# Internationalizing English Language Education in Globalized Taiwan

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in Globalized Taiwan**

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*Part III. Developing Global Literacy*

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# Introduction and Overview

**Wen-Chuan Lin and Robert Godwin-Jones**

For decades, English as a foreign language (EFL) has been generally assumed to be the essential element in global communication, not to mention in today's world where one is likely to have more encounters (online or in person) with people from different cultures. Crystal (2003) described English as a "global language" and people in Taiwan as well as in other countries in Asia tend to view anything involving English positively. Learning English as a global language is considered by many as vital to Taiwan's economy in terms of providing access to the world community, and is viewed as one of the means to success in its economic globalization and modernization. Being able to speak English carries significant prestige, and it is generally believed that speaking better English fuels upward mobility in terms of career and social status (Lin & Byram, 2016). This social phenomenon exists not only in Taiwan but also in other Asian countries, such as China, Japan and Korea (see the Afterword).

In an age of rapid globalization, the process of interacting with people who are different from oneself in fundamental ways related to appearance, language, worldviews, or a number of other categories has become part of our everyday lives, for example, in multilingual, multicultural communities or in culturally diverse families (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Since, the majority of human societies nowadays inevitably need to deal with multiple cultures and multiple languages, this gives rise to a growing public interest in the capacity for communicating across the world in English as a common global language, as a *lingua franca* (Dewey, 2007).This concern is accelerating as technological advances today have

played a major role in bringing people together, facilitating the process of globalization.

The Internet has reached the remotest corners of the world. People are now able to see and appreciate differences in culture, way of life, and ways of interpreting the world at the click of a button. The knowledge of and skills in using information technology in EFL teaching and learning has become a new form of "literacy", or "new literacies" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) that are crucial in our educational system today. This has also resulted in a significant call for the development of intercultural communication, for 21st-century citizens to meet a visible increase in the need and desire to be interculturally sensitive and competent. An experience living abroad or in close contact with those from another culture can lead to dramatically changed perspectives on the values and behavior patterns of one's native country (Godwin-Jones, 2018). For this reason, the integration of education abroad for international exposure and developing intercultural communication competence is now becoming a significant part of EFL education in Taiwan and abroad.

## EFL education in Taiwan–A brief historical context

Since the 1980s, Taiwanese society has been subject to rapid economic and socio-political change. Learning English as a foreign language in Taiwan has become one of the main economic concerns, as industries have recognized the need to compete within global markets where trade is mostly carried out in English. The growth in demand for and supply of EFL education in business, public sectors and educational settings is accelerating. In recent years, the downward extension of the age at which English becomes a required school subject reflects public recognition of the importance of EFL education (Lin, 2008; Lin & Byram, 2016).

In 2001, the extension of EFL to younger ages in the national curriculum was a response to a dramatic sense of

socio-political change and awareness of global economic trends. The implementation of the new Grades 1-9 Curriculum (*jiŭ-nián yī-guàn kè-chéng*) from MOE (Ministry of Education) Taiwan, provided a framework of guidelines regulating curriculum goals, pedagogic methods, timetable, content, and evaluation. Following these MOE guidelines, English is taught with a focus on the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and on developing basic communicative competences and knowledge about culture and social customs of foreign countries.

More recently, in responding to the revolutionary changes in communication and transportation technologies that dramatically accelerate intercultural interaction around the world, the 12-Year Basic Education Curricula (*shí'èr-nián guó-jiào xīn-kè-gāng*) was announced by MOE in 2014 and will be implemented in 2018 (MOE Taiwan, 2018). The new curricula have three core changes; discourse-based (not decontextualized), usage-based (not grammar-focused) and the addition of listening practice to different English accents (Huang, 2017). The third change to include understanding of "Global Englishes" reflects the recognition of a growing importance of intercultural training in the global context. In the new EFL curricula for senior high schools, as another example, the core literacy involves cultivation of multicultural understanding and appreciation, understanding of global issues, and capability of international mobility. This also leads to a rising demand for intercultural communication pedagogy not only in senior high school level but also in higher education in globalized Taiwan.

## Internationalizing English language education in globalized Taiwan

The far-reaching and rapid process of globalization has brought dramatic socio-cultural and linguistic changes to many global communities, including Taiwan, other Asian countries, and not to mention English-speaking countries such as USA.

For example, USA has traditionally been one of the few countries in which it is possible to be successful even if one speaks only one language, English (Nieto, 2010). However, the USA is shifting demographically in ways that are likely to change dramatically attitudes towards language and culture. By the year 2042, demographers tell us, non-Hispanic whites will be in the minority (Roberts, 2008). Certainly, USA is by no means unique in undergoing this process.

Like the USA, Taiwan experienced demographical changes in the rapid process of globalization, and this is likely to change people's attitudes towards language and culture. For example, the number of foreign workers (mostly from Southeastern countries like Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam) and foreign brides (mostly from Vietnam and China) is increasing. In 2018, the total number of foreign workers and foreign brides, mounting up to almost 500,000 in population, is more than the total population of local Taiwanese indigenous people (less than 2% of the island's population) (National Immigration Agency Taiwan, 2018). This phenomenon adds to the complexity of already mixed ethnic Taiwan and leads to a significant call for changing attitudes and policies towards an inclusive education, and an integration of intercultural communication into EFL education.

The purpose of this book is to position EFL education at the intersection of globalization and internationalization in Taiwan. Through empirical studies, the book chapters provide firsthand accounts of how English language teaching is situated in the local-distant contact zone, while investigating the significant impacts of internationalizing curricula on EFL learners. In recent years, there have been growing calls for English language teachers at the classroom level to adopt new curricular goals of developing students' global competence and international understanding (Lin & Byram, 2016; Jackson, 2014). Yet, the number of studies on this practical "global-local" approach is still scant. Thus, when viewing, augmenting, and partaking in border-crossing activities as a

pedagogical issue, such an approach may be the right pedagogy for the right time.

The authors of this book are EFL teachers and researchers who have many years of EFL teaching experiences at Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, Taiwan. They have provided practical examples of innovation in research methods and in illustrations of empirical findings from their research work–predominantly from their classroom teaching or cooperative projects with other educational sectors or industry. Therefore, this book is a reflection and reevaluation of EFL teachers' and researchers' practice through scientific inquiry. The purpose is to provide new insights in English language education at the intersection of globalization and internationalization in Taiwan.

This book is written not only for Taiwanese readers, but also for readers in other Asian regions who are concerned with EFL language and education as much as many professionals in Taiwan. The editors and contributors are convinced that the issues raised in the processes of English teaching and learning in Taiwan are common across East Asia, and they also feel that a shared understanding of the analysis and resolution to the practice of English education will benefit readers of this book.

## Contents of the book

Of the following eight chapters, most are invited chapters by scholars from Wenzao. The book is divided into three parts. In the first part, there are three chapters which contextualize language teaching by way of "integrating intercultural competence" into EFL education in Taiwanese context. In Chapter 1, (*Exploring Taiwanese Students' Experiences of Intercultural and English Learning Online: A Class Blog Project*), Wen-Chuan Lin, Jian-Shiung Shie and Prue Holmes present Taiwanese junior high school students' experiences of intercultural and EFL language learning through an online language exchange project between Taiwan and England. Findings indicate that students perceived development of both

English abilities and intercultural competence through meaningful online peer interactions. Suggestions are made about the future practice of online language exchanges and relevant next steps in researching this area. In Chapter 2, (*Assessing Strengths and Challenges of Taiwanese Foreign Language Major College Students' Intercultural Sensitivity*), Yi-ching Jean Chiu, using Chen and Starosta's (2003) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), evaluate the perceived strengths and challenges and potential for development of intercultural misunderstandings. Results show that these foreign language major college students have positive intercultural attitudes. They are shown to be disposed towards intercultural sensitivity and being open-minded to respect distinctive cultures despite the fact that they reveal a variety of intercultural difficulties and challenges, mostly concerning cultural practices, religious stereotypes and culinary preferences. In Chapter 3, (*Theorizing and Assessing an Integrated Model of Intercultural Competence of International Hotel Staff in Taiwan*), I-Jane Janet Weng addresses the need to solve problems of understanding and assessment of the intercultural competence of hotel staff. For this pilot project, she constructed a theory and developed a useful tool, specifically designed to understand the intercultural competence of Taiwan's hotel staff interacting in intercultural situations with international guests. Results of the integrated intercultural competence revealed a good construct validity and concurrent reliability for each measure.

The second group of chapters brings into focus the topic of "negotiating local and distant", representing teachers' effort in EFL classroom pedagogy that tailor border-crossing activities to develop students' global competence and international understanding. In Chapter 4, (*An Optimal Curriculum Design for English Club in Junior High School*), Elena Yakovleva presents a useful curriculum for a series of EFL classes that could be applied to English camps or English clubs for teenage learners of EFL. Based on an Industry-Government-Academia project with one junior high

school in Southern Taiwan, she designed a curriculum comprising diversified intercultural activities, including quizzes, games, discussions and popular songs. Results indicate a positive feedback from the students, although a few drawbacks are pointed out for future research. In Chapter 5, (*The Wenzao Desk International Internship Program: Building Multicultural Skills for the Workplace*), Pai-Hsien Aiden Yeh presents the outcome of students' international internship experiences in the Wenzao Desk International Internship program. Through a thematic analysis of students' feedback reports, she found that international exposure in the workplace abroad fosters students' personal and professional development of culturally appropriate skills. Immersion in multicultural environments also contributes to students' linguistic and intercultural communications skills that are gaining importance when working in multicultural workplaces in global contexts. In Chapter 6, (*Empowering International Students through a Work-Integrated Learning Project*), Hsiang-I Huang investigates whether a university-industry collaborating WIL (Work-Integrated Learning) project empowers international students' abilities, particularly in their employability, language, and translation skills. Findings suggest that the participants perceived improvements in working attitude, stress resistance, professional knowledge, motivation for skills learning, technology skills, and the ability to spot and solve problems. Challenges also emerged, such as work expectations, intercultural communication skills and health conditions. These need to be addressed in designing relevant international WIL programs in higher education in the future.

The last two chapters concentrate on the exploration and discussion of new forms of literacy in EFL education, what we term "global literacy". The principal approaches in this section include the use of information technology in EFL pedagogy as one form of "new literacies" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) and the use of the globally familiar genre of the novel to teach tertiary EFL classes in Taiwan. In Chapter 7, (*A Case Study of Game-based Listening Course in an EFL Tertiary-level*

*Context*), *Hsiu-Chen Antonia Lin* addresses the benefit of integrating interactive technology in EFL education. She reports the use of Kahoot among a group of Taiwanese tertiary-leveled undergraduate English majors to explore their perceptions of using Kahoot, a game-based instant response device, in EFL learning. Findings reveal students' positive feedback toward using Kahoot and suggest that Kahoot could be integrated into the EFL learning context to motivate learners in language classes and activate the learning atmosphere. In Chapter 8 (*Can the Novel Serve as Genre of Choice in the Tertiary EFL Classroom?*), Simon White seeks to answer the question as to what sort of literature is suitable for language learners. He presents current issues with the use of the novel genre in the tertiary EFL classroom in Taiwan. His study examines several models for the inclusion of literature of all genres in EFL teaching syllabus, including the acculturation model, language model and personal growth model. Findings reveal comparative strengths of the novel, with a particular emphasis on the cross-cultural pervasiveness of the genre. Because the novel genre is familiar, readable, varied and accessible, it represents a good fit for use in the tertiary EFL class in Taiwan.

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# Exploring Taiwanese Students' Experiences of Intercultural and English Learning Online: A Class Blog Project[1]

## Wen-Chuan Lin, Jian-Shiung Shie and Prue Holmes

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports on a six-month online language exchange project between secondary school students in Taiwan and England which investigated their experiences of intercultural and foreign language learning. In recent years, due to rapid globalization, interaction between people within the same or different cultures has intensified. In Taiwan, public recognition of the importance of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has been escalating as industries have recognized the need to compete within global markets in which trade is predominantly carried out in English. Therefore, the growth in demand for, and supply of, English language education in Taiwanese school settings is mounting. In Britain, the recent addition of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) to the curriculum reflects shifts in geopolitical and economic priorities. However, there is a widespread view that foreign language learning and teaching in both Taiwan and Britain have historically had limited success (Jones, 2007; Lin & Byram, 2016). Nevertheless, the advance of information technology in recent decades may be having some impact on

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter was published in Lin, W. C., Shie, J. S., & Holmes, P. (2017). Enhancing intercultural communicative competence through online foreign language exchange: Taiwanese students' experiences. *Asian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 4*(2), 73-88.

the learning of foreign languages, such as EFL and CFL, in an online interactional environment.

Many studies demonstrate positive impacts from applying computer-assisted or mediated teaching and learning to foreign languages (for example, Chen & Yang, 2014; Lin & Yang, 2011; Warschauer & Kern, 2000; Yang, 2011). In particular, efforts have been made to engage language learners in either bilateral telecollaborative exchanges or multilateral approaches to intercultural learning. However, documented drawbacks for the online exchange of language learning suggest that critical cultural awareness (Guilherme, 2000) is needed to enhance students' critical intercultural competences (Byram, 1997, 2009). Arguably, learners from various cultural backgrounds are facing cultural boundaries during the process of online social interaction. Whether and how language learners cross those boundaries and carry out meaning negotiation are worthy of investigation.

Through exploring students' perceptions of intercultural and foreign language learning, this study intends to broaden the understanding of interactions between language and culture. In addition, the cross-cultural comparative framework employed here allows the examination of the processes and participants' perceptions of foreign language intercultural interaction mediated by internet communication tools.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *EFL learning in Taiwan: The context*

English has played a pivotal role in education in Taiwan. English as an international language has become vital to its economy by providing access to the world community which is key to success in Taiwan's economic globalization and modernization. It is generally believed that speaking better English fuels upward occupational and social mobility and the pressure to improve is heavy on all learners (Lin, 2008; Lin & Byram, 2016). Nevertheless, there are issues associated with learning this traditionally important foreign language.

Documented issues are the social phenomenon of resources discrepancy (Lin, 2008; Lin & Ivinson, 2012) and urban-rural divide (Chang, 2002; Lin, 2008). Learning English is not equal for students from different social and cultural backgrounds resulting in efforts to reduce the "English divide". One of these efforts has been the use of web-based learning approaches.

### *Web-based language learning and peer interaction*

Computer-mediated communication (CMC), computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and foreign language uses of telecollaboration (interaction mediated by internet communication tools) have become important pedagogical tools that integrate information technology into language learning (Fotos & Browne, 2004; Ware & O'Dowd, 2008). This online peer interaction for language learning is supported by several theoretical frameworks, such as, collaborative learning theory, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), and socio-cultural theory (e.g. Lin, 2008) or cultural-historical and activity theory (e.g. Thorne, 2003). A common thread to these theories is the notion that learning takes place not in an isolated individual mind, but among people (Lin, 2008; Lin & Ivinson, 2012), in the society (Rogoff, 1990) or within communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

This interactional activity is also conceptualized as a meaning-negotiation process because peer interaction on an online platform includes responding, negotiating internally and socially, arguing against points, adding to evolving ideas, and offering alternative perspectives in the process of solving authentic tasks (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Ware and O'Dowd (2008), in their study of telecollaboration, argued that "negotiation of meaning is seen as a natural and automatic process as interlocutors seek to understand and clarify each other's utterances" (p. 44). In recent years, efforts have also been made to engage language learners in either traditional binary schema of bilateral telecollaborative exchanges

(O'Dowd, 2005; Yang, 2011) or multilateral approach to intercultural learning (Hauck, 2007; Hauck & Youngs, 2008) whereby meaning negotiation processes are made available and investigated.

However, there are some documented drawbacks for bilateral or multilateral exchange in language learning. A problem for bilateral partnerships is an inherent risk that participants will see themselves and their partners as representatives of a given culture. Moreover, in the contemporary world, experience of culture is increasingly diversified rather than mono-national. Participants no longer fit exactly into the traditional binary schema of bilateral telecollaborative exchanges (Lewis, Chanier & Youngs, 2011). This is why learners' relationships with their own and others' languages and cultures are more complex and therefore deserve learners' critical awareness (Byram, 1997; East, 2012).

### Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language learning

Language learning is a social, psychological and cultural process that involves issues pertaining to practice, community and identity (Smagorinsky, 2011). Recently, more attention has been paid to the importance of developing learners' intercultural competence or awareness in foreign language learning (Byram, 1997; Guilherme, 2000). O'Dowd (2007) argued that telecollaborative activities have the potential to support the development of students' intercultural communicative competence. In human communication within or across cultures, navigating cultural differences requires competence in negotiating differences properly using language, or relating efficiently to otherness (Byram, 1997; East, 2012). This inter-cultural meaning negotiation should move beyond the merely linguistic to include the intercultural (East, 2012).

Byram (1997) in his framework for intercultural communicative competence (ICC model), argued that it is crucial to create a critical space to interpret culture from the perspective of the learners and their target interlocutors to

facilitate the development of knowledge in interaction. This critical space, or as Guilherme (2000) termed it, critical cultural awareness, encourages learners to "reflect critically on the values, beliefs, and behaviours of their own society … through a comparative study of other societies" (Byram, 2009, p. 323). The use of technology to promote online interaction may create that critical space for enhancing students' language and intercultural competences.

To explore students' perceptions of intercultural and foreign language learning through online peer interaction, this study asked the following research questions:

1    What are students' perceptions of EFL learning through this online class blog project?
2    Are there any differences between students' intercultural communicative competence before and after the project?

# METHODS

This study employed questionnaires, observations and interviews. This chapter focuses primarily on the perceptions and reflections of the Taiwanese participants.

### *Settings and participants*

The participants consisted of 30 8th grade students (aged 13) in a pull-out bilingual class in a junior high school in southern Taiwan and 10 Year 10 students (aged 14) from a school in south-west England. The Taiwanese participants had been learning English as a foreign language for five years. Two of them previously lived in the United States and have native-like English abilities and foreign cultural experiences. Most of them had passed the elementary level of English proficiency in GEPT (General English Proficiency Test in Taiwan) and an English language placement test before enrolling. By comparison with their school peers, these students were advanced learners with competent English language skills. Their English language instructor and home room teacher, Teacher Maggie (pseudonym), also participated in this study.

The UK participants had completed a two-week taster course of Mandarin Chinese and culture taught by the first author in the summer of 2013. They demonstrated strong interest in learning Mandarin and its associated culture, and volunteered to join this study. Student participants from both countries interacted via a class blog (Kids' Blog, see Figure 1) from January to June, 2014. The topics dealt with in the blog and the activities carried out by students are indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Students' blog activities

| Months | Activities |
|---|---|
| January | • Students chose ten items that best represent their culture.<br>• For each item they created a riddle with three clues. |
| February | • Taiwanese students posted their riddles at Kids' Blog. British students tried to guess the answers.<br>• Taiwanese students sent local cultural artefacts in a box (e.g., calligraphy pens) to England. |
| March | • British students opened the cultural box from Taiwan.<br>• British and Taiwanese students discussed the contents of the cultural box via Kids' Blog. |
| April | • British students posted their riddles at Kids' Blog. Taiwanese students tried to guess the answers.<br>• British students sent their cultural items to Taiwan. |
| May | • Taiwanese students opened the cultural box from UK.<br>• Taiwanese and British students discussed the contents of the cultural box via Kids' Blog. |
| June | • Students picked out the foreign item that appealed to them most, wrote a short article about it, and shared it with their peers at Kids' Blog.<br>• Students talked to their peers, using Skype or other video-conferencing tools. |

### *Research instruments and analysis*

A reflective questionnaire (see Appendix) in the Taiwanese participants' own language (Chinese) was used at the beginning and (with minor rewording) the end of the project. The first use elicited participants' initial perceptions of the blog activity and the later use prompted reflection on their language and intercultural learning. The questionnaire consisting of 5-Likert scale and open-ended questions regarding students' online interactional experiences, was modified from Chen and Yang's (2014) study of multilateral intercultural communication among secondary students in Taiwan. The questionnaire assessed students' experiences and perceptions of online blog practice at the levels of knowledge, attitudes and skills, following Byram's ICC model, and helped them reflect on their learning processes (Table 2). The researcher (first author) also observed relevant activities and conducted a focus group interview (8 volunteers) and case interviews at the end of the project (all in Chinese). The students' learning journals and blog texts were collected and analysed. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed to generate themes guided by the research questions and the issues which emerged from a review of the research literature.

**Table 2:**  Taiwanese participants' perceptions of the blog practice at three levels

|  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Helps me know different countries and understand associated foreign cultures. (Knowledge) | | | | | |
| Beginning | 0% | 0% | 7% | 77% | 16% |
| End | 0% | 0% | 7% | 57% | 40% |
| Difference | -- | -- | -- | -20% | +24% |
| Helps me view my own and other cultures from various perspectives. (Attitudes) | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beginning | 0% | 0% | 50% | 37% | 13% |
| End | 0% | 0% | 16% | 67% | 17% |
| Difference | -- | -- | -34% | +30% | +4% |

Helps me develop thinking skills & promote the ability of critical inquiry on culture. (Skills)

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beginning | 0% | 7% | 37% | 43% | 13% |
| End | 0% | 3% | 30% | 57% | 10% |
| Difference | -- | -3% | -7% | +14% | -3% |

The class blog, Kids' Blog (http://kidblog.org/ EnglishMandarin/) was used for classroom activities sharing (via posts and comments) and cultural exchange in Taiwan and England. Students from Taiwan were randomly assigned into 10 groups (three students in each) in order to communicate with their secondary peers from England. The British participants were not separated into groups, but were encouraged to freely post or respond to questions on the blog.

## *Research procedures*

Beginning in January 2014, students greeted each other by introducing themselves on the blog and continued interacting asynchronously until the end of June. For the purpose of cultural exchange, peers introduced local cultural events to the partner school, such as the Taiwanese Tomb-sweeping and Dragon-Boat Festival versus Pancake Day and Easter in England. Furthermore, cultural artefacts (e.g., foods, cards and souvenirs) were delivered to the partner schools. These artefacts were used primarily as mediational tools to facilitate cultural reflection and interaction. For the Taiwanese students, a mid-term workshop was held by the researcher, to ignite students' reflections and critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997), and provide clarifications regarding British cultural events and people's behaviours mentioned in the blog.

The online exchange processes were semi-structured, allowing students to create their interaction and content while remaining focused on language learning and cultural sharing.

Throughout the process, classroom teachers (e.g., Teacher Maggie) and the researcher were also invited to take part in the discussion on the blog. In recognition of the importance of ethical considerations, informed consent was collected from all participants and their identities, including those of the teacher, have been kept confidential, using pseudonyms throughout this paper.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Due to limited space, the findings discussed here focus on the Taiwanese students' reflective questionnaires and qualitative data. First, students' perceptions of English learning and intercultural communicative competence are presented briefly, then three themes which emerged from the process of the class blog activity are discussed in more depth.

### *Development of English learning during blog practice*
As a "pull-out" class whose English abilities are relative better than those of their school peers, the Taiwanese participants perceived that this blog activity helped them use English to communicate with foreign peers effectively and, at the same time, helped develop their English capacity. For example, when they were asked at the end of the project if this activity assisted them in improving their reading and writing in English, over 80 percent of them responded positively (including *agree* and *strongly agree* responses) in the post test (87% and 83% respectively for reading and writing). Also, 84 percent reported that the blog enabled them to express their own opinions in English effectively (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Taiwanese participants' perceptions of how blog practice helps them learn English (n = 30)

|  | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It helps me develop English reading ability. | | | | | |
| Beginning | 0% | 7% | 16% | 60% | 17% |
| End | 0% | 3% | 10% | 60% | 27% |
| Difference | -- | -4% | -6% | -- | +10% |
| It helps me develop English writing skill. | | | | | |
| Beginning | 0% | 7% | 23% | 50% | 20% |
| End | 0% | 0% | 17% | 63% | 20% |
| Difference | -- | -7% | -6% | +13% | -- |
| It helps me express my own opinions in English. | | | | | |
| Beginning | 0% | 3% | 13% | 67% | 17% |
| End | 0% | 3% | 13% | 40% | 44% |
| Difference | -- | -- | -- | -27% | +27% |

### *Development of intercultural communicative competence*

In general, students were very positive towards the perceived learning effect at all three levels of ICC development. For example, at the knowledge level, when participants were asked whether this activity helped them to know different countries and understand associated foreign cultures, 95 percent provided affirmative responses (Table 2). At the level of attitudes, when participants were asked whether this activity helped them to view their own and other's cultures from various perspectives, 84 percent provided affirmative responses at the end of the project(a 34 percent increase from the beginning of the project). At the level of skills, when participants were asked whether this activity helped them develop thinking skills and promote the ability of critical inquiry on culture, over 60 percent of them provided affirmative responses.

### *Meaningful interactions enhance intercultural communicative competence*

The data support O'Dowd's (2007) assertion that telecollaborative activities have the potential to support the development of students' intercultural communicative competence. The students perceived a growth in their intercultural communicative competence in all three levels through meaningful interactions with social partners (Table 3). Such development is evident in students' blog texts. For example, at the beginning of the project, students undertook a form of knowledge exchange through introducing their school cultures and later on discovered the similarities and differences of school life in Taiwan and England.

One of the British students, Henry, had been an active participant in the class blog, describing his everyday school routine and providing personal feelings about such school lessons as "*… very fun and are often varied*". He then continued to say "*We get lots of homework, do you?*" with a tag question to prompt responses (see Figure 1). This description and question successfully raised Taiwanese students' interests. Jack from Taiwan, replied "*Both our schools give us a lot of homework and my school almost have (has) tests everyday!*" Jack was trying to emphasize that homework and quizzes are viewed as everyday life in most secondary schools in Taiwan. This indicates that the Taiwanese students see themselves as having a different school life to that in England.

**Henry** (England)                    January 22, 2014 at 12:40 AM
*My school has four lessons a day each lasting 1:15 with half an hour for tutor. My Monday looks like this ... The lessons are very fun and are often varied. What sort of subjects do you have? We get lots of homework, do you?*

**Jack** (Taiwan)                    January 30, 2014 at 1:45 AM
*We learn many subjects like Chinese ... and Art. There are even more but I think this is enough for you to know. Both our schools give us a lot of homework and my school almost has tests everyday!*

**Figure 1:** Knowledge exchange on class blog

In terms of attitudes, over 90 percent of the Taiwanese students confirmed that this project helped them appreciate different cultures with open attitudes (Table 2). This is evident in Kelly's interview account. Kelly is Taiwanese but was born and lived in the US for 8 years before moving to Taiwan. She used primarily American English since childhood and had never encountered British people or British English. She said:

> *... when I knew that we are doing a project with students from the UK, I was afraid that I couldn't understand their British English. But I was still excited to talk to them ... the only thing I knew was British people are a little bit more serious than Americans .... But I realized that they are pretty funny and very friendly ... they are super polite .... I found that there's not too big a difference between our English and we can communicate very smoothly. (Interview: Nov. 11th, 2014, translated)*

Kelly was nervous in the beginning because of her American English which is more informal or colloquial. She was afraid that her British peers would use British English

which is different from hers. After a few months of interaction, she realized there was no problem for them to understand each other, demonstrating students' growing appreciation towards different cultures with open attitudes through this project.

In terms of skills, it is interesting to discover that this activity also helped students to develop knowledge of and skills for clarifying certain cultural stereotypes about British people and their language. As Kelly pointed out, her image of British people was that they are "*a little bit more serious than Americans.*" However, she discovered that they are "*pretty funny and very friendly*". More importantly, they are "*super polite*". For she now understood that British students tend to be very polite, using *sorry* and *thanks* a lot on the class blog. This is evident in Henry's blog response to a Taiwanese student when he replied "*Allow me to say that your English is very good. I wish I was as good at languages as you are*" (Posted on February 12, 2014 at 9:15 AM). This demonstrates that the British peers are trying to be polite as is their cultural norm. This cultural stereotype of British people's politeness appeared to be justified, to some extent, during the process of the blog activity.

### *Meaningful peer interactions help learning to take place*

The results show that this class blog interaction helped learning to take place in both intercultural communicative competence and foreign language acquisition. When the Taiwanese students were asked about their perceptions of taking part in this class blog activity in which they interacted with British peers, they reported as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Students' perceptions of class blog activity (Group Interview: June 11, 2014, translated)

| Students | Learning | Responses and feedback |
|---|---|---|
| S1 | motivation | Um … much fun indeed … feel like we can connect people living so far away even though we don't know each other. |
| S2 | openness | … see this activity as something innovative and makes me feel very interested, and then tries not to reject it. |
| S3 | curiosity | … very happy, because U.K. sounds very high class. |
| S4 | cultural learning | Same as S1, I feel like I am so cool … and feel like very proud when I'm home. U.K. sounds like very posh, it's just cool! |
| S5 | cultural learning | Yeah … a lot of fun … feel like they are very high standard. They just talk to you with frequent apologies … things like that … Very polite! |

According to the findings from the group interview, students demonstrated very positive perceptions of this class blog activity. However, some students, maybe due to a kind of cultural stereotype of the United Kingdom, considered it as very high class (S3), and thus felt it was cool to interact with peers from England. More interestingly, they felt very proud because the U.K. sounds very posh (S4) and very high standard (S5). This collective image of the British peers as being very high class was interpreted by Teacher Maggie as a typical stereotypical image of Britain. As she pointed out:

*Students feel that England is very high class. It may be because we used to interact with peers from India … and also with Poland before … so this sense of England being "high class" may not be because of a comparison with India or Poland … these students have been growing up in an environment*

*where media, books sending out the message that the Western world, including the U.K., are great countries. Naturally, they have this stereotype and feel like England is very cool and high class. (Interview: Oct 23, 2014, translated)*

Apart from a traditional stereotype of old colonial Britain which is usually learnt from history textbooks in Taiwan, the widespread use of English as a *lingua franca* also contributes to this image. Furthermore, the use of English as the major medium of conversation during the blog practice may have exacerbated such cultural stereotyping.

This project provided students with an invaluable opportunity for developing the critical cultural awareness described by Guilherme (2000) where learners can reflect critically on the values and beliefs of their own society through a comparative study of other societies (as described by Byram, 2009). Taiwanese students' critical reflection on the cultural stereotype of the polite British people is one of the examples we will discuss below.

Through this project, the Taiwanese students experienced a traditional, yet positive side of the stereotype of British politeness. As one of the students (S5) revealed in the group interview, "*they just talk to you with frequent apologies … Very polite!*" This is echoed by Kelly's experience when she revealed that these English peers are "*super polite*". Furthermore, as Vygotsky (1978) put it, cognitive functions originate in social interaction and that learning is not merely an installation of new knowledge by the individual learners; "it is the process by which learners are integrated into a knowledge community" (Woo & Reeves, 2007, p. 18). The class blog became a knowledge community where meaningful social interactions allow foreign culture learning to take place. In this project, the existing cultural stereotype of British people being polite was not only clarified but also justified, to some extent, during the process of social learning online.

### *Pondering different cultures: Reflections from the teacher and the researcher*

Contrastive educational cultures between Taiwan and England emerged in this project and are worthy of attention. The British counterparts posted more topics on the blog than their Taiwanese peers. One of the British bloggers, Henry, posted 19 messages and 54 responses during the process and was the most active student. On the contrary, the highest number of posts initiated by any Taiwanese student was 4 and the highest number of responses was 20. As Teacher Maggie pointed out in her interview:

> *… since I hoped students could interact more with the UK peers, I requested them to post messages, so I have analysed the numbers of text they posted and responses, and simultaneously take a look at the ones from the British side. I found a huge gap … the British pupils posted a lot of messages actively.… whenever they were having activities or holidays they will share with our Taiwanese students …. But our students were more passive, and less likely to initiate the post. (Interview: Oct 23, 2014, translated)*

In Taiwan, the secondary school (i.e., junior high) life is one of a competitive culture where tests are everyday practice and a very tight school schedule is usually the norm, along with attending after school lessons (i.e., cram schools) on a weekly or daily basis for some (Lin, 2008). In consequence Taiwanese students tend to become passive due to a tedious learning process. As Teacher Maggie admitted when referring to writing cards for English peers during the activity of exchanging cultural artefacts:

> *in fact, our students did not write the cards autonomously … they were persuaded by me … actually it took me a lot time collecting the cards …*

*some students were very passive and really needed
to be pushed (Interview: Oct 23, 2014, translated).*

However, Teacher Maggie's reflection may be
attributable to the verbal passiveness of students in Taiwanese
culture. In fact, since Teacher Maggie just requested the
students to post messages without telling them what messages
to post, it could be argued, in line with O'Dowd (2007), that
there were still substantial emergences of contents and patterns
of natural telecollaboration between Taiwanese students and
their social partners, potentially supporting the development of
students' intercultural communicative competence.

The contrast between Taiwanese passivity and British
autonomy can also be captured in Taiwanese students'
accounts. Helen pointed out that the British students have lots
of holidays:

*They can spend lots of time on the blog whereas we
Taiwanese students have very tight schedule
cramming including on Sundays ... with this tight
daily schedule, we are usually being reminded to
post message on the blog by our teacher (Maggie) as
homework. (Interview: Nov 12, 2014, translated)*

This explanation was echoed by Kelly who agreed with
Helen that the blog activity was considered by them as a
required "mission". Only after the mission was completed
could she freely browse other information on the blog truly for
fun. Kelly revealed that she was surprised to know that their
British peers attended this project voluntarily. She said in a
complaining tone of voice:

*For us, we post or comment just for finishing
homework. I usually check through Kidblog after my
"mission" is complete and leave some comments or
read something I'm interested in. I really like how
their school works (England), they give students who*

*want to join this project a chance to do it, so they will really put effort in this project and care about it. Not like us, everyone HAS TO do it. (Interview: Nov 12, 2014, translated)*

The emerging differences of students' motivations and attitudes towards this project may be due to dissimilar educational cultures between the two countries. Teacher Maggie offered her observation as follows:

*… I have been thinking about what makes this difference … maybe it's because our students are usually forced to accept answers from teachers during the educational process. In class, teachers tend to ask students questions without allowing more time for them to think. Correct answers are usually given directly by the teachers. (Interview: Oct 23, 2014 translated)*

As Maggie pointed out, Taiwanese secondary school culture usually forces students to accept standardized answers from teachers. Students are seldom encouraged to be inquisitive or to formulate their own critical thinking patterns until they attend higher education. Partly because of a general respectful culture in Asian countries such as Taiwan, classroom teachers are not often challenged by students. With such an overt power relationship between teachers and students as a social norm, passive learning cultures seem to dominate in secondary schools in Taiwan. Although the investigation of educational cultures is not the focus of this paper, the emerging diversified national or educational cultures that seem to impact on foreign language learning are worth future investigation.

