



Exploring the Cultural Content in Chinese ELT Textbooks from Intercultural Perspectives

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In EFL contexts like mainland China, many researchers made efforts to investigate the cultural content of Chinese government-authorized textbooks used in both public secondary schools and universities. However, few people pay attention to textbooks used in cram schools. This study aims to explore the cultural content in *New Concept English (NCE)*, an extensively used textbook in Chinese cram schools for nearly 30 years. Meanwhile, it attempts to analyze its strengths and weaknesses of the cultural content from intercultural perspectives. Adopting content analysis under the guidance of two coding schemes, the results reveal that general culture (68%) has the largest percentage while source culture (2%) is significantly ignored in stark contrast to target culture (46%). Based on the findings, the prominent strength lies in the great deal of general culture (68%), which helps student understand culture from an etic view and makes them realize the cultural differences for cross-cultural comparison. The two weaknesses are the severely neglected source culture (2%) compared to target culture (46%) and the unbalanced distribution in international cultures. Findings of this study intend to raise teachers' awareness of the intercultural teaching and learning in cram schools.

Keywords: cultural content, intercultural perspectives, Chinese ELT textbook, cram schools

Introduction

As the deep implementation of globalization and internationalization, English has played an integral role for communication and interaction between people from different countries and cultures. In English language teaching (ELT) context, the importance of cultural teaching has been paid more and more attention by scholars (Byram, 1997; Hinkel, 1999; Kramsch, 1991). Byram (1997) stated that language teaching can seldom occur without overtly teaching of culture. Similarly, Kramsch (1991) indicated that culture and language are inextricably intertwined with each other, which constitute "a single universe or domain of experience" (p. 217). With its significant role in ELT classroom, cultural teaching has proved to be successful through many materials, among which textbooks play a vital role. As a source of input, Hinkel (1999) believed that textbook can be regarded as "a teacher, map, resource, trainer and an authority and ideology" (p. 199) for cultural teaching in ELT classrooms.

Many researchers made efforts to investigate the cultural content of English textbooks used in middle schools, high schools and universities (Aliabari & Jamalvandi, 2013; Jiang, 2013; Wu, 2010; Xu, 2013). As much attention has been paid on the cultural content of government-authorized English textbooks by Chinese researchers (Jiang, 2013; Wu, 2010; Xu, 2013), however, few researchers keep their eyes on English textbooks used in cram schools. As an extensively used textbook in Chinese cram schools for nearly 30 years, *New Concept English (NCE)* has gained great popularity among Chinese students including secondary school and university students. In Shanghai, it has acted as one of the main textbooks

in almost 90% cram schools (Wei, 2012). Considering its wide application and growing popularity, this article intends to evaluate *NCE* from a different perspective -- the cultural content. Unlike the limited articles evaluating *NCE* from multifaceted perspectives like pronunciation, grammar, text chosen or exercise design (Long, 2009; Wei, 2012), this study attempts to investigate the cultural content of this textbook from intercultural perspectives. In doing so, the study hopes to examine what kinds of cultural content *NCE* contains, and whether it is suitable for today's English as an international language (EIL) classrooms. Meanwhile, the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural content are elaborated from intercultural perspectives. With regards to the purpose and significance, this study hopes to help cram school teachers who currently use *NCE* as the textbook pay more attention to the cultural content; moreover, it wishes to raise their awareness in terms of cultural teaching and intercultural issues in English classes.

Literature Review

From Cultural to Intercultural Teaching and Learning in ELT

Language is inextricably connected to culture and the importance of culture teaching and learning in ELT field has received many scholars' attention in the last four decades (Baker, 2011; Bragaw, 1991; Byram & Morgan, 1994; Moore, 1992). Cultural learning, as Paige et al. (2003) defined, is the "process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general¹ knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 177) for efficient human communication between individuals from diverse cultures. To be specific, it is an ongoing, fluid and dynamic procedure, which acquires learners' culture-general and culture-specific knowledge, attitudes and behavior to conceptualize the culture learning (Paige et al., 2003). Furthermore, emergent, situated and hybrid cultural references and practices are of great necessity in cultural learning (Baker, 2011). However, as the definition proposed, researchers began to raise doubts that whose culture should be taught (Mckay, 2004) in today's ELT classrooms. With English as an international language or lingua franca, the wide application of English spreads from Inner Circle, Outer Circle to Expanding Circle² (Kachru, 1985). Correspondingly, the culture learning in ELT cannot be limited to culture-specific or target culture, such as Anglo-American culture in Inner Circle. Concerning this, many scholars (Baker, 2011; Bennet et al., 2003; Byram, 1997) highlight the importance of intercultural teaching and learning.

