more worship [sic] foreign things after they know more about international cultures. On the other hand, multiculturalism promotes the equality and identity of different cultures so that the culture of one country is not necessarily better than another one. Therefore, adopting the multiculturalism during the process of instructing international cultures can avoid falling into this kind of mistakes. (Comment-04)

To summarise, we can see that university students put a high value on the teaching and learning of culture. The questionnaire reflects and emphasises that the issue of teaching culture should also be involved in the teaching process. University students notice the importance of teaching culture against the background of globalisation and multiculturalism. They would like to be exposed to different cultures and also realise the importance of the often-ignored source culture in the process of language learning.

In order to triangulate the data, a follow-up focus group (Appendix B, c.f. Kunschak, 2010) was conducted. Participants of the focus group were another five students who had studied or worked abroad, and one international teacher acting as the facilitator. The teacher and the students shared their experiences and opinions on general culture teaching, as well as teaching the source, the target and international cultures and provided prominent findings during their discussions. For instance, when discussing the question ‘how important are cultural/intercultural aspects in English

learning', one student said:

I think it depends on how much and how fluent you want to be. [...] I learnt a little bit of French at school and I liked it very much. But I don't need to use French as much as I do English. So I would spend more of my time in understanding English speaking countries and people, and of course, their culture. (Comment-05)

When talking about intercultural barriers when living abroad, students gave examples such as going to a pub (they simply could not get used to it), and different religious beliefs (students could not understand why people go to church every week and even pray at night, especially when the students themselves do not have religious beliefs). From what students shared, some intercultural barriers were hard to overcome, and sometimes it was even unnecessary for one to adjust oneself. Only if and when students are exposed to international cultures can they develop a sense of cultural awareness or 'Intercultural Communicative Competence' (ICC) (Byram, 1997; Corbett, 2003), and more importantly, reflect on their own culture.

Students talked much about another question of the focus group: 'what role do you tend to play in the development of intercultural competence as a learner? What are some strategies that you have developed in your English learning?' It seems that students who have studied or worked abroad have developed their own strategies of English learning combined with culture study. Some student responses included the following:

I think first, [from] my own experience, we should love the culture, [and] we should love the country. For example, I love English. I like American culture, English culture, so I am interested in that. It stimulates me to learn English. (Comment-06)

I think sharing your opinions with your friends is a good way. [...] I love to be a listener. I can get the ideas from them. (Comment-07)

I learn much about the other culture through entertainment, through TV, movies, another thing is music. I will read the lyrics, and try to understand

what the singer is trying to say. [...] But mostly, is visual entertainment.
(Comment-08)

From students' comments, we find that culture acts as a potential incentive to help students embrace the language and the world. However, from students' responses, it seems that they still receive stereotypes and a restricted version about what 'culture' refers to. A more objective and broad understanding of 'culture', especially one that empowers students to realize and understand the concept of international culture and develop a sense of cultural awareness and sensitivity, should be implemented during language teaching.

As the study also includes testing perspectives on teaching the source culture, the question 'How important do you think it is to have instruction in the source culture (namely the mainstream Chinese culture) in your English class instruction?' was also asked. All students participating in the focus group, as well as the instructor, showed a positive attitude towards teaching the source culture and agreed that even though they had studied English for a long time and had experiences abroad, it would be necessary and crucial for them to reflect on their own culture when learning English (or any other foreign language). It is also significant for students to know how to express cultural terms in another language, especially because the English language has become such an international language. One comment concerning teaching the source culture from the focus group is as follows:

To receive instruction in the source culture in the English learning process can help students learn their culture from a new perspective. Meanwhile, to add the familiar culture in the lengthy and maybe boring learning process can enrich the study of a new language and make it fun as well. Plus, it might be helpful to the students [sic] to learn how to express their culture in a different language as a way of presenting it to foreigners. All in all, it is helpful for both the students and teachers to embed some source cultures when teaching or learning a foreign language. (Comment-09)

McKay (2002, p. 82) also points out,

it cannot be assumed that the culture of any one particular country, especially an Inner Circle country, should provide the basis for cultural content when teaching EIL. [...] [I]f one of the goals of using culture in EIL teaching is to help individuals interact in cross-cultural encounters, then merely knowing about a culture will not be sufficient to gain insight into how to interact in these encounters.

IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

[C]ulture teaching in EIL needs to be more than supplying information about various cultures if it is to be helpful in using the language for both cross-cultural encounters and sharing insights about one's own culture with others. In order to develop these uses of EIL, students need to be encouraged to reflect on their own culture (McKay, 2002, p. 88).