# CONCLUSION

This study explores the processes of foreign language learning and intercultural interactions between secondary school students in Taiwan and England which are mediated by internet communication tools by employing multiple research methods including questionnaires, observations and interviews. Findings show that the Taiwanese students perceived that they developed their English ability and intercultural communicative competence through meaningful social interactions at knowledge, attitude and skill levels. However, differences of learning attitudes between the two groups were also found and this variance may reflect contrastive educational cultures between the two countries.

Using a cross-cultural comparative framework the study shows that blog practice developed participants' intercultural and foreign language competence. This meaning negotiation across different cultures moved beyond the merely linguistic to include the intercultural, as suggested by East (2012). In particular, through meaningful social interactions with their British peers, the Taiwanese students grasped the opportunity to clarify and thus justify some of their existing stereotypes towards British culture and its language.

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**Appendix:** The questionnaire as used at the end of the project with Taiwanese participants (translated from the original Chinese version)

**Part I: Overall reflection of the project**

Please circle the number that best describes your own experience of participation.

| *(1: Strongly disagree/ 2: Disagree/ 3: Neutral/ 4: Agree/ 5: Strongly agree)* | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I looked forward to this cross-cultural learning at the time of joining the project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I think this online learning approach can improve my English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I enjoy using Internet to engage in cross-cultural communication. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I think the project can expand my learning horizon. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I think there's no problem for me to learn through the tasks of the program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I am very happy to participate and will gain a great sense of accomplishment when completing the project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**7. I think the project at the <u>knowledge</u> level …**

| | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) helps me gain authentic information. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (2) helps me know different countries and understand associated foreign cultures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (3) helps me know that each country has its own unique culture and values. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (4) helps me know that every country has its own social problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5) helps me understand that despite cultural differences, different countries have something in common. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (6) helps me understand the factors leading to each country's unique culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (7) helps me know more about my own culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**8.  I think the project at the <u>attitude</u> level …**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) raises my curiosity about cultural diversity in various countries. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (2) helps me view other cultures from various perspectives. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (3) allows me to enjoy different cultures with a more open attitude. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (4) allows me to reflect on and question Taiwanese culture from learning different countries' cultures. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5) allows me to expect more culture learning and more in-depth exchange opportunities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**9.  I think the project at the <u>skill</u> level …**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) helps to develop thinking skills and to promote ability of critical inquiry on culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (2) helps to develop ability in exploring cultural issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (3) helps to cultivate ability in reflecting on self-culture. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (4) helps to develop ability in collecting and analysing information. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5) helps to develop ability in communicating with foreign partners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (6) helps to enhance ability in using information technology. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please circle the number that best describes your own experience of participation.

| *(1: Strongly disagree/ 2: Disagree/ 3: Neutral/ 4: Agree/ 5: Strongly agree)* | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**1.  I think the program at the <u>English Learning</u> level …**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) allows me to learn to communicate with foreign partners in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (2) helps me develop English reading ability. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (3) helps me develop English writing skills. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (4) helps me express my own opinions in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5) allows me to learn a lot of English words, not solely from the textbooks. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (6) makes me aware of my own weakness in English ability. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (7) allows me to understand the importance of English proficiency in cross culture communication. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (8) allows me to have more interest in learning English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Part II: Reflection of the project

### (A) Teaching activities

| *(1: Strongly disagree/ 2: Disagree/ 3: Neutral/ 3: Agree/ 4: Strongly agree)* | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The activity can help us complete the tasks of cross-cultural communication successfully. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. The activity can help us reflect on our own learning process. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. The activity is properly designed so that we know what we are doing. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. The activity can help us correct mistakes and enhance the quality of cross-cultural communication. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Each stage of the activity can guide us to think about and gradually complete the tasks of intercultural communication. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. There is enough time for me to complete the project without pressure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The teachers can provide assistance and advice to help us solve problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| **(B) The use of Blog network platform through Kids Blog** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can improve my English by observing my classmates' work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I can keep up with the progress of the project by saving information online. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. | I can save personal study records and keep track of my own learning situation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | I can speak freely while exchanging opinions with my peers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Allows me to exchange opinions with more peers fully. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Part III: Self-reflecting on the learning process

### (A) Assessment of self-performance

| **1. Through the project, I feel that I have made significant progress in the following areas.** *(1: Strongly disagree/ 2: Disagree/ 3: Neutral/ 4: Agree/ 5: Strongly agree)* | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Using information technology | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (2) English reading | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (3) English writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (4) English vocabulary | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5) Data collection | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (6) Information comparison and analysis | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (7) Summary writing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (8) Critical thinking | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (9) Multicultural understanding | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**(B) Perceptions of participating in the project in order to learn English (multiple choices)**

☐ 1.Happy ☐2.Painful ☐3.Relaxed ☐4.Tough

☐ 5.Sense of accomplishment

☐ 6.Frustrated ☐7.Confident ☐8.Confused ☐9.High-spirited

☐10.Pressed ☐11.Expectant

☐12.Nervous ☐13.Curious ☐14.Fun ☐15.Interesting

☐16.Others _____

**Part IV: Cultural Understanding (Open-ended questions)**

(A) What is your overall understanding of British culture so far?

(B) What are the differences (culture, values and school education) between Taiwan and England?

(C) What is your general feeling toward English culture while taking part in the project? Is there anything surprising in terms of learning? What attitudes may be good for you when encountering different cultures?

(D) Do you think cultures can be divided into "high" vs. "low"? When you first heard about interacting with British students, did you feel that the country was more advanced than Taiwan or better than other countries?

(E) Do you think this project can help you understand different cultures? If yes, why? There are many cultural learning approaches. How different is this project from traditional classroom learning/teaching in comprehending various cultures?

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# Assessing Strengths and Challenges of Taiwanese Foreign Language Major College Students' Intercultural Sensitivity

## Yi-Ching Jean Chiu

## INTRODUCTION

To cope with the needs of rapidly-changing interactions occasioned by globalization, intercultural competence has become an important factor in judging foreign language major college students' competitiveness. While intercultural competence has been widely researched through cultural, educational and social studies in English native speaking contexts (Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001; Banks & Banks, 2004; Chen & Starosta, 2003; Moran, Harris & Moran, 2007), it was evaluated more in that general context, with little specific research such as that relevant to foreign language majors' intercultural competence in an English as Specific Purpose (ESP) context in Taiwan. According to the Global Education Association in Taiwan (Chong, 2018) and the Storm Media (2018), Taiwanese university students were found to be struggling in intercultural communication and sensitivity in overseas internships, despite displaying the foreign language proficiency required by domestic and overseas companies. For example, Chong (2018) urged local university students to be sensitive to international news and be able to engage in international discussions with global partners in overseas internships. The purpose of the present study was to assess such Taiwanese foreign language major college students' intercultural sensitivity, in a pertinent learning context where engagement with intercultural news was a significant element in the curriculum. The study applied Chen and Starosta's

(2003) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) with forty university freshmen students of different foreign language majors in an English as Specific Purpose (ESP) class of Journalistic English, in which discussions on international and intercultural issues are obligatory, and Intercultural Sensitivity particularly important. It used standardized assessment and a qualitative form seeking comments for analysis, to better evaluate the perceived strengths, challenges and possibilities for better development of intercultural education in the foreign language college in addition to language proficiency benchmark.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature relevant to this study includes: Intercultural competence, Intercultural sensitivity and relevant intercultural teaching.

### *Intercultural competence*

Most relevant literature focuses on intercultural communication, concerning cultural attitude and knowledge, which will be detailed below (Byram, 2000). Byram and Zarate (1994) first coined the dimensions of "Intercultural Communicative Competence" (Byram, 1997) featuring attitudes, knowledge, skills of investigation and discovery, skills of interpreting and relating, as well as critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2000; Byram et al., 2001). Additionally, other studies (Santoro, 2009; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Chen & Starosta, 2003) approached this topic from a variety of social-cultural perspectives. The selected Byram's dimensions in this study of news course include:

Intercultural Knowledge (savoir) refers to the understanding of social processes in social groups, cultural identities related to these interactions, and the cultural practices of one's culture of origin and of the intercultural partner's social groups. It involves another intercultural knowledge component: the ability to perceive how others

perceive themselves (Byram, 2009). The precise Intercultural Knowledge needed in intercultural communication is highly complex, depending on different cultural engagements and contexts. In researching cultural knowledge in foreign language class contexts, language educator Kramsh (1998) urged language teachers to integrate culture in English classes beyond the 4F theory of Food, Folklore, Festival, and statistical Fact. Nevertheless, the so called 4F information does certainly provide pedagogically effective starters for novice foreign language learners as they strive to acquire culture of the target languages. The intercultural knowledge needed in the current study of Journalistic English class may be even more challenging since it relates to assimilation and reporting of the content of international news regarding global politics and economies.

Intercultural attitude (savoir être) comprises the willingness and openness to suspend one's disbelief about other cultures, and to "decenter" from an outsider's perspective of different values, beliefs and behaviors.

Critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager) encompasses the ability to critically evaluate perspectives and practices in one's own and other cultures or countries on the basis of explicit criteria, and furthers the intercultural attitude mentioned above (Byram, Nichols, Stevens, 2001).

Intercultural Knowledge (savoir) entails understanding relevant social processes including those of social groups, identities related to interactions, and the cultural practices of one's own and one's intercultural partner's social groups and practices. It also contains the cultural ability to perceive how others perceive themselves (Byram, 1997). The exact Intercultural Knowledge needed in intercultural communication is highly complex, depending on different cultural contexts.

Further to the model of Byram, Nichols, and Stevens (2001), the intercultural education model of Santoro (2009) offers a slightly more societal cultural perspective, with the ideal intercultural competence manifested in the following three umbrella branches to empower learners:

- democratic pluralism,
- understanding the culture of self and others, and
- cultural transformative knowledge.

If the cultural transformative knowledge is to be sufficiently developed, learners must be able to overcome the intercultural hindrances occasioned by particular challenges of religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class (Santoro, 2009). Intercultural communication must also address the need for understanding in the cultural identity of origin by self and the other parties to enable intercultural dialogues, supplemented by democratic pluralism, to voice individual rights and different roles in daily living intercultural engagement and the larger social context in the model of Santoro (2009). The author of the current study thus planned to determine if attention to enhance competence under Byram's dimensions would be effective in developing Taiwanese EFL students' intercultural communication competence and democratic empowerment.

### *Intercultural sensitivity*

Intercultural attitude is a major component of intercultural communication, along with intercultural knowledge and skills (Byram, 2000; Chen & Starosta, 2003; Moran, Harris & Moran, 2007). Intercultural attitude encompasses affective understanding and empathizing with culturally distinct others in intercultural communication contexts across disciplines. It is needed for effective, two-way communication between people from different cultural backgrounds (Chen & Starosta, 2003; Bennett, 2001). Intercultural sensitivity can be defined as "an individual's ability to develop emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication" (Chen & Starosta, 1997, p. 5). This intercultural ability helps intercultural communicators to be enabled to understand beyond the initial cultural adaptation of the ethno-centric stage, progressing to

the ethno-relative stage (Bennett, 1993). Sensitive and empathic skills are needed to filter through cultural differences into the bicultural or multicultural level for cultural integration. Intercultural sensitivity will transform intercultural behavior and skills through intercultural enjoyment, which enables those concerned to understand and value their own and their counterparts' feelings and behaviors (Gudykunst & Kim, 2002).

In regard to how to measure intercultural competence, Chen and Starosta (2000) developed a model Intercultural Competence Scale questionnaire on intercultural sensitivity. Their subsequent model (2003) developed and presented a commonly accepted assessment of intercultural sensitivity, featuring English native speaking students' intercultural skills and their self-perceptions in cross-cultural communication, studied in the university context of the United States. The five-factor assessment model (Chen & Starosta, 2003) measures the following:

- Interaction Engagement: the attempt to obtain information needed for intercultural interaction engagement with people from different cultures.
- Intercultural Respect for Cultural Differences: the respectful understanding of different ways in which people from different cultures behave.
- Intercultural Enjoyment: the felt enjoyment in interacting with people from different cultures, without the sense of fear, frustrations or upset.
- Interaction Confidence: the self-confidence in interacting with people from different cultures.
- Interaction Attentiveness: the sensitivity and observance of subtle differences in the ways that people from different cultures behave.

In brief, Intercultural sensitivity helps in the generation of positive emotional responses in an intercultural communication process, in order for the person concerned to appreciate, engage, acknowledge and respect the views and

values of someone from another distinct culture (Chen & Starosta, 2003). Without the full panoply of components, intercultural knowledge and skills (Byram, 2000) alone would not possibly ensure adequate intercultural communication competence.

### *Intercultural teaching issues*

There have been studies pertinent to issues of teaching intercultural communication, ranging from cultural identity of teachers as well as pedagogy (Ahmadi Fatalaki, 2015; Hinkel, 2011; Chiu & Cowan, 2012, Chiu, 2017a, Chiu 2017b). Unlike the findings of Ladson-Billings (1995), Dimova (2011) found in her sample from outside the English native speaking countries that non-native English-speaking teachers used a more grammar-translation-oriented approach in their teaching pedagogy to engage with authentic US or UK textbooks. Non-native English teachers, however, rated their own speaking confidence moderately low. In a 1-5 Likert scale questionnaire used in Dimova's (2011) study, the non-native English-speaking teachers perceived themselves most confident in English reading and grammar, yet their perceived speaking confidence was lower than these.

Additionally, Chiu (2017a) introduced another factor bearing on the speaking confidence of non-native English-speaking teachers (L2), being "the challenge of an in-between identity because local teachers are not exactly L1 speaking, but need to carry on the cultural ambassador mission" (p. 86) and contribute from an L1 perspective "in-depth critical cultural discussion concentrating on distinct values and principles for analysis, evaluation and synthesis" (p. 89). In other words, the confidence of non-native English-speaking teachers is related both to their cultural identity and to Byram's (2000) discovering and interaction skills which demand speaking ability for critical cultural discussions. Chiu (2017b) furthered the importance of fostering affective support prior to cognitive knowledge transmission in creating intercultural dialogues in socially constructive approach.

Non-native local English teachers are in need of the affective pedagogy to increase the intercultural confidence of learners' speaking.

This review of the current literature has examined the different theoretical frameworks and models that existing research has developed. Though these intercultural assessment models are applied among different ethnic minority groups, including some that have been conducted in Chinese language (Wu, 2015), an intercultural assessment scale has not often been used to evaluate and assess the strengths and weaknesses of non-English native learners who major in foreign language instructed though English language in higher education of Taiwan. This will be the focus of the current research.

# METHODS

This study adopted a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative research approaches to explore students' intercultural sensitivity. Different dimensions of data were collected by standardized assessment and in-depth interviews.

## *Research model*

The measurement model was Chen and Starosta's (2003) Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) with its high reliability coefficient of 0.80 (Wu, 2015). This instrument is divided into five sub-categories:    interaction engagement, interactive confidence, respect for other cultures, enjoyment in intercultural engagement, and intercultural attentiveness (Chen & Starosta, 2003). The 24 one-to-five-point Likert scale items are distributed in a random order of sequence with reversed items. The assessment was self-administered in a Week 17 classroom session.

Based on this scale, intercultural sensitivity is operationalized under the following dimensions, each now illustrated by a sample item (Chen & Starosta, 2003):

- Interaction Engagement: *I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures*.
- Intercultural Respect for Cultural Differences: *I respect the way people from different cultures behave*.
- Intercultural Enjoyment: *I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures*.
- *Interaction Confidence: I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures*.
- Interaction Attentiveness: *I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction*.

### *Research context*

The researched group was a class following a 3-credit, 3-hour per week elective news course in Journalistic English, in the fourth-year of five-year junior college. It is an introductory course in the media track of the English department, and was selected because of the international and intercultural issues featured for study in global news, both translated from and originated in English. The course objectives include: To help students understand news structure and to enhance their English news reading skills; to encourage students to question news with critical thinking in news discussions; and to train students to interview, edit and write up news.

The purpose of this year-long course is to help students to understand news reported in English and to develop their news writing ability in that language. This is an introductory course of the media track. The first semester focuses on understanding the nature of news, the environment of news, and types of news. International news stories and intercultural issues are discussed in class. The focus of the discussions is multi-dimensional, recently including the following issues:

- the terrorist attacks by Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in France, Belgium and Germany, with European Union's refugee policy and security control,

- Brexit in the UK
- the economy and the anti-immigration issues in the U.S. presidential election
- international and regional trade treaties like the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the North America Free Trade Agreement

Inputs to develop understanding of intercultural knowledge regarding Judaism-Christianity and Islam and racial tension issues in English native speaking countries were provided to enhance participants' intercultural knowledge, sensitivity and critical thinking.

Participants were asked to complete a semi-structured questionnaire at the end of the study, to provide the personal demographic academic backgrounds involving different majors, together with open-ended answers to better clarify their intercultural experience prior to the study.

### *Research participants*

The research participants were 40 freshmen-equivalent Taiwanese students, who were enrolled in the elective course "Journalistic English" in the fourth year of the five-year-junior-college program in a foreign language university in Taiwan. The average age of the research participants was approximately 19, and their English proficiency ranged from lower-intermediate to higher-intermediate levels, partially depending on their different major specializations. There were 16 English majors, 10 French majors, 10 German majors, and 4 Japanese majors in this elective course for voluntary studies.

### *Academic major and backgrounds*

Regarding the research participants' background and majors, these did not appear to fundamentally influence their intercultural exposure. English and non-English majors possessed similar experience of overseas travelling prior to the study. Their intercultural communication experience was similar. The proportions of students who had overseas

experience was similar. Among 16 English-major students, 11 had overseas experience. Among the 24 non-English major students, the percentage was similar at 70%: 17 students had overseas travelling experience, primarily to nearby Asian regions, including Japan, Korea, China, and Hong Kong.

Both English majors and non-English-majors in the study had encountered English input and the similar exposure to second foreign languages (French, German, Spanish, and Japanese) together. They interacted and influenced one another in regard to their intercultural understanding and intended traveling. Their family backgrounds and economic status were similar, having enabled them as university students to travel within Asian countries for a short period of time during vacations. Nevertheless, their travel destinations were largely regional. Only three students had been to English-native-speaking countries: two to the USA and one to New Zealand within the university's winter language programs.

In short, the majority of the participants had had intercultural communication experience with foreigners beforehand, including contacts with a diversity of the overseas students who studied Chinese in Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, including German, French, American, Spanish, Indonesian, Turkish and Vietnamese exchange students.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## *Quantitative Measurement of Intercultural Sensitivity*

Participants' intercultural sensitivity was overall moderate, over the different factors of Chen and Starosta's (2003) model. The results will be divided into five sections, supplemented with students' questionnaire responses. Reserve-coding was completed before summing up in average mean and modifying the statements accordingly.

The first section demonstrates the participants' intercultural engagement.

**Table 1**    Descriptive Statistics of Intercultural Interaction
Engagement

| Interaction Engagement Items | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts. | 3.05 | .64 |
| 13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures. | 4.37 | .65 |
| 21. I often give a positive response to my culturally-distinct counterpart during our interactions. | 3.83 | .76 |
| 22. I do not avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons. | 3.59 | .66 |
| 23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal or nonverbal cues. | 3.22 | .55 |
| 24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between culturally-distinct counterparts and me. | 3.83 | .81 |
| **Average mean** | **3.65** | **.67** |

As can be seen in Table 1, participants rated their Interaction engagement moderate (M=3.65). Because of lack of confidence in two-way cultural communication as expressed in the open-ended questionnaires, they tended to give positive responses (M=3.83). Student 1 wrote: "*I think many Taiwanese college students are afraid of making grammatical errors, or misunderstanding foreigners' meaning.*" Student 2 echoed, "*I think my mother has more courage than I do in interacting with foreigners with her Taiwanese English. She speaks very little English. Unlike her, I did not have courage to talk to Americans in a one-week part-time job experience in a café, because I did not understand their English, particularly American slogans, phrases or pop culture.*" Verbal and nonverbal cues in interaction engagement

were difficult to detect accurately (M=3.22) because of lack of social and cultural understanding like Western personal privacy and socializing style. Research participants expressed that they used English to communicate most with foreign guests and overseas students, yet conversed in Mandarin Chinese with Vietnamese students. Hence, they did not rate their engagement skills are not rated highly positive partially due to fear of making errors in English.

Intercultural engagement was rated moderate here partially due to lack of Byram's (2009) Skills of discovery and Santoro's (2009) Understanding self and others, mediated in English–a foreign language for the research participants. In regard to participants' difficulties in intercultural communication, the major problems reported in the open-ended part of the questionnaire included English listening comprehension, accent adaptation, lack of ability to express their own meanings, and difficulties in commenting on others in fluent and grammatically accurate English. This part will be further analyzed in the later section.

According to Table 2, the participants rated their intercultural respect in a highly positive way (M=4.29). In line with Santoro (2009), intercultural education is effective and features democratic their pluralism and intercultural respect. Respect of other cultures (Santoro, 2009; Chen & Starosta, 2003) is a basic characteristic of foreign language college students and also an essential of intercultural competence for global citizenship. Student 3 wrote, "*Respecting other cultures is a must. No racial discrimination should be allowed in Wenzao. We are a foreign language university after all!*" Student 5 offered an example on food differences, "*If it is a taboo in some culture not to eat pork or beef, it is totally understandable to do so in interacting with foreigners. I would not order pork chop when I am with Muslim students.*" Students will try to respect others' beliefs and practice even to the point of following their practices and not to eat certain food. Additionally, Student 6 added, "*I think the Muslim*

*females' head covering should also be respected everywhere in the world, unless they do not want to do it anymore.*"

**Table 2**     Perception of Intercultural Respect

| Intercultural Respect Items | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 1.  I think people from other cultures are not narrow-minded. | 4.18 | .80 |
| 7.  I like to be with people from different cultures | 4.46 | .63 |
| 8.  I respect the values of people from different cultures. | 4.63 | .65 |
| 16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave. | 4.39 | .62 |
| 18. I accept the opinions of people from different cultures. | 4.53 | .72 |
| 20. I think my culture is not better than other cultures. | 3.63 | .94 |
| **Average Mean** | **4.29** | **.73** |

**Table 3**     Perception of Intercultural Interaction Confidence

| Interaction Confidence Items | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 3.  I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures. | 3.59 | .83 |
| 4.  I do not find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures. | 3.37 | .83 |
| 5.  I always know what to say when interacting with people from other cultures. | 3.11 | .72 |
| 6.  I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures. | 3.33 | .93 |
| 10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures. | 3.20 | .79 |
| **Average Mean** | **3.32** | **.82** |

As shown in Table 3, the participants' interaction confidence is moderately low (M=3.32). Unlike the Western socializing culture, Taiwanese are not confident in initiating intercultural encounter with strangers from different cultural backgrounds. This behavior is related to what Santoro (2009) advocates as transformative knowledge: the intercultural knowledge to help learners to be capable to understand different cultural practices and to overcome the intercultural hindrances. The intercultural knowledge needed for confidence may particularly include challenges of religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class (Santoro, 2009). Due to the lack of authentic language and culture exposure, Student 7 said, "*I do not think I am confident in interacting with foreigners compared with the western students who learn Chinese in Taiwan. We are taught to listen and not to talk.*" Student 12 wrote, "*After interacting with foreign partners, I am more confident than before and later know about other nationalities.*" Student 13 explained the intercultural knowledge needed in intercultural communication confidence:

> *I was not confident to communicate to foreigners because I did not know enough cultural information. We once ordered pork chop lunch boxes for everyone including an Indonesian classmate and later found out many Indonesians are Muslims who do not eat pork. We thought only people in the Middle East follow this … Some foreigners do not eat some specific food because of different culture, such as: a Muslim does not eat pork, and Indians do not eat beef. Many Koreans do mini-plastic surgery often, so we should not express too much surprise in these.*

In addition to the cultural knowledge of different dietary practices and preferences, Student 14 added, "*I am not confident in intercultural communication because I have 'fear': I think without overseas experience, I lack intercultural practices, opportunities or the habit to speak to foreign*

*strangers naturally. I may not be able to answer questions
when I do not know sufficient cultural knowledge.*"

To sum up for intercultural confidence (M=3.11), as
Student 8 explained, "*I think I am not sure what to say
properly in English, honestly speaking, what would be suitable
in intercultural communication?*" Hence, their interaction
confidence was limited to reaching out to foreigners when it
appeared to be safe and necessary. Examples were helping
answering foreigners who are lost and cannot read Chinese.
Participants' intercultural confidence was low due to their lack
of courage and confidence in their English-speaking
proficiency, despite their EFL training in a foreign language
university for effective intercultural interactions.

**Table 4**     Perception of Intercultural Enjoyment

| Intercultural Enjoyment Items | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|
| 1.  I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures. | 4.26 | .65 |
| 9.  I do not feel upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures. | 3.98 | .72 |
| 12. I do not get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures. | 3.70 | .67 |
| 15. I do not feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures. | 3.70 | .99 |
| **Average Mean** | **3.91** | **.76** |

Regarding participants' interaction enjoyment, Table 4
shows overall a moderately positive rate (M=3.91). Unlike
their somewhat low confidence in interaction, participants
expressed interest in intercultural interactions. Student 9
thought Taiwanese tend to gain enjoyment (M=4.26) instead of
feeling upset, discouraged or useless during cultural
interactions. This refers to what Student 10 expressed by
saying "*English majors are mostly fond of foreigners, thus are
positive to communicate with people of that culture*". Student
11 pointed out that foreign language major students tend to
like English-native speakers:

> *Among all nationalities and cultures, North Americans are preferred by our classmates because of their accent being more familiar from the textbooks' CD than other English accents, and they generally have a friendly attitude to Taiwanese students. However, the foreigners who study in the Chinese learning center in the participants' university come mostly from other different cultures, such as France and Germany ….*

Additionally, the intercultural enjoyment derives from acquiring intercultural differences. Student 12 described intercultural enjoyment in intercultural differences:

> *I think I really enjoy interacting with foreigners every time. I enjoy talking with different people from the whole world over their cultures and learn that not every German is hard-working and punctual. Not everyone from the Middle East Countries is [a] terrorist. Most Muslims are friendly, honest and hard working. British people are not all cold: some are quite friendly, but they have a good taste in fashion. Danish are open-minded and fun to talk with!*

The participants' intercultural interaction enjoyment was found to be generally positive in approaching people of different cultures and personalities, making foreign language education authentic, culturally diverse and first-hand experience.

**Table 5**     Perception on Intercultural Attentiveness

| **Intercultural Attentiveness Items** | **Mean** | **Standard deviation** |
|---|---|---|
| 14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures. | 3.34 | .79 |
| 17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures. | 4.09 | .86 |
| 19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction. | 3.01 | .73 |
| **Average Mean** | **3.48** | **.79** |

According to Table 5, the participants were found to have only a moderate intercultural interactive attentiveness (M=3.48). This means that Brown-Jeffy and Cooper's (2011) Cultural Identification and Santoro's (2009) Understanding self and others are not yet developed sufficiently among the participants, to allow them to be observant and sensitive about others' cultures. While the student participants tended to obtain as much cultural information as possible (M=4.07), they found it challenging to be observant (M=3.34), to be sensitive to subtle meanings of verbal, and non-verbal signals of intercultural partners (M=3.01) in intercultural engagement.

### *Qualitative Measurement of Intercultural Sensitivity*

The overall interaction attentiveness was moderate because participants are moderately sensitive to possibly subtle cultural signals by partially guessing the connotations and implications. One of the students who majored in Japanese wrote that she was not sure she could be observant enough when Japanese guests express certain negative implication in non-verbal or verbal signals which may communicate some messages. The reason was that she and other classmates had not had sufficient intercultural opportunities in an authentic context. Slightly similar to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), cultural identification is a key issue, but not only across cultures, but also within different regions of a specific culture.

For instance, a Japanese professor from the traditional cultural city of Kyoto said learners need to be able to identify cultural subtle meanings: "When some Japanese hosts offer you more green tea, it could mean it is time for you to leave. Similarly, if a Japanese guest denies the second offer, it could either be cultural politeness not to demonstrate rudeness, or it could be real expression of no more need …." If students do not apply their intercultural knowledge to a real-life scenario, the increased intercultural knowledge could lower students' intercultural confidence level because of the gap.

Possible reasons behind Taiwanese foreign language major students' low level of intercultural confidence is found to be related to students' lack of intercultural knowledge. According to Byram's (2000) model, intercultural communication competence consists of intercultural knowledge, skills and attitude. One of the reasons for low intercultural competence is the simple fact that foreign language major students in the case of Taiwan do not access the required international news for intercultural knowledge. In the Journalistic English class, the more they have grown to seek out and learn about international news and global issues in conflict, the more they are aware of their inadequate intercultural knowledge beyond the simple Food, Folklore, Festival, and Facts in Kramsh's (1998) theory. Student 4 expressed:

> *Actually, my international view was once very poor. However, our instructor taught me a lot of the international situations, so I learned a lot in class about the European immigrant issue, the Pope's response and the concerns of the U.S. The US election reminds me of the first female president elected in Taiwan … I knew that I should notice more*

Additionally, Student 6 echoed:

*I didn't know a lot about the situation in the world.
In this class, our professor gives us chances to learn
from the latest world trends. I figured out that I
finally understand why many American people
would like to support Trump .... I have never thought
about it before, but his demeanor is really so
different from other former presidential candidates
in U.S. to me ...*

Similar to Chiu (2017a), the foreign major students'
difficulty may also be related to their teachers' pedagogy and
to their teachers' own level of confidence in speaking in
intercultural communication context, similar to the findings of
Dimova (2011). Teachers need to overcome intercultural
difficulties by flipping Chinese style of mentality and teaching
pedagogy to break silence (Chiu, 2017b).

Intercultural knowledge needs to be immersed with
intercultural communication to allow EFL students to be
intercultural sensitive without being ethnocentric (Banks &
Banks, 2000) in expressing their own culture. Occasionally
teachers' case explanation of cultural miscommunication and
students' negative experience may lower students' level of
confidence. Student 7 reflected,

*I think sometimes learning about other's
unsuccessful intercultural communication cases can
be helpful and troublesome. For instance, a student
who went to a French high school for exchange,
experienced negative feedback from certain local
residents. Her case shocked the class and posed fear
at some level to communicate with foreigners.*

In the particular instance mentioned above, the
experience took place in a local supermarket where the
Taiwanese exchange student was treated with mockery and

derision. It was clearly a consequence of *severe ethnocentrism* of the involved party against foreigners who appeared to be Chinese. The examples of cross-cultural miscommunication shared in the class discussions can also cause mixed perceptions about cross-cultural communication, both negative in alertness and positive in understanding the value difference behind individuals. Student 9 found out her own fear in intercultural communications because

*I found that the refugee issue in Europe was far more serious than I thought. Now some European countries are very afraid of possible attacks from ISIS. Some classmates and I wonder it is safe to visit European countries for semester exchange programs ... we are hesitant. We do not understand their beliefs in extreme actions ...*

Following Student 9's confusion and lack of understanding of culturally distinct Muslim news, Student 10 ultimately experienced an intercultural self-reflection after understanding both cultures:

*When I explored the issues of Western and Eastern differences, I found something contrary to my initial belief. I used to think that the Western education is the best for both Eastern and Western children, which means fewer exams, less homework, less parents' control and pressures, more discussions, and hands-on projects. However, after this, I realize that I have a narrow thinking and belief at that time. No matter which educational system you prefer, both systems offer valuable things ... I need to know my culture better.*

In addition to possible educational belief change to know their own culture of origin better, Student 13 pointed out the

level of language proficiency and the western social constructivist approach to learning by discussions:

> *Because I am not a high-level English learner, I found it a little difficult in news discussions. First, the comprehension of the news and other intercultural knowledge background can be very difficult in English. Second, I need Google and Baidu (Mainland Chinese search engine) translation engines to help me understand special terms. Third, it is quite new and interesting to argue about different viewpoints in open class discussions. I like our instructor to share some world news every week. It is very good.*

Intercultural Immersion by sharing domestic and world news updates is helpful, particularly to students whose English proficiency level is not advanced. Because reading comprehension in English news can be cognitively challenging and time consuming for them, it is more effective to first speak and listen, than to read and write. Similar to the findings of Hinkel (2011), news summarizing in journal writing can open up students' intercultural competence; but what is more significant is the crucial effect in bridging between learners as interactive and relative persons by increasing their confidence levels in their intercultural knowledge and the skills they needed. According to Student 13, creating arguments and debates regarding news in English is also a new learning experience, and provides enjoyment to learners who do not engage in the give-and-take of public discussions in their English class.

According to the open-ended feedback, participants might not be attentive to intercultural engagement because of different types of cultural misunderstanding. Student 15 explained the attentiveness gap:

*The key is cultural difference since childhood: westerners are trained to greet strangers and engage in dialogues .... It is a cultural difference in confidence level. I don't think we are inferior to them. They are very confident, probably overly confident in English communication. They don't portray the low-confident side, like inability to speak fluent Chinese after learning it a while.*

In addition to intercultural confidence discrepancy, Student 16 observed that the cultural miscommunication may happen, as for example when Taiwanese describe a man as quite "cute" when they mean him to be what English speakers would call "handsome". A misunderstanding in her experience in Dubai and Lebanon was revealed by her discovery that not all Arabic people had dark skins. Some of her Arabic female friends had light skin and most Arabic people have attractive eyes. Hence, intercultural sensitivity is related to authentic intercultural communication experiences, which will reinforce intercultural confidence to engagement with culturally different ethnic groups.