Bennet et al. (2003) shed light on the significance of teaching intercultural competence (IC) in language classrooms. According to them, IC refers to "the general ability to transcend ethnocentrism, appreciate other cultures, and generate appropriate behavior in one or more different culture" (p. 237). To develop IC, Bennet et al. (2003) further elaborated that it is imperative to prepare learners with two kinds of cultures, *Big C* and *little c*. Interculturalists like Bennett (1998) and Cushner and Brislin (1996) attempted to relate *Big C* and *little c* with objective and subjective cultures respectively. Specifically, objective C indexes "formal culture" (Bennet et al., 2003, p. 243), the visible and tangible cultural creations like artifacts, institutions, geographical monuments or art products. While subjective culture refers to "invisible and less tangible aspects of culture" (Bennet et al., 2003, p. 243); and it emphasizes on cultural value, worldview or social belief. Apart from the two cultures described as critical elements for exploring intercultural content, Bennet et al. (2003) held that culture-specific and culture-general approaches are inseparable parts in developing IC. They believed the goal of developing IC demands a hybrid of two approaches, which requires learners not only to apprehend a particular or target culture but

¹ Culture-specific learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to a given target culture; Culture-general learning refers to knowledge and skills that are more generalizable in nature and transferable across cultures.

² Inner circle refers to English as native language countries, like America or Britain; outer circle represents countries where English is a second language; and Expanding circle includes countries where English is a foreign language, such as China or Russia.

also to overcome ethnocentrism and cultivate cultural empathy towards diverse cultures. Furthermore, these two approaches are of great help to improve learners' general cultural adaptation strategies (Bennet et al., 2003).

Similar to Bennet et al.'s (2003) emphasis on intercultural teaching, Byram (1997) proposed a model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) stressing on both intercultural teaching and learning. According to Byram (1997), ICC includes five prominent factors: "attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness" (p. 33). ICC model requires learners to have positive attitudes and similar knowledge towards both their own and other cultures with curiosity and willingness. With the ability to "decentre" (p. 34), it is the initial steps for learners to have skills of interpreting, relating and analyzing culture based on their own knowledge and to discover new information independently for further social interaction. In a word, positive attitudes and mutual knowledge of bilateral cultures added with two skills for interpreting and relating contribute to learners' improvement of ICC.

To prepare students with IC and ICC, it is of great necessity to raise their intercultural awareness (ICA) as English is used as a lingua franca (ELF). Baker (2011) stated ELF communication is "emergent and situated" (p. 63) which demands learners' ability to take advantage of linguistic and communicative materials in the multicultural contexts. From this point of view, traditional cultural awareness that informs students to either local culture or target culture in inner circle has proved to be limited since more communication and interaction take place in expanding circle (Baker, 2011). Teachers in ELF contexts ought to cultivate students' ICA and expose them to the realization of cultural influences as "fluid, fragmented, hybrid and emergent" (p. 66) in the global settings. What's more, Baker (2011) proposed six strands for teachers to apply ICA in ELT classrooms to make use of all teaching materials available such as textbooks.

Research on Cultural Content in ELT Textbooks from Intercultural Perspectives

With the researchers' attention shifting from cultural to intercultural issues in ELT field, the exploration of the cultural content in textbooks has been conducted from intercultural perspectives. Scholars made efforts to investigate the intercultural issues from multifaceted angles, such as English as an international language (EIL) (Ke, 2012; Matsuda, 2012), intercultural approaches and exposure (Munandar & Ulwiyah, 2012; Siddiqie, 2011), hidden curriculum or agenda underlying intercultural content (Chao, 2010; Tajeddin & Teimourmezhad, 2015) and globalization (Lee, 2011; Xu, 2013).