From the discussion and analysis above, we can see that teaching culture and intercultural communication is a rational way to guide students to be 'bicultural' or 'intercultural'. As Moran (2001, p. 35) points out, '[m]embers of the culture have created the language to carry out all their cultural practices, to identify and organise all their cultural products, and to name the underlying cultural perspectives in all the various communities that comprise their culture'. Because 'language is seen as social practice' (Kramsch, 1993) and cannot be taught alone, the EFL class should aim to develop students' cultural awareness. Furthermore, as language and culture are both integrated, EFL students do not learn the language by itself; more importantly, they should be fostered with a sense of 'Intercultural Understanding', which acts as an enrichment of their own identity. As Gupta (2003, p. 170) points out, 'students learn to reflect on themselves and their own cultural systems and gradually come to realize the extent of their own ethnocentrism and how this influences their ways of thinking and communicating'. Accordingly, besides the 'frontal' teaching model, it is necessary to suggest that EFL teachers enhance students' cultural awareness by using different activities such as group discussion, role play, portfolio and debate to help students create a

‘real’ cultural environment.

As English has developed as an international language, Western culture might no longer claim dominance of the English classroom. Therefore, it can be claimed that both native speakers of English and local non-native English-speaking instructors should be further trained to be ‘qualified’ English instructors. As EFL teachers, they should also develop their own cultural awareness. Therefore, teacher development and professionalism is another aspect which should be a source of concern in today’s English classroom. EFL teachers should notice the value of culture teaching, especially teaching the source and international cultures.

It is important to understand that ‘the pedagogy of communication is currently shifting from teaching accurate facts and culturally appropriate behaviours to teaching the social and historical contexts that have given present cultural phenomena their meaning within larger cross-cultural networks’ (Kramsch, 2001, p. 205). English class should focus not just on students’ ‘communicative competence’ but more essentially, on developing students’ ‘Intercultural Communicative Competence’ (ICC) (Byram, 1997; Corbett, 2003; Fantini, 2008). An ‘intercultural communicative approach’ can be implemented with the method of communicative language teaching because it is more recognisable that the ultimate goal of an intercultural approach is to foster students’ ‘intercultural communicative competence’. EFL teachers should also realise that ‘developing intercultural competence involves not only teaching language, but also incorporating interactive and communicative strategies’ (Fantini, 2008, p. 13).

For curriculum design, the cultural aspect should be presented in a more varied way. For example, extra materials can be added when instructing contents from the textbook. ‘Watching movies’ might act as an effective way to get students involved when teaching and reflecting on culture, but the process of feedback is more important than the movies themselves. The Internet is another useful resource for teaching culture. Therefore, in an EFL context, both curriculum and textbook design should be more culture-oriented and present both the ‘source and international target culture’ in order

to fit the needs of both EFL teachers and students.

CONCLUSION

Before making any tentative conclusions, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of this study. As it is true that the concept of 'culture' is not easy to define, and that there are also many 'subcultures' in various fields, in this paper, the source and international cultures can most simply refer to the 'dominant or mainstream culture'. Moreover, as the number of participants of the questionnaire in a particular setting was limited, the questionnaire can only reflect the overt attitude from a certain number of students. More triangulation studies and ethnographic study should be further analysed for more reflective claims.

Culture teaching and learning, as a key element in the EFL classroom, as well as different varieties of English, should be offered to students (Sifakis, 2006). EFL teachers should realise the background of EIL and cultural diversity, and, furthermore, be thoroughly trained in related knowledge such as WE, cultural awareness, intercultural communication and comparative cultural study. As a lingua franca, English is used by more non-native than native speakers in a world range, which means that the English culture no longer merely belongs exclusively to the native speakers of English.

In the EFL context, it is important to shift the paradigm from language and culture globalisation to the concept of glocalisation (Canagarajah, 2005; Guo & Beckett, 2007) because the English language and its culture function in different ways and not only just as a communication tool. Nault (2006, p. 324) argues that 'English learners, in fact, may only require English for local or regional purposes; or they may need it to converse with other non-native speakers from other cultures or countries'. Therefore, it is necessary to draw the conclusion that within the framework of WE, in either EFL monolingual or multilingual classrooms, the essence of teaching the source culture and international cultures should be reclaimed to help students reflect on their

own culture and act as an additional element for intercultural communication against today's background of multiculturalism.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I am indebted to Dr. Claudia Kunschak, director of the English Language Centre, Shantou University, who provided me with useful comments and inspired me on drafts of this paper. My gratitude also goes to Junru Yang for her generous help with the Chi-square data analysis. Finally, I would like to thank all the participants who helped me by participating in the questionnaire, especially those who took part in interviews and the focus group. Without all this help and feedback, this paper would not have reached the final stage. All lack of clarity and any omissions remain entirely my responsibility.