## CONCLUSION

The study set out to explore the strengths and weaknesses of Taiwanese foreign major students' intercultural sensitivity (Chen & Starosta, 2003) in an ESP class of Journalistic English, in order to better equip their intercultural communication competence beyond standardized test scores. The participants were found to have overall moderate intercultural sensitivity, to be high in intercultural interaction enjoyment and intercultural respect, and moderate in intercultural engagement. They had developed sufficient Democratic Pluralism in Santoro's (2009) model to respect others' cultures. However, their intercultural confidence and attentiveness were still moderately low. The reasons behind these figures can be related to several causes: lack of Byram's

(2000) Intercultural knowledge and skills, and difficulties in Understanding Self and others in Santoro's (209) model, particularly regarding culturally distinct partners including Muslim's practice, and extreme beliefs shown in the relevant news. Within the long-term educational upbringing of exam-orientation rather than the consecutive communicative language approach in Taiwan, language and cultural difficulties in discussing about the international issues are interwoven.

Unlike Kramsch (1998), the 4F intercultural information is still considered necessary for Taiwanese foreign major students particularly in food, and distinct religious practice to establish a basic foundation in understanding distinct cultures' dietary preferences and practices. They need integrating intercultural knowledge of Kramsch to help better develop intercultural sensitivity in foreign language education beyond improving language proficiency benchmark towards authentic intercultural communication competence.

Nevertheless, through building upon these cognitive starters, Taiwanese foreign language major students need more in-depth understanding of their own culture and the international news, including the complicated international issues like the US presidential election and Europe refugees with immigration policy, so that intercultural dialogues would be better developed for social constructivist interactions.

### *Limitation and potential of the study*

The recommendation for future study result cannot be generalized to the entire English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college student population in Taiwan, because the participants were conveniently sampled in a small-sized and somewhat specialized elective Journalistic class in the five-year-junior college of a foreign language university. The ESP nature of the class may have lowered the perceived intercultural interaction confidence and attentiveness in intercultural news discussions.

### *Recommendation for future study*

EFL foreign language major students' intercultural confidence is related to their intercultural knowledge and Byram's (2000) discovering and interaction skills which need critical participation of cultural discussions in this ESP case on international news. Future researchers in the field are recommended to explore intercultural challenge factors that are likely to attribute to intercultural miscommunication (Cruz, 2013) and culturally relevant pedagogy to help foster EFL university students' intercultural confidence and global competitiveness for optimal international mobility in the global labor market.

## Acknowledgments

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# Theorizing and Assessing an Integrated Model of Intercultural Competence of International Hotel Staff in Taiwan

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## INTRODUCTION

Due to the influence of global economy and open policy of Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan, Taiwan's international tourists have increased rapidly. According to Taiwan Tourism Bureau's statistics [1], in 2009 there were 4,395,004 international tourists visiting Taiwan, and by 2017 it had reached 10,739,601. Although the influx of international tourists, especially the Chinese, has greatly benefitted the hotel industry, intercultural ability of the hotel practitioners who have direct interaction with the guests has become a concern. In fact, a number of scholars have identified employees' intercultural competence as a core competence of international talent in the international hotel business (Waldeck, Durante, Helmuth & Marcia, 2012). Hotel staff are expected to be interculturally sensitive when interacting with international guests. If they fail to serve culturally different guests in a culturally sensitive way, problems of misunderstanding and conflict will be raised. Consequently, insensitivities towards international guests can potentially impact the development and economic benefits of the hotel industry.

Yet, the concept of intercultural competence is quite complicated. The literature review have revealed more than 300 terms, and definitions related to intercultural abilities drawn from different academic disciplines and areas

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[1] The statistics is based on the website of Taiwan's Tourism Bureau at http://admin.taiwan.net.tw/public/public.aspx?no=134

(Spitzberg & Changnon, 2008). Quite a few assessment tools have also been developed to evaluate people's intercultural competence in the real world. It shows its conceptualization may cover a diverse of disciplines. Although the study of intercultural competence has always been interdisciplinary, it lacks a broader framework to explain a body of research findings in a more comprehensive way. Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) suggest that a consistent and general concept which reconciles different approaches might be more insightful. In this study, it is theorized that an integrated framework which combines intercultural personality and intercultural effectiveness can better assess the the intercultural competence of the international hotel staff. This pilot study is also aimed at exploring the relationship between Taiwan's hotel staff's intercultural competence and organizational citizenship behaviors. It would validate the integrated model of intercultural competence by developing a useful tool specifically for assessing how this was directly related to their job performance.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

To develop a theory regarding the integrated framework of intercultural competence and developing an assessment tool to measure Taiwan's hotel staff's intercultural competence, a comprehensive literature review related to concepts and measures of intercultural competence was undertaken. This included a focus on two domains of intercultural competence: intercultural personality traits and intercultural effectiveness, whereas the extra-role of job performance would be correlated.

### *Concepts and Measures of Intercultural Competence*
Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) define intercultural competence as "the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways" (p. 422). Likewise, Johnson, Lenartowicz, and Apud (2006) state intercultural competence as "an individual's effectiveness in drawing upon

a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad" (p. 530). Fantini (2009) describes intercultural competence as "complex abilities that are required to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (p. 458).

While researchers have different foci in theorizing intercultural competence, three fundamental dimensions can be identified in the construction of the concept: affective, cognitive and behavioral abilities (Bücker & Poutsma, 2010; Chen & Starosta, 1998; Gertsen, 1990). Some researchers have expanded the concept of intercultural competence by developing models or frameworks depending on different theoretical goals, such as Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993) and King and Baxer's Developmental Model of Intercultural Maturity Model (2003). Among the models and frameworks, the integrated model proposed by Leung, Ang, and Tan (2014) has been inspiring. The researchers incorporated three intercultural dimensions, personality traits, attitude/worldview and capability, to generate intercultural effectiveness. Compared with previous studies, they have noted a need to probe the mechanism by examining the predictive power of different constructs of intercultural competence on intercultural effectiveness.

Such an integrated approach to intercultural competence is an important step as it takes the temporal development of intercultural competence into consideration and examines the predictive validity with different measures of the same intercultural competence dimension. Moreover, it allows for a more refined theory if tested by elucidating the various aspects of intercultural competence.

### Intercultural Personality Traits

According to Leung, et al. (2014), intercultural personality traits refer to enduring personal characteristics that determine individuals' typical behaviors in intercultural

situations. Researchers found some aspects of Big-5 personality traits were significantly related to intercultural competence (Ang, van Dyne & Koh, 2006). For instance, "Openness to Experience" was identified the most as being related to all aspects of cultural intelligence (CQ) and "Extraversion" was found to be correlated with cognitive, motivational and behavioral CQ. Other examples of intercultural personality traits identified in previous studies include "Open-mindedness" (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000), "Dissimilarities Openness" (Lloyd & Härtel, 2010), "Tolerance of Ambiguity" (Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens & Oddou, 2010; Deardorff, 2006), and "Flexibilities" (Matsumoto, LeRoux, Ratzlaff, Tatani & Uchida, 2001).

Based on the theory of stable dispositions being performance predictor, van der Zee and van Oudenhoven (2000) conceptualized the Multicultural Personality Model, which included a 91-item Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2001), which was later shortened to 40 items in a more recent study (Van der Zee, Van Oudenhoven, Ponterotto & Fietzer, 2013). The MPQ measure includes five specific and narrow traits: "Emotional Stability", "Social Initiative", "Open-mindedness", "Cultural Empathy", and "Flexibility". Their definitions are briefly explained below.

1. Emotional Stability (8 items): It is defined as an ability of remaining calm when facing psychological stress and discomfort. Sample items are "Worries when interacting with foreigners (reversed coded)", and "Keeps calm when things don't go well."

2. Social Initiative (8 items): It is an ability to take initiative in social interaction and interact easily with members of other cultures. Questions such as "Takes the lead in cross-cultural contact", or "Leaves initiatives to others to make contacts (reversed coded)" are included.

3. Open-mindedness (8 items): It means one can keep an open mind and will not be judgmental when encounters different values or norms in other cultures. Sample items

include "Likes to imagine solutions to problems" and
"Starts a new life easily".

4.  Cultural Empathy (8 items): It refers to the ability to
    understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of
    members of different cultural backgrounds. "Pays
    attention to the emotions of others" and "Sympathizes
    with others" are two sample items.

5.  Flexibility (8 items): It is associated with one's ability to
    adjust his/her behaviors when facing unexpected
    situations within another culture. In this trait, sample
    questions include "Works according to strict rules" or
    "Functions best in a familiar setting", which are all
    reversed coded.

It has been proven to exhibit good predictive validity
power, for assessment of "Psychological Well-being" (Van der
Zee, Zaal & Piekstra, 2003; Van Oudenhoven, Mol & Van der
Zee, 2003; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002), "Mental
Health" and "Physical Health" (Van Oudenhoven & Van der
Zee, 2002) of international students and expatriates, and
"Socio-cultural Adjustment" (Leong, 2007; Van Oudenhoven,
Timmerman & Van der Zee, 2007).

### *Intercultural Effectiveness*

Chen and Starosta (1996) define intercultural
effectiveness as an "intercultural adroitness" or the
behaviorally verbal and nonverbal aspect of intercultural
communication competence, which enables individuals to
attain communication goals in intercultural interactions
through appropriate and effective performance (p. 21). Being
different from the inner dimension of intercultural personality
traits, intercultural effectiveness dictates the external and
behavioral aspect of intercultural competence and the ability to
attain communication goals in intercultural interactions
(Portalla & Chen, 2010). It is suggested that three types of
intercultural effectiveness, including psychological, behavioral
and performance, are structurally related to each other

(Bhaskar-Shrinivas, Harrison, Shaffer & Luk, 2005; Ng, van Dyne & Ang, 2012).

In terms of intercultural competence, Portalla and Chen (2010) has designed a 20-item Intercultural Effective Scale (IES), which was extracted from 76 items of intercultural effectiveness, to measure an individual's effectiveness in interacting with people from different cultures. This IES consists of six factors, including "Behavioral Flexibility", "Interaction Relaxation", "Interactant Respect", "Message Skills", "Identity Maintenance" and "Interaction Management". This new measure has been proven to have good reliability and validity and will be included in the integrated model of this study. Below is a brief description of the six factors of IES.

1. Behavioral Flexibility (4 items): It is related to the ability of a person to distinguish between appropriate behaviors and adapt to specific situations. One sample item is "I am not always the person I appear to be when interacting with people from different cultures".

2. Interaction Relaxation (5 items): It is about the ease that a person feels while conversing, specifically referring to their approachability, openness, and overall comfort level during the interaction. "I find it is easy to talk with people from different cultures" is one item example.

3. Interactant Respect (3 items): It refers to the level of value the participant places on their culturally different counterpart during the interaction. One sample item is "I always show respect for my culturally different counterparts during our interaction".

4. Message Skills (3 items): This refers to the understanding and use of the verbal and non-verbal behavioral language in a culture other than one's own. The sample item is "I have problems with grammar when interacting with people from different cultures", which is reversed coded.

5. Identity Maintenance (3 items): It refers to the ability to maintain the counterpart's identity in intercultural interactions. A competent intercultural member would be

able to keep the identity of both one's own and that of his or her counterpart through effective and appropriate communication during cross-cultural involvement. "I find I have a lot in common with my culturally different counterparts during our interaction" is one item sample.

6.  Interaction Management (2 items): It is an ability of knowing how to perform appropriately in a cross-cultural interaction by initiating and terminating the conversation in a dialogue. Item such as "I am able to express my ideas clearly when interacting with people from different cultures" is included.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that individuals with multicultural personality traits are more effective in conducting intercultural interactions and therefore better able to perform appropriate intercultural behaviors. Thus, this study will include behavioral aspects of intercultural effectiveness in the theoretical model, which subsequently depict what hotel staff should be able to do to appropriately carry out diverse intercultural interactions.

### Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs)

Organ (1988) defines organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) as "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization" (p. 4). In other words, OCBs is a personal choice, rather than an enforceable requirement of the job and "its omission is not generally understood as punishable" (p. 4). In Organ's OCBs, there are 12 items in four dimensions: (a) Civic Virtue, indicating the staff are happy to represent the organization in positive ways, such as attending charity projects or company-sanctioned social events. (b) Sportsmanship, demonstrating willingness to accept minor inconvenience with any incentive; (c) Altruism, referring to the behaviors of helping others; and (d) Conscientiousness, describing the staff perform beyond and above what they are expected to do for the organization.

In a recent study by McComas (2014), a statistically significant relationship was found between leader's metacognitive cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) in the multinational realms of healthcare, human services, and engineering. As an extra-role behavior, OCBs is also found to link positively with employee performance rating (MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Fetter, 1991; Van Dyne & Lepine, 1998; Werner, 1994). Since the hotel industry in Taiwan has become more interculturally diverse, individuals must not only fulfil the requirements of the specified job, but also go beyond the predetermined role (Katz, 1964), such as accommodating others and maintaining harmony in the environment (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1964), in order to be integrated into the organizational system. Thus, in this study, the domain of organizational citizenship behaviors is included in testing the link between a hotel staff's intercultural competence and job performance of OCBs in a multicultural setting. It is predicted that individuals that score high in MPQ and ICS would also score high in OCBs.

Based on the literature review, an integrated theoretical model measuring intercultural competence of hotel staff was proposed. Since intercultural personality traits, which are related to enduring personal characteristics, have been proved to affect other intercultural behaviors (Leung et al., 2014), it is reasonable to hypothesize that it can predict intercultural effectiveness, which focus on the behavioral aspects of intercultural competence (Chen & Starosta, 1996). Furthermore, whereas significant relationship has been found between metacognitive cultural intelligence and behavioral cultural intelligence and organizational citizenship behaviors (McComas, 2014), it is predicted that the intercultural personality traits and behaviorally aspect of intercultural effectiveness have a combined effect on job performance based on the organizational citizenship behaviors of the hotel staff working in intercultural settings. The integrated model of intercultural competence is depicted as Figure 1.

### *Research Model*

Intercultural Competence

| Intercultural Personality Traits (MPQ) |
| --- |
| (a) Emotional stability<br>(b) Social initiative<br>(c) Open-mindedness<br>(d) Cultural empathy<br>(e) Flexibility |

Job performance

| Intercultural Outcome-Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs) |
| --- |
| (a) Civic Virtue<br>(b) Sportsmanship<br>(c) Altruism<br>(d) Conscientiousness |

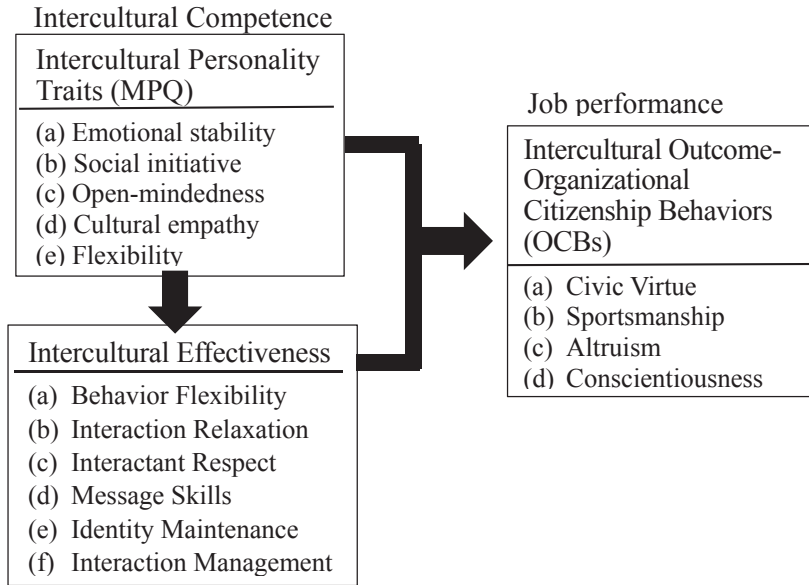| Intercultural Effectiveness |
| --- |
| (a) Behavior Flexibility<br>(b) Interaction Relaxation<br>(c) Interactant Respect<br>(d) Message Skills<br>(e) Identity Maintenance<br>(f) Interaction Management |

**Figure 1.**  The proposed integrated model of intercultural competence

## METHODS

This study employed a focus group interview methodology and a quantitative survey. The tool was a self-designed questionnaire comprised of an adapted version of the 40-item Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000, 2001), the 20-item Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) designed by Portalla and Chen (2010), and the 13-item Organizational Citizen Behaviors Scale (OCBs) proposed by MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter (1993); all in a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally not applicable*) to 7 (*completely applicable*). Questionnaires were translated by the researcher from English to Traditional Chinese with the original measure, for Chinese speaking participants to fully comprehend.

To increase the face and content validity of the tool, using method of Delphi, university professors of hospitality and hotel managers were invited to analyse the effectiveness of the theoretical model and to ensure the relevance of each item to the research goals and domain. Those items agreed by 80% of the experts were retained as representatives of the construct (Lichtenstein, Netemeyer & Burton, 1990; Zaichkowsky, 1985, 1994); three items were subsequently deleted from the MPQ. Several words and sentence structures used in describing the items were also revised to achieve better clarity of meaning.

Drawing on the suggestions by Hertzog (2008), a sample size of 35-40 would be preferable for pilot studies aimed to test instrumentation. Thus, it was decided to send the revised questionnaire by e-mail to 60 hotel staff working in the international hotels throughout Taiwan, in which 44 valid responses remained, including 20 (45.5%) males and 24 (54.5%) females. About the location of the hotels, the majority (*N*=30, 68.2%) of these respondents worked in southern Taiwan, followed by the north (*N*=6, 13.6) and east (*N*=6, 13.6) part of Taiwan, and the least in central Taiwan (*N*=2, 4.5%). Moreover, 24 respondents (54.6%) worked in hotels of more than 500 rooms, 12 (27.3%) in hotels less than 200 rooms, and only 8 (18.1%) in hotels of 201-400 rooms. Among them, 25 (56.8%) worked in city hotels and 19 (43.2%) in resort hotels. About their hotel experiences, 17 respondents had 1 to 5 years of hotel experiences, 13 of them with 6 to 10 years, 10 of them with more than 11 years, and only 4 of them with less than 1-year experiences. The respondents' job rankings include directors (*N*=5, 11.4%), managers (*N*=9, 20.5%), supervisors (*N*=13, 29.5%), and front-line staff (*N*=17, 38.6%). The departments they worked also varies from Front Office (*N*=13, 29.5%), Housekeeping (*N*=5, 11.4%), Food and Beverages (*N*=10, 22.7%), Marketing and Sales (*N*=2, 4.5%), Human Resources (*N*=6, 13.6%), and others (*N*=8, 18.2%).

Then, the three measures of quantitative data were computed using SPSS 22. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (*KMO*) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity

were run to assess the data's suitability for factor analysis. The *KMO* should be found to be higher than 0.5 to be acceptable, and the Bartlett test of sphericity should be found to have significance of ($p$ <.05) in order for the factor analysis to be considered appropriate (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). After confirming the strength of the relationships among the target data items, a SPSS Stratified Factor Analysis on the three measures was run to analyse if MPQ, IES, and OCBs data for each item fit the proposed model's target constructs and stayed within its domain. At the end, reliability of the three domains was performed. To depict the relationship among the three domains, the canonical correlation analysis between the three domains, MPQ, IES, and OCBs was also generated. These findings are reported in the following section.

# RESULTS

### *The Validity and Reliability of MPQ*

From the results of stratified confirmatory factor analysis on the factors of MPQ, among the original 37 items, 9 items with a loading of less than .55 were dropped from the 5-constructed MPQ, bringing it to a total 28 items in the scale. After elimination of items, the stratified confirmatory factor analysis was performed again to correct the variance for items in the MPQ constructs. The second factor analysis found variances of all items to be above .55 and common variances of each MPQ construct ranging from 52.9% to 72.3%. This indicated that there was indeed an inter-correlation between the items and therefore exhibiting a good construct. The results of *Cronbach's Alpha* test were 0.739 to 0.897, which indicated a high level of internal consistency of constructs.

**Table 1.**    Loadings and Cronbach's Alpha Results of MPQ

| Construct(*N=44*) | Original item | New Item | *Loading* before correction | *Loading* (>0.55) | *Cronbach's Alpha* (0.7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cultural Empathy(CE) *KMO* = 0.753, *Chi-Square*=219.688**, *df* = 28**, *Variance =* 52.9% | 1 | 1 | .803 | .803 | .863 |
| | 2 | 2 | .676 | .676 | |
| | 3 | 3 | .793 | .793 | |
| | 4 | 4 | .645 | .645 | |
| | 5 | 5 | .695 | .695 | |
| | 6 | 6 | .818 | .818 | |
| | 7 | 7 | .671 | .671 | |
| | 8 | 8 | .695 | .695 | |
| Flexibility(FL) *KMO* = 0.557, *Chi-Square* = 97.041**, *df* = 10**, *Variance*=53.3% | 9 | 9 | .723 | .769 | .739 |
| | 10 | 10 | .796 | .831 | |
| | 11# | | .385 | - | |
| | 12# | | .508 | - | |
| | 13 | 11 | .698 | .583 | |
| | 14 | 12 | .545 | .600 | |
| | 15 | 13 | .755 | .828 | |
| Social Initiative(SI) *KMO* = 0.682, *Chi-Square* = 43.510**, *df* = 3**, *Variance =* 72.3% | 16 | 14 | .819 | .893 | .801 |
| | 17# | | .105 | - | |
| | 18# | | .211 | - | |
| | 19 | 15 | .643 | .800 | |
| | 20 | 16 | .627 | .856 | |
| | 21# | | .039 | - | |
| Emotional Stability(ES) *KMO*=0.636, *Chi-Square*=39.837**, *df*=6**, *Variance*=54.8% | 22# | | .101 | - | .719 |
| | 23 | 17 | .633 | .695 | |
| | 24 | 18 | .643 | .736 | |
| | 25 | 19 | .659 | .651 | |
| | 26# | | -.117 | - | |
| | 27 | 20 | .888 | .862 | |
| | 28# | | .534 | - | |
| | 29# | | -.019 | - | |
| Open-mindedness(OM) *KMO* = 0.676, *Chi-Square* = 336.625**, *df* = 28**, *Variance =* 62.2% | 30 | 21 | .810 | .810 | .897 |
| | 31 | 22 | .756 | .756 | |
| | 32 | 23 | .833 | .833 | |
| | 33 | 24 | .894 | .894 | |
| | 34 | 25 | .804 | .804 | |
| | 35 | 26 | .699 | .699 | |
| | 36 | 27 | .699 | .699 | |
| | 37 | 28 | .794 | .794 | |

** significance <*0.01*
# indicates items with too small loading value were dropped.

The original and new loadings for each item and the Cronbach's Alpha values of the 5 constructs of "Cultural Empathy" (CE), "Flexibility" (FL), "Social Initiative" (SI), "Emotional Stability" (ES) and "Open-mindedness" (OM) in MPQ are reported in Table 1.

### The Validity and Reliability of IES

Based on the findings of the stratified factor analysis of IES, 2 items with a variance less than 0.55 were disregarded from the original 20-item scale. The second factor analysis was then run for the remaining 18 items, resulting in a new variance of items, all being above 0.5 (0.504 to 0.960) and with common variances for each IES construct being between 62.7% and 92.1%, indicating a good inter-correlation of items and IES construct. All values of *Cronbach's Alpha* were found to be above 0.7 (0.7 to 0.912), exhibiting a high level of internal scale consistency within the specific sample. There were now 18 items in IES, which included 6 constructs of "Behavior Flexibility" (FL), "Interaction Relaxation" (IR), "Interactant Respect" (IRS), "Message Skills" (MS), "Identity Maintenance" (ID), and "Interaction Management" (IM). A new item number was assigned to each remaining item. The original and new item loadings and *Cronbach's Alpha* values for the 6 IES constructs are exhibited in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Loading and Cronbach's Alpha of IES (N=44)

| Construct | Original item | New Item | *Loading* before correction | *Loading* (>0.5) | *Cronbach's Alpha* (>0.7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Behavior Flexibility(FL) *KMO*=0.693, *Chi-Square*=69.817**, *df*=3** *Variance*=80.3% | 2 | 1 | .859 | .888 | .872 |
| | 4 | 2 | .917 | .937 | |
| | 14 | 3 | .892 | .861 | |
| | 18# | | -.281 | - | |
| Interaction Relaxation(IR) *KMO*=0.582, *Chi-Square*=140.326**, *df*=10** *Variance*=63.8% | 1 | 4 | .835 | .835 | .842 |
| | 3 | 5 | .923 | .923 | |
| | 11 | 6 | .504 | .504 | |
| | 13 | 7 | .831 | .831 | |
| | 19 | 8 | .836 | .836 | |

| Construct | Origina l item | New Item | *Loading before correction* | *Loading (>0.5)* | *Cronbach's Alpha (>0.7)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Interactant Respect (IRS) KMO=0.564, *Chi-Square*=30.612**, *df*=3** *Variance*=62.7% | 9 | 9 | .848 | .848 | .700 |
| | 15 | 10 | .599 | .599 | |
| | 20 | 11 | .895 | .895 | |
| Message Skills (MS) *KMO*=0.680, *Chi-Square*=38.458**,*df*=3 ** *Variance*=70.4% | 6 | 12 | .782 | .782 | .760 |
| | 10 | 13 | .855 | .855 | |
| | 12 | 14 | .877 | .877 | |
| Identity Maintenance(ID) *KMO*=0.500, *Chi-Square*=45.699**, *df*=1**, *Variance*=90.9% | 8 | 15 | .936 | .953 | .895 |
| | 16 | 16 | .964 | .953 | |
| | 17# | | .136 | - | |
| Interaction Management(IM) *KMO*=0.500, *Chi-Square*=51.224**, *df*=1**, *Variance*=92.1% | 5 | 17 | .960 | .960 | .912 |
| | 7 | 18 | .960 | .960 | |

** significance <*0.01*
# indicates items with too small loading that were dropped

### *The Validity and Reliability of OCBs*

The OCSs stratified factor analysis revealed that each of the item *loading* was above 0.5 (0.781 to 0.963). Common variances of "Civic Virtue" (CV), "Sportsmanship" (SP), "Altruism" (AL) and "Conscientiousness" (CO) in the OCBs were 68.3%, 89.3%, 80.5% and 67.8% respectively. The *Cronbach's Alpha* values of all constructs in the OCBs were above 0.7 (0.722 to 0.933), indicating a high reliability. Loadings for each item and the *Cronbach's Alpha* values for the 4 OCBs constructs are reported in Table 3.

After deleting items with loadings of less than 0.5, questionnaires were then renumbered. To avoid confusion in terms of response, the reverse-coded questions in the IES and OCBs measures were edited to be positively stated. The final Traditional Chinese version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix.

**Table 3.** Loadings and Cronbach's Alpha for OCBs (N=44)

| Construct | Original item | New Item | *Loading* (>0.5) | *Cronbach's Alpha* (>0.7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civic Virtue(CV) | 1 | 1 | .890 | |
| *KMO*=0.642, | 2 | 2 | .800 | .729 |
| *Chi-Square*=35.328, *Variance*=68.3% | 3 | 3 | .786 | |
| Sportsmanship(SP) | 4 | 4 | .963 | |
| KMO=0.744, | 5 | 5 | .934 | .933 |
| Chi-Square=114.095, Variance=89.3% | 6 | 6 | .937 | |
| Altruism(AL) | 7 | 7 | .781 | |
| *KMO*=0.636, | 8 | 8 | .957 | .863 |
| *Chi-Square*=105.303, *Variance*=80.5% | 9 | 9 | .944 | |
| Conscientiousness(CO) | 10 | 10 | .812 | |
| *KMO*=0. 690, | 11 | 11 | .848 | .722 |
| *Chi-Square*=31.140, *Variance*=67.8% | 12 | 12 | .810 | |

\*\* Significance <*0.01*

### *Canonical Correlation Analysis*

The canonical correlation analysis findings revealed mixed results. In the canonical correlation between MPQ and IES, there were 2 pairs of canonical variables generated with canonical correlation values of 0.738 ($\rho^2$=.691, p=.001) and 0.685 ($\rho^2$= 0.477, p=.022), indicating a medium high positive correlation between the constructs of MPQ and IES. In the first pair of canonical variable for covariates MPQ, 4 constructs, "Emotional Stability", "Social Initiative", "Open-mindedness" and "Cultural Empathy", with a loading ranging from -0.295 to -0.820, were found to be positively correlated with 5 IES constructs, "Behavior Flexibility", "Interaction Relaxation", "Interactant Respect", "Identity Maintenance" and "Interaction Management", which had values ranging from -0.403 to -0.682. MPQ's "Open-mindedness" construct had the best predicting power (*loading*=-.820) on IES's "Interactant Respect" (*loading*=-0.682). In the second pair of correlation variables,

MPQ's "Emotional Stability", "Open-mindedness", "Cultural Empathy", and "Flexibility", with loadings ranging from -.006 to -0.701, were found to be positively related to all IES's constructs, which had loadings ranging from -.071 to -0.851. Construct of "Cultural Empathy" (*loading*=-0.701) was the best predictor, which was found to be closely correlated with "Behavior Flexibility" (*loading*=-0.851).

The accumulative variance of $X_1$ and $X_2$ could explain 45.7% of the variance of MPQ's variables. The accumulative variance of $\eta_1$ and $\eta_2$ could explain 60% of the total variance of IES's variables (see details in Table 4 and Figure 2).

**Table 4.** Canonical Correlation Analysis Btw MPQ and IES

| MPQ | *CORRELATIONS* btw *COV* AND *CAN* variables | | IES | *CORRELATIONS* btw *DEP* AND *CAN* variables | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $X_1$ | $X_2$ | | $\eta_1$ | $\eta_2$ |
| Emotional Stability | -.662# | -.302 | Behavior Flexibility | -.403 | -.530# |
| Social Initiative | -.682# | .012 | Interaction Relaxation | -.623# | -.530# |
| Open-mindedness | -.820# | -.006 | Interactant Respect | -.682# | -.071 |
| Cultural Empathy | -.295 | -.701# | Message Skills | .070 | -.779# |
| Flexibility | .057 | -.192 | Identity Maintenance | -.616# | -.572# |
| | | | Interaction Management | -.530# | -.387 |
| Pct Var DEP % | 18.2 | 5.9 | Pct Var DEP % | 28.0 | 32.2 |
| Pct Var COV % | 33.3 | 12.4 | Pct Var COV % | 15.3 | 15.4 |
| CANCORR | $\rho_1$=.738 | $\rho_2$=.685 | | | |
| $\rho^2$ | .691 | .477 | | | |
| p | .001 | .022 | | | |

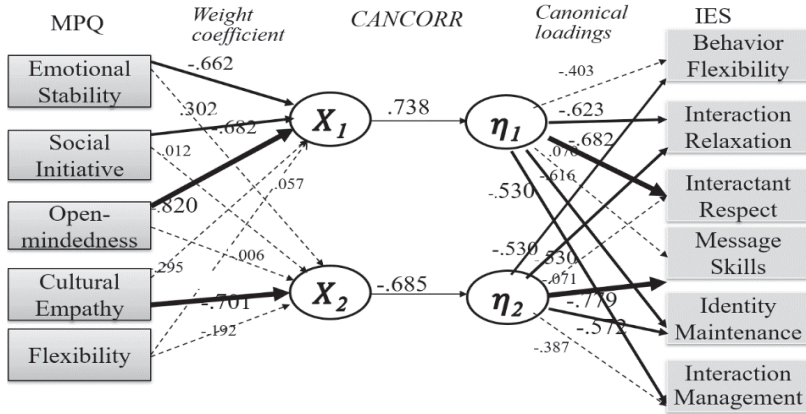# indicating construct's canonical loading was over .500

**Figure 2.** Canonical Correlation between MPQ and IES.

In the canonical correlation between MPQ, IES and OBCs, one pair of canonical variable was generated ($\rho_1 = 0.893$, $\rho_2 = 0.798$, $p = .000$). Four constructs in MPQ and IES, including "Open-mindedness" (*loading* = 0.724), "Cultural Empathy" (*loading* = 0.629), "Flexibility" *(loading* = 0.689), "Interactant Respect" *(loading* = 0.693) were found to be positively correlated with "Altruism" (*loading* = 0.682) and "Conscientiousness" (*loading* = 0.992).

Among all covariates, the most powerful indicator was "Open-mindedness", which was found to be most correlated with "Conscientiousness". The accumulative variance of $X_1$ can explain 37.1% of the total variance of MPQ and IES, whereas the correlation $\eta_1$ can explain 17.5% of the total variance of OBCs. The details are depicted in Table 5 and Figure 3.