Ke (2012) attempted to investigate the role of English in Taiwanese high-school textbooks from 1952-2009 via both quantitative and qualitative methods. In his study, 1072 lessons from 14 textbooks were analyzed to reach a conclusion that international and universal lessons maintain a smooth improvement over the past 50 years despite of the increasing or declining of Anglo-American and local lessons (Ke, 2012). Associated with Taiwanese socio-political changes, the results indicated that the role of English has changed from English as a foreign language to EIL or scientific language in the globalized context. Similar to the research goal examining the role of English, Munandar and Ulwiyah (2012) adopted the intercultural approaches to explore how cultural content is integrated into ELT Indonesia high-school textbooks. Data was analyzed based on three different types of cultures, i.e. source, target and international cultures, proposed by Cortazzi and Jin (1999). Findings showed that the affluent local cultural content not only encourages learners to relate their own knowledge to the target or international cultures, but also assists them in accommodating cultural knowledge to concrete communication and interaction. Moreover, the vital role of teachers in ELT class in evaluating the cultural components of textbooks was also highlighted in their study.

To explore the cultural content in textbooks, some researchers intended to conduct a further investigation of the hidden curriculum or agenda from intercultural perspectives. Chao (2012) adopted content analysis to examine the cultural content and hidden curriculum in an internationally published textbook used in a Taiwanese university. Results indicated that western culture concerning products,

values and people plays a salient role in the textbook while domestic and Asian culture receives little interest. What's more, the textbook presents learners the appreciation of western culture including the positive attitudes towards western people or superior values for occidental countries. The culture-specific content would probably mislead learners into thinking their local culture is inferior or unimportant (Chao, 2012). Different from Chao's (2012) results, findings in Tajeddin and Teimournezhad (2015) revealed that cultural elements in Iranian English textbooks entail a culturally neutral view without specific focus on any particular culture. The lack of enough target and international cultures, however, provided an implication for future textbook editors.

Globalization was another crucial factor to analyze cultural content in ELT textbooks. Xu (2013) elaborated two important issues, namely globalization and culture in ELT classrooms, with a particular interest in Chinese nationwide secondary school textbooks. The data was collected from a new series of English textbooks named "New Senior English for China". The author endeavored to find out whether the texts expose Chinese learners to diversities of English and cultures and whether the texts provide opportunities for learners to associate Chinese culture with other cultures. After data analysis, findings revealed that current Chinese textbooks in secondary school present a favorable co-existence of Chinese and non-Chinese cultures. Meanwhile, the textbooks play a positive role for developing students' intercultural awareness and communicative competence (Xu, 2013). Nevertheless, in Lee's (2011) study that aimed to investigate how globalization is presented in Korean high-school ELT textbooks, different results were given that the textbooks appreciated western people and culture but marginalized local and other cultures. In this regard, Lee (2011) strongly recommended the significance of embedding intercultural components into textbooks to meet the requirements and challenges in EIL global context.

Research on Cultural Content in Chinese ELT Textbooks

The cultural content in Chinese ELT textbooks has attracted more and more researchers' attention in recent years (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2013; Jiang, 2013; Wu, 2010; Xu, 2013). Aliakbari and Jamalvandi (2013) examined the cultural realization in Chinese high-school English textbooks with the outcome that target culture (C2) was more highlighted than source culture (C1) and other cultures (C3). Wu (2010) intended to investigate the role college English textbooks played in improving students' intercultural communicative competence and awareness. Concentrating on the Chinese college English textbooks similar to Wu's (2010) study, Jiang (2013) found that neither local nor world culture was presented and few culture-related tasks were designed in the textbooks; furthermore, the importance of ICC did not receive much attention by the textbook editors.

As previous studies on cultural content analysis focus on government-authorized textbooks in public schools, however, few people pay attention to textbooks used in cram schools. This study explores the cultural content in *NCE*, a popularly and widely used textbook in Chinese cram schools. Although it was evaluated by several Chinese researchers from different angles like pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary (Long, 2009; Rong, 2009; Wei, 2012), few people concentrated on the cultural content, especially on the intercultural issues. In terms of this, two research questions are addressed in the study:

- 1) What kinds of cultural content are represented in *New Concept English*?
- 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural content from intercultural perspectives?