THE AUTHOR

Fan Fang is currently a lecturer at the English Language Centre, Shantou University, China. His current research interests cover World Englishes, intercultural communication and teaching English as a foreign language. His recent publications include *People Mountain, People Sea: A Study of Four Chinese English Idioms on the Web* (2008), *Intelligibility, Acceptability, Target-likeness: Teacher vs. Student Perspectives on the Teaching of Pronunciation within an EIL Framework* (2008, co-authored with Claudia Kunschak) and *College English Teaching and Learning Based on the Framework of World Englishes* (2010, in Chinese).

Email: ffang@stu.edu.cn

REFERENCES

- Adamson, B. (2004). *China's English: A history of English in Chinese education*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Alptekin, C. (2002). Towards intercultural communicative competence in ELT. *ELT Journal*, 56(1), 57-64.
- Bolton, K. (2003). *Chinese Englishes: A sociolinguistic history*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Brutt-Griffler, J. (2002). *World English: A study of its development*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M., & Morgan, C. (1994). *Teaching-and-learning Language-and-culture*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Canagarajah, A. S. (2005). *Reclaiming the local in language policy and practice* (Ed.), Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Chen, J. F., Warden, C. A., & Chang, H. (2005). Motivators that do not motivate: The case of Chinese EFL learners and the influence of culture on motivation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(4), 609-633.
- Chen, M. L., & Hu, X. Q. (2006). Towards the acceptability of China English at home and abroad. *Changing English*, 13(2), 231-240.
- Corbett, J. (2003). *An intercultural approach to English language teaching*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Corson, D. (2001). *Language diversity and education*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fang, F. (2008). People mountain, people sea: A study of four Chinese English idioms on the web. *English Today* 96, 24(4), 46-50.
- Fantini, A. E. (2008). Redesigning ESOL courses to address cultural and intercultural aspects. *Essential Teacher*, 5(2), 12-13.
- Genc, B., & Bada, E. (2005). Culture in language learning and teaching. *The Reading Matrix*, 5(1), 73-84.
- Graddol, D. (2006). *English Next*. British Council.
- Guilherme, M. (2002). *Critical citizens for an intercultural world: Foreign language education as cultural politics*. Clevedon; UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Guo, Y., & Beckett, G. H. (2007). The hegemony of English as a global language:

- Reclaiming local knowledge and culture in China. *Convergence*, *XL*(1-2), 117-131.
- Gupta, A. F. (1992). Contact features of Singapore colloquial English. In K. Bolton, & H. Kwok (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics today: International perspectives* (pp. 323-45). London and New York: Routledge.
- Gupta, A. F. (1998). Singapore colloquial English? Or deviant standard English? In J. Tent, & F. Mugler (Eds.), *SICOL, Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Oceanic Linguistics: Vol. 1. Language Contact* (pp. 43-57). Canberra Australia: Pacific Linguistics.
- Gupta, A. F. (2006). Standard English in the world. In R. Rubdy, & M. Saraceni (Eds.), *English in the world: Global rules, Global roles* (pp. 95-109). London: Continuum.
- Gupta, A. S. (2003). Changing the focus: A discussion of the dynamics of the intercultural experience. In G. Alred, M. Byram, & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Intercultural experience and education* (pp. 155-178). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Harlow, J. (2006). Chinglish – It's a word in a million. Times Online. Retrieved June, 2010 from the World Wide Web: from <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article726906.ece>
- Hobsbawm, E. (1996). Language, culture and national identity. *Social Research*, *63*(4), 1065-1080.
- House, J. (2003). English as a lingua Franca: A threat to multilingualism?. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *7*(4), 556-578.
- Hu, X. Q. (2004). Why China English should stand alongside British, American, and the other 'World Englishes'. *English Today*, *20*(2), 26-33.
- Hu, X. Q. (2005). China English, at home and in the world. *English Today*, *21*(3), 27-38.
- Hu, Z. L. (2001). *Linguistics: A course book*. Beijing: Beijing University Press.
- Jenkins, J. (2007). *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jiang, Y. J. (2003). English as a Chinese language. *English Today* *74*, *19*(2), 3-8.
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification, and sociolinguistic realism: The English language in the outer circle. In R. Quirk, & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures* (pp. 11-30). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kachru, B. B. (1992a). World Englishes: Approaches, issues and resources. *Language Teaching*, *25*, 1-14.
- Kachru, B. B. (1992b). Introduction: The other side of English and the 1990s. In B. B. Kachru, (Ed.), *The other tongue: English across cultures* (pp. 1-15). Urbana &

- Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Kachru, B. B. (1992c). Meaning in deviation: Toward understanding non-native English texts. In B. B. Kachru, (Ed.), *The other tongue: English across Cultures* (pp. 301-326). Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Kirkpatrick, A. (2007). *World Englishes: Implications for international communication and English language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kramersch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramersch, C. (1998). *Language and culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kramersch, C. (2001). Intercultural communication. In R. Carter, & D. Nunan, *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 201-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kramersch, C. (2006). The uses of communicative competence in a global world. *Review of Applied Linguistics in China*, 2, 30-50.
- Kunschak, C. (2010, June). *Multiple identities in the mirror*. A paper presented at the 16th IAICS. Guangzhou, China.
- Lang, G. (2005). Chinese Pidgin English. In P. Strazny, (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Linguistics* (pp. 200-201). New York: Fitzroy Dearborn.
- McArthur, T. (2002). *Oxford guide to world English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCrum, R. (2010). *Globish: How the English language became the world's language*. London: Penguin Group.
- McKay, S. L. (2002). *Teaching English as an international language: Rethinking goals and approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Melchers, G., & Shaw, P. (2003). *World Englishes*. London: Arnold.
- Moran, P. R. (2001). *Teaching culture: Perspectives in practice*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Mufwene, S. S. (1994). New Englishes and criteria for naming them. *World Englishes*, 13(1), 21-31.
- Nault, D. (2006). Going global: Rethinking culture teaching in ELT Contexts. *Language, culture and curriculum*, 19(3), 314-328.
- Nelson, C. L. (1992). My language, your culture: Whose communicative competence?. In B.B. Kachru, (Ed.), *The other tongue: English across cultures* (pp. 327-339). Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. Hillsdale, NJ: New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rao, Z. H. (2006). Understanding Chinese students' use of language learning strategies from cultural and educational perspectives. *Journal of Multilingual*

and Multicultural Development, 27(6), 491-508.

- Schneider, E. W. (2003). The dynamics of new englishes: From identity construction to dialect birth. *Language*, 79(2), 233-281.
- Sifakis, N. (2006). Teaching EIL – Teaching international or intercultural English? what teachers should know. In R. Rubdy, & M. Saraceni (Eds.), *English in the world: global rules, global roles* (pp. 151-168). London: Continuum.
- Tang, Y. F. (2006). Beyond behavior: Goals of cultural learning in the second language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90, 86-99.
- Trudgill, P. (1999). Standard English: What it isn't. In B. Tony, & R. J. Watts (Eds.), *Standard English: the widening debate* (pp. 117-28). London: Routledge.
- Trudgill, P., & Hannah, J. (2002). *International English: A guide to varieties of standard English*. London: Arnold.

APPENDIX A

I) Demographic Background Data

Please fill out the following information about yourself. All personal responses will remain confidential and are included for statistical purposes only.

- 1) Age: 18-22 23-30 31-40
 41-60 61 and above
- 2) Gender: male female
- 3) Major: language-related non language-related
- 4) Age when starting to learn English:
 native primary secondary
 university
- 5) Current level of ELC: _____

II) Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions about your own experience and beliefs about 'cultural learning'. There is no right or wrong answer. If you can give some additional information, please do so.

1. Do you like to learn about Western cultures during the process of English learning?
A. I like to learn about them very much.
B. I like to learn about them.
C. I do not like to learn about them very much
D. I do not like to learn about them at all.
Reasons: _____
2. How important do you think culture is in the process of College English Teaching?
A. very important B. important

- C. not very important D. not important at all
3. During the process of English learning, is the instructor concerned with teaching culture?
A. usually concerned with it B. sometimes concerned with it
C. seldom concerned with it D. never concerned with it
4. Which of the teaching methods do you think is the most effective way to learn culture?
A. textbooks B. instructions
C. movies D. others please specify: _____
5. Do you feel satisfied with college English teaching of culture?
A. very satisfied B. satisfied C. generally satisfied
D. not very satisfied E. not satisfied at all
6. Do you think that teaching Western culture only can meet students' needs during the process of teaching culture?
A. Yes B. No C. No idea
Reasons: _____
7. Do you think it is necessary to instruct the source culture (namely the mainstream Chinese culture) in your English class instruction?
A. Yes B. No C. No idea
Reasons: _____
8. Do you think it is necessary to instruct international cultures in your English classroom instruction?
A. Yes B. No C. No idea
Reasons: _____
- Do you have any comments or suggestions?

* THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION *

APPENDIX B

1. How would you define communicative competence/intercultural competence?
2. The Chinese Ministry of Education published College English Curriculum Requirements (2007), which states that:

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

How do you interpret this quote?
3. How important are cultural/intercultural aspects in language learning?
How do you integrate them in your English learning?
4. Have you had any intercultural barrier when you studied/lived abroad? If so, how did you try to adjust yourself? Was it successful? How did you overcome at the end?
5. What role do you tend to play in the development of intercultural competence as a learner? What are some strategies that you have developed in your English learning that you could share with your fellow students?
6. How important do you think it is to have instruction in the source culture (namely the mainstream Chinese culture) in your English class instruction?