**Table 5.**  Canonical Correlation of MPQ, IES and OCBs

| MPQ & IES | *CORRELATIONS BETWEEN COV AND CAN* variables | OCBs | *CORRELATIONS BTW DEP AND CAN* variables |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | $X_1$ |  | $\eta_1$ |
| Emotional Stability | .411 | Civic Virtue | .453 |
| Social Initiative | .384 | Sportsmanship | .448 |
| Open-mindedness | .724# | Altruism | .682# |
| Cultural Empathy | .629# | Conscientiousness | .992# |
| Flexibility | .689# |  |  |
| Behavior Flexibility | .331 |  |  |
| Interaction Relaxation |  | .250 |  |
| Interactant Respect |  | .693# |  |
| Message Skills |  | .020 |  |
| Identity Maintenance |  | .115 |  |
| Interaction Management |  | .167 |  |
| Pct Var DEP % |  | 46.4 | Pct Var DEP % 17.5 |
| Pct Var COV % |  | 37.1 | Pct Var COV % 21.9 |
| CANCORR |  | $\rho_1$=.893 |  |
| $\rho^2$ |  | .798 |  |
| p |  | .000 |  |

# indicating construct's canonical loadi*ng was over .500*
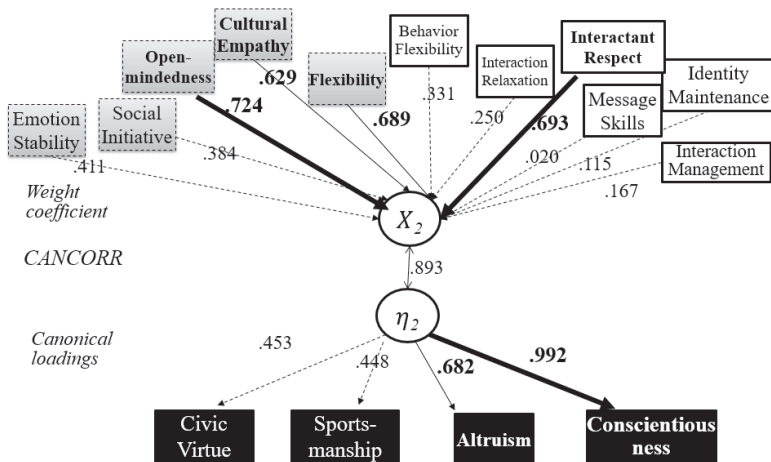


**Figure 3.**  Canonical Correlation Analysis of MPQ, IES and OCBs.

# DISCUSSIONS

In this study, an integrated model and three sets of measures were developed to test the intercultural competence of hotel staff. The stratified factor analysis of the measures, Intercultural Personality Traits, Intercultural Effectiveness, and the Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, showed that all items had a loading more than .05, indicating a good inter-correlation of items in its construct respectively. The reliability coefficient of the mentioned measures was satisfactory with a *Cronbach's α* value above 0.7. The mixed results of the Canonical Correlation shed lights to the prediction that a hotel staff who scored high in Emotional Stability, Social Initiatives, Open-mindedness, and Cultural Empathy of Intercultural Personality Traits (MPQ) might perform better in one's Intercultural Effectiveness (IES) and that a hotel employee's open-mindedness, cultural empathy, behavioral flexibility, and interactant respect might subsequently predict one's altruism and conscientiousness in Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs). The following discussions explain the relationship between different dimensions in more details.

First, hotel staff who are open-minded, emotionally calm, and willing to take initiative in social interactions would be more likely to show respect to culturally different members. They also tend to feel more comfortable when interacting with guests from other cultural background and are more capable to find commonality with culturally different counterparts problems. They can better perform appropriately in a cross-cultural interaction. As revealed in the study, the hotel staff's open-mindedness is especially important, which can entail behavioral aspect of paying respect to the value and behavior of their international guests. Furthermore, echoed Arthur and Bennett's (1995), cultural empathy is also a key predictor of intercultural effectiveness. Popescu, Borca, and Baesu (2014) state that people with cultural empathy seem to

understand more about other cultures. Due to the same reason, if hotel staff who can understand the feelings, perspectives and behaviors of their international guests, they are more likely to interact effectively with people from other cultures and are especially capable in delivering appropriate verbal and nonverbal messages.

Secondly, the data showed that Open-mindedness has the best predicted power on OCBs, followed by Cultural Empathy and Flexibility. It indicates that if hotel staff is open-minded and has no prejudice towards cultural differences, they are more likely to do things that is beneficial to others even they need to pay extra efforts and sometimes it might be disadvantageous for themselves. These employees would have more self-discipline and are more responsible, efficient and organized. On the other hand, Interactant Respect was also found to have a positive impact on Altruism and Conscientiousness. Spitzberg and Cupach (1989) stated that people who are relational competent can better recognize the reciprocal and interdependent nature in communications. Whereas respect is a competence which is other oriented (Portalla & Chen, 2010), hotel staff who exhibits respect to their international guests would cater more for culturally different guests and built a positive relationship through interactions. Consequently, hotel staff with such other orientation probably would be less selfish and more willing to help others. By the same token, they have better awareness that their behaviors might have an impact on their international guests in cross-cultural interactions, so they would be more responsible about their behaviors.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the conceptualized model combined three domains operationalized by a 28-item Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (MPQ), an 18-item Intercultural Effectiveness Scale (IES) and a 12-item Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs) to analyse Taiwanese hotel

staff's intercultural competence and organizational citizenship behaviors in the workplace. Statistical analysis for each domain proved to have good results in both face and content validity and reliability. The canonical correlation analysis showed that participants who had personality traits of open-mindedness, emotional stability, and social initiative would be more likely to behave with ease, value people of different cultures, maintain their own identity, and express their ideas in intercultural interactions. It is proven that the hotel employees who were able to empathize with different thoughts or behaviors of international guests would be more effective in engaging in intercultural behaviors, especially in performing appropriate behaviors, communicating with a language of other culture, and maintaining their own identity in intercultural situations. Although only medium high correlation was found between the intercultural competence variables of MPQ and IES, it is still confirmed that hotel staff who had personal traits of open-mindedness, cultural empathy, flexibility, and respect different cultures would be more likely to perform organizational citizenship behaviors in terms of helping others and following company's regulations and procedures which would in turn promote the effectiveness of the hotel business.

The findings can contribute to the understanding of complex relationship between different aspects of intercultural competence and provide a more holistic view of the concept of different dimensions of intercultural competence. Hotel managers, supervisors, consultants or university teachers can apply the tool to assess the intercultural competence of the applicants or the students of hotel majors when selecting the new employees. It can also be used to design the intercultural training program based on the scores gained in different aspects of the scales in the model.

Although the model and measure might be insightful, it is important to acknowledge that since it was a pilot study, the sample was relatively small and the population was limited to hotel staff from Taiwan. This could probably explain some of

the medium canonical correlation in the findings. Thus, more studies in different cultural contexts and a bigger sample size would be helpful to produce a more universal model and valid measurements that combine different dimensions of intercultural competence. Another limitation is translating the self-perceived intercultural competence into real competence in work place. Chen and Starosta (1996) beg the question of who is be best suited in evaluating an individual's interactions in intercultural effectiveness and competence. Consequently, these intercultural evaluations could fluctuate if survey included other individuals or a supervisor. To compare results and measure consistency, future research could also utilize different methods of data collection. While further research is needed for testing the integrated model with other populations, these scales do indeed show promise for assessing intercultural competence and its predictive validity of employees in the hotel industry.

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendix: *Formal Questionnaire of Intercultural Competence of International Hotel Staff in Taiwan (the original Chinese version)*

海峽兩岸國際觀光飯店從業人員跨文化能力問卷（中文版）

### 第一部分 多元文化人格特質分析

以下的敘述是有關於多元文化人格特質分析的自我評估，請根據您的感受在每題敘述後的數字選項上，圈選最符合你想法與行為的號碼，數字 1 代表「非常不同意」；數字 7 代表「非常同意」。

| 題項 | 題目 | 非常不同意 | | | | | | 非常同意 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 我會注意他人的情緒。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | 我是一個好聽眾。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | 我能察覺別人的不悅。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | 我能夠深入的了解他人。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5 | 我享受聽別人的故事。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6 | 我能察覺別人是否遇到麻煩。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7 | 我有惻隱之心。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 我能使他人感到自在。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9 | 在工作上，我會遵守嚴謹的規定。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10 | 我會依照計畫行事。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11 | 我希望能預先掌握情況。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12 | 我擅長在熟悉的環境中做事。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13 | 我有固定的習慣。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14 | 我會帶頭做事。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15 | 我易於表達自己的看法。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 16 | 我常擔任幕後的推手。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17 | 我容易感到沮喪。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18 | 我容易感到緊張。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 19 | 我易於感到孤單。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 20 | 我易於感到不安。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 21 | 我會嘗試各種不同的方式。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 22 | 為了達到目標，我會嘗試尋找新的方法。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 23 | 我能很快的適應新生活。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 24 | 我喜歡找出解決問題的方法。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 25 | 我是社會趨勢發展中的開拓者。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 26 | 我能感受什麼在文化中是合宜的。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 27 | 我喜歡接觸來自不同文化背景的人。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 28 | 我的興趣很廣泛。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

17, 18, 19, and 20 are reverse-coded before summing the 28 items. Cultural Empathy(文化移情) items are 1-8; Flexibility (彈性) items are 9-13; Social Initiative(社交主動) items are 14-16; Emotional Stability(情感穩定度) items are 17-20; Open-mindedness (心胸開放) items are 21-28 items.

## 第二部分 跨文化效能

以下的敘述是有關於個人對跨文化效能的自我評估，請根據您的感受在每題敘述後的數字選項上，圈選最符合你想法與行為的號碼，數字 1 代表「非常不同意」；數字 7 代表「非常同意」。

| 項次 | 題 項 | 非常<br>不同意 | | | | | 非常<br>同意 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 當我與來自不同文化的人互動時，我敢於表達自己的觀點。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | 當我與來自不同文化的人互動時，我總是表現出我原來的樣子。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | 當我與來自不同文化的人互動時，我時常表現的像自己。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | 我發現與來自不同文化的人談話是容易的。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5 | 我發現與來自不同文化的人相處是很容易的。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6 | 當我與來自不同文化的人互動時，我總是知道怎麼開啟話題。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7 | 當與來自不同文化的人互動時，我覺得很自在。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 在互動當中，我發現要認同與我文化背景不同的人是容易的。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9 | 當我與文化不同的人相處時，我會使用適當的眼神接觸。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10 | 我總是能在彼此的互動中，對於不同文化的人表示尊重。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11 | 我總是能在彼此的互動中，對於不同文化的人所持的意見表示尊重。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 12 | 當我與來自不同文化的人互動時，我沒有語言的問題。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 13 | 當我與來自不同文化的人互動時，我可以分辨別人是§想告知我，或者是想要說服我。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 14 | 當我與來自不同文化的人互動時，我可以完全理解他們對話的意涵。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 15 | 我發現我常常感受到我有與文化不同的人有相似之處。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| 項次 | 題　項 | 非常<br>不同意 | | | | | | 非常<br>同意 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | 與我不同文化的對象互動時，我覺得彼此沒有距離。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 17 | 當與來自不同文化的人互動時，我能清楚表達自己的想法。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18 | 當與來自不同文化的人互動時，我能有效地回答問題。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Behavioral Flexibility(行為彈性度) items are 1, 2, and 3; Interaction Relaxation (互動放鬆度) items are 4 to 8; Interactant Respect(互動尊重) items are 9, 10, and 11; Message Skills (訊息溝通技巧) items are 12, 13, and 14; Identity Maintenance (身分維護) items are 15 and 16; Interaction Management(互動管理能力) items are 17 and 18.

## 第三部分 組織公民行為

以下的敘述是有關於個人公民行為的自我評估，請根據您的感受在每題敘述後的數字選項上，圈選最符合你想法與行為的號碼，數字 "1" 代表 "非常不同意" ；數字 "7" 代表 "非常同意" 。

| 項次 | 題　項 | 非常<br>不同意 | | | | | | 非常<br>同意 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 我跟的上飯店的發展。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 | 對未被要求的職責，但有助飯店形象的事，我會去做。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3 | 為了飯店好，我願意冒著不被別人同意的風險。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | 我很少抱怨瑣碎的事。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5 | 我擅於使問題單純化。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6 | 我總是專注於事情的正面，而非其負面。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7 | 即使沒被要求，我還是會幫忙引導新人。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 我總是準備好向他人伸出援手或幫助他人。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9 | 我願意花時間去幫助他人。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10 | 我會盡責的遵守飯店規定與程序。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 11 | 我會比要求的時間提早繳交主管交付的任務(例如：預算表、銷售規劃或是支出報表等)。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| 項次 | 題　項 | 非常不同意 | | | | | | 非常同意 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 我會立即回撥電話並回覆他人的留言與所要求的資訊。 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

Civic Virtue (公民素養) items are 1-3; Sportsmanship (運動家精神) items are 4-6; Altruism (利他行為) items are 7-9; Conscientiousness(責任心) items are 10-12.

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# An Optimal Curriculum Design for English Club
# in Junior High School

## Elena Yakovleva

## INTRODUCTION

This research study is based on teaching English in the English club of Tzyy Guan Junior High School (梓官國中) in Kaohsiung. The Industry-Government-Academia Cooperation Project was conducted between the school mentioned above and the English Department of Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages. Twenty-seven 12- to 13-year old students willingly participated in the English club, which was held monthly on Wednesdays from 2:20-4:00 pm, with a 10-minute-break. A small auditorium was equipped with a projector, microphone, white board, and internet access. The English club was held at the end of October and November 2015, and then at the end of March-June 2016 each month, totaling six classes. Due to the optional participation concept, the self-motivation of students was the driving factor behind successful learning. However, the English levels of students differed significantly, which hindered the teaching process. While some of the students (approximately 40%) understood and replied to the teacher's questions and willingly participated in activities, other students were more passive in terms of communication and participation in activities. With this in mind, the teacher tried to implement activities that required the participation of each student, such as surveys that required them to express their own preferences or opinions. Group discussion was commonly used in the English club. This gave the more reserved students an opportunity to be involved in the conversations, which unfortunately were often held in Chinese, the students' native language. The students could pre-discuss and rehearse in a

small group first, and express their opinions later in public for the whole class.

The junior high school invited a non-native English-speaking foreigner from Russia who is currently a university teacher of English to motivate the students to speak out in a planned educational setting that closely imitated some near-authentic English-speaking circumstances. This was intended to improve their English-speaking ability and to ultimately overcome English-speaking barriers when using the target language, thereby diminishing their fear of communicating with foreigners in a foreign language. According to Pennycook, this goal of simply talking is called the "empty babble of the communicative language class" (1994, p. 110). The foreign teacher, however, had a broader goal: to foster English oracy in terms of social interaction coupled with the development of a cultural competence in students, where the intercultural competence would not only be focused on English-speaking countries. This, therefore, could be called global competence and would be useful to non-native English-speakers around the world, enabling them to communicate by speaking English.

The local English teacher who led the English club was also present in the class to observe and to learn, as stipulated. Fortunately, he completely refrained from intervening in the foreign teacher's class (e.g., by translating English into Chinese), irrespective of instances when some of the students failed to understand the foreign teacher's diverse explanations. Fortunately, after the foreign teacher's use of clearer explanations, most students were able to grasp the idea.

The purpose of the research project is to learn about students' perceptions of different activities in the English club in order to collect feedback on teaching this type of English course. In addition, by playing various board games in English (e.g., *Monopoly, Scrabble,* and *Taboo*), students learned the course content and found that learning English could be fun. Furthermore, the introduction of different cultures broadened the world-view of the students. In conclusion, the aim of this

English club program was to achieve a balance between effective English learning and using various fun activities. The research also enabled the identification of the most and least favorite activities in the class and the weak aspects of students' learning, as well as the subsequent remedies for these.

## METHODS

A questionnaire survey was conducted to learn the students' initial perceptions of the course (see Appendix I). The survey questions were written both in English and Chinese for better understanding by the students. The results were quantitatively presented and evaluated in the report, supported by the relevant theoretical postulates. However, the first part of the investigation began with a description and analysis of each of the six classes, whose schedule was developed by the foreign teacher (see Appendix II).

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

An online search for a suitable curriculum for this English club, where English had been practiced as a foreign language, was unsuccessful. Therefore, the curriculum was created so that some common and motivating English discussion themes and activities could be fully or partially incorporated in this project. The resulting program would be especially suitable for high school students. The study furthermore analyzed the most and least favorite topics and activities using students' evaluations of the program. The data is presented in the chronological order. The tasks given to the students were first explained by the teacher, and then processed and presented by the students. Afterwards, the teacher evaluated the outcome of the task and decided what needed to be adjusted.

## 1. First class session (October 29ᵗʰ, 2014)

As the saying goes, "the first step is always the hardest"―it was very challenging for both the teacher and students at the beginning. Due to their shyness and insecurity, the students were reluctant to participate in any of the activities described below. As a result, the teacher sometimes had to ask them to write down their answers or opinions instead of speaking even though the latter skill was in fact a teaching goal. Something to consider is that students, especially teenagers, often resist actively communicating with superiors in public in their daily lives. Various scholars consider treating such rooted resistance differently. For example, Canagarajah (1999) suggested that a teacher should "unravel the hidden cultures of their classrooms and students" and incorporate those cultures into the classroom. On the other hand, Wallace (1999) proposed only to respect but not to incorporate the students' underlife into the classroom, as that could be a long-term challenge. According to the researcher's observation and instruction practices, the students' background should be selectively considered and incorporated into classroom practice to evoke their interest (see the later discussion on "agency in the classroom"). Giroux (1983) made an interesting and correct distinction between *opposition* and *resistance*. Where the former is "an instinctive, unreflected upon response to domination," resistance is "a considered, reflected-upon, rational stance." The teacher's task was to turn instinct into reflectiveness, i.e., opposition into resistance, where English would be used as a tool for critical thinking. In the English club this change did gradually occur when most students did not volunteer to answer when requested by the teacher.

The class started not with the usual self-introduction of the teacher and students, but with Wh-questions that students could ask the teacher in order to know more about her. Most questions were as follows: *How old are you? Where are you from? What is your favorite color/food?* As the students were not ready to ask these questions directly, the teacher instructed

them to write them down anonymously. After the teacher used the questions to introduce herself, the students were then instructed to find a partner with whom they had something in common. Then, 2-3 students introduced themselves by saying: *We have several things in common: (e.g., running/eating out/singing English songs as a hobby).* This type of group introduction diminished the students' fear of self-introduction. The teacher then used this to identify the students' interests and tailor the curriculum based on these activities.

Due to it being the last week of October, the teacher spoke about the history of Halloween, which even in Taiwan, was to be celebrated on October 31, and about the origin of the jack-o-lantern. All this information seemed unfamiliar to the students and they listened very attentively.

The next activity dealt with common English proverbs (such as "practice makes perfect", "the first step is always the hardest", "all good things must come to an end", and "better late than never") presented in PowerPoint format. Those proverbs were intentionally chosen to motivate students to learn English despite any challenges they may face. The meanings were explained through examples and incorporated into their English learning. The students were, however, given the opportunity to think of the Chinese equivalents.

As the last activity, the *Taboo* card game was played, in which the students needed to guess one word from the clues. In this game, five words are written on a card along with a related "Guess Word" that cannot be spoken. The students then needed to find other related words and synonyms to describe the "Guess Word" without using gestures or mimicry. It was very challenging for the students. Every student who was a leader in the game and had to describe the word to his/her classmates was nervous that s/he would not recognize the given word (like *newspaper* or *panda*) in order to explain it. To encourage active participation, students were rewarded with a pen from Wenzao as an incentive for their bravery in overcoming the fear of public speaking. However, the teacher assisted the students by giving them some hints to motivate

them in trying to guess the target word. In spite of those challenges, the students seemed to be fascinated with the game.

## 2. Second class session (November 26ᵗʰ, 2014)

The class warm-up activity started with the question "What happened to you this past month?". Even though every student needed to speak about three events, only one or two events were mentioned. At first, because the students were confused about how to start, the teacher provided a hint such as *went to a new restaurant, read a new book, travelled somewhere*. As a result, the majority of students talked about those types of events. This led to two hypotheses. The first is the hypothesis that the students may lack critical and creative thinking, which was recently emphasized as a fifth skill in language learning. The second hypothesis is that the students lacked the self-confidence to express their own ideas. This theory was further investigated through observation of the students' responses.

The next activity was a short video clip about the history of Thanksgiving which would be celebrated the following day in the United States (http://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving). The video provided some interesting facts about this important holiday and American culture. The importance of using media in the form of short videos has been proven in many research studies, including one conducted by Duxbury and Yakovleva (2012) on junior high school students. For Generation Y, who are digital natives, the virtual world stimulates better learning. The Virtual Realia allows teachers, who are digital immigrants, and students to travel through cyberspace anywhere in the world providing authentic materials from any culture (cf. Smith, 1997). It is advisable to incorporate video clips that are relevant to the study topic and the students' interest, and are of appropriate length into the classroom to enhance the learning process. Despite the fact that global technology offers "convenient, authentic, direct, and speedy access to native speakers and their cultures", it

cannot, however, fully provide intercultural understanding, especially if their historical and social base for speaking and thinking is significantly different (cf. Kramsch & Thorne in Block & Cameron, 2002, p. 100).

The following activity consisted of riddles that appeared exciting, where the students were asked to guess half of the riddle with answers such as *calendar, fish,* and *age*. Participants were again rewarded with a Wenzao pen to motivate the students and promote the university. It seemed that activities such as quizzes and the Taboo game, where the students needed to guess words, were appealing to the students as they tried to figure out the answers for these tasks.

The activity that followed was more informative than the previous ones, as it introduced common idioms (such as *tie the knot, drop a line*) and slang in short conversations. Two students took turns reading those dialogues out loud. After ensuring they understood the meaning, the teacher asked them to create their own conversation using the idioms and slang that had been introduced. Even though, this activity took a while for the students to complete, they were able to create short dialogues and speak about it loudly, which was the aim of the exercise.

The closing activity was a *Taboo game*, which was familiar to the students from the first class. Therefore, a few new students tried and successfully described the guess words to their classmates who also had fun guessing them. However, there were students who were unable to attempt being a game leader despite their noticeable internal motivation. This means that "stage fright" restrained the students' intrinsic motivation.

### 3. Third class session (March 25th, 2015)

After a long four-month break, the English club had its first meeting of the new year after the Chinese New Year. At the beginning of the class, students named the Chinese attributes of the Chinese New Year in English (e.g., *red couplet, firecrackers, red envelope,* and *lion and dragon dance*). In general, this meeting was devoted to different

cultures. For the beginning, the teacher presented in PowerPoint format her favorite travel destination (Salzburg, a town in Austria, as a historical and beautiful spot). Then, students had two quizzes in PowerPoint form on typical foods, sightseeing, and famous people in the UK and the USA, for which the students were able to answer most of the questions. Later a quiz was given on the traditions of different countries (e.g., no patting a child's head in Thailand; no use of the left hand in India, etc.). Despite the challenging questions, a few students were able to answer and each received reward. As the last activity, students were placed in groups and instructed to present a country as their travel destination. They described a country and explained the reasons for traveling there, naming the typical symbols of the country. The other students were able to guess successfully the country's name. The travel destinations included Japan, Thailand, Italy, and Holland. The discussion on travel destinations livened up the class, and the colorful PPTs with pictures of the cities attracted the students' attention.

### 4. Fourth class session (April 29th, 2015)

This class was very different from the previous classes, as the students played two board games in English named *Monopoly* and *Upwords* (a simplified version of *Scrabble*). This type of group activity was exciting for the students.

*Monopoly* is the game of buying, renting and selling properties so that players can increase their wealth. The players can invest money in buying land, constructing houses and hotels, and then renting them. The foreign language is exercised when negotiating, selling and buying the properties, as well as by reading the Property cards and lists of Chance and Community Chest tasks. This meant that the reading and speaking abilities of the students were exercised in this game. In addition to language practice (e.g., new vocabulary, conversation), this type of game-based learning allows students to gain basic business and decision-making knowledge as well as speaking practice. If the students used

their native tongue in the game, they were fined and had to pay money to the bank from their savings. This time-consuming game (about one hour and thirty minutes) was played by six players. So, at least two sets were needed to play it in two groups.

Another two groups played *Upwords*. This is a board game where the players spell words with stackable letter tiles on a special gameboard to score points. The students build words by placing letters across or down the board and by stacking letters on top of others already on the board to form different words. This 3-dimensional game is unique and challenging to play since it requires a rich vocabulary from students, as well as competence in the morphological processes (e.g., derivation or compounding) for adding another word (e.g., *book+store*) or affixing to stand-alone words (e.g., free, derivational morphemes such as ***be***+*loved* or *stand+**by***; inflectional morphemes such as ***un***+*paid* or *–s* for plural or 3rd person singular in the present tense) in order to build new words. The use of print or electronic dictionaries was forbidden in the class. If the students doubted the spelling or existence of a word, they asked their teacher. One set of this game is for four players with 100 letter tiles. The rules of the game were simplified due to time constraints and/or the number of students participating in this game. For the team play, several sets of board games were provided for parallel games running in a class. Each set was played by eight players, with two students playing together to accelerate the playing time by building words more quickly. It is noteworthy that in comparison to the traditional boring method of memorizing vocabulary and spelling, the students were able to build and sometimes learn words, stack letters, brainstorm proper words, and really have fun with this playing activity.

In the first period of class, three sets of *Monopoly* were played by three teams of six players, for a total of eighteen students. Two sets of *Upwords* were played by two teams of four players, for a total of eight students. After 45 minutes, in the second period, those five teams totaling twenty-six

students exchanged games. Since *Monopoly* can be played by six students, four new students joined the game and another two students remained to play it. However, each set of *Upwords* was played by eight students, with two students playing together.

After the teacher explained the rules for both games at the beginning of the class, the students started to play. The teacher assisted the students throughout, especially for *Upwords*, where students needed help in building words. Each time the teacher built a new word, she explained its meaning in English or used Google to translate it into Chinese. Hence, the students were able to learn some new short words, e.g., *fin, fog, fig,* and *rod*. In *Monopoly*, the teacher's assistance was requested only to explain the meaning of the manager or referee cards as the students were unclear whether it was an income or expense. The teacher therefore explained that *collect* is in favor of player. It was noticed that, while playing *Monopoly*, many students were quite passive and unwilling to buy any property or to negotiate. Unfortunately, the Chinese language was dominant throughout the game. Surprisingly, the majority of students wanted to play the more challenging game *Upwords* and actively participated in this game. This could be explained by the fact that they were already familiar with the Chinese version of *Monopoly* and therefore less interested in it than in the "new" board game, *Upwords*. Therefore, challenging tasks are not necessarily a deterrent to them. The students wanted to practice their existing knowledge of vocabulary and acquire new words. As a result, playing board games was clearly a fun class for most students.

## 5. Fifth class session (May 27th, 2015)

The fifth monthly meeting with the students started with a survey about their internet habits. The majority of students do not bring smart phones to the school presumably to avoid distraction and primarily due to the school policy that forbids turning on the phones during the school day except at break time. Therefore, the students use the internet at home for about

one or two hours a day, usually for chatting via *Line* or *Facebook*, listening to music on *YouTube*, searching for information, or playing video games. On this issue, there was a quiz about the English abbreviations commonly used in text messages (e.g., *2B* stands for "to be" or *D8* for "date"). The students had fun guessing such abbreviations. The teacher explained that the term "emoticons" was used to express feelings and ideas, and asked students in groups to create a new abbreviation and/or emoticon that was later guessed by excited students.

Since, as mentioned above, the students enjoy listening to English songs, the pop song *Love Story* by Taylor Swift was presented as the second activity with the aim of teaching English vocabulary. First, the students listened to the song and watched its video clip with English subtitles. Later, they were presented with the lyrics and asked to fill in the blanks which seemed to be challenging for the students (see Appendix III). Third, they were given an opportunity to sing the karaoke version of this song. Honestly, most students did not sing but looked attentively at the text and hummed it.

The last activity focused on *Sport*, and each student expressed his/her most and least favorite sports and explained the reasons why. At the end, the teacher calculated and announced the most and least favorite sports among the students. The favorites were basketball and baseball, and the latter included soccer and swimming, which clearly shows that American sports are preferred. The students also mentioned the sport (mostly tennis) that they would most like to try. The boys were more interested and active in this activity than girls, who were generally less interested in sports.

### 6. Sixth class session (June 24th, 2015)

The last meeting of English club started with a survey called "My World: Money", in which the students talked about their allowance and monthly expenses on certain items such as snacks and movies. Afterwards, the game *"Mime words"* was enthusiastically played, in which the students typically mimed

only easy words (*cry, cute, ear*) because they were afraid and refused to mime slightly difficult words (*cheap, weekend*). The next activity was a PowerPoint-based game, *"Trivial Pursuit"* with different kinds of questions such as *"Who was the first nonhuman to win an Oscar?"* and *"What is the highest mountain in Taiwan?"*. Most students seemed to enjoy answering such quiz questions. The next task related to English grammar, where the students needed to fill in the blanks with an appropriate preposition. This was challenging for the students as they often failed to insert the correct preposition (e.g., *pay attention **to**; be **on** campus*). Thus, the correct grammar was reinforced through this exercise. The subsequent relaxing activity presented the pop song *Need You Now* by Lady Antebellum. After attentively watching the video with subtitles, the students tried to fill in the blanks in the lyrics, which was fun for the students. The last activity was an oral practice on sharing an experience with the topic *"I am usually at my best/worst when …"* The students shared their opinions while learning a new phrase and proper grammar. The class ended with the students completing a survey regarding the six classes of the English club. The results of the survey using a five-point Likert scale are presented and evaluated below.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the survey conducted have revealed interesting facts about the likes and dislikes of junior high school students regarding English club activities. The feedback from twenty-seven students was evaluated quantitatively using the SPSS software program (ver.14) and the average values are presented in Appendix I.

In general, most students' responses expressed agreement with the positive statements of the survey, except for the significant disagreement of 22.2% of students who mostly did not understand the foreign teacher. It means almost a quarter of students could not fully follow the teacher's explanations.

Another one-third of the students (33.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with Question **6** that they could mostly understand the foreign teacher. However, another one-third of the students (33.3%) tended to agree and 11.1% fully agreed that they could mostly understand the foreign teacher. The difficulty with the students' listening comprehension had been expected by the school when it deliberately chose a foreign (not local) teacher for the English club. Thus, the students could improve their listening and speaking ability while overcoming the language barrier through contact with a foreigner. Some of the students were more able to reply to the teacher, especially closer to the end of the project.

In connection with Question 6, more than half of the students (59.2%) preferred to have a foreign teacher instead of a local one (see **Q7**). This meant that the class was more interesting, funny, and relaxing without any tests. The teacher was open-minded and actively interacted with the students, and had a foreign (not Chinese) accent and different cultural experiences. However, 37% had no preference in terms of a local or foreign teacher. A few students (3.7%) preferred a local teacher, assuming she or he would know the students' needs better.

Overall, this course met the expectations of the majority (70.3%) of the students (see **Q2**). Only 3.7% tended to disagree with this and 25.9% neither agreed nor disagreed here. A conclusive majority of the students (92.6%) agreed that they learned new vocabulary (see **Q3**) and new information about other countries (see **Q5**). Since the foreign teacher was a multicultural person with experience living in different cultures, the students asked about such different countries as the USA, the UK, Germany, France, Spain, Russia, Costa Rica and others. Furthermore, more than half of the students (59.2%) agreed that they often spoke in English (see **Q4**). However, one-third of the students (33.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this.

Next, 74% liked the variety of teaching materials used in the class such as PPTs, video clips, vocabulary games, board

games, and songs (see **Q8**). Different formats for quizzes are very popular among learners (Mello, 1997). According to Mello's classification categories, the quizzes used were in the Trivia and Culture category. Other types of quizzes used and administered via PPTs were "Fill in the Blanks" (for the song's lyrics) and "Multiple Choice" (trivia game) with easy, medium, and advanced levels of difficulty.

Najjar (1996) stated that "information presented via multimedia may be more novel and stimulating" [; however,] the novelty of multimedia information has a slight, temporary, positive effect on learning" (p. 3). He further noted that the success of multimedia can be explained through the Paivio's (1971) dual coding theory where "information is processed through one of two generally independent channels. One channel processes verbal information such as text or audio. The other channel processes nonverbal images such as illustrations and sounds in the environment. […] Information processed through both channels is called referential processing and has an additive effect on recall" (cited in Najjar 1996, p. 4). Therefore, double support has a double effect; however, the information in both channels should be closely related and supportive to facilitate the cognitive process of the learner. In recent research, this type of learning using technology in a blended traditional and non-traditional mannerway is often called "flipping the classroom", including group discussions, collaborative learning, and problem-based learning. The tools applied for such method are usually learning-based videos, quizzes, worksheets, etc. (Hung, 2015).

In Question **9**, 70.3% of the students felt that their English had improved through this course. However, 29.6% neither agreed nor disagreed with this. Above all, most students (77.7%) liked this English course for several reasons (see Q**1**): they could learn English (e.g., through English songs; the course was interesting and entertaining); they could interact with an enthusiastic teacher; and they learned a lot (e.g., vocabulary and cultural facts). In contrast, 22.2% neither agreed nor disagreed that they liked this course. In reply to

Question **11** (What do you like least in this class?), the students indicated several dislikes: first was writing worksheets, then learning vocabulary and answering questions, and lastly not understanding the teacher's instructions. However, 29.6% of the students could not identify anything they disliked in the class. In contrast, for Question **10,** the students indicated what they liked about the class, mostly learning vocabulary through English songs and playing board games.

The effectiveness and appropriateness of using songs and games in different age groups has been studied by many researchers (Al-Mamary, 1998; Barska, 2006; Dormann & Biddle, 2006; McCallum, 1980; Lo, 1998; Medina, 2003; Nguyen & Khuat, 2003; Sari, 2006; Tavil & Uşisaġ, 2009; Uberman, 1998; Yakovleva, 2010). The axiom states that the younger the learner, the more songs and games should be used to teach a foreign language in a fun and easy way (cf. Yakovleva, 2014). Later, teenage learners feel embarrassed about singing aloud in public, but they still remain interested in music. Thus, music that has recently been at the top of the charts should be played. However, older learners, especially seniors, sing foreign songs enthusiastically in the class (Chen, 2009). The lyrics of two songs were played as karaoke using video clips. Therefore, the visual cues facilitated the students' listening comprehension and retention because "video offers contextual support and/or helps learners to visualize words as well as meanings" (Canning-Wilson, 2000). According to Berk, there are several potential outcomes of the learning value of video clips: grabbing the students' attention; focusing the students' concentration; generating interest in the class; energizing or relaxing students for learning exercises; drawing on the students' imagination; improving attitudes toward content and learning; building a connection with other students and the instructor; setting an appropriate mood or tone; creating memorable visual images, etc. (Berk, 2009, p. 2).

In addition, the rhythm of the song helps students to easily remember the lyrics. In the aggregate, "verbal/linguistic

[reading, writing, speaking, listening, debating, discussing, and playing word games], visual/spatial [seeing, imagining], and musical/rhythmic [singing, listening to music] are core intelligences in every student's brain [engaging both hemispheres]" (Berk, 2009, p. 3). However, "Balatova's studies (1994) indicated that visual cues found in videos were informative and enhanced comprehension in general but did not necessarily stimulate the understanding of a text" (ref. Canning-Wilson, 2000). On the other hand, "video clips can be used to communicate with learners at a deeper level of understanding by touching their emotions" (Berk, 2009, p. 3).