Methodology

Textbook Selection

The textbook *New Concept English* was originally written by L. G. Alexander in Britain and later was revised by a Chinese English education scholar called He Qishen when it was brought into Chinese cram

schools. The first revised edition was published in 1997 in China. The textbook is divided into four volumes covering the elementary stage to advance, which is available for students from primary schools to universities. In this study, the third volume is purposefully selected due to its increasing popularity among cram schools. More importantly, compared to other volumes, the third one receives a large range of students including middle school, high school and college students. There are 60 lessons in total in the third volume.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is adopted in this study. It is conducted for identifying and categorizing related elements that are then summarized into themes or patterns. Served as a convinced and objective research method both in educational and historical fields, content analysis can elicit clear and explicit rules for researchers to further classify and process collected data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Holsti, 1969).

In this study, the detailed content contains two aspects: 1) the main readings from every lesson (60 readings in total), and 2) the notes below the reading texts. The output sections like exercises and learning tasks are excluded because they are specifically associated with vocabulary and grammar knowledge while concerning little cultural content.

Two Coding Schemes

In line with the two research questions above, two coding schemes are established in this study. The first one is the classifications of the cultural content. According to Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) research, the cultural content in ELT materials includes three kinds of cultural components: 1) target culture materials, 2) local culture materials, and 3) international culture materials. Based on their classifications and other theoretical frameworks in the previous studies on cultural or intercultural content, the first coding scheme is formed and shown in Table 1 to address the first research question.

TABLE 1
Categories of Cultural Content

Categories	Subcategories	Explanations
Source Culture (SC)	It refers to Chinese culture.	
Target Culture (TC)	British culture	It refers to culture in English-speaking countries.
	American culture	
	Culture in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland	
International Culture (IC)	Culture in Asia	It refers to culture all over the world except source and target culture above.
	Culture in Europe	
	Culture in Africa	
	Culture in Latin America	
General Culture (GC)	It includes universal knowledge/content that does not belong to any specific culture or countries.	

Instead of adopting one popularly used model like Byram's (1997) ICC as the second coding scheme, the researcher combines four scholars' explanations on the intercultural issue in that the cultural content to be analyzed in this textbook contains only the main reading passages and notes. Without output content in this study, Byram's (1997) two skills of "interpreting, relating, discovery and interaction" (p.33) in ICC model would not be suitable and thus be deleted correspondingly; meanwhile, the knowledge in ICC regarding interaction between self and others is not proper, either. Thus, the researcher establishes an appropriate scheme for answering the second research question. The specific description of the second coding scheme is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Intercultural Guidelines for Cultural Content Analysis

Intercultural Guidelines		Explanations
Intercultural Knowledge	Culture-specific and Culture-general knowledge	Culture-specific learning refers to “the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to a given target culture”; Culture-general learning refers to “knowledge and skills that are more generalizable in nature and transferable across cultures”. (Paige, 2003, p. 177)
	<i>Big C and little c</i>	<i>Big C</i> refers to objective culture regarding visible and tangible cultural creations while <i>little c</i> means subjective culture concerning “invisible and less tangible aspects of culture”. (Bennet et al., 2003, p. 243)
Intercultural Attitudes		Intercultural attitude refers to “curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own”. It aims to raise students’ “willingness and interest in discovering familiar or unfamiliar phenomenon both in one’s own and in other cultures”. (Byram, 1997, p. 50)
Intercultural Awareness		“ICA is a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication”. (Baker, 2011, p. 66)

Data Analysis

The core content to be analyzed is the main readings with notes. Based on Table 2, each reading text is categorized as source culture (SC), target culture (TC), international culture (IC) or general culture (GC). SC refers to Chinese culture and TC is culture in Britain, America, Australia, Canada or New Zealand. For IC, it contains cultures all over the world except TC and SC. While for GC, it includes universal knowledge or content that belongs to no specific culture. For instance, *Lesson 17 “The longest suspension bridge in the world”* discusses the origin and appearance of an American bridge; it is thus coded as TC. *Lesson 3 “An unknown goddess”* delineates an ancient city on the Aegean island of Kea in Greek, which is classified as IC - European culture. The example of GC can be shown in *Lesson 4 “The double life of Alfred Bloggs”* which discusses about jobs from different people’s views.

For some reading texts and notes, they are not limited in one cultural category; for example, the reading in *Lesson 6 “Smash-and-grab”* talking about robbery belongs to GC; while the note below mentions the target British culture; as a result, this lesson is categorized as both general and target culture. Likewise, although the main topics of several reading texts belong to specific cultural classification, certain particular culture is mentioned as well in the readings; for example, in *Lesson 29 “Funny or not?”*, the main topic is classified as general culture: humor; however, the reading talks about Charlie Chaplin’s humor in UK, which is the typical British culture. In this case, Lesson 29 is sorted out as general culture and target (British) culture.