Next, the cultural aspect was a component of all the classes, where the students were "*cultural explorers*" and the teacher was a "*cultural mediator*" or "*cultural negotiator*" while teaching intercultural competence. Usually, such competence has been developed through the contrast of one's own culture and a foreign culture. It is important that both the students and the teacher have "cultural awareness", i.e., "an insight" into values different from one's own to avoid possible cross-cultural misunderstandings (Hofstede, 1989; Byram, 1997). According to Hammerly's classification (1986), all three sub-categories for better understanding of culture have been implemented in the class: 1) **informational culture** about geography and history (e.g., the origin of Halloween); 2) **behavioral culture** about customs and values (e.g., favorite American foods, sports, etc.); and 3) **achievement culture** about literature and music (e.g., singing recent American music hits). The students were interested in all three cultural aspects, but they were more familiar with the last category because of the popular English-language songs whose lyrics they knew by heart.

It is important to mention that the **agency** aspect was highly emphasized in our English class to awaken the students' interest in the course. From a pedagogical perspective, **agency** in sociocultural theory is where the significance of the student's background is related to the object studied (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). It means that appealing to the student's own

experience about the discussed issues will enhance his/her motivation and ultimately lead to a more effective way of learning. Through the use of personalized questions, the students could express their own opinions or experiences on different issues (e.g., their desired travel destination). Furthermore, this contributed to their awareness of the value of the Taiwanese culture, which is their national identity, while diminishing Taiwanese society's unfortunate yet common attitude of the superiority of American or other Anglophone cultures. In Japan, for instance, the Ministry of Education (1998) stipulated that Japanese students should develop their awareness as a Japanese person in the international community while coexisting and interacting in an unbiased manner with other cultures (Kubota, 2002, p. 23). This approach is a good example that the Taiwanese educational system could follow.

According to Kubota's investigation (2002), there are at least three different opinions among many scholars with regard to whether learning English contributes to an international understanding of different cultures or instead focuses only on English-speaking countries and whether learning English develops cross-cultural communication skills rather than knowledge about world cultures. In fact, it depends on at least two or three factors, such as the course objective, the teacher's competence, and possibly the students' interest. Based on the author's observation, English taught in Taiwan by local and native speakers primarily focuses on language competence, and secondarily on cultural differences between Anglophone countries and Taiwan (some studies indicated this fact in other Asian countries). However, if the foreign teacher comes from a third, non-English-speaking country, usually at least three comparative aspects, local culture, culture of English-speaking countries, and culture of other non-English-speaking country(ies) will be studied in the class. Due to the teacher's experience of living in different countries around the world, the English class was often appropriately enriched by comparative discussions on different issues. Therefore, the students had the opportunity to develop not only English and

cross-cultural communication skills related to verbal and non-verbal behavior of the English-speaking countries, but also knowledge and possibly an understanding of other world cultures.

Referring back to the students' competence, only a few of van Ek's (1986) six types of competence have been practiced in the class. The *linguistic* competence was practiced primarily when the students produced and interpreted meaningful utterances applying grammatical rules. Furthermore, the *strategic* competence was sometimes used, but more so by the teacher when she tried to explain the meaning in different ways. The *social* competence was also developed in the students to some extent when they tried to interact with each other.

Next, the effectiveness of an English class depends not only on the teacher's proficiency and engagement but also on the student's motivation. This means that the student's motivation and initiative are more important than the teacher's "input" for more effective learning (van Lier, 2008). Therefore, the average score for students' motivation was 7 (out of 10), which is relatively high, indicating that the English club contributed to most students' learning progress.

## CONCLUSION

The curriculum for the elective English class was quite diverse, as it included different activities, e.g., games, quizzes, discussions, songs and the like. This diversity could motivate students and keep them interested through the whole two-hour class. Since it was an elective, supplementary English class, most students were highly motivated to attend it. As mentioned, they learned English in an active and fun way, through the use of computer-based multimedia (PPTs, video clips), various games, and quizzes that made language teaching and learning much more effective, motivating, challenging, and fast. The students also learned many new

facts about different cultures that broadened their horizons. It seemingly awakened their interest in exploring more cultures through foreign language learning. Even though there was no immediate effect of the applied method of Communicative Language Teaching on the students that could be observed through a (fluent) output of English language use in or outside the classroom, the passive knowledge they absorbed will remain and will have a long-term effect on their language use in the future. The questionnaire results and the teacher's observation showed that the English club was successful and effective for most of the students. The conclusive proof of successful teaching and the reward for the teacher was the question from the students, "Will we have this type of English club next year?"

# LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATION
# FOR FUTURE STUDY

One of the limitations of the study lies in the inability of the foreign teacher to communicate with the students fluently in Chinese, which could have been used for interviewing the students regarding their perceptions of the teaching. The results of such an interview would provide deeper understanding of the students' concerns about learning English. Through open-ended or multiple-choice questions, further studies could investigate the students' motivations for learning English, their expectations of the course, and the differences such a course might have made.

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# Appendix I

| Question<br>問題 | Strongly<br>Agree<br>非常同意 | Tend to<br>agree<br>同意 | Neither agree<br>nor disagree<br>沒意見 | Tend to<br>disagree<br>不同意 | Strongly<br>disagree<br>非常不同意 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I like this English course. **Why?** 我喜歡這堂英語課 為什麼? | 48.1% | 29.6% | 22.2% | | |
| 2.This course meets my expectations 這堂課滿足了我的期望 | 25.9% | 44.4% | 25.9% | 3.7% | |
| 3. I learn a lot of new vocabulary 我學到很多新的單字 | 59.3% | 33.3% | 7.4% | | |
| 4. We often have English talk 我們常常用英語交談 | 40.7% | 18.5% | 33.3% | 7.4% | |
| 5. I learn new information about other countries 我學到關於其他國家的新資訊 | 51.9% | 40.7% | 7.4% | | |
| 6. I can mostly understand the foreign teacher 我幾乎都能了解外籍老師說的話 | 11.1% | 33.3% | 33.3% | 22.2% | |
| 7. I prefer to have a foreign English teacher instead of local teacher. **Why?** 我比較喜歡外籍老師而不是台灣老師。為什麼? | 44.4% | 14.8% | 37% | 3.7% | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. I like the teaching materials. **Why?** 我喜歡上課使用的教材。為什麼? | 40.7% | 33.3% | 25.9% | | |
| 9. My English has been improved through this course. 透過這堂課，我的英文變好了 | 37% | 33.3% | 29.6% | | |
| 10. What do you like most in this class? 妳最喜歡這堂課的哪些事情? | | | | | |
| 11. What do you like least in this class? 你最不喜歡這堂課的哪些事情? | | | | | |
| 12. Rate you motivation from 1 to 10 (1 = I don't care/10 = highly motivated) 從1-10選出你學習英文的動機高低(越靠近10代表動機越高): **Average Mean: 7.24** | | | | | |

# Appendix II
# Itinerary for English Club

**Oct 29th**
1. Introduction of myself through students' Wh-Qs (15 min)
2. Introduction of students in pairs: *We have ...... in common* (30 min)
3. History of Halloween (20 min)
4. Proverbs (15 min)
5. Taboo game (10 min) (Goal: guess an unspeakable word; use synonyms to describe taboo word; learn new words)

**Nov 26th**
1. Three things happened during one month (20 min)
2. History of Thanksgiving (Videos: http://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving) (15 min)
3. Riddles (10 min)
4. Idioms and Slang in conversation (25 min)
5. Make your own conversation with introduced vocabulary (15 min)
6. Taboo game (5 min)

**March 25th**
1. Chinese New Year terminology (PowerPoint, 7 min)
2. Interesting facts about English-speaking countries (UK, USA 30 min)
3. Beautiful sites (8 min)
4. Cultural differences (PowerPoint) + Quiz (15min)
5. Cultural meaning of numbers (5 min)
6. My travel destination (students' quiz) (25 min)

**April 29th**
Board Games (groups will change the game)
Objective: No Chinese; Speak English, Play and Have Fun!
1. Monopoly (3-4 sets) (Goal: manage your property and money well) (45 min)
2. Scrabble (2-3 sets) (Goal: build English words, expand your vocabulary) (42 min)
3. Feedback (3 min)

## May 27th

1. My world–Internet + Text Message (PowerPoint) + Emoticons (create new emoticons) (Write your short text message, explain) (30 min)
2. English pop song (Fill in the blanks in the lyrics; sing karaoke) (15 min)
3. My World–Sport (30 min)
4. Taboo game (15 min)

## June 24th

1. My World–Money (12 min)
2. Mime words (12 min)
3. Trivial Pursuit (PowerPoint) (12 min)
4. Preposition Exercise (9 min)
5. English pop song (Fill in the blanks in the lyrics; sing karaoke) (15 min)
6. Topics for debate (15 min)
7. Fill out survey (15 min)

# Appendix III
# Lady Antebellum－Need You Now

_____ perfect memories

scattered _____ _____ the floor

Reaching for the _____ 'cause I can't fight it _____

And I wonder if I ever _____ your _____

For me it happens all the time

It's a _____ after one, I'm all alone and I need you now

Said I wouldn't call but I _____ all _____ and I need you now

And I don't _____ how I can do without

I just need you now

_____ shot of whiskey can't stop _____ at the door

Wishing you'd come sweeping in the way you did _____

And I wonder if I ever cross your _____

For me it _____ all the time

It's a quarter after one, I'm a little _____ and I need you now

Said I wouldn't call but I lost _____ control and I need you now

And I don't know _____ I can do without

I just need you now

_____ I'd rather hurt than feel nothin' at all

It's a quarter after one I'm all alone and I need you now

And I said I wouldn't _____ but I'm a _____ drunk and I need you now

And I don't know how I can do _____

I just need you now

I just need you now

Ooo, _____, I need you now

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# The Wenzao Desk Internship Program: Building Multicultural Skills for the Workplace

## Pai-Hsien Aiden Yeh

## INTRODUCTION

Internationalization in higher education worldwide has been continuously gaining an upward momentum as more and more institutions engage in international student mobility and exchange programs. The term "mobility" can mean different things depending on the duration of a program i.e., short or long time (one semester or two, or even, in some cases, years) and the type of academic program (credit-based, diploma or degree-based full-time study program). This study will use the definition given by Kehm (2005) which refers to "mobility" as a limited period (six to twelve months) of study in an international environment. Such mobility involves both inbound and outbound exchange where international students attend local institutions, and local students go abroad either for a semester or a year-long program for academic credit while still being enrolled at their home institution. Various academic programs have been designed and developed to meet the growing demand of students, faculty, and policy makers for robust programs that ensure the delivery of effective international learning experiences. These programs include student exchange for undergraduates and graduates, short intensive learning modules i.e., summer or winter courses, service learning or voluntary service opportunities, international collaborative research projects, and student internships. Due to the wide scope the programs encompass, they have positive ramifications for individual students, the schools, private and public organizations, and society in general (Altbach & Knight, 2007). International mobility

allows students to experience living in a completely different environment, immersing themselves in a foreign culture, learning and speaking a foreign language, thus giving them more insights into, and empathy for, people of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Their overseas experiences endow them with greater intercultural competencies than they might otherwise possess (Marcotte, Desroches & Poupart, 2007; Kim & Goldstein, 2005). One of the goals of providing international internship opportunities for students is to give them the necessary exposure to different work environments while experiencing and dealing with other cultures and languages. It goes without saying that, during this process, interpersonal skills should be developed at the same time. And in today's globalized contexts, communicating and working with people from different cultures can be professionally challenging and, in some cases, emotionally difficult. This study focuses on a unique internship program called Wenzao Desk which is offered by the only university in Taiwan that specializes in language education. Wenzao Desk was created so that students can build their cross-cultural competence while they do their internship in a foreign country. Under this initiative, Wenzao students serve as Taiwan cultural ambassadors whereby they teach Chinese i.e., Mandarin (the official language of Taiwan) and aspects of Taiwanese culture. Wenzao Desk is, in so many ways, a window to understanding Taiwan and its people. Traveling to another country and living there for 5 months, or even up to a year, can be overwhelming and pushes them out of their comfort zones. This poses potential challenges, that provide learning opportunities, and not necessarily create barriers to living and working in other cultures. This paper examines the outcome of students' international internship experiences based on the feedback reports they submitted after their internship had been completed.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

The 2016 Top Markets Report Education conducted on Taiwan by the International Trade Administration (ITA), Department of Commerce of the United States of America (2016), states that for the past 20 years, Taiwan has been among the top senders of international students, and in the 2014/15 academic year, it was the "seventh leading source of students studying in the United States" (par. 1). It is not only the sending of students to other countries that the Taiwan government is keen on enhancing; it has also been active in promoting the increasing number of international student enrollments. In 2016, there were more than 110,000 overseas students enrolled at universities in Taiwan (Ministry of Education [MOE] Statistics Summary, 2017). Looking at these statistics, the number of inbound students has clearly been on the rise. Smith (2017) reports that a huge number of these students come from ASEAN countries, and that Malaysian students accounted for more than half of these in 2015.

| | Non-citizen Students in Universities, Colleges and Junior Colleges | | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | | | | | | | | Unit:Person |
| Year | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
| Grand Total | 30,509 | 33,582 | 39,533 | 45,413 | 57,920 | 66,961 | 79,730 | 93,645 | ①111,340 | 116,416 |
| Diploma | 16,195 | 17,758 | 20,676 | 22,438 | 25,107 | 28,696 | 33,286 | 40,078 | ②46,470 | 51,741 |
| Studying for a degree | 5,259 | 6,258 | 7,764 | 8,801 | 10,059 | 11,554 | 12,597 | 14,063 | 15,792 | 17,788 |
| Overseas Compatriot Students (Including Students from Hong Kong and Macao) | 10,936 | 11,500 | 12,912 | 13,637 | 14,120 | 15,278 | 17,135 | 20,134 | ②22,865 | 24,626 |
| Mainland China Students (Studying for a Degree) | – | – | – | – | 928 | 1,864 | 3,554 | 5,881 | 7,813 | 9,327 |
| Non-diploma | 14,314 | 15,824 | 18,857 | 22,975 | 32,813 | 38,265 | 46,444 | 53,567 | ⑥64,870 | 64,675 |
| International Exchange | 1,441 | 1,732 | 2,069 | 2,259 | 3,301 | 3,871 | 3,626 | 3,743 | ④4,126 | 4,126 |
| Short-term courses | 1,146 | 1,258 | 1,307 | 1,604 | 2,265 | 3,163 | 3,915 | 4,758 | ⑤5,586 | 5,586 |
| Studying Mandarin Chinese | 10,177 | 10,651 | 11,612 | 12,555 | 14,480 | 13,898 | 15,510 | 15,526 | 18,645 | 19,977 |
| Mainland China Students (to take short-term courses or Attend Meeting) | 823 | 1,321 | 2,888 | 5,316 | 11,227 | 15,590 | 21,233 | 27,030 | 34,114 | 32,648 |
| Overseas Compatriot Youth Technical Training Classes | 727 | 862 | 981 | 1,241 | 1,540 | 1,743 | 2,160 | 2,510 | 2,399 | 2,338 |

**Figure 1:** Statistics Summary
(Source: Ministry of Education [MOE] Statistics Summary, 2017)

Several studies conducted on student mobility programs indicate how such initiatives can enhance post-graduation international work opportunities for the participants (Kehm, 2005; Li & Bray, 2007; Teichler & Janson, 2007), boost intercultural competence, develop cross-cultural and

technical/professional knowledge which trickles down to benefit their home countries upon their return (Naidoo, 2006; Baruch, Budhwar & Khatri, 2007; Tremblay, 2005). All this has serious implications for countries in South East Asia, particularly for some ASEAN countries, where intellectual and social capital is still in its early stages of development. Fan and Feng's study (2012) looked at Taiwanese university students' personality traits and (the enhanced) motivation for overseas internships. Using questionnaires administered to 131 students, the results show that it is a sense of excitement and gaining self-satisfaction that push students to be more open to traveling and experiencing something new and different. Tse's research (2010) looked into the perspectives of Hospitality major students (n=279) on the importance and value of internships in the Hospitality Industry, and how such programs can better prepare them for future work.

A Central News article reported by Liu Decang (2017) on Taiwan student internships in Thailand states that the MOE plans to encourage more young people to do their practicum overseas because students who have had such an experience claim that internships increased their international outlook and, along with their workplace experience, opened up many possibilities for overseas employment. He (2015) from the United Daily News (UDN) published an article on the MOE's implementation of the "Xuehai" program where excellent students were chosen to go abroad for internship in foreign enterprises and institutions, and how these students are considered to be more "able" than those who have had only limited local part-time work experience. Lin (2006) reported about the plans of the MOE to provide travel grants for students (training to become Mandarin teachers) doing overseas internships to avail themselves of the opportunity to teach Chinese to foreigners. With such encouragement and aid from the MOE, many Taiwanese universities have set up such programs. Yet, surprisingly there have been only a handful of publications on teaching Mandarin, e.g. the article published by Nownews.com on the *Myths behind Taiwan's Teaching*

*Chinese Training Program as compared to Beijing's Chinese Pronunciation Standards* (2008). There is apparently little research on credit-based internship programs, and no formal academic study has so far been conducted and published on the outcomes of the Wenzao Desk program; this chapter focuses on the multicultural skills that students acquire from their international internship experience.

# BACKGROUND

### The Wenzao Desk Internship Program

The Wenzao Desk is a unique program that offers students practical opportunities to study, work and learn with partner institutions overseas. Qualified students go through a rigid process that includes submission of application forms, a resume, a personal essay outlining the reasons for applying, meeting language proficiency requirements, and an interview before a panel of teachers where the applicants have to demonstrate their interest and their "unique selling point" for the limited number of placements. In other words, they have to satisfy the faculty panel screening them and to prove that they have got the appropriate attitude and aptitude, necessary qualifications, and the suitable character for international internship mobility program. This selection process is rigorous since the program provides grants, airfares, accommodation, and meals.

The Wenzao Desk aims to expand students' global vision and enhance their international experience, provide an opportunity to hone their proficiency in a second or third language, and use their interpersonal skills to adapt and embrace a culture different to theirs. This should broaden their intercultural knowledge and skills–all these are very much needed in today's highly global competitive work environment.

While the Office of International and Cross-Strait Cooperation (OICC) sends out a list of application requirements, such as the ones below, the details of the "job

requirements" are stipulated by and negotiated with the partner institutions.

1. Number of practicum placements (slots) available for Wenzao students
2. Language requirements
3. Conditions: Accommodations, meals, etc.
4. Length/duration of practicum: one semester or two semesters, please specify number of months
5. Practicum details (Practicum location, role/job specifications, etc.)
6. Application deadline
7. Application submission contact person (address and email)
8. Other relevant information.
   Wenzao students may serve as:
   a) Coordinate to facilitate the teaching and cultural programs at the host institution
   b) Liaison officer between both institutions, for example, organizing faculty and student group visits
   c) Administrator for clerical affairs assigned by the host institution–job rotation among different offices may be possible in order to gain diverse on-hand experiences.

The duties of each stationed representative are not necessarily limited to the descriptions stated above. These can be adjusted in accordance with actual operational circumstances by mutual agreement of both institutions. It is taken for granted that the safety in the workplace must be considered as a top priority. There is an assigned Coordinator who is responsible for the selection of suitable nominees. It is understood that the Coordinator will nominate candidates who are academically and emotionally suitable for overseas exchanges, and that details of the candidate's academic and personal background, as well as references, will be provided to the host institution prior to the commencement of the internship.

The Wenzao Desk expects the host institution to provide assistance with the interns' board and lodging needs, and offer suitable alternative arrangements in the event of a limited supply of housing facilities. The host institution also arranges adequate insurance for the stationed representative during the period of service. At the end of the "posting", an evaluation is conducted by both institutions and the result is made available within two weeks after the completion of the service. A certificate issued by the home institution is awarded provided a satisfactory result has been achieved viz. the aims of the program have been met.

The following list is an example of an internship placement from a partner institution in Southeast Asia.

### Intern to be placed in the Business Faculty

1. Number of placement in the Faculty of Business: 2
2. Fluent in English (minimum TOEFL score 550) with GPA min 3.00 (out of 4)
3. Accomodation will be provided near the main campus
4. Duration 4 months.
5. The candidates will assist the Mandarin and English lecturer to teach undergraduate students to hold daily conversations in Mandarin and English. The candidates will also help with the administration in the Faculty of Business. Working hours: 40 a week.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before identifying what multicultural and other transferable skills students develop during internships, it is important to define a few basic terms, such as the difference between multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural, and what multicultural competence means. The Oxford Dictionary (2017) provides the following definitions:

- **Multicultural:** relating to or containing several cultural or ethnic groups within a society: *multicultural education*
- **Cross-cultural**: relating to different cultures or comparison between them: *cross-cultural understanding*
- **Intercultural**: taking place between cultures or derived from different cultures: *intercultural communication.*

Schriefer (2017) postulates that multicultural refers to "a society that contains several cultural or ethnic groups" (par. 3) and that people in that community co-exist but "each cultural group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with each other" (par. 3). Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2003) posit that to possess a multicultural ideology would mean exhibiting positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Schriefer (ibid) describes intercultural as "communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures", and that to engage in intercultural communication would suggest a "mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships" (par. 4). In other words, to obtain multicultural skills, people need to have the knowledge and awareness of who and what the other cultural and ethnic groups are, while intercultural skills help people to live and work with others who come from very different cultural backgrounds (Landis & Bhagat, 1996). To be able to do that, change in behavior is necessary as people blend across cultures. Due to increasing cultural diversity within many higher education institutions, the need for these skills and competencies has become even more imperative.

Pritchard (1999, cited in Connerly & Pederson, 2005) considers such competencies as the "knowledge, skills, abilities, personal characteristics, and other person-based factors that help distinguish between outstanding performance and average performance" (p. 70). Multicultural competence would then appertain to possessing an ability to effectively and successfully mediate cross-cultural differences in order to attain defined goals (Vaughn, 2007). Although international

mobility can result in encountering different cultures, Paige (1993) argues that not all intercultural encounters lead to developing students' multicultural competence but can, sometimes, reinforce built-in stereotypes and prejudices; particularly, if their experiences are deemed personally irrelevant and meaningless. For students to be able to gain positively from their intercultural experiences and thereby to learn new skills, they need to consolidate their individual experiences with people from other cultures (Brewer, 1996). Intercultural competence can be manifested if there is a change in their knowledge (cognition), attitudes (emotions), and skills (behavior) that enable them to act appropriately, interact effectively and engage in conversations with people of other cultures (Dignes & Baldwin, 1996). As Bhawuk and Brislin (1992) point out, "To be effective in another culture, people must be interested in other cultures, be sensitive enough to notice cultural differences, and then also be willing to modify their behavior as an indication of respect for the people of other cultures" (p. 416). In other words, intercultural sensitivity is highly correlated with the likelihood of exhibiting intercultural competence.

The theoretical framework on multicultural competencies is based on Sue, Arredondo and McDavis's (1992) report that such competencies should include awareness, knowledge about culture, and work-related skills. Awareness grounded on accurate opinions, attitudes and values can develop one's emphatic understanding and respect towards others (Pedersen, 1997). Cultural knowledge provides factual information that helps people to develop their cultural skills i.e., to adapt, adopt, and change in multicultural situations where their behavior is guided by accurate information and life experiences, and not simply based on false assumptions.

The framework for intercultural competence used in this study is founded on Kuhlmann and Stahl's (1998, cited in Connerly, 2005, p. 73) research that included samples from various cultures which expands their findings' generalizability factor:

- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Behavioral flexibility
- Goal orientation
- Sociability and interest in other people
- Empathy
- Non-judgementalness
- Meta-communication skills.

Possessing and developing these competencies should be beneficial to better prepare and equip people to interact in multicultural environments. According to Mendenhall and Oddou (1985), there are certain skills that are needed to be successful in a new culture. These are skills related to how people maintain one's self, i.e., mental health, psychological well-being, stress reduction, feelings of self-confidence while also exhibiting skills needed to cultivate healthy relationships with others living in the host country. All these require correct understanding of the new cultural environment and its social norms. This relates to Gertsen's cross-cultural dimensions based on a study involving expatriates (1990, p. 346). These are:

1. an affective dimension (awareness, personality traits and attitudes)
2. a cognitive dimension (how individuals acquire and categorize cultural knowledge)
3. a communicative, behavioral dimension (being an effective communicator).

Specific cross-cultural traits, i.e., awareness, knowledge and skills, presented by LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993, p. 396) propose that to be culturally competent people have to:

(1) possess a strong personal identity
(2) have knowledge of and facility with the beliefs and values of the culture
(3) display sensitivity to the affective processes of the culture
(4) communicate clearly in the language of the given

cultural group

(5) perform specially sanctioned behavior

(6) maintain active social relations within the cultural group

(7) negotiate the institutional structures of that culture.

Demonstrating these skills enables them to effectively engage in cross-cultural interaction, minimize misunderstandings, and avoid displaying inappropriate behavior. The competencies mentioned above were used in analyzing the data collected in this study, which is interpretive in nature and based on qualitative data using the Wenzao Desk internship feedback submitted by students who have completed the program. The performance feedback is a self-assessment of competence which provides an insight into their experiences of and perspectives on their internship. The qualitative approach of the study is grounded on Shutz's social phenomenology (1967) that explores subjective experience and social relationships, where people ascribe meaning to a situation and then make judgements, and provide an overall evaluation of their experiences. The collected data for this study were collated, coded, interpreted, and analyzed (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) using the multicultural, cross-cultural, and intercultural competencies mentioned above.

The following section discusses the methodology, i.e., process of data collection.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Using the deductive approach, what specific multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural competencies were acquired during the internship period?

2. What lessons were learnt from the internship experience?

3.  Using the inductive approach, what themes were highlighted that were relevant to the internship experience?

Data were collected from the Wenzao Desk Internship feedback form that the students submitted at the end of their internship program. Feedback reports collected were from years 2011 to 2016. The following table shows the total number of interns who were accepted and pursued international internships through the Wenzao Desk.

**Table 1.**  Wenzao Desk data collected from feedback reports

| School Year | Number of Students Enrolled | |
|---|---|---|
| | First Semester | Second Semester |
| 1.  2016 | 6 | 7 |
| 2.  2015 | 8 | 6 |
| 3.  2014 | 7 | 4 |
| 4.  2013 | 6 | 5 |
| 5.  2012 | 5 | 6 |

The partner institutions which agreed to receive student interns under the Wenzao Desk Program are located in the following countries: Thailand (Bangkok), France, The Czech Republic, and United Kingdom. Out of the total number (n=61) of students from academic year 2012-2016, only twenty feedback reports (n=20) were retrieved from the International Office and used as data for this study. The following list shows the number of feedback reports from each country:

1.  Bangkok                  n=7
2.  France                   n=8
3.  The Czech Republic     n=1
4.  UK        n=4
Total:     n= 20

Students whose feedback reports were collected are from the following academic departments: French, Japanese, Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language Department, German, English, Foreign Language Instruction Department, and Spanish.

In the feedback report form, students were asked to describe their experiences based on the following items:

1. 行前準備 Preparation for departure. (可就出國前準備、簽證之辦理、接機等準備事項進行陳述) (This section may include the pre-departure procedures, visa application, airport pickup etc.)
2. 實習學校/單位簡介Introduction of the host institution
3. 實習生可享有的福利、可參與的活動或相關項目. (可包含是否提供膳宿、可否修課或旁聽課程、使用圖書館、參加學校活動等). (This section may include the privileges student received and the events attended, and so on; e.g. how board and lodgings were provided, courses taken or audited, the access to the library and the participation in school events.)
4. 實習活動/工作內容介紹 Description of the internship program. (請盡可能詳述負責工作/內容/曾遭遇的工作困難等). (This section may include details about job duties/responsibilities and difficulties encountered.)
5. 國外實習之日常生活 Daily life experience.(可就實習學校之生活環境、住宿、交通、飲食及各項支出費用等事項進行陳述。 (This section may include details about the living environment, residential life, transport, food, and living costs, etc.)
6. 實習之具體效益(請條列式列舉) Advantages gained from this internship
7. 感想與建議 Overall comments, suggestions and recommendations.

In analyzing the students' feedback reports, a combined technique of inductive and deductive thematic analysis was

used. The interpretive approach is subjective in nature but it is in line with retaining the participants' subjective view and recognizing the context within which the details of the content provided in their reports were studied (Leininger, 1994). The participants' reflections and opinions, expressed in their own words, have been treated as raw data which underwent a repetition of reviews (reading and re-reading of data) and text analysis where overarching themes and patterns from coded data were retrieved and categorized. They were then used in the data analysis supported by excerpts or quotations from the raw data to ensure that data interpretations were linked to the participants' own narratives (Rice and Ezzy, 1999). The method of analysis for this study was a thematic analysis of both the data-driven inductive approach (Boyatzis, 1998) and a deductive approach (Crabtree and Miller, 1999) where pre-existing codes were outlined. The coding process for the inductive approach involved looking at important/relevant points from the text grounded in the original data and encoding them for interpretation and thematic analysis. The deductive approach involved an outline of codes using the multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural competencies theoretical framework as a means of organizing the texts from the participants' reports for analysis and interpretation.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## Research Question 1: Using the deductive approach, what specific multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural competencies were acquired during the internship period?

In answering research question 1, the deductive approach based on a multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural competencies theoretical framework was used i.e., affective dimension, cognitive dimension, communicative, behavioral (skills) dimension; the codes were derived from the list and used as categories for analyzing the data (see Table 2).

**Table 2.**　Multicultural, Cross-cultural, Intercultural
Competencies Categories

| Gertsen's cross-cultural dimensions (1990, p. 346) | | |
|---|---|---|
| AFFECTIVE DIMENSION (AD) | COGNITIVE DIMENSION (CD) | COMMUNICATIVE, BEHAVIORAL (SKILLS) DIMENSION (CBD) |
| <ul><li>Awareness</li><li>Personality traits</li><li>Attitudes</li><li>Emotions.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Cultural knowledge</li><li>Factual information.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Tolerance for ambiguity and yet possess a strong personal identity</li><li>Behavioral flexibility, perform specially sanctioned behavior</li><li>Goal orientation</li><li>Sociability and interest in other people, maintain active social relations within the cultural group</li><li>Empathy, display sensitivity to the affective processes of the culture</li><li>Non-judgementalness, have knowledge of and facility with the beliefs and values of the culture</li><li>Meta-communication skills, communicate clearly in the language of the given cultural group, negotiate the institutional structures of that culture</li></ul><br>Kuhlmann and Stahl (1998 cited in Connerly, 2004, p. 73); LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993, p. 396). |

## 1. Affective Dimension (AD)
### *Awareness of Cross-cultural skills/ Comparison: similarities and differences*

By being in a foreign place and by experiencing the city, its people, its culture, by getting involved in the locals' way of life, and observing how things are done, one can see the commonalities, similarities and differences between the host institution's culture and Taiwan's. One intern from The Czech Republic wrote,

> *The Czech school system is also different from Taiwan, students can always give up a pre-requisite class if it is not interesting or, for whatever reason they may have, for not taking it; students will decisively give up the course. For them, the class means spending their time, if the teacher is not ready, they do not have to come back, so once again it is good to stress that pre-class preparation is very important.*

An intern in the UK, commenting on work ethics wrote, "*In Wenzao, we all keep practicing how to work as a team but here they prefer that we finish our own work and then be more independent but still need to considerate of others*." Another intern, also based in the UK, shared her insights on language differences, i.e., contrast between British and American English. She noted the word "term" versus "semester" and how dissimilar the academic schedule is from that of Taiwan. She wrote,

> *The different thing here is "term" (or a semester as we call it in Taiwan). Between each term, there will be few weeks holiday like Easter holiday then next term will start, after running the half term there will be a short holiday about a week so that staff, teachers and students can have a good break. In the UK they have "bank holiday" that falls only on*

*certain days, sometimes during the week sometimes on the weekend.*

Another intern observed how the British people feel about their tea; she noted,

*Cup of tea–which is the super important thing for English people, they cannot live without it. This is really interesting and as a foreigner, we can understand how different our concept of proper tea is or even tea set–it is completely different from how we make our tea.*

Another intern observed a few phrases that British people love to say. She made a few observations that her colleagues would say to her, *"When describing something is okay or acceptable, they would say 'brilliant or lovely'; if they experienced a colder weather, they would say 'chilly'; to say 'thank you', you would say 'cheers'; it really is very interesting."* Another commented on living with host families and how they welcomed her, took her to places, and what it meant for her. She wrote,

*Sometimes my host family does not have time to drive me or help us run errands, so they taught me how to take a bus or train, but you need to be aware of price and time. Where we live is very near the town, and we can explore local shops and stores. Because I live with a host family, I don't need to spend too much money on food.*

There is a given assumption that when students enrol on an international internship, they will be travelling abroad and will be immersed in a new culture for a period of time. It is vital that they have cultural self–and other-awareness, positive attitudes toward their own culture and toward differences in cultural values and biases, and good psychological well-being

so they can handle the stress of new jobs/roles, as well as the possible loneliness of being away from family and friends.

### Feeling Lonely and Anxious

In the 20 feedback reports, all the student interns expressed going through some form of loneliness. As one student interning in Bangkok wrote: "*in this internship period, I was the only one from Wenzao, so I felt lonely sometimes, but the Thai teachers and new foreign friends that I met kept me company, and that helped a lot.*" Below are some other examples of how students dealt with feeling lonely:

### Ways to cope with loneliness
- after class, I would join other students and friends for a meal
- joined Bible Studies as a way to socialize and interact with Thai and foreign friends
- go out with homestay family for a walk or short trip out of the city
- hang out with colleagues for a cup of coffee or a meal
- in my free time, I'd go and check out the shops or walk in the park
- call my Taiwanese friends and family via Line or FaceBook (FB) messenger.

Another interesting finding was that all interns had felt a degree of anxiety, uncertainty, and fear, particularly when it came to doing their job or when dealing with other responsibilities as seen in this feedback, "*In the beginning of the internship, I was afraid and unsure of what to do (what to teach, how to teach …) but later on gained confidence; Thai teachers are friendly and are always willing to help.*" Another example is when an intern felt stressed when she learned that the students she would be teaching were almost her age, and she was teaching them English oral practice. Eventually, she discovered that she could teach and felt relieved at overcoming her fear, "… *so in the beginning, I was very worried about my*

*limited English knowledge and was over thinking about what they would think of me, but later on after so many lessons and meetings, I found that I could teach Basic English conversation."*

### Personality trait: preparedness

One key finding was the high level of preparation required prior to leaving the home country. Being prepared is a positive skill that was evident in all the 20 interns, particularly as they went through the process of visa applications, collecting documentation, booking flights, packing, etc. One intern who went to France wrote: *"Before I left for France, I checked the information on the Internet, like how to get a visa, how to buy a travel agency tickets and so on."*

### Intrinsic motivation to learn about foreign languages and cultures

Learning the language of the host country can help in communicating with the locals and to build relationships. However, it is not easy to learn a new foreign language. So, when students take the initiative to learn and show a willingness to improve and really embrace the language, it shows tenacity and intrinsic motivation. One intern based in France expressed her love for the French language i.e., listening, reading, writing, and speaking. She wrote, *"And my writing teachers would help me practice. I am a French student, and I have been learning French for 3 years, so I took the initiative to inform my French teacher to help me prepare for DELF B1 class and they were willing to adjust the class content for me."* She also highlighted her appreciation for the opportunity to see another country: *"I like to go to different places so when the school arranged for short trips, I signed up and I also took every opportunity to see the many beautiful places in France; I talked to the locals and spoke French, so in many ways my French improved, too."*

Students were also keen about being healthy and eating healthy food. One student in Bangkok wrote about her love for

authentic Thai: *"I like Thai culture, so going to Thailand was really great as I also hoped to travel and experience the exotic Thai culture."* For many who went to Bangkok, their reactions toward Thai teachers were all positive–many have expressed how they were taken care of, and that this made them feel at ease and paved the way for developing close relationships. One student got so busy with the pre-departure document preparation that she forgot to bring a Taiwanese/Chinese national costume with her. She got fearful that she would be scolded, but instead one of the Thai teachers lent her a costume, and she realized that Thai teachers tended be lenient, solution-oriented, and displayed empathy.

## Cognitive Dimension (CD)

In this dimension, it is relevant to gain knowledge about the new or host country based on factual information and through experiential learning. As mentioned above, interns need to have multicultural competencies in order to be culturally effective. A high cultural sensitivity to others' cultural backgrounds can equip them with the know-how to behave appropriately. Knowledge can be gained from reading culturally-specific materials from books or online sources. All of the interns usually do some reading about the place that they will be going to, and that gives them an idea of what to expect and what things to avoid or not do. However, knowing just by reading is not enough and can be limited/and limiting. Being exposed to the culture and actually being there and engaging with others, can be more meaningful and provide more useful knowledge. The following excerpts from the feedback reports provide descriptive information about what the interns know concerning the partner institutions' background, surrounding areas, their accommodation, local transportation, etc., –all of which were gained from their direct exposure to the target culture.

Knowledge of the university environment i.e., convenience stores and other facilities:

> One intern wrote, *"There are many shops in the school; there are McDonald's, convenience stores, 3C supplies stores and other small restaurants. Although the school is located in the suburbs of Bangkok, campus life can still be very convenient."*

Knowing the area near the accommodation:

> It is only when the interns arrive in their internship location that they can have a sense of the place. All the reports revealed the importance of knowing where the supermarkets are, how far or near the police station is, where the bus stops are, where to flag down a taxi, the nearest convenience store, etc.

Knowledge about getting around i.e., transportation, shopping

> One intern wrote that the transportation and traffic congestion in Bangkok can be a serious problem, but there are many different means of transport: BTS, MRT, tuk tuk, double cars, motorcycle taxi, bus and general buses. The fares are cheap and affordable, but one must be careful of devious drivers. She wrote, *"the moment you get in a taxi, you need to say "by meter", otherwise they will not flag down the meter and give you a fixed rate which could be way too much compared to what it may ordinarily cost."* Another intern wrote about the abundance of night markets and shopping areas in Bangkok, and it is a normal to go shopping in the evening.

Knowledge about local food:

> The excerpt below shows the intern's knowledge of local food i.e., whether it is spicy or oily. Such knowledge can be acquired even before traveling to the country especially if "specialty" restaurants are available in Taiwan. For instance, there is an abundance of Thai restaurants in Taiwan. Nonetheless, authentic food is best experienced by traveling to the country. It is the sights and sounds of the place that add to its exoticness and unique culinary experience.

> *Thai food can be too hot and cold-based (sic). Thai people prefer stronger and heavy taste, often seen in the food stalls or restaurants–many dishes have a range of seasonings, spicy oil, vinegar, salt, and even sugar, adding to the unique but authentically Thai taste. I did not have the courage to try; it's an acquired taste I think, but I prefer the natural taste of food so seasoning for me is unnecessary.*

## 2. Communicative and Behavioral Dimension (CBD)

The Behavioral Dimension includes communicative skills and other behaviors manifested or displayed in multicultural environments and situations where intercultural and cross-cultural communications take place. Students who have exhibited any of the following could mean that they have the skills to behave appropriately when interacting with people from other cultures or ethnic backgrounds.

### *Sociability and interest in other people*

All 20 participants in the study wrote about their excitement at meeting people from other countries, and that they made a point of maintaining an active social life i.e., having a meal out, being with new friends to feel happy and less lonely.

One student wrote, *"I go out with friends and go shopping in local malls."* Another student revealed that this internship offers many exciting opportunities to get to know people, *"I think this was a very interesting experience; it also allowed me to meet many foreigners. I am now less shy."*

### Tolerance for ambiguity and yet possess a strong personal identity

The following quotation from a student's report is an example of where she experienced a taxi ride fiasco and how she learned to negotiate with taxi drivers using the Thai language whenever they wanted to extort a higher fare; she also learned how to take the tricycle–a local mode of transportation that looks like a scooter with three wheels and a passenger seat. She wrote, *"At the beginning, I used to ride a taxi but had experience with a few drivers who wanted to increase the fare by not using the flag down rate. So, from that time on, I started taking a motorcycle taxi. The fare is about 30 Baht; it takes 10 minutes to arrive at my destination; fast and convenient, especially when there's traffic jams. For me, the motorcycle taxi is the most convenient means of transport."* This intern had a high tolerance for situations where dubious taxi drivers seem to get their way–something that is commonly seen in Bangkok; she accepted this as part of her cultural learning experience.

### Being in a multicultural environment

In some situations, moving to a new country or a new workplace does not guarantee that one will be in a multicultural environment. True, the culture and language may be foreign, but a plurality of cultures is not a given, particularly in homogenous areas where most people come from a single ethnic background. In the locations where Wenzao students have served their internship, all have been sent to places where multicultural environments are highly visible. This is what some of the students said about being in a multicultural situation even when they least thought that it was

even possible. One intern in France wrote, *"St. Denis is an international High School where one does not only have contact with the French, but with people from other countries as well. We all live in the teachers' dormitory (sic); I think this is a great opportunity to practice one's language skills. One can see different cultures in St. Denis High School."* Another similar situation happened to one intern in Bangkok. She wrote, "*I know from Lifepoint (assigned accommodation), there are people from many countries, including Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Myanmar, Philippines, Cambodia, China, Russia, USA ... and so on. Every week you will see familiar faces, and sometimes there will be a new face; we come and go*." Another intern in Bangkok also thinks that Bangkok is a melting pot that attracts foreigners from all over the world, and she adds that *"it was an exciting experience to teach English to friends from Lithuania–in Bangkok!"* This student never imagined that she would have the chance to meet Lithuanians and to teach them English in Bangkok.

## Research Question 2: What lessons were learnt from the internship experience?

The majority of interns report that they learned a great deal from their experiences. In addition to skills that had to perform in line with their work, they also honed their skills about working with people from other ethnic backgrounds, as well as learning how to change and adapt in general. In other words, they learned how to cope with the challenges that multicultural and cross-cultural environments could bring for them in the future. Despite some difficulties, all of them were grateful for the opportunity to travel and enhance their work and interpersonal skills. One intern wrote that she is thankful for the great opportunity because for her every class she supervised always offered something different, something good; something that she felt she could never learn in the classroom. One intern who was asked to teach Chinese calligraphy took that chance to share with her students (Thai

teachers) to learn about Taiwanese culture, and that experience allowed her to improve her own Chinese calligraphy writing skills and expanded her own knowledge of Taiwan's culture. An interesting finding is that interns realized how (good) it feels to be a teacher especially on seeing their students' sense of accomplishment. One intern wrote, *"In this internship, I got to see and experience how teachers feel when students get frustrated in their learning, but I also got to see how elated they can be when they can write or utter something comprehensible in Chinese. This helped me change my perspective and attitude towards my teachers in Wenzao."*

For others, the internship program gave them the chance to experience what it feels like to work and perform tasks and responsibilities quite similar to what is given to teaching staff. One intern in The Czech Republic wrote a piece of advice for future interns,

> *In the same way as the internship teacher, you need to plan and effectively manage the course. So, before each class you have to take some time to prepare lesson plans, design materials and provide a curriculum outline, so as not to be caught unprepared. At the beginning of the course I prepared the visual materials and designed some games for the students so they could remember their vocabulary. Like full time staff, interns can freely use the facilities and classrooms for teaching purposes i.e., use photocopiers for handouts and assignments.*

In intercultural communication, it is quite common to see people speak English as a lingua franca, but people also frequently code-switch between their native language and English. For interns teaching Chinese, switching from English to Chinese is prevalent, as one intern wrote, *"Often in class we will use English and Chinese, but I try to use Chinese more often as I want them to familiarize themselves with the tones and get used to the target language."*

Looking at the reports submitted, the following list summarizes what the interns consider are the main benefits of doing an internship abroad.

1. Teaching internships do not only allow the chance to collaborate with other teachers, but also help in learning some office work skills. The interns also learn to behave maturely towards others and towards themselves.

2. Being immersed in a different cultural environment, they saw the strengths and weaknesses of Eastern and Western cultures, copy the good traits, accept the contrasts and treat them as cultural differences without necessarily emulating behaviours that they think are unacceptable.

3. They learn to understand themselves, know who they are, where they need to improve, the need to reflect, which aspects of language to develop, and what kind of attitudes to change.

4. It is important to learn the language of the country they are moving to, and whether it is for work or travel, learning to communicate effectively in international settings is a must.

5. The internship program becomes a key for helping people from other cultures–and, indeed, learning from them too.

6. The interns also learn more about Taiwanese culture, and although Mandarin Chinese is the language being taught, it is a good way for them to experience traditional Mandarin from a Taiwanese perspective.

## Research Question 3: Using the inductive approach, what themes were highlighted that were relevant to the internship experience?

This section presents the themes found from the feedback reports using the inductive approach. Below is a list of the coding steps (translation, coding, interpretation, and finding of theme) and an example of text followed during the exploration of data using the inductive approach.

Step 1:  Translation and getting the message of the text
Sample text from raw data:「我從沒修過華語學程，對於漢語拼音一點概念也沒有，教學經驗曾有過一次……」
Translation: I have never taken any Chinese language course; I have no concept of the Chinese phonetic alphabet, and only taught once.

Step 2:  Coding: No teaching experience (Lack of academic background in teaching Chinese as a foreign language)

Step 3:  Interpretation: Lack of teaching experience triggers a sense of fear; self-awareness regarding lack of skills

Step 4:  Finding a theme: affective factors: self-expressed weakness, fear, self-awareness, self-expression

The themes listed below shed light on some of the issues that are relevant to the skills used while participating in this program.

### *Theme 1: Pre-internship knowledge and skills*

The excerpts show the kind of preparation students had to undergo before the start of their internship abroad. All interns exhibited preparation, planning, and organizational skills as they dealt with visa application matters, flight tickets, etc. At this stage, it shows their attitude towards goal orientation, level of preparedness, and eye for details as the documentation and the submission process can be very tedious. Prior to departure, they had to arrange for airport pick-up, get transportation details from airport to place of accommodation, contact details of staff or teachers from the host institutions for emergency purposes. One intern insists that it is important to have these details on their mobile phones; she wrote, *"in order to avoid the international roaming costs in Thailand, fear of getting lost at the airport, having the teacher's LINE is a good way, because in Thailand LINE, like email, Facebook, etc. is also commonly used. Having a few teachers' contact details is also a guarantee that help is ready when needed".*

### *Theme 2: Internship issues uncovered in feedback*

The following are the internship, job-focused skills issues that the interns have included in their report. These are relevant concerns for Wenzao's International Office as they affect the criteria for intern recruitment.

a.  Background knowledge in teaching Chinese and/or English, a pass score in related courses needed for the job must be required from all intern applicants and is a key factor for successful application. Note: this feedback was from early 2012 and this issue has been resolved. It is now noted that knowledge of Chinese is an essential criterion for acceptance.

b.  Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language major students tend to write more about their teaching strategies and learning activities in the feedback report i.e., sharing their lessons and sample tasks they used in class.

c.  The feedback reports revealed a correlation between the lack of experience in teaching English and Chinese and their level of job-related insecurity; they felt insecure because the lack of teaching experience weakens their belief that they will perform well in teaching, and it raises their fear of being rejected by the students.

As many of these interns end up teaching Mandarin and English, they consider that a high level of language proficiency must be enforced. Intern applicants are required to submit language proficiency scores, and there is an understanding that they should have met this, and other criteria, prior to receiving the placement. What is pertinent here is that not only should an appropriate proficiency level be required but also an experience of teaching and background knowledge of the language they will be expected to teach. Teacher training should also be given to these interns to prepare them for their international internship.

# IMPLICATIONS

The small number of feedback reports from the students who participated in the internship program can be considered a limitation of this study as the findings can only describe these interns' experiences and opinions about what they saw, what they did, and what they went through during the internship period. Nonetheless, the subjective views offer an insight into how they assessed themselves based on their own reflections of how the events unfolded (cf Shutz, 1967). This qualitative approach explored the subjective experience and social relationships of these interns; their reports helped to ascribe meaning to what most students go through when they travel abroad for internship. The thematic issues on multicultural skills, cross-cultural skills, and intercultural communication skills explored in this paper can be compared to what other interns from other cultures have experienced (cf Kuhlmann and Stahl, 1998 cited in Connerly, 2005; LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton, 1993).

It is apparent that the Wenzao student interns were exposed to multicultural environments while doing their internship in foreign countries, and due to the presence of many cultures in a foreign country, these interns had the opportunity to expand their knowledge about these cultures and this has opened the gateway for building friendships and relationships that go beyond their internship duties. This also allowed them to engage in cross-cultural situations and intercultural communications where they realized that an effective manner of expressing themselves is the key to having successful relationships with teachers, with students, with other foreign interns and with local people.

The Wenzao Desk International Program provides students an opportunity to develop first-hand knowledge of international affairs and gain hands-on experience in dealing with international/intercultural situations. The interns have the chance to observe the functions of various administrative

processes, to experience teaching and working collaboratively with other local teachers, to hold leadership roles, while at the same time serving as interns and being students themselves. This experience of cultural diversity provides students with significant benefits including cultural and linguistic skills which can improve over time. Students who felt a huge change in themselves after their internship serve as a positive public image for Wenzao as it shows that the university can produce confident and globally competent young people who will be joining society and the workforce the moment they graduate. The difficulties they encountered and the manner in which they overcame them also reveal their tenacity to face these challenges and to focus on achieving their main goal viz. to successfully finish the internship.

The feedback reports provide evidence of their cross-cultural experience and the development of their multicultural and intercultural skills. It is especially important to demonstrate their international knowledge, to prove that they can survive and be successful in a multicultural work setting while abroad. What they have shared in the feedback reports can be effectively useful when seeking employment as soon as they have earned their degrees. These reports describe where and how they acquired their international experience, and to what extent they are aware of what skills are required to be successful and enjoy being in a cross-cultural work environment.

The overall implications of the findings from this study affirm that the Wenzao international internship program enhances a long list of skills, qualities, attitudes (below) that prepare the students with the relevant attributes for the workplace–whether local or abroad. Our students

- have a more positive attitude toward change and new environments
- feel comfortable working with people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- are more outgoing, amiable
- are adept in understanding others

- are sensitive to and respect others' differences
- are more considerate of others' needs
- have self-awareness i.e., own strengths and weaknesses
- can overcome challenges brought about by cultural and linguistic differences.

The above list is not exhaustive of the specific skills manifested during their period of internship, but nonetheless they provide a general view of the multicultural skills the interns acquire which will provide a solid foundation when seeking employment at home or abroad.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the importance and relevance of international internships and the added value these give to institutions such as Wenzao in their efforts to promote internationalization in higher education. This study examined the broader impact that the Wenzao Desk International Internship program has on students' multicultural, cross-cultural and intercultural skills, and on their understanding of global issues. By analyzing students' positive experiences, as well as the challenges they encountered, we can amend the placement criteria making them more specific and relevant to each individual internship, for example in the case of a teaching internship it is essential to have some teaching experience and a high level of proficiency in the target language. Integrating language skills with other aspects of cultural knowledge could be reinforced in developing students' ability to work in multicultural settings. The post-internship feedback reports have served as a window to students' perceptions and attitudes toward their overall experience in teaching, learning, and working with people from different cultural backgrounds. These reflections have benefitted both the participating institutions and the interns themselves as they continue to refine their behavior and thinking, and by developing their skills in establishing

relationships with individuals from other cultures in the future. By asking students to look back at their internship, they will continue to draw on their own experiences based on their impressions of their own training, skills learned, and level of involvement in the job-related tasks given during the internship period. The students' reports that were included in this study were highly positive in terms of enhancing their awareness, knowledge and application of various culturally-appropriate skills. Their immersion in multicultural settings helped boost their cross-cultural communication and interpersonal skills, which will forever be useful and necessary when working in multicultural workplaces. All their reflections, whether based on various adversities and frustrations they might have endured during their internship, or on more positive aspects of the exercise will prove to be valuable. The former, although professionally challenging and emotionally difficult, showed that they were able to overcome such difficulties, and this helped them to be stronger and more resilient; the latter gave them the skills to become better international citizens, and also more employable in a global setting.

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# Empowering International Students through a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Project

## Hsiang-I Huang

## INTRODUCTION

Lacking students and economic support, higher education institutions are facing tremendous pressure of student recruitment. To enhance global competitiveness, many universities are striving to internationalize the curricula and recruit international students. Benefits of enrolling international students in universities include serving as role models for domestic students, expanding the world view of faculty members and domestic students, providing international perspectives and experiences, and enhancing research productivity (Kinnucan, 2012; Obst & Forster, 2005).

International students were desirable skilled migrants (Hawthorne, 2008) and an "increasingly attractive human capital resource" (Hawthorne, 2014, p.1) for the host countries, and there was intense global competition for government and employers to retain the international students (Hawthorne, 2014); Gribble (2014) also noted that the overseas work experience was considered a "must" to make the international students more competitive in the job market. However, Anderson, Carmichael, Harper and Huang (2009) pointed out that career development was one of the challenges international students encountered. It is often not easy for international students to find jobs in their profession (Hawthorne, 2010). Job opportunities and governmental policy supporting the future employment of the international students after they complete the college degree are limited (Hawthorne, 2010). According to Gardner (2013), the director of Collegiate Employment Research Institute at Michigan State University,

75% of the nearly 2000 employers would not hire international students for full time positions. Only about one-third of 1900 employers were interested in offering international students internships. Despite the fact that the United States is one of the leading countries to host international students, future employment prospects and internship rate show little promises. The situation of international students in "emerging contenders," such as China, Malaysia, and Singapore, may be even more discouraging (Lasanowski & Verbik, 2007, p. 18).

The research exploring international students' career development is limited (Reynolds & Constantine, 2007; Singaravelu, White & Bringaze, 2005). The National Career Development Association International Student Work Group (2015) indicated that the United States hosted a large number of international students in different education levels. Yet with discussions of and research into its international student recruitment rate and marketing strategies, few studies focused on international students' career goals and employment. Little research discussed issues related to international students and Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and how international students transit from campus to work successfully (Gribble, 2014). In Taiwan, many universities have been recruiting international students, and they are facing similar challenges. As institutions of higher education are facing pressure to enhance students' employability (Gribble & Blackmore, 2012), bridging international students and work is vital. According to Gribble, Blackmore and Rahimi (2015), international students' participation rate in WIL programs is much lower than domestic students'. In addition, there is very limited research aiming specifically at the problems international students have when participating in WIL programs such as internship and work placement. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the benefits and challenges a WIL project brings to international college students in Taiwan. The research questions of this research are as follows:

1.  What are the benefits that international college students perceive in a WIL project?
2.  What are the challenges that international college students encounter in a WIL project?

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

Dewey's (1938) theory of learning by doing asserts that learning takes place when done through a hands-on approach. Kolb (1984) agreed that learning is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). Projects and activities have potential to provide learners with opportunities to learn from experiences. However, not all experiences are "genuinely or equally educative" (Dewey, 1938, p. 25); some can even be "mis-educative." Therefore, it is important to design and use the projects carefully. Dewey listed four criteria for projects to be educative (1933, pp. 217–218):

1.  Must generate interest.
2.  Must be worthwhile intrinsically.
3.  Must present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for information.
4.  Must cover a considerable time span and be capable of fostering development over time.

In addition, it is also vital to have "the ability to perceive and then weave meaning among the threads of experience" (Rodgers, 2002, pp. 847-848). By relating and reflecting on one's experience and giving that experience a meaning and value, one truly learns. From Dewey's perspective, an "educative" program should include the elements above to maximize its educative effects and learning value. According to Raelin (2008), "Work-based learning expressly merges theory with practice, knowledge with experience" (p. 2). It is

clear that Dewey's ideal learning programs correspond to work-based approaches such as simulation projects, service learning, internship programs, and university-industry collaboration projects. As Smith (2012) claimed, such work-based or integrated learning met the needs of the industry and facilitated collaboration between higher education and industry.

Studies have shown that the learning programs integrating the "practical work" or "hands-on" elements are beneficial to students. These WIL programs not only improve students' professional knowledge and skills (Muhamad, Yahya, Shahimi & Mahzan, 2009; Nagarajan, 2012), but also facilitate their employability skills (Khalil, 2015; Papakonstantinou, Charlton-Robb, Reine & Rayner, 2013). The WIL programs also foster students' interpersonal skills, work ability, independence, stress resistance, conflict management ability, idea-presenting competence, problem-solving ability and oral communication skills (Beggs, Ross & Goodwin, 2008; Burnett, 2003; Huang, 2015; Jackson, 2014; Lin, 2008; Martin & Wilkerson, 2006; Mihail, 2006; Ridzuan, Ahmat & Azdel, 2014; Walo, 2001). These are valuable transferable skills for college graduates.

WIL programs pave the way to future employment, providing students with not only the gains of work skills, but also insight into the real-world workforce. These programs shape students' industrial perception (Seyitoğlu & Yirik, 2014), afford them practical work experience (Lubbers, Bourland-Davis & Rawlins, 2007) and understanding of the work place (Gerken, Rienties, Giesbers & Könings, 2012), and prepare them for the relevant work environment (Rayner & Papakonstantinou, 2015). They also provide students with better opportunities to network (Kipreos & Dimitropoulos, 2016; Lawless, 2010), receive job offers (Knouse, Tanner & Harris, 1999; Rigsby, Addy, Herring & Polledo, 2013), and earn higher salaries (Gault, Redington & Schlager, 2000; Poppins & Singh, 2005). Students who have participated in the internship programs find jobs faster (Gault et al., 2000;

Knouse et al., 1999). Their internship experience also influences their subsequent work performance, and brings them higher work performance ratings (Siegal, Balckwood & Landy, 2010) as well as more rapid promotion (Siegel & Rigsby, 1988). As Smith and Rojewski (1993) concluded in their research, there were four desired outcomes for the learning programs preparing students to transit from school to work: connecting theory with real practice; developing personal and social work skills; gaining work-related knowledge and skills while exploring individuals' abilities and potential; and providing students with real working experience and insight.

However, despite WIL projects benefit for students, international students may not be able to fully take advantage of such projects. According to Gribble et al. (2015), international students' WIL experience was often unsatisfying due to their poor English proficiency, limited social networks and impractical expectations of employment. In fact, language proficiency has become the one of the most significant barriers to prevent international students from excelling in academic settings and WIL programs. Language proficiency is the core to successful communication (Mehdizadeh & Scott, 2005), yet many international students were anxious about using the language in front of native English speakers (Lin & Scherz, 2014), and they had limited language abilities to communicate with others in the host languages (Gribble et al., 2015).

In addition to the language barrier, international students may have the same difficulties similar as local students to fulfill the requirements for both work and study. Barron (2007) reported some downsides of students having part-time jobs, and one was interaction with their supervisors. Robotham (2009) and Schoffstall (2013) found that students suffered from stress when they had two roles to play, as a student and a part-timer. Though some of the students improved their abilities to cope with stress, more subjects in Robotham's (2009) study reported the opposite and their stress levels increased due to the combination of work and study.

Furthermore, students struggle to perform well academically when they have work at the same time. Garkaza, Banimahdb and Esmaeili (2011) indicated employment status affected students' academic performance in research demonstrating that the unemployed students had higher performance than the employed ones. Students' working hours decreased their study time, attendance, credits completed, and academic performance (Curtis, 2007; Darolia, 2014; Nonis & Hudson, 2010; Oldfield, Rodwell, Curry & Marks, 2017; Rochford, Connolly & Drennan, 2009; Schoffstall, 2013). As their working hours increased, their academic performance and cumulative grade point averages (GPA) decreased. Since students' ability to concentrate is influential in boosting their academic performance (Nonis & Hudson, 2010), it is inevitable that students will perform poorly in their academic learning when they have limited time to finish their assignment, are less capable of accomplishing the requisite reading, and have problems concentrating in their studies and lectures due to fatigue (Curtis, 2007; Robotham, 2009). Interestingly, however, De Zoysa and Rudkin (2007) found a positive relationship between paid employment and academic performance when analyzing domestic students in Australia. Yet, such a relationship did not exist in the sample of international students, where a negative relationship between paid employment and academic performance was noted.

From previous literature, WIL seems to be a promising solution for higher education. However, very limited research has focused on its effects on international college students. International students may suffer from factors that do not affect local students such as language and cultural barriers. It is unclear whether the WIL programs would benefit international students the same way as it does domestic students. The present research fills this knowledge gap and explores the use of WIL project and its effects on international college students in Taiwan.

**Employability skills**

Robinson (2000) defines employability skills as "basic skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job" (p. 1). They are rather general skills that can be used across different industry types, sizes, and job content. Robinson (2000) categorizes employability skills into three skill sets, (1) basic academic skills, (2) higher-order thinking skills, and (3) personal qualities. The Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry propose the employability skills framework based on the view of the Australian industry. They consider employability skills as "skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions" (DEST, 2002, p. 3). Eight core skills are listed:

1.  Communication that contributes to productive and harmonious relations between employees and customers must generate interest.
2.  Teamwork that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes.
3.  Problem solving that contributes to productive outcomes.
4.  Initiative and enterprise that contribute to innovative outcomes.
5.  Planning and organizing that contribute to long-term and short-term strategic planning.
6.  Self-management that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth.
7.  Learning that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes.
8.  Technology that contributes to effective execution of tasks.

The National Youth Commission (2006) in Taiwan also conducted a national career development project and explored the college graduates' employability skills. It summarized

eight important employability skills from both the employers' and college graduates' perspectives. The eight employability skills were as follows: (1) good working attitude, (2) stability and stress resistance, (3) communication skills, (4) professional knowledge and skills, (5) learning motivation and flexibility, (6) teamwork ability, (7) basic computing skills, and (8) the ability to find and solve problems. Based on the frameworks above, Huang (2016) lists eight skills for employability: (1) working attitude, (2) stress resistance, (3) communication skills, (4) professional knowledge and skills, (5) learning motivation, (6) teamwork, (7) technology skills, and (8) ability to spot and solve problems. The present study adopted Huang's (2016) framework to develop the interview questions and discussed the effectiveness of the university-industry collaborating WIL project and problems international college students faced.

## METHODS

To investigate the benefits and struggles international students experience and perceive from WIL and to obtain in-depth insights and reflections from the participants, the present study adopted a qualitative case study research method. This university-industry collaboration project provided international students with hands-on experience outside classroom learning. The project lasted for 7.5 months, but the actual work time for participants depended on the cases the company assigned. Sometimes there were no cases for months. The international students used their spare time to accomplish the translation and transcription work tasks. The company that collaborated with the university in this project was an international market research company. It offered its customers useful business strategies and suggestions by gathering and analyzing first-hand information and data from surveys and interviews. Subjects of the current study translated the surveys, interview transcriptions, and PowerPoint business presentation

content and occasionally transcribed some interviews for the company.

## Subjects of the study

Five female international college students participated in the project. Three students were from the English Department, one was from Translation and Interpreting Department, and the other majored in International Business Administration. Most of them were taking or had taken translation classes. Among these five international students, one was a Singaporean Taiwanese student (Participant A), another was Malaysian Chinese (Participant B), and the remaining three were Japanese (Participant C, D, and E). The Singaporean Taiwanese student was competent both in English and Mandarin, the latter being her mother tongue. Although the Malaysian Chinese student's mother tongue was Mandarin, she received Malaysian language education in Malaysia from elementary school to high school, and she scored A on all of her Malaysian language subjects. She had lived in Taiwan for three years by the time when she enrolled the project. Japanese students were native speakers of Japanese, and their Mandarin was of intermediate level. They had lived and studied in Taiwan ranging from one to three years before joining this project. One of them was more bilingual as her parents were Japanese and Taiwanese.

## Procedure

This research explored a WIL project that integrated internship into a Chinese-English translation class. Before the project, the research questions were set based on the previous literature review. The translation class instructor, who was also the manager of this WIL project, chose participants from classes and invited them to join this project. During the project, the participants were interviewed and the results were used to develop the questions for the post-project interview. After the project was completed, participants received an in-depth

interview and the interview results were analyzed for further discussions.

## Job content

The main task of the project was to translate given work before the due date. Three different kinds of language translation were involved. One was from Mandarin to English, for which the Singaporean Taiwanese student was responsible. She was in charge of translating surveys, particularly those related to e-commerce and consumer behavior. Another kind of translation was from Mandarin to Malaysian, which was assigned to the Malaysian Chinese student. Translation tasks and content were the same as the previous Mandarin-English ones. Last, the Japanese students were responsible for transcribing interviews in Japanese and translating various materials from Mandarin to Japanese, such as a survey, business PowerPoint content, and interview transcriptions. The survey was the similar e-commerce survey as the other language surveys mentioned above, but the PowerPoint was the business investigation and data of the local fishery business for a Japanese company. The interview transcriptions were related to hairdryers.

## Research instrument

The present study used interviews to collect research data. During the project, subjects were briefly interviewed to reflect on their learning and challenges. The interview result was used to develop the interview questions employed in the post-project interview. After the project was completed, the subjects received an in-depth written or oral interview. Twenty-nine questions were asked in Mandarin to elicit subjects' thoughts and feedback on this WIL project. The group oral interview lasted for an hour, and participants were given questions prior to the interview to allow time for reflection on their WIL experiences. The oral interview was audio-recorded and transcribed for further data analysis. For few subjects were not able to attend the oral interview or

might need more time to process the questions due to their Mandarin proficiency, they received the interview via a written form. Those subjects responded to the questions in a Word file and sent it back to the researcher. The researcher read through their responses and asked them questions to clarify the unclear and unanswered parts via synchronous and asynchronous online messages until the interview questions were fully addressed and answered.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In general, participants were satisfied with the WIL project, which contradicts the research by Gribble et al. (2015). Participants in this study reported that the experience helped them learn and improve in different aspects including their employability skills, language competences, translation skills, and other skills. Although they wanted more time to complete the assigned translation tasks, they knew that time pressure was an inevitable part of the translation work and learned to accept it. They also expressed their willingness to participate in similar WIL projects in the future.

## Employability skills
The participants perceived value of this university-industry collaborating WIL project, with respect to their employability skills. This result confirms Connor and Brown's (2009) study which concludes that opportunities for international students to experience work facilitated their employability skills. The following paragraphs discuss the perceived effectiveness of WIL project on international students' eight employability skills.

### *Work attitude*
The participants stated that their attitudes to work before and during the WIL project were different. Before they joined the project, they did not know how demanding the work tasks would be, so they treated tasks with the same attitude they

held towards their school work. However, soon after they started working on the cases, they realized that they needed to take their job more seriously. As one participant said:

> *It was so much more stressful to work for others, and I couldn't decide when the due date would be. I had to finish my work on time and there were no make-up chances for handing in the late assignment as what it was like in classes. So, I had to take this very seriously and carefully. (Participant C) (Interview: Nov 27, 2017, translated)*

During the project, several of the participants wanted to withdraw themselves from the project unexpectedly because they felt upset about the recording problem that they could not solve. Yet, after discussing with the project manager, they were convinced to continue their work and learned to be more responsible for their work. Participant C commented:

> *Because this was a university-industry collaborating WIL project, I couldn't just quit on this job as I would do for other part time jobs. I had to finish my work, and there were time limits for my work! If it's just a job outside school, I can simply quit it when I am not happy about the new rules set by the boss. There are plenty of people who can take over my jobs. (Interview: Nov 27, 2017, translated)*

Another participant also acknowledged her weakness and affirmed that she wanted to learn more and do her best at work after the recording crisis (Participant E). Her work attitude shifted from a negative attitude to a positive one, and won the collaborating company supervisor's approval.