Among the 60 lessons, some readings cannot be classified as any cultural category because what they present to readers is just a story. Thus, these kinds of texts are excluded from the data collection. In total, there are 50 readings for data analysis.

Inter-rater Reliability

To maintain the reliability of the study, another two coders were responsible for the coding after the researcher’s work (Nunan, 1992). The coders are two MA TESOL students who have background knowledge of cultural education and textbook evaluation. After coding, discrepancies were discussed among the three raters until the agreement was eventually achieved. If disagreement still occurred, the researcher asked for suggestions from another Ph.D. student majoring in culture and TESOL and the four then discussed with each other to reach the final consensus.

Results and Discussion

Results of Cultural Content in NCE

As the results of cultural content in *NCE* represented in Table 3, GC takes up the largest number of 68% among the 50 lessons. And TC has the second largest percentage (46%) followed by IC (32%). Within TC, British and American culture occupy nearly 90%. As for the IC, European culture (26%) is 13 times higher than African culture (2%) and nearly 7 times than Asian culture (4%). However, SC seldom occurs in *NCE* with only 2%.

TABLE 3
Results of Cultural Content in NCE

Cultural Content in Readings (including notes)	Subcategories	Percentages
Source Culture (SC) 2% (1/50)		2% (1/50)
Target Culture (TC) 46% (23/50)	British culture	28% (14/50)
	American culture	14% (7/50)
	Culture in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Ireland	4% (2/50)
	Culture in Asia	4% (2/50)
International Culture (IC) 32% (16/50)	Culture in Europe	26% (13/50)
	Culture in Africa	2% (1/50)
	Culture in Latin America	0%
General Culture (GC) 68% (34/50)		68% (34/50)
Total 50 (10 excluded)		Total 50 (10 excluded)

Strengths of the Cultural Content from Intercultural Perspectives

From intercultural perspective, the prominent strength of the cultural content in *NCE* is that GC has the largest percentage (68%) among 50 lessons. Table 4 illustrates the topics of general culture from 34 lessons. Based on the second coding scheme, intercultural knowledge contains not only the specific culture –to gain cultural value, view or behavior of a specific or target culture –but also the general culture that is universal and can be generalized across different cultures (Bennet et al., 2003; Paige, 2003). Instead of exposing students to some specific culture, *NCE* presents learners a universal picture of general knowledge that does not belong to any specific culture or countries via introducing them a great deal of general cultures. The affluent general knowledge in *NCE* helps learners understand culture from an “etic” (Bennet et al., 2003, p. 244) view in ethnographic approach. This ability is strengthened in intercultural work to make students realize the cultural differences, which can be applied for cross-cultural comparison. Moreover, through internalizing students’ cognition on cultural analysis, general culture is of great help to overcome their ethnocentrism and develop a kind of respect or appreciation to one’s own culture and other cultures (Bennet et al., 2003).

TABLE 4
Topics in General Culture

Lessons	Topics	Lessons	Topics
Lesson 4	Classifications of Job	Lesson 34	Art
Lesson 5	Newspaper	Lesson 35	Justice
Lesson 6	Robbery	Lesson 36	Novel
Lesson 9	Animal	Lesson 38	People (Historians)
Lesson 11	Customs officers	Lesson 40	University students
Lesson 12	Life on a desert island	Lesson 41	Country Life
Lesson 15	Children's belief on money	Lesson 42	Cave Exploration
Lesson 18	Modern sculpture	Lesson 43	Insurance
Lesson 19	Relationship between Animal and people	Lesson 44	Transportation
Lesson 22	Drama	Lesson 45	Media
Lesson 23	Food	Lesson 47	Environment
Lesson 24	Novel	Lesson 50	Human Behaviors on resolution
Lesson 26	Advertisement	Lesson 51	Science and Technology
Lesson 27	Belief on Job	Lesson 54	Animal
Lesson 29	Humor	Lesson 55	Planet
Lesson 31	People with eccentricity	Lesson 59	Hobby
Lesson 33	Attitudes	Lesson 60	Punctuation

Lesson 29 "Funny or not?" which discusses the general culture "Humor" is a good example to make a cross-cultural comparison for students. At the very beginning in this reading, it says the sense of humor is closely linked to national characteristics. Then, the text elaborates the senses of humor from different countries, like America, France, Russia and the UK followed by inspiring examples. From this lesson, it is easy for students to compare humor from distinctive countries or cultures; and they probably have the tendency to relate those humors to their own culture in humor.