These positive changes in participants' work attitudes demonstrate the WIL project provides international students with opportunities to mold their work perceptions and attitudes and consequently, they are more likely to be better prepared

for future employment in relevant work fields. This finding is consistent with Seyitoğlu and Yirik's (2014) and Rayner and Papakonstantinou's (2015) research.

### *Stress resistance*

All the participants expressed that their stress resistance improved due to WIL project work experience. The participants needed to complete their work before the deadlines. This demand placed a burden on their shoulders. One participant stated, "*I felt like I was being tested and challenged to see how far I could go... how much I could do within the given time*" (Participant C). Others added that they knew that they had to finish their given work tasks on time because they agreed to take the job. Also, each task had its own deadline, so if they could not finish one on time, they would not be able to finish the rest before the due date (Participant C, D & E). The nature of work and the tasks stressed the participants out.

To summarize, participants experienced three kinds of stress: pressure of time, pressure of being requested by the collaborating company, and stress of unfamiliarity with the work. It was hard for the participants at the beginning, but they gradually learned how to cope with that stress and achieve their goals during the process. As one participant elaborated, "*I had a tight deadline to meet, so I had to be very focused and work efficiently. During this process, my stress resistance improved* " (Participant B). Another participant pointed out, after completing the WIL project, she had better stress resistance when dealing with other things in life (Participant A). This result shows that WIL project facilitates international students' stress resistance, and this is in agreement with the findings by Walo (2001) and Kuo (2006).

### *Professional knowledge and skills*

The subjects agreed that this WIL project acquainted them with new knowledge. Participants were responsible for translating various kinds of content, such e-commerce,

consumer behaviors, hairdryers, and the fishery industry. Therefore, they needed to obtain the background knowledge of the content for better translation. For example, one participant illustrated that besides learning how to translate more accurately from Mandarin to Japanese, she had also learned a lot of fishery vocabulary and terminology including culinary and marine terminology and information (Participant C). She also expressed her learning in hair drying skills resulted from participating in this project. Subject E indicated that she had learned new knowledge and skills that were useful and could be applied to future jobs. This result is in accordance with Mihail (2006) and Nagarajan's (2012) studies.

### Learning motivation

The participants showed their interests in learning new things during the interview. They became more motivated to make themselves better translators and learn new work and translation skills in pursuit of that goal. One said, "*Because I didn't translate that well at the beginning, I wanted to make myself more competent and skillful in translation! I want to learn more to be a better translator*" (Participant A). Another participant added, "*I like learning new things while making money at the same time*" (Participant C). This indicates international students' increased learning motivation resulted from this WIL project. This corresponds to Freudenberg, Brimble and Vyvyan's (2010) investigation.

### Technology skills

The participants revealed their improvement in technological skills in the present project. To accomplish translation work tasks, participants used several different technologies to complete the job. For instance, they became more familiar with Google and other online dictionaries. To more accurately understand the meaning of the source and the target language, and to ascertain the perfect match of the terminology in different languages, the participants tried their best to search for and translate language items to the "*right*

*word/expression.*" One participant also employed translation software and online tools to translate. This result supports Mihail's (2006) findings.

### Problem-spotting and problem-solving abilities

As Lin (2008) found, the participants perceived improvement in their abilities to spot and solve problems. Several problems were spotted by participants. First, they underestimated the needed time to complete their translation tasks. They did not realize that such translation work would take them so long. During the process, they gradually realized that they needed to be more focused and develop time management skills to achieve the given tasks in a timely fashion; otherwise, they could only use the approach that participant A first adopted, that is "*to stay up all night to work on my translation project.*" As a result, they paid more attention to how to balance their time and managed to hand in their work punctually. Second, one participant found confusing terms in the source language when translating them to the target language. For example, the original PowerPoint used two different terms to describe the raw fish in Japanese cuisine, but those two terms actually referred to the same thing, so she confirmed her impression with the project manager and the collaborating company before sending out the translation work. The third problem was related to the differences between two countries. The participant responsible for the Mandarin-Malaysian translation noticed that the logistic system and educational system mentioned in the survey did not correspond to the systems used in the country where the translated surveys would be distributed. As a result, those survey questions would not be valid in that context and thus the collected data would not be of use. After the translator reported the problem to the project manager and the company, those survey questions were modified, which saved the company from conducting invalid research. All of these examples demonstrated that the participants developed their

problem-spotting and problem-solving abilities throughout the internship.

### *Communication and team work skills*

Due to the work nature of this WIL project, only written text translation was required and the participants worked individually. No teamwork was engaged, and the participants did not need to communicate orally with their clients or each other.

Although the participants did not perceive significant improvement in these two skills, some claimed that this project equipped them to know how to communicate with others more clearly and specifically in terms of the job content and requirement.

### Learning in other aspects

In addition to the abilities and skills mentioned above, participants also perceived other improvement in the ways listed below.

### *Language abilities*

All participants acknowledged improvements in language abilities brought about by WIL experience. They expanded their vocabulary in both of foreign language and mother tongue, for they needed to fully comprehend meanings and usage of the vocabularies both in the original and translation texts. They also learned to use different languages registers based on contexts. Participants had rarely used formal or business language prior to this internship, so they needed to research business correspondence forms for their translation tasks. They also needed to polish up their language expressions, choice of words, and tone. In short, this internship impelled them to explore language further and refine both of their mother tongue and foreign language skills.

### *Translation skills*

All participants strongly agreed that their translation skills were enhanced after the internship. On the surface level, they have acquired new vocabularies and the relevant background information attached to them. When there were no equivalent terms in the target language, they learned to translate using the words or expressions that native speakers would understand. For example, the name and the flavor of a Taiwanese dish, "3-cup chicken," did not exist in Japanese, so after consulting with the project manager, the participant used a simple Japanese expression to translate the term. Regarding structure level, participant A used to write in a complicated and long-winded way. After the project manager pinpointed and explained that problem, she paid more attention to sentence structure and used more precise and concise sentences in translation. Participant E indicated the improvement of her speed for completing translation tasks. In short, this WIL project facilitated international students' translation skills and provided extra learning outside classrooms. This finding supports Mihail's (2006) research that WIL projects link theoretical knowledge and practice.

### *Knowledge/understanding of the work settings*

Participants claimed that this work experience helped them gain more knowledge and understanding of work settings and be aware of the inherent challenges of translation work in the real world, which prepared them for relevant jobs in the future. For example, participant A noted that after this WIL project she received another translation job offer and, due to her previous WIL work experience, she had a better idea of what to expect about the job requirements and pay. According to Gribble (2014), international students do not have enough knowledge of the job market and workplace culture of the host countries, and that puts them at a disadvantage. The result of this study is consistent with previous research (Gerken et al., 2012), and it shows that the implementation of WIL program would remedy this situation.

In addition to providing a better understanding of the translation work in the real world, this WIL project also made all participants become more experienced and competitive for the future job hunting. For instance, participant C found this WIL project to be useful in sharpening her language abilities, and with her language competence she felt more confident about finding jobs in not only the translation field but also others such as the tourism industry that required bilingual language abilities. The use of the WIL project expands the horizon and effects of the classroom learning.

## *Time management*

All participants strongly agreed that this WIL project enhanced their time management skills. This result is consistent with Huang's (2015) and Mihail's (2006) study. In order to be able to meet the tight deadlines of the job assignments, the participants not only needed to work very hard but also to manage their time more efficiently. All participants were still studying and attending school as full-time students while working on cases as freelance translators for this WIL project. Therefore, they had to handle both academic and work requirements at the same time. The lack of time to work on translation cases was the most frequent complaint participants had during the internship project. Since the collaborating company would not extend or change deadlines, participants were pushed to develop better time management. Participant A reflected:

> *After my first case, I started to think about how to manage my time more properly. I've learned to prioritize my chores, schoolwork, and tasks. Then I set different time for different things based on that priority list. I used to do everything and even take care of other people's work, but then from this WIL project, I've learned that I can't do everything! If it's a group project, I should let others do their parts, too! (Interview: Nov 22, 2017, translated)*

### *Information searching skills*

As discussed in the technology skill section, participants employed the modern technology to assist them in searching for the relevant information for the background schema as well as finding the equivalent terms across languages. For example, participants generally looked up the vocabulary in the specific dictionaries only, such as English-Chinese dictionaries or Japanese-Chinese dictionaries. However, in the WIL project, they learned to use English-English dictionaries and double-checked the word in all of the languages they knew to ensure the comprehension of the word was accurate. Furthermore, participants learned to search and filter information more efficiently. These examples confirmed that the participants sharpened their information searching skills and this finding supports Huang's (2015) and Mihail's (2006) research.

### Challenges and Problems

The current study shows that a WIL project is beneficial to international students, yet it is also undeniable that international students face some challenges and problems when participating in a WIL project in a host country.

### *Wrong work expectations*

Some participants expressed their negative emotions caused by their work expectations prior the WIL project. They started off with high expectations for the job. One stated that she was looking forward to participating in this WIL project. Yet, they encountered some technology failures which hindered them in their efforts to accomplish the work tasks. In addition, some participants thought it would be an easy job as their work mainly required the uses of their mother tongues. They thought this would not take too much time and efforts to complete the tasks. However, as they started working on the tasks, they realized it was much more time- and energy-consuming than they expected. As a result, they were

very upset. This supports previous findings that international students often have unrealistic expectation of WIL programs (Gribble et al, 2015). Therefore, it is suggested that orientation regarding work content and tasks be given to international students prior to WIL projects in the future to avoid this problem and prepare students for real world work.

### *Health problems*

Participants mentioned that the main physical health problem they had caused by the WIL project was fatigue. It was resulted from the lack of sleep as they were occupied with the work tasks and academic learning. One participant claimed that once she almost had no sleep for 4 days, and this also brought her headache (Participant D). Another noted down that her average sleeping time was 3~4 hours per day in a week when she had work tasks (Participant E). This is consistent with Curtis' (2007) and Robotham's (2009) findings that when students play two roles at the same time, their study and work bring them physical fatigue. However, participants' academic performance was not affected as in previous research (Curtis, 2007; Darolia, 2014; Garkaza et al., 2011; Nonis & Hudson, 2010; Oldfield et al., 2017; Rochford et al., 2009; Schoffstall, 2013).

In addition to the physical health problem, participants also experienced mental struggles during the WIL project. All participants were under a lot of stress. Participant C specifically stated that the stress she had at a certain point was so great that it was driving her to the brink of a nervous breakdown. This result corresponds to Robotham's (2009) and Schoffstall's (2013) studies that students experience a lot of stress while handling their studies and work simultaneously. Yet, this exposure to stress also helped participants learn to cope with stress and develop higher stress resistance. Therefore, the stress from WIL projects served as a good stimulus to their learning when students know how to deal with it. Consequently, a prior orientation that teaches

international students how to manage stress and balance their life, studies, and work is vital (Varghese et al., 2012).

### *Miscommunication between culture*

Some participants suffered from communicating with the project supervisor during the process, and their poor intercultural communication led to the clash between the two parties. An audio-crisis occurred during the project. When the project supervisor confirmed with the participants in charge of the tasks about the work requirement via face-to-face and on-line meetings, the participants did not express any disagreement or complaint and remained in silence. However, soon after the work meeting was over, the project supervisor was informed that those participants decided to quit the WIL project. Though the participants were persuaded to continue their work afterwards, the damage was already done to the relationships between the supervisor and those participants.

Based on the interview results, three potential factors contributed to the miscommunication and crisis above. One was those participants' language abilities, another was their communication skills, and the other one was their home culture. First of all, the tasks mostly required use of participants' mother tongue. Therefore, the participants had no problems using the host country's language in this respect. However, participants suffered from using Mandarin to express themselves clearly when discussing the work with the supervisor (Participants C, D & E). As Participant E pointed out, "*If we can get rid of the language barriers, we would be more likely to solve the problems. Our foreign language ability limited our ability to express ourselves well in that language.*" This finding is consistent with previous study (Gribble et al., 2015) that international students' language competence of the host country's language is critical in determining the success in WIL and employment.

Second, those participants stated that their poor communication skills caused the miscommunication. They felt that they had clearly stated their difficulties in achieving tasks

due to the technology failures, yet the company would not listen to them and insisted that they should try harder and accomplish the tasks as much as they could. As a result, they became frustrated and angry about it. That triggered them to give up and wanted to quit the WIL project.

Third, this major failure in cross-cultural communication was greatly caused by the cultural differences between those participants' home and host countries. As Wu, Garza and Guzman (2015) state, international students need to deal with differences in their value systems, communication patterns, and so on from the host countries, and those differences are very likely to cause misunderstanding and miscommunication. In the present research, participants had problems adjusting to the way how it was communicated in the host country, and their "home" ways of communication failed them in the cross-cultural communication with their local supervisor. Culturally speaking, Japanese do not directly and clearly speak up their opinions because they care about how the interlocutors would feel (Participant E). This cultural difference may have a detrimental effect on intercultural communication. In the current study, the Japanese students had problems in communicating with the local project supervisor who preferred students expressing their ideas and opinions clearly and discussing about work openly. Yet, subjects never voiced their opinions and stayed silent during the meetings. As a result, the supervisor assumed that participants were satisfied with the WIL project, and thus was very shocked as well as mad when she was informed that subjects decided to withdraw from the project. In addition, the local supervisor might have possessed the "cultural stereotype" towards the participants that she assumed that Japanese were very hard-working and responsible people as how they were always portrayed in all kinds of media. However, it turned out that the participants just quitted the job easily and were not as responsible as she had imagined. This example illustrated how a different frame of reference, culture backgrounds, and stereotypes may cause problems in intercultural communication in a WIL project.

This is one of the crucial factors the educators and teachers need to consider when designing and implementing WIL projects involving with international college students.

In short, these problems highlight the need for a thorough pre-project training or orientation. The training would prepare international students for work in their host country, and it should ideally cover work expectations, language and intercultural competence, and strategies to manage work, study, and stress.

# CONCLUSION

This chapter investigates effectiveness of a university-industry collaborating WIL project. The data analysis indicates positive results. In general, the international students enhanced their employability skills. They perceived improvements on work attitude, stress resistance, professional knowledge and skills, learning motivation, technology skills, and the ability to spot and solve problems. Furthermore, participants upgraded their translation skills and language abilities. Additional benefits related to their time management and information skills were also evident and they grew to learn more about the work settings. These findings show that a WIL project provides not only extra learning but also the unique learning experiences to supplement what cannot be taught in classrooms and reinforce what students have learned in class.

The positive results above suggest that the WIL project is beneficial to international students though international students also encounter challenges in their wrong work expectations, miscommunication between cultures, and health problems. This finding may shed a light on the future curriculum mapping in the institutions of higher education. Taiwan is eager to recruit international students as a way of compensating for the decrease in the domestic student population. With this in mind, it is imperative that the Taiwan government and institutions of higher education work to meet the needs of international students. Strategies to better increase

international students' competitiveness in the job market are vital. The use of WIL programs and projects may help in this effort.

Although the results of the present study sound promising, they cannot be generalized due to the small number of the participants. Therefore, future research should include bigger samples for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

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# Appendix: *Interview questions* (translated from the original Chinese version)

**Part I: Attitudes in general (satisfaction and perceived usefulness of the project)**

Q1: Are you satisfied with this WIL project experience? What are you satisfied and dissatisfied with?

Q2: Did this WIL project foster your employability skills in general? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q3: Is this project useful for your future job hunting?

**Part II: Improvements in specific employability skills**

Q4: Please compare and contrast your working attitude before and after this WIL project.

Q5: Did this WIL project enhance your stress resistance? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q6: Did this WIL project enhance your communication skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q7: Did this WIL project enhance your professional knowledge and skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q8: Did this WIL project enhance your motivation in learning new things and skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q9: Did this WIL project enhance your team work skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q10: Did this WIL project enhance your technology skills? I If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q11: Did this WIL project enhance your problem-spotting and -solving abilities? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

**Part III: Improvements in language competence**

Q12: Did this WIL project enhance your language competence in your mother tongue and foreign language? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

**Part IV: Improvements in translation skills and interests**

Q13: Did this WIL project enhance your translation skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q14: Did this WIL project enhance your interests in translation jobs? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q15: Is this WIL project useful to the translation course? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

**Part V: Improvements in other aspects**

Q16: Did this WIL project enhance your time management skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q17: Did this WIL project enhance your crisis management skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q18: Did this WIL project enhance your information searching skills? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

**Part VI: Others**

Q19: Did this WIL project enhance your knowledge of different cultures? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q20: Did your own cultural knowledge come in useful during this WIL project? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q21: Did this WIL project enhance your understanding of work settings and work place culture of translation field? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q22: Did this WIL project enhance your understanding of work settings and work place culture in Taiwan? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q23: Did this WIL project help you understand more about what you want to do and/or capable of doing in the future? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q24: Did this WIL project help you learn more about yourself such as your capabilities, strengths and weakness? If yes, how did it help? If not, why not?

Q25: In your opinion, do you think the universities in your host country offer enough resources and help to assist international students transit from campus to work? Why/why not?

Q26: Did this WIL project enhance your motivation in working in the host country in the future after graduation?

Q27: Will this WIL project increase chances of finding jobs in the host country?

Q28: Will this WIL project increase chances of finding jobs in your home country?

Q29: Any other comments, feedback, or opinions regarding this WIL project to share?


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# A Case Study of Game-based Listening Course in an EFL Tertiary-level Context

## Hsiu-Chen Antonia Lin

## INTRODUCTION

Due to the advanced educational technology, a large amount of course management systems have increased and have been widely incorporated into educational contexts, especially in higher education. Among these innovations are the famous Blackboard, E-course, Moodle, and Moocs. As a result of growing smart technology development, gaming has played a pivotal role in the field of interactive education. Games are regarded motivating because they arouse players' full attention and provide fun and excitement. For this reason, they are frequently embedded in the classroom, especially in the teaching of language, for example, Communicative Language Teaching Methodology. Once the remarkable advances have been exponentially made in technology, students are exposed to user-friendly mobile technology which makes learning portable. What the television programs do to include audience as part of the live participants such as using a handy device, or a clicker, to show their responses can be done in class. Incorporation of smartphones, tablets, and I-Pads into learning settings creates a positive learning setting for the class and encourages students to become active game players. Relevant studies have also indicated that the game-based approach in education benefits learning (Carr & Bossomaier, 2011; Hussein, 2015; Iwamoto, Hargis, Taitano & Vuong, 2017; Papastergiou, 2009).

Kahoot is a free, game-oriented interactive device playing a prominent role in education. It has the features of games: participants (players, host) and events (competition, music,

graphic results, and rank). It also has the following characteristics. Firstly, Kahoot is actually a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) game show to empower teaching and learning in the classroom (Wang, 2013). It is handy and convenient to use. Secondly, Kahoot has its glamour. It has attracted educators, in particular teachers because it lowers the threshold of the game, draws participants' attention, creates a playful atmosphere, gathers players' responses, and creates a sense of achievement. Due to the fact that students tend to have a short period of attention span (Vawter, 2009), what is done in the classroom needs to be in chunks so as to avoid students' losing their attention. Application of game-like instant response system successfully captures students' attention to the lectures. Thirdly, Kahoot is a motivating device full of challenge, fantasy, and curiosity. According to Malone's (1981) theory, intrinsically motivating activities, for example computer games, can be beneficial to students. In short, the trend of handy device makes the classroom a more interactive and dynamic place where participants are affectively and cognitively engaged, and where teachers are academically involved in implementing assessment, discussion, and survey in class.

In Taiwan, game-oriented learning has been discussed in academia; however, the published studies rarely emphasize on adult learners, in particular those attending the extended division in university (Chuang, 2014; Lin, 2016; Shen, 2015). Wang (2013) asserted the use of game-based learning in the classroom, and he further stated that repeated use of Kahoot had no negative impact on the students' attitude. Lin (2016, p. 475) reported a preliminary study on the use of Kahoot in a tertiary leveled context in Taiwan, stating that it spiced up EFL learners' motivation, for example, being able to get the instant response, engaging in the activity, and focusing on learning. She also observed a pleasant and fully attentive atmosphere in the classroom. Although the researcher did a Kahoot-based study in the early 2016, the surveyed students came from different courses scattered in the day and evening schools

rather than a group of participants from the same learning context. This study therefore attempts to investigate to what extent a specific group of students, that is, adult learners at the low intermediate level in a summer school, perceive the use of user-friendly, game-based Kahoot as a repeated, technological device.

### *Research questions*

This research aims to investigate whether there were differences among students' opinions about the use of Kahoot. Thus, the research questions are as follows:

1. What do the participants perceive the use of Kahoot game after being exposed to it?
2. Do students' perceptions of Kahoot make any significant differences between pre-test and posy-test?
3. To what extent do the participants comment on the use of Kahoot?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A game, is commonly known as a form of competitive activity amusingly played according to rules. The power of games influences everyone regardless of age, gender, and language proficiency. Deterding, Khaled, Nacke, and Dixon (2011) note that a game consists of rules, competition, and goals. An astonishing charisma of games is that participants are affectively influenced and cognitively challenged during the process of a specific activity because they feel curious about the challenge, follow the rules in order to win, expect to see the results, and gain a sense of achievement. Since the 1970s, the approach of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been promoted in the teaching of language, especially in ESL or EFL contexts, in which games have been widely integrated in the curriculum (Widdowson, 1990). Games can replace the traditional classroom tasks, such as assessments, allowing teachers to evaluate students' progress, and as a result, students' motivation, engagement and

performance are positively improved (Wang, 2015). On account of the increasing advancement of technology, games have been presented in dynamic formats, leading learning and teaching to a new instruction method—gamification in education.

According to McMunn-Tetangco (2017), gamification refers to "using elements of games in order to create more successful experiences and activities for patrons" (p. 47). Research shows that competition and achievement are considered motivating elements of online games (Sherry et al., 2006; Yee, 2006). Therefore, teachers are in favor of the use of gamification to motivate active engagement, offer a pleasant game-show atmosphere, and provide incentive (e.g. points) so as to accomplish a specific educational goal. Furthermore, gamification is defined as the use of game design elements in non-game contexts," such as in a learning process (Deterding, Khaled, Nacke & Dixon, 2011, p. 10; Werbach & Hunter, 2012). Even better, gamification encouraged teacher-student relationships. In a recent study on gamification, Fotaris, Mastoras, Leinfellner, and Rosunally (2015) noted that gamification has impact on learners' motivation because the experimental group tended to be more punctual and to attend classes more often compared to their counterparts.

When students are exposed to a learning environment, positive, affective learning process can be experienced, a process where knowledge such as learning materials and a game activity such as levels and scores are emerged (Bellotti, Breta, De Gloria & Primavera, 2009). Having a three-year experience with the tertiary students and a one-year experience with graduate students, Bellotti, et al (2009) reported that gamification not only led to learners' satisfaction but also fostered interaction and attention among university students. In Australia, Ocriciano (2016, p. 31) added gamification via educational technology in a 33-participant writing class and investigated the impact of gamification on students' writing performance in the IELTS examination. Although there were motivated students (25) and unmotivated students (8) in the

study, overall improvement in their IELTS writing scores was achieved.

Many Kahoot-oriented studies have revealed that Kahoot leads to meaningful learning. Brand (2015), the chief executive of Kahoot, noted that although Kahoot quiz did not statistically overweigh the traditional paper-and-pen quiz, the game-based learning experience was welcoming and enjoyable, which indicated that emotional engagement matters. In a quasi-experiment focusing on the wear out effect of Kahoot in two groups: an experiment Kahoot semester group and a control Kahoot event group, Wang (2013) concluded that students' engagement increased and that Kahoot helped students to remain focused, to explore content autonomously, to gain instant feedback, to fill the gap of unknown knowledge and to remember the content. Similar to Wang's result, Lin's (2016) study on Taiwanese tertiary-leveled EFL students in the day school and evening school revealed that instant feedback was the most favorable characteristic of Kahoot, yet students regarded timing as the least favorable feature in that they did not have sufficient time (10–30 seconds) to read the questions on the screen.

Regarding Kahoot learning effectiveness, along with his colleagues, Wang did another study with three groups of students working with paper quiz, clicker quiz and Kahoot quiz. When Kahoot was used as a review tool, it had positive impact on engagement, motivation, enjoyment, participation, performance and excitement (Wang, Zhu & Sætre, 2016); however, no significant difference was found in terms of students' learning outcome. Conole and Fill (2005) reported that context, approach, and task are the three prominent features for pedagogically effective learning activity. In a learner-centered learning setting equipped with educational technology, involvement and engagement are more likely to be boosted. In Norway, Husseein's (2015) study on impact of 11 instructional methods on university students' learning experience indicated that among the 64 valid respondents, Kahoot, which was used as a media to encourage active

participation and to keep students' concentration while doing review tasks, was regarded "the highest contribution to their learning" (p. 119) with a mean score of 5.31 in a six-point Likert scale. Another example of the use of Kahoot in promoting learning was an action research by Sasse and Cher (2016) in Australia, where they conducted a five-week course to students in General English and English for Academic Purposes respectively. Focusing on academic vocabulary instruction, they found that with the help of technological tools, students were encouraged to become autonomous learners. Hence, they proposed that "there is an ever increasing plethora of online games and apps that teachers and students could use to enhance teaching, learning and motivation" (p. 28).

Music has been considered an essential element in learning. Berk (2008) notes that music has been integrated in education and research has been conducted to study the effects of music in learning. Music is usually used in games to create a feeling of upbeat and suspension and a sense of entertainment environment (Dellos, 2015). Inevitably, it can be regarded a must-have feature in Kahoot design. Although the music-embedded Kahoot creates a game-like atmosphere in the classroom, it does not mean that it is perfect because participants with different learning styles hold different perspectives. In fact, it sometimes turns out to be a less welcoming feature to some students who may feel distracted when music goes with the game. For instance, Lin (2016) reported that music was ranked the last second favorable item in her study.

To sum up, as revealed in documented literature, Kahoot, which has incredibly entertaining game features, for example, rules, music, competition, award, and goals, has been a rewarding research topic and has led to positive learning outcome. Its benefits include satisfaction, interaction, concentration, enjoyment, involvement, and immediate feedback. Teachers who intend to spice up a positive learning atmosphere may consider incorporating such a game-based and easy-to-make instrument into language teaching and

contribute further research findings to literature in terms of different learner levels and relevant aspects.

# METHODS

## *Participants*

Involved in this study were 28 low-intermediate English majors from the evening division of a language university located in Southern Taiwan. However, 26 students returned their responses of the first survey and 24 the second survey. The program lasted for 36 hours over 12 days. All of them were introduced to the online-platform of Kahoot in the beginning of the program. The participating students were invited to do two surveys: one was conducted after they took the midterm exam and the other in the final exam.

## *Instruments*

In this study two major instruments were used. The essential instrument was Kahoot. With the free of charge Kahoot template, the researcher, also the instructor of the course, designed a list of titles on the basis of the lectures consisting approximately 10 questions, mainly multiple choice questions with two to four options. Kahoot activities were introduced and demonstrated in class. The questionnaire was composed based on Lin's (2016) study. It contained three sections: the demographic information (3 items), statements about the use of Kahoot (27 statements with four-point Likert scale), and four open-ended questions, mainly related to users' feedback. Questions were designed on the basis of the observed Kahoot interface. Thus, in the questionnaire, three sectors of operation, function and features, and satisfaction were designed which not only represented a musical and visual template, a user-friendly and color coded screen, and a pleasant gaming atmosphere, but it also offered an engaging and positive learning environment.

The questionnaire was presented with Google Form and was sent to students via email in the midterm examination after their initial exposure to Kahoot, and the same questionnaire was administered in the final examination. It aimed to figure out whether or not students showed their perceptions differently about Kahoot. Since students had rarely used Kahoot before participating in this study, the questionnaire was administered in the midterm examination as the pre-test. The post-test was given in the end of the course. The questions were related to (1) operation of the used of Kahoot, (2) functions and physical features of Kahoot, (3) personal satisfaction with the use of Kahoot, and (4) questions asking for personal feedback regarding using three adjectives to describe Kahoot, the background music, the feedback toward the use of Kahoot, and the game mode preference.

### *Data collection and analysis*

SPSS was employed to deal with the data of the questionnaire. Frequency analysis was conducted on the demographic information. Paired samples t-test was run to examine whether or not statistically significant difference existed between the two surveys: the pre-test and the post-test. The answers collected from the open-ended questions were analyzed and then thematically coded in terms of adjectives, background music, and feedback.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire used in this study contained a number of 27 statements. Reliability statistics was employed and the result showed Cronbach's Alpha 0.978. Since no specific literature could provide a fully-designed questionnaire exclusively for Kathoot, expert review, known as professional judgment, was employed. By interviewing two professors who had been practicing Kahoot in their instruction, accuracy and appropriateness of questionnaire item statements were evaluated and thus the content validity was assured. Table 1

shows demographic information in relation to the experience of using Kahoot in the pre-test.

**Table 1.**    General questions in terms of experience of using Kahoot

| Question | Answer | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| First time users | Yes | 22 | 84.6 |
| | No | 4 | 15.4 |
| | Total | 26 | 100.0 |
| Understandable demonstration | Yes | 20 | 76.9 |
| | No | 6 | 23.1 |
| | Total | 26 | 100.0 |
| Step-by-step operation | Yes | 23 | 88.5 |
| | No | 3 | 11.5 |
| | Total | 26 | 100.0 |

As shown above, approximately 85% (N = 22) had never played Kahoot before they took this course. More than three quarters (N = 20) of the students considered the instructor's demonstration of how to play with Kahoot understandable, and nearly nine tenths (N = 23) of the students reported that they could follow the step-by-step operation while playing Kahoot.

Research question 1: What do the participants perceive the use of Kahoot game after being exposed to it?

Tables 2–4 illustrate the results of the pre-test in the week of midterm examination. With the four-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree), the mean scores of Table 2 ranged between 2.81 and 3.04, implying positive feedback. The highest rank fell on three items: "I tended to get the right answer so as to get a high point." This might suggest Kahoot contains a sense of competition. On the other hand, the lowest rank fell on "I had sufficient time (10–30 seconds) to read the questions on the screen" (M = 2.81), suggesting the tense of time limit.

**Table 2.** Students' Perception of the Use of Kahoot: Operation of Kahoot

| Operation of Kahoot | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I tended to get the right answer so as to get a high point. | 26 | 3.04 | .66 |
| 2. I tended to get the right answer quickly to gain the speed bonus. | 26 | 3.00 | .69 |
| 3. I had sufficient time (10–30 seconds) to read the questions on the screen. | 26 | 2.81 | .80 |

The mean scores of Table 3 ranged between 2.92 and 3.12, indicating positive responses. The top rank was "The color/shape of options to choose from is recognizable," implying the users were able to recognize the options appeared in each question. The lowest rank was "It is helpful to see the immediate response on the screen."

**Table 3.** Students' Perception of the Use of Kahoot: Functions

| Functions of Kahoot | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The color/shape of options to choose from is recognizable. | 26 | 3.12 | .65 |
| 2. It is helpful to see the player's rank (no specific name but nickname or number) on the screen. | 26 | 3.04 | .66 |
| 3. The bar graph with the percentage of correct answer on the screen was helpful. | 26 | 3.04 | .59 |
| 4. The background music was an encouraging device. | 26 | 3.00 | .69 |
| 5. The four options (in different shape and color) are easy for you to click the answer. | 26 | 3.00 | .69 |
| 6. The "feeling" function (faces) of the activity shown on the screen was helpful. | 26 | 3.00 | .56 |
| 7. The appearance of "feedback and results" appeared in the end of the task was helpful. | 26 | 2.96 | .59 |

| | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8. The "rating" function (1–5) of the activity shown on the screen was helpful. | 26 | 2.96 | .59 |
| 9. The "learning" function of the activity shown on the screen was helpful. | 26 | 2.96 | .52 |
| 10. The "recommend" function of the activity shown on the screen was helpful. | 26 | 2.96 | .52 |
| 11. It is helpful to see the immediate response on the screen. | 26 | 2.92 | .62 |

Table 4 presents the degree of users' satisfaction with the use of Kahoot. The items of "Using Kahoot as a test was much better than a paper-and-pen test," and "In general, Kahoot shows challenge of the game," ranked the highest mean score (M = 3.12). This may imply that in this study a game-based test was more preferable than a traditional paper-and-pen test for Kahooters and that the Kahoot game was challenging.

**Table 4.** Students' Perception of the Use of Kahoot: Personal Satisfaction

| Personal satisfaction | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Using Kahoot as a test was much better than a paper-and-pen test. | 26 | **3.12** | .58 |
| 2. In general, Kahoot shows challenge of the game. | 26 | **3.12** | .43 |
| 3. The use of Kahoot made me think quickly to get the right answer. | 26 | 3.08 | .48 |
| 4. The use of Kahoot helped me realize how much I have learned. | 26 | 3.08 | .62 |
| 5. The use of Kahoot reduced the test anxiety. | 26 | 3.04 | .59 |
| 6. The use of Kahoot made me focus on the questions. | 26 | 3.04 | .66 |
| 7. The use of Kahoot made me excited to join the game. | 26 | 3.04 | .77 |
| 8. Overall, I like the design of Kahoot. | 26 | 3.04 | .59 |
| 9. The use of Kahoot made me remember the learned materials easily. | 26 | 3.00 | .69 |
| 10. The use of Kahoot can help me to pay | 26 | 2.96 | .59 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| more attention to the lessons. | | | |
| 11. Overall, Kahoot is easy to use. | 26 | 2.92 | .56 |
| 12. Generally, Kahoot shows fantasy of the game. | 26 | 2.88 | .65 |
| 13. The use of Kahoot made me eager to win the game. | 26 | 2.85 | .73 |

Unlike Lin's (2016) results on the participants' feedback toward instant response system, the present study reveals the two most favorable items: "The color/shape of options to choose from is recognizable," and "Using Kahoot as a test was much better than a paper-and-pen test" (M = 3.12). This was then followed by "The use of Kahoot made me think quickly to get the right answer," and "The use of Kahoot helped me realize how much I have learned" (M = 3.08). One common thing of the two studies is that when students were exposed to Kahoot use in class, they highly agreed that Kahoot made them think quickly to get the right answers. Nevertheless, unexpected results appeared in the comparison of the two studies. While immediate response ranked high (M = 3.37) in Lin's (2016) study, the participants in the current study did not show the same result, with a mean score of 2.92 ranking the last second favorable item. Another case was to do with the background music. Lin (2016) also reported that music ranked the last second (M = 3.15), whereas it appeared to be modest in this study (M = 3.00).