To investigate the general culture from 34 readings, the researcher classified them into *Big C* and *little c*. Results in Table 5 show that despite of 65% in *Big C*, the role of *little c* of 35% in general culture cannot be ignored in *NCE*. These GCs in *NCE* not only present students with abundant objective cultures (*Big C*) including food (Lesson 23), animal (Lesson 9) or planet (Lesson 55), but also show them the invisible or tangible aspects of culture (*little c*) such as humor (Lesson 29) or justice (Lesson 35). According to interculturalists like Bennett (1998) and Cushner and Brislin (1996), *Big C* and *little c* as a whole play an inseparable role in improving students' intercultural competence. In particular, *little* or subjective *c* like world value, social belief or assumptions which hidden under the objective culture is of great significance to make them investigate the reasons underlying some cultural products. Moreover, the relatively balanced distribution of *Big C* and *little c* is effective enough to develop students' intercultural competence.

TABLE 5
Big and little c in General Culture

	Big C	little c
Number	22	12
Frequency	65%	35%

Weaknesses of the Cultural Content from Intercultural Perspectives

Based on the results of Table 3, there are two major weaknesses in the cultural content from intercultural perspectives. The first lies in the severely unbalanced proportion between TC and SC in *NCE*. Compared to TC (46%) occupying a large percentage in the cultural content, SC (2%) is significantly ignored in the third volume of *NCE*. The only SC mentioned is Chinese popular product "tea" in the 19th century in Lesson 25. The very brief introduction to SC is discussed for comparing with other fashionable products like Australian wool. Large amounts of TC in sharp contrast with little SC easily result in showing students' appreciation and respect for the Anglo-American culture while ignoring their own

culture. More importantly, the weakness hinders students' development in positive intercultural attitudes that aim to cultivate curiosity, willingness and interest in discovering both one's own and other cultures (Byram, 1997).

The textbook under investigation is the third volume in *NCE* which is applied for a wide range of students from junior and senior high schools to universities. Nevertheless, the scanty content of SC mismatches the requirements of both Curriculum Standard (MOE, 2014) in secondary compulsory English education and Teaching Guideline (MOE, 2017) in college English from the perspective of cultural teaching and learning. The explicit standard on textbook compilation is to arouse students' awareness of the cultural differences between eastern and western countries (MOE, 2014, 2017); especially, the Curriculum Standard (MOE, 2014) points out that a certain proportion of Chinese culture (SC) should be incorporated into the English textbooks to cultivate students' spirit of patriotism and cultural confidence.

In general, this distribution of little SC in *NCE* cannot satisfy the need of intercultural development and meet the requirements of both National Curriculum Standard (MOE, 2014) or Teaching Guideline (MOE, 2017) in terms of cultural teaching and learning. As a widely used textbook in Chinese cram schools, increasing the content of SC should be emphasized to catch up with the change or innovation of government-authorized textbooks where Chinese and non-Chinese cultures co-existent favorably (Xu, 2013).

The second weakness is associated with IC. Although IC (32%) is frequently occurred in *NCE*, European culture occupies a large proportion (81%, 13/16) in IC, which impedes the development of intercultural attitudes. By definition from Table 1, the content of international culture covers a wide range including Asian, European, Latin American or African cultures. Compared to the limited number of Asian culture (13%), African culture (6%) and Latin American (0%), the huge percentage of European culture (81%) outperforms. This uneven distribution can empower students' negative ideology to appreciate European culture and despise other countries' cultures like Asian or African, especially the empty content about Latin-American.

Furthermore, the weakness of salient percentages in European culture hampers students' development of intercultural awareness. From the second coding scheme, intercultural awareness, according to Baker (2011), involves two main aspects. Both the first in the understanding of the role culture played and the second concerning the ability to transfer the understanding into practice in intercultural communication cannot be realized due to the large percentage in European culture. As the emergence of English as an international language or lingua franca, English is used world widely with the interaction and communication moving from inner circle countries like Anglo-America to outer circle like India or expanding circle like Asian countries. Exposing students to different varieties of cultures like Asian or African rather than merely limiting in European countries becomes a trend in cultural teaching. This conduction will facilitate and develop students' intercultural communicating competence while interacting with foreigners.

Conclusion and Implication

This study aims at investigating the cultural content of *New Concept English*, a widely and popularly used textbook in Chinese cram schools; meanwhile, it attempts to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the cultural content from intercultural perspectives. Content analysis is adopted as the core method with two coding schemes to elicit the results and to discuss the strengths and weaknesses. Findings show that GC (68%) takes up the largest percentage followed by TC (46%) and IC (32%). Compared with TC, SC (2%) is severely ignored in the third volume of *NCE*. The outstanding strength is the abundant GC, which exposes students to culture-general knowledge and makes them realize the cultural differences for cross-cultural comparison (Cusher & Brislin, 1996). The second strength concerns the relatively balanced distribution of *Big C* and *little c* in GC. It is effective enough to develop students' intercultural

competence. However, the obvious weakness is the serious ignorance of SC in sharp contrast to TC, which is 23 times higher than SC. The excessive TC greatly impedes students' development in favorable intercultural attitudes. Moreover, the larger amounts of TC easily make learners show appreciation or respect for Anglo-American culture and establish a kind of bias towards other cultures. The uneven cultural representations between SC and TC could not satisfy the need in today's intercultural communication. Furthermore, the weakness cannot meet the requirements of National Curriculum Standard (MOE, 2014) or Teaching Guideline (MOE, 2017) in terms of cultural teaching and learning for high school and college students.

Findings of this study wish to raise teachers' attention and awareness in cram schools to incorporate the intercultural teaching and learning into *NCE*. It is cram school teachers' responsibilities to cultivate students as 'bicultural' or 'multicultural' learners (Fang, 2011) by incorporating learning tasks about intercultural communication into ELT classrooms. In addition, the weaknesses of scanty SC against the concept of 'World Englishes' or 'New Englishes' (Holmes, 2013) calls for the adapted materials by adding source culture and diversified cultures rather than Anglo-American or European cultures. In line with these expectations, some pedagogical implications are provided as follows.

First and foremost, the ignored SC or other cultures in this textbook need to be remedied by embedding various cultural knowledge from Asian, Latin American or African countries as a supplement. For example, the cram school teachers can design tasks or activities that relate to those cultures to raise students' awareness, curiosity and interest in discovering unfamiliar phenomenon from other cultures (Byram, 1997).

Secondly, the "hidden curriculum" (Cunningsworth, 1995; Holly, 1990) of *NCE* can be obviously predicted that Anglo-American and European ideologies take a dominant role in ELT classrooms. The huge gap between SC and TC, the unbalanced distribution of European and other cultures could be the best justification. To address this issue, teachers in cram schools need to explicitly integrate materials about various cultures into the curriculum design. For example, teachers can prepare some meaningful videos or films about other cultures in class to help shape learners an unbiased attitude towards different cultures.

Thirdly, the textbooks used in cram school need to be modified and updated to meet the change and development of Chinese government-authorized textbooks where a harmonious coexistence between Chinese culture and other cultures could be obtained (Xu, 2013). Responding to this, traditional Chinese culture has to be incorporated into the main reading materials to keep a balance with Anglo-American or European cultures. In this way, students could gradually gain a self-esteem or confidence towards their own culture and establish the self-cultural identity while interacting with foreigners, particularly with the Anglo-American people in real-life communication.

However, the study has a limitation that the textbook under investigation is restricted to only one volume in *NCE*. With four volumes to be analyzed, more meaningful and helpful findings for teachers, scholars and textbook editors could be obtained. In terms of the suggestions for future study, this study could serve as a pilot or initial study and may be followed up by other volumes in *NCE*. Additionally, the author believes it quite necessary to compare *NCE* with government-authorized textbooks used in Chinese public schools under national curriculum. By comparison, it would have provided audiences a significant insight of the overall cultural representations in those widely used textbooks in China. At the same time, having interviews with the front-line cram school teachers about their opinions of intercultural teaching is imperative to improve the quality of *NCE* from intercultural perspectives. Those who are teaching *NCE* for several years probably have quite different views with either intercultural educators or researchers.

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