Research question 2: Do students' perceptions of Kahoot make any significant differences between the pre-test and post-test?

In the end of the course, the same questionnaire was administered. Table 5 shows the averaged mean score of the categories in the pre- and post-tests. Generally, the figures in the post-test appear to be higher than those in the pre-test.

**Table 5.** Averaged Mean Score of Each Category in the Pre- and Post-tests

| Average mean score | Pre-test | Post-test |
|---|---|---|
| Operation | 2.95 | 3.19 |
| Functions and Features | 2.99 | 3.11 |
| Satisfaction | 3.01 | 3.16 |

In order to investigate whether participants held any different perception of the repeated use of Kahoot, paired samples t-test was employed. Table 6 indicates the results; only one item showed the significant difference.

**Table 6.** Paired Samples t-test of the Operation of Kahoot

| | Survey | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I had sufficient time (10 – 30 seconds) to read the questions on the screen. | 1 | 26 | 2.81 | .80 | -2.026 | 48 | .048* |
| | 2 | 24 | 3.25 | .73 | | | |

Of the 27 statements, no significant differences were found except the item of timing. The mean score (M = 3.25) of the post-test outnumbered that (M = 2.81) of the pre-test (t = -2.026, p < .05). Moreover, in the post-test, the item of timing surprisingly ranked the top second, following the highest item: Kahoot is easy to use (M = 3.25). Such a result may imply that the participants seemed to get used to the limit of time and therefore they tended to become positive toward timing.

Research question 3: To what extent do the participants comment on the use of Kahoot?

Four open-ended questions were involved asking students to give three adjectives describing Kahoot use, background music use during the game, the overall feedback toward the use of Kahoot, and the preferred game mode. However, some students did not give the required number of adjectives. Table

7 shows the counts of comments on the use of Kahoot in two different periods.

**Table 7.**    Counts of comments on the use of Kahoot

| Comments | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Counts | Percentage | Counts | Percentage |
| Positive | 51 | 82% | 56 | 92% |
| Negative | 10 | 16% | 5 | 8% |
| Neutral | 1 | 2% | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 62 | 100% | 61 | 100% |

In the pre-test, of the 62 adjectives students reported, 82% (N = 51) responses were positive, and 16% (N = 10) responses were negative. There was one neutral response (2%) response. The positive comments were mainly adjectives in relation to "fun", "interesting", "good", "cool", "exciting", "surprising", "convenient", "encouraging", "joyful", special", "useful", and the like. Ten (10) words were associated with negative adjectives, for instance, "boring", "nervous", "too fast", "unfair", "less speedy cellphone", and the like. One response was counted neutral because of the answer "I don't know," which did not meet the requirement of "adjectives". Overall, these adult learners tended to hold positive attitudes towards the use of Kahoot. In the post-test, of the 61 responses, 56 (92%) positive adjectives were reported. This time the chosen words were similar to those in the former, for example, "interesting", "fun", "good", "exciting", "happy", "useful", "cool", "easy", "amazing", "great", "special", "fantastic", to name a few. As to the negative adjectives, five (8%) adjectives were reported: "awful", "boring", "unfair", "brainwashing", "hot and cold". One possible explanation why "boring" and "unfair" appeared in the two surveys could be related to the display of scoreboard after each question. Because the rank counted on not only the correct answer but also the speed of clicking the answer, those players who were slow or whose smartphones did not have sufficient speed might get lower scores of their speed of clicking.

In terms of music, the counts of comments can be seen in Table 8. There were 24 comments in the pre-test and 22 in the post-test.

**Table 8.**    Counts of comments on the use of Kahoot

| Comments | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|----------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Counts | Percentage | Counts | Percentage |
| Positive | 20 | 83% | 18 | 82% |
| Negative | 4 | 17% | 2 | 9% |
| Neutral | 0 | 0% | 2 | 9% |
| Total | 24 | 100% | 22 | 100% |

In the pre-test, among the reported responses (24), there were 20 (83%) positive comments and four (17%) negative ones. Words reported in relation to the former were "good", "cute", "acceptable", "motivating", "helpful", "funny", "relaxing", and the like. Words reported in relation to the negative answers were "unnecessary", "nervous", "noisy", and "annoying". In the post-test, 22 responses were reported. Eighteen (82%) positive words were mainly related to "cute", "excited", "funny", "great", "encouraging", "motivating", "surprising", "happy", "surprising", and the like. Two (9%) negative words were mentioned: "brainwashing" and "noisy". There were two (9%) neutral responses: "no idea" and "nothing special". That negative word "noisy" was reported implying the different perceptions of music among Kahooters. This means that some people might consider music as background element of a game and would not care too much about it, but some might be distracted with music being played during the game.

In the aspect of overall feedback toward the use of Kahoot, Table 9 presents the results. Some feedback was reported in words, but some were reported in phrases and sentences.

**Table 9.** Overall Feedback about Kahoot

| Pretest: Overall feedback (N = 27) | |
| --- | --- |
| Positive<br>(N = 19)<br>70% | • Good (5)<br>• Fun and useful<br>• A special way to learn English<br>• Great<br>• I like to play it.<br>• I really think the music is very cute.<br>• It is a good game for students to know class content.<br>• It is easy for people to learn.<br>• It is helpful.<br>• It's interesting, and it could be better.<br>• It's very interesting and increases our English ability.<br>• KAHOOT can get students' attention.<br>• It sounds good<br>• KAHOOT is more interesting and fun than the regular test.<br>• Kahoot is interesting, more convenient than the paper-and-pen test. |
| Negative<br>(N = 5)<br>19% | • Do not want to play it IN CLASS!<br>• I feel it's not useful to help me learn English listening.<br>• The music is really noisy.<br>• Too fast<br>• You have to change the platform to PC. |
| Neutral<br>(N = 3)<br>11% | • I have no idea.<br>• Nothing<br>• So-so |
| Post-test: Overall feedback (N = 26) | |
| Positive<br>(N = 22)<br>85% | • It is a good game. (6)<br>• Fun (3)<br>• Useful (2)<br>• Great<br>• I like it. (2)<br>• I can learn more about the listening materials.<br>• It can help me to remember and learn a lot.<br>• It is a great teaching material in class.<br>• It is like to have fun with learning. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • It's an interesting game. |
| | • It's better than paper test. |
| | • It's very funny. |
| | • Kahoot is good for learning. |
| Negative (N = 1) 4% | • I want to play Kahoot on PC, not cellphone! |
| Neutral (N = 3) 11% | • No comment (3) |

As can be seen in Table 8, over 70% (N = 19) students in the pre-test responded positively when giving their comments, for instance, good, interesting, fun, cute, easy, helpful, convenient, and the like. Of the 27 responses, 19% (N = 5) were negative responses, mainly related to personal experience and motivation, such as time restraint, cellphone use, useless to listening, and noisy music. In the post-test, however, over 85% (N = 22) students gave positive responses and 4% (N =1) gave a negative answer. As to the neutral comments, 3 students reported that they had no comments. As illustrated in Table 8, what the pre-test and post-test had in common were the words such as "good", "fun", "useful", "interesting" and "like". In addition, Kahoot was regarded a great tool. When it was used as a test, it was considered better and more convenient than the paper-and-pen test. Furthermore, helpfulness of Kahoot was also mentioned, helping students to learn more about the content.

Overall, the results of the open-ended questions correspond with the positive findings mentioned in previous studies (Carr & Bossomaier, 2011; Matsubara & Yoshida, 2018; Sasse & Cher, 2016; Wang, 2013; Wang, et al., 2016). For instance, benefiting learning, fostering engagement, drawing attention, and gaining enjoyment are the common features. Furthermore, the written feedback of the preference of Kahoot game as a test in comparison with the paper-and-pen test reflects the highest rating of the statement, showing consistency.

In terms of game mode students preferred when using Kahoot, individual or team, Table 10 illustrates the results.

**Table 10.** Preference of The Game Mode of Kahoot

| Comments | Pre-test | | Post-test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Counts | Percentage | Counts | Percentage |
| Individual | 17 | 65% | 18 | 75% |
| Team | 9 | 35% | 6 | 25% |
| Total | 26 | 100% | 24 | 100% |

Students tended to prefer individual mode in both surveys. In the pre-test more than 65% (N = 17) participants chose the individual mode, and in the post-test the number increased to 75% (N = 18). Such a result may be interpreted that these adult learners appeared to be independent and preferred working on their own.

This result may echo with the findings in Matsubara and Yoshida's study (2018) in which 79% of the participants were in favor of the individual mode and 21% preferred the team mode. One possible reason could be related to the time limit while working on the test which might not allow too much discussion when working in the team mode.

## CONCLUSION

This study attempted to investigate the users' perceptions of Kahoot, a game-based instant feedback system, in a context where a group of EFL undergraduate adult learners took a listening course in the summer school. Participants showed positive feedback toward the interactive device, including device design, operation, engagement, and experience. These results corresponded with other studies reporting the positive responses toward the investigation of Kahoot-based questionnaire (Wang, 2013; Husseein, 2015; Lin, 2016; Sasse & Cher, 2016).

Contribution of this study may be summarized as follows. An interesting finding related to timing implied that although

students might feel insufficient of time in the pre-test, it did not bother them in the post-test. This could be an indication that once students are familiar with the game, time restraint might not be a problematic issue to the student players. Another interesting finding was related to a negative comment—the speed of WIFI. This suggests that technical issue may hinder users from smooth operation. Despite the fact that music is an inevitable element in games, when it is used in the cognitive process which requires concentration, it can become a distracting factor. Teachers who are creating Kahoot games might consider closing the function of music in class.

To conclude, the use of Kahoot can empower learning and encourage students to engage in and enjoy the process of learning. As a catalyst, Kahoot is indeed a game-based interactive device that transforms an ordinary classroom to a more entertaining and engaging learning environment. This corresponds to what Brown (2008) proposed in TED Talk, emphasizing the power of play which influences our lives positively and brings happiness and enjoyment.

This study attempted to investigate the users' perceptions of Kahoot, a game-based instant feedback system, in a context where a group of EFL undergraduate adult learners took a listening course in the summer school. During the study period, students experienced an alternative way of learning—application of game-based Kahoot. As revealed in the results of the questionnaires, students appeared to hold positive feedback toward the interactive device, including device design, operation, engagement, and experience. In general, positive feedback was received, corresponding with other studies reporting the positive responses toward the investigation of Kahoot-based questionnaire (Wang, 2013; Husseein, 2015; Lin, 2016; Sasse & Cher, 2016). Overall, in the comparison of the pre-test and post-test, no significant difference was found except one which was related to timing. Although they felt insufficient of time in the pre-test, it did not bother them in the post-test, an indication that time restraint

might not be a problematic issue to the student players once they became familiar with the template and made use of reading strategies over the period of time. In the aspect of qualitative findings, although several positive comments were reported, some negative comments were given, showing a common problem—the speed of WIFI. In other words, if students used a smart phone with good function, they might have a smooth operation; otherwise, technical issue might hinder them from smooth operation. Despite the fact that music is an inevitable element in games, when it is used in the cognitive process which requires concentration, some students might regard it as a distracting factor. Even though the number of music-related negative comment was not high, teachers who are creating Kahoot games might consider closing the function of music in class.

To conclude, the purpose of getting students to play with Kahoot was to empower learning and encourage them to become interested in and enjoy what they were learning. Playing with Kahoot benefits everyone because play is a catalyst. Kahoot is indeed a game-based interactive device that lifts students from the ordinary classroom to a more entertaining and engaging learning environment. As Brown (2008) claimed in TED talk on play is more than just fun, emphasizing the power of play which influences our lives positively and brings everyone happiness and enjoyment.

### *Limitations and Suggestions*

Although the results of this study could be insightful to other interested teachers in a similar learning context, they may not be generalized. It is therefore suggested that the sample size be increased in the future study and the time of study could be extended to a full academic year. For further study, the following might have to be considered:

1. To make it fair, instead of using smartphones, an alternative device is the computer. Technical issue can be considered beforehand so as to avoid any speed differences among smartphones.

2. A focus group can be formed to gather in-depth information which can specifically elicit the student players' view, focusing on how the players select the answer.
3. A standardized listening test can be conducted to examine the difference students make before/after the program.
4. A student-made Kahoot can be encouraged to summarize their understanding of listening passages. This might boost the players' active participation in the process of making an instant feedback examination.

To sum, the implications of the abovementioned suggestions may enhance learning effectiveness as well as reveal the outcome of their learning.

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# Appendix:
# Questionnaire Summer School Listening:
# Evaluation on Kahoot Game in Class

## I. Read the questions and tick the answer.

1. Is it the first time for you to play "KAHOOT"?
   Yes _____      No _____

2. Was the instructor's demonstration of "KAHOOT"
   understandable?
   Yes _____      No _____

3. Could you follow the step-by-step "KAHOOT" operation?
   Yes _____      No _____

## II. Read the statements below. Choose the best answer to each question that describes your opinion.

Highly agree (4); Agree (3); Disagree (2); Highly disagree (1)

| Items | Opinions |
|---|---|
| 1. I had sufficient time (10-30 seconds) to read the questions on the screen. | 4 3 2 1 |
| 2. I tended to get the right answer so as to get a high point. | 4 3 2 1 |
| 3. I tended to get the right answer quickly to gain the speed bonus. | 4 3 2 1 |
| 4. The background music was an encouraging device. | 4 3 2 1 |
| 5. The color/shape of options to choose from is recognizable. | 4 3 2 1 |
| 6. The four options (in different shape and color) are easy for you to click the answer. | 4 3 2 1 |
| 7. It is helpful to see the immediate response on the screen. | 4 3 2 1 |

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8. It is helpful to see the player's rank (no specific name but nickname or number) on the screen.                     4 3 2 1

9. The bar graph with the percentage of correct answer on the screen was helpful.                     4 3 2 1

10. The appearance of "feedback and results" appeared in the end of the task was helpful.                     4 3 2 1

11. The "rating" function (1-5) of the activity shown on the screen was helpful.                     4 3 2 1

12. The "learning" function of the activity shown on the screen was helpful.                     4 3 2 1

13. The "recommend" function of the activity shown on the screen was helpful.                     4 3 2 1

14. The "feeling" function (faces) of the activity shown on the screen was helpful.                     4 3 2 1

15. The use of Kahoot reduced the test anxiety.                     4 3 2 1

16. The use of Kahoot made me think quickly to get the right answer.                     4 3 2 1

17. The use of Kahoot helped me realize how much I have learned.                     4 3 2 1

18. Using Kahoot as a test was much better than a paper-and-pen test.                     4 3 2 1

19. The use of Kahoot can help me to pay more attention to the lessons.                     4 3 2 1

20. The use of Kahoot made me focus on the questions.                     4 3 2 1

21. The use of Kahoot made me excited to join the game.                     4 3 2 1

22. The use of Kahoot made me remember the learned materials easily.                     4 3 2 1

23. The use of Kahoot made me eager to win the game.　　4 3 2 1

24. In general, Kahoot shows challenge of the game.　　4 3 2 1

25. Generally, Kahoot shows fantasy of the game.　　4 3 2 1

26. Overall, Kahoot is easy to use.　　4 3 2 1

27. Overall, I like the design of Kahoot.　　4 3 2 1

## III. Short answers.

1.  Please write three adjective words to describe your opinions
    about the use of KAHOOT.

2.  What do you think about the music used in Kahoot?

3.  Please write your feedback/comments on the use of KAHOOT.

4.  Which game mode do you prefer, individual game or team
    game?

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# Can the Novel Serve as Genre of Choice in the Tertiary EFL Classroom?

**Simon White**

## INTRODUCTION

The case for using literature in the English as a foreign language classroom has been thoroughly rehearsed. In the past, the preconceived "difficulty" of the literary text, whether that be a poem, play, short story or novel, or an extract from any of these genres, might have deterred the language teacher on pedagogical and personal grounds from incorporating texts not specifically linguistic in focus.  However, this challenge no longer represents a bar to inclusion of literary texts; and emphasis on literal and complete understanding of the text has lessened along with literature's renewed and increasing prominence in the English as a second language syllabus. Yet the genre of texts remains open to choice. However, several factors seem to militate against the inclusion of novels in foreign language syllabi. A language teacher offering to include a novel in the syllabus receives "a chorus of replies," but cites mostly negative reaction: novels are "too difficult;" you "always have to look up so many words;" and novels are "so long" (Collie & Slater, 2007, p. 1). The class quickly pivots to short stories, and, though the authors' subsequent discussion of literature defends and advances the utility of literature's role in the classroom, this does not necessarily include the novel genre. The anecdote rings true for this author: Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages in Southern Taiwan also moved away from using shorter novels such as Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* (1988) and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1987) first to novellas and then short stories, if reading classes kept a fictional component at all.   Short (1989, p. 180)

asserted that the pedagogical assumption that "high caliber" and "inaccessible" texts such as classic novels would "rub off" on students' foreign language performance was largely the reason that literature started to fade from language teaching curricula early in the last century. Classic canonical texts were supplanted by "surrogate literature," readable but ersatz copies in the shape of structured texts without the literary "complementarity of form and function" to be found in genuine literary texts (p. 181).

The novel, therefore, may be intimidating and demotivating due to difficult language and unmanageable length, generally held to be between 60,000 and 70,000 words, but running up to 200,000 words (Cuddon, 1999). The form is so mutable as to defy more specificity: "the subject matter of the novel eludes classification, for it is the hold-all and Gladstone bag of literature" with "endless variety of topics and themes" (p. 500). In these at least, it may surpass any other form of literature, but this comes as cold comfort to the class counting words and weeks. Nevertheless, as an inclusive literary genre, it can also be an adaptive and adaptable one. In the EFL classroom, in Taiwan and elsewhere, graded reading texts can go far to obviate some of the disadvantages of their longer, original counterparts. They are "written with specific levels of grammatical complexity in mind and with vocabulary that is limited by frequency headword counts" (Graded Reader, 2017). What is perhaps more important is that despite simplified wording and grammar "graded readers do not necessarily lack depth or avoid complex themes." Moreover, the Extensive Reading Foundation supports such Language Learner Literature (LLL) as genuine texts in that such works "comprise a valid, authentic, type of literature aimed at a specific readership" (What are "Graded Readers?"). A wide variety of texts and publishers are available sharing similar levels with vocabulary counts ranging from 200 words up to 3000 words. Furthermore, as they are defined, graded readers do not necessarily have to exclude original texts: adaptation is not always a necessary qualification where texts are chosen

based on "readability" in terms of language, grammar, and literary features, explaining the relatively wide use of authors such as Conan-Doyle (1988) or Orwell (1996) on reading class syllabi. Tsai (2012) chose *Night at the Museum*, a novelization of the film which was unabridged and of young adult level for a tertiary Taiwanese class; the author found that after reading the junior novel "students demonstrated improvement in attitudes, confidence, interest, and their own perceived reading ability" and also that such works could be a "pleasant alternative to textbooks" (p. 103). Even when such unaltered, unabridged works are not applicable, however, graded and adapted readers constitute an authentic body of literature for their EFL readers; and, in consideration of narrative, character, plot, and associated tropes, a graded novel is no less of a literary production than its longer, possibly original counterpart.

Whether in the guise of reading, cultural reading, cultural studies, or literature classes, the prominence of the subject has certainly risen in English language curricula, which demands academic and theoretical justification for its teaching practice, and perhaps also a critical appreciation of the source materials. Work has been done on the motivations for literature's inclusion into the EFL area, but the next step, the natural logical progression to the question of what kind, form or genre of text is the optimum vehicle for classroom analysis is largely open to instructors. Collie and Slater (2007) leave the issue undetermined: "What sort of literature is suitable for language learners? The criteria of suitability depend ultimately on each particular group of students, their needs, interests, cultural background and language level" (p. 6). While this is obviously true within the framework of a genre, it does not deal with the wider question of genre itself, and leaves the individual teacher with a spectrum of forms to choose from. There are no culture-specific or linguistic-level recommendations with regard to which genre of literature to opt for in the language class. It could be argued, therefore, that the field is too wide for the EFL professional aspiring to include literature in their

teaching armory. Most frequently, after all, such individuals are not literature specialists but rather linguistics ones. This combination could even result in the demotion or disappearance of literature from the syllabus, for without genre markers, "it is difficult to make a *linguistic* distinction between literature and the rest of language" because of the absence of a "linguistic feature or set of linguistic features which are found in literature but not in other kinds of texts" (Short, 1989, p. 200). Such similarity of literary tropes meant that Short's workshop participants were able to employ literary analytical tools on commercial advertisements as readily as on purportedly literary texts. Choice of the best work should be considered carefully, but the choice of genre, particularly for a literature course rather than just a reading component within a language course, is of equal, if not even greater importance.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## *Rationales for literature in language teaching*

Several models have been proposed for the inclusion of literature in the classroom, with justification resting on values both intrinsic and extrinsic to literary art.

Literature can be a repository of "valuable authentic material" in that it "says something about human issues" and so, despite passing times or fashions, may retain "ephemeral relevance" and cannot entirely disappear (Collie & Slater, 2007, p. 3). Moreover, since meaning is not "static," "a literary work can transcend both time and culture to speak to a reader in another country or a different period of history," (Collie & Slater, 2007, p. 3) and different periods, and indeed cultures, may bestow different levels of meaning and insight into a given text. Readers from one period may focus on the aesthetic values of poetic diction, whereas readers from another may see value more in terms of social or political commentary. Further to source material, literature may also be useful for "additional familiarity with many linguistic uses, forms, and conventions of the written mode" (Collie & Slater, 2007, p. 4), which in

terms of norms of narration or irony set literature apart from other authentic materials like instruction manuals, menus, advertisements or notices.

Literature can also offer a vehicle for "cultural enrichment" (Collie & Slater, 2007); it can initiate or facilitate the important process of "acculturation" which enables learners to use language more effectively by allowing them to step beyond cultural boundaries (Kooy & Chiu, 1998, p. 76). Specific incidents, interpretations, or actions within the text can have general or universal consequences according to Carter and Long (1991):

> *Teaching literature within a cultural model enables students to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own in time and space and to come to perceive tradition of thought, feeling and artistic form within the heritage the literature of such cultures endows. (p. 2)*

This artificial world of the text provides "a full and vivid context" which can give the reader "a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real society" (Collie & Slater, 2007, p.4), though the identity of that "real" society in depiction may be disputable. Despite the possible danger of cultural imperialism through the perpetuation of dominant cultures of English as evinced by Lazar (2004), literary production thus has a complementary and expository place in the spectrum of authentic cultural materials available in the EFL classroom.

Literature may also lead to language "acquisition" (Lazar, 2004) or "enrichment" (Collie & Slater, 2007). This approach emphasizes the exposure of students to "functions of the written language" as well as of increasing vocabulary and "'providing a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable" (Collie & Slater, 2007, p. 5). It was objected that these items were not what language students needed, with some literary genres more than

others tending towards obscure, arcane, or ungrammatical linguistic forms. Lazar (2004, p. 18) gives the example of Dylan Thomas's substitution of "grief" for a noun of time in the phrase, "A grief ago" in his poem of the same title. She notes, however, that, despite the possibility of creating confusion, such instances may lead the language students to think about linguistic norms and thereby increase their general language awareness. Literature as primary source of linguistic material may inhibit or delay language acquisition, but, as "counterpoise and supplement," it may provide "a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable" (Collie & Slater, 2007, p. 5). Thus, literature is not just unique as a cultural entity, which, despite the problems differentiating literature from other linguistic forms, is obviously the case; but also it is of prime importance is as repository of linguistic and grammatical features in the most authentic of contexts, and choice is made based upon the considerations of appropriateness and accessibility to these features, without reference to aesthetic, stylistic, or canonical ideas of literary status at all. Carter and Long (1991) go as far as to include dishwasher advertisements and commercial literature for insurance in their authentic textual sources, placed side by side with poems, and extracts from plays and novels in line with this rationale.

The final, perhaps most nebulous, and probably oldest justification lies in the "personal involvement" (Collie & Slater, 2007), "personal growth" (Carter & Long, 1991), or "whole person education" (Lazar, 2004) that literature was purported to deliver. In what is largely a restatement of a much older idea–Petrarch believed, after all, that the classics were valuable for their ethical wisdom, elegance, and rhetorical improvement of a stylistically barren Christian tradition, rather than for their intrinsic value as art–the rationale of literature exists in its imaginative and intellectual connection with and emotional impact on its readers, or, in the EFL case, the language students. In this area, dishwasher and insurance advertisements will not do. While this form of aesthetically

imaginative connection might not seem to be necessarily related to language acquisition, particularly amongst younger learners, personal and linguistic development go hand in hand, and so spurring one will lead to change in the other. Sustained imaginative engagement allows students to see past the immediate obstacle of the foreign language of the text such that they may as readers begin to "inhabit the text" (Collie & Slater, 2007, p. 6), fostering a sense of personal investment in, or even ownership of the text.   This personalization can have profound effects well beyond language acquisition. Schwartz (2008) sees reading to represent a transformative "Odyssey":

> *Reading is immersion; reading is reflection. Reading takes us elsewhere. We read to satisfy our curiosity about other times and places, to garner information about what is happening in the world beyond our lives .... Our reading helps formulate narratives—of personal hopes, plans putative triumphs—that help us both understand our pasts and make plans for our futures. (Schwartz, 2008, p.7)*

Optimistically, perhaps, the new EFL readers' active involvement with the text enables the language thereof to become "transparent" according to Collie and Slater (2007), in the sense that the reader becomes enchanted by the character, plotting, and their emotional response to the texts above the mundane demands of grammatical comprehension because "the fiction summons the whole person into its own world" (p. 6). It is interesting here, that fiction, above other genres, should figure in their hypothesis. The student may thus develop both an emotional excitement about and linguistic interest in the classroom literature. In this way, personal growth is both connected and diametrically opposed to the linguistic view of literary use. On the one hand any and all texts which spark a student's interest and so foster personal involvement are appropriate; on the other, it is assumed that literature exists because it has a peculiar and intense emotional

effect upon its readers, an effect which a commercial or a factual essay lacks, and as such not all writing is text, and not even all accepted literature is worthy of, or appropriate for, study. While this view might not allow for the inclusion of some of the extreme textual choices that a purely linguistic one might permit, it might also lead to unpredictable or unexpected definitions of ideal literatures for teaching.

# DISCUSSION

### *Sidestepping the word count problem*

The novel genre provides a good fit for all these models for literature in the classroom, but it comes with one big drawback. The novel's (60,000–70,000 words) or even novella's (20,000 words) length is a problem in the classroom context generally, and this difficulty is particularly acute in Taiwan given the pressures on time and focus in college syllabi and curricula. Any tool which can speed access to literature will be of considerable value and facilitate use of a valuable genre with high readability. Graded readers have expanded widely in scope and quality in recent decades with over fifty discrete series with worldwide distribution excluding other local and regional graded reader publications. This growth has been particularly marked in the Far East (Hill, 2013). Moreover, Hill's (2013) third survey of graded readers makes clear where the generic priorities lie: the majority of these are novels, usually adapted, often of classic works, but more recently young adult fiction has grown in significance. The big growth in this section of the EFL market testifies to the clear success of novels. Hill notes only seven nonfiction series in comparison to the forty-seven fiction series, with even fewer to be found in the field of drama.

It is not hard to see the reasons for the novel's preponderance. The *Oxford Bookworms* series has unsurprisingly included Shakespeare's dramas in the lineup, but clear obstacles intrinsic to adapting drama emerged. The complexity of the original language resists adaptation as it has

done historically with the Bowdlerization of his plays. Graded rewrites, according to Hill (2013), are insipid; there are too many plots and characters populating them; the onus of interpretation on the reader is too great; and there is a lack of prose blocks to situate and contextualize the dialogue. Regarding the other prose genre available, the non-fiction alternative, the results in the *Oxford Bookworms* series are "worthy but dull" suggesting that their writers "are not really interested in what they are writing" (p. 122). Also, the intra-grade reading is comparatively more difficult with the only two significant exceptions being original works incorporating imagined conversations and interactions between characters, namely, *Titanic* and *The Everest Story*, which arouse and maintain interest in the manner of fiction, or the novel, which in this case they are, i.e., non-fiction novels.

Graded readers in novel form may mitigate the severe challenge of length. The inclusion of dialogue, plot, theme and setting, even in the case of adaptation, make them essential to a holistic treatment of art. Long derided as at best ersatz literature or at worst not worthy of attention by "literary" language or literature teachers, these texts nevertheless supply the characters, plots, generic features and development available without the onerous length and of their literary counterparts or originals, and in so doing these readers give their readership an engagement and interest in literature which might otherwise be beyond reach. Disregarded graded readers may be, but in the EFL area their L2 consumers do not seem to care given the expanding size and number of new (especially novel) genres covered. Even more significantly, the abridged nature allows for the speedier completion of the text so as to appreciate the work as a whole artistic product, and to consume and interpret it as a singular entity; this avoids Gallagher's "readicide" effect (2009) of the sadly familiar situation where a longer text is broken up and parceled out into seemingly easily digestible morsels, robbing the literature of its immersive enchantment, and thereby destroying any interest in the artistic imaginative whole. Thus, graded readers

could rescue the novel for lower level EFL classes and make the literature available for exploitation sooner and more readily, and allow the novel genre to become a formidable vehicle for language acquisition without frightening the EFL students off.

### *Pluralism and readability*

In consideration of the ethical wisdom rationale for the inclusion of literature, novels also have an important passive advantage for the EFL class. Inherent balance of literary form becomes an important issue when one considers the negative possibilities or distorted perspective which becomes possible in a utilitarian approach to literature, when literature is only considered as a linguistic or other exemplary resource. Quasi-propagandist applications reduce literature to the status of little more than anecdotal extension of doctrine, with impoverishing results. In one extreme case, Marnane and Heinen (1993) perceive and define literature as an ideological tool for "Fostering Moral Growth through Teaching Literature." Literature for them is neither a stylistic, artistic, or even historical entity; it is a method of moral improvement or ideological indoctrination, since they draw no distinction between the two. Their course uses rather than studies, significantly focusing on shorter literary forms; they employ film, novel extracts, and short stories in the exegesis of a five-stage moral program. The purpose of literature seems to have been through a profound process of reductionism where only one facet justifies inclusion in their moral canon:

> *One compelling reason for including literature in school curricula is that young people can learn moral values by considering how fictional characters make moral choices. It is, therefore, both desirable and possible to construct a class unit in literature that ... will foster moral growth and promote the clarification of values. (Marnane & Heinen, 1993, p. 80)*

Such a didactic approach to literature study appears to represent the furthest thing from the one envisaged by pedagogical advocates of the personal growth model, since it tends to grossly oversimplify literary works. This, however, is the *reductio ad absurdum* of their case. The study has little if anything to do with literature at all; what they propose is a five-stage moral course, with each component reinforced by selection of films and literature as well as a spectrum of characters from Harry Potter to Bilbo Baggins, while leaving issues of characterization, ambiguity, dramatic tension, and irony unexplored. This literary body is an amputated one, denuded of  meaning beyond what is resourceful in consideration of their teaching goal, and which lies outside the themes of pain, reward, peer approval, social contract, and an ultimate (and vague) commitment to universal human rights. Such a course ill suits the parameters of an ethics or political science course, let alone a literary one, and clearly illustrates the dangers of unrestrained didacticism. What may be more desirable from a pedagogical standpoint, therefore, is a vehicle or a resource with its own inbuilt safety features, a form which, rather than propounding one idea in one way, includes a multiplicity of facets and interpretations which can prevent both the student and the teacher falling into the singularity of a "this-work-teaches-us" didactic fallacy.

The novel as genre resists singular readings, or propagandist ones, as was noted by research outside arts and education. Social science also testifies to the efficacy of novels. Connelly, Laney, Lucey, and Lycke (2013) illuminate an interesting strength of the novel form with respect to teaching of citizenship to school students. In their case, *The Hunger Games* serves as a springboard for citizenship education. Novels are of crucial value in that they transcend singular interpretations and familiar modes of thinking entrenched in teaching and learning. Citizenship involves "difficult and complex concepts," and teaching is made all the more challenging by a latent conservative and unconscious bias:

"Teachers tend to possess concepts of citizenship that relate to obedience, loyalty, and duty" (Connelly et al., 2013, p. 190). This can result in a "philosophy of compliance with patterns of social expectation," and established patterns of expected behavior. Martin (2008) also found that following rules and maintaining social cohesion were themes that could define junior school definitions of citizenship (as cited in Connelly et al., 2013, p. 193). *The Hunger Games* is of value because it subverts, modifies, or counteracts these innate conservative assumptions which underpin teaching citizenship, most particularly as Katniss's sacrifice stands out from a coercive, consumerist and obedient society and the "deemphasis of the individual" that can occur in contemporary society. Kasinitz (2009) also sees fiction, with novels as the first choice, as useful adjuncts to and vehicles for social science teaching by assigning students fictional works so as to use those texts' "images and insights" and to take advantage of the "accessibility" of the literary genre (p. 456). "Heightened realism" or even "surrealism" can be more revealing than "realistic" accounts of social changes (p. 460). Radical voices and social relevance are not exclusively in the bailiwick of the modern novel, however. Lanser (2005) indicated that the earliest modern novels of the eighteenth century concerned themselves with questions of individual rights to participate, to be represented, as much as with narrative strategies (p. 483). She goes on to show that "the flexibility of its voices" endowed the novel with "a special capacity to redistribute social bodies," (p. 483) which is to say novels tended towards radical or progressive agendas and could not be easily bent to conservative politics.

From the other end of the political spectrum, Richter's (1976) study of reading behavior and pedagogy in the German context provides a further caution against the temptation to bend literature to a singular end, linguistic or otherwise, and it comes as a salutary warning to the literature teacher and the language teacher who would propound one particular outlook. He followed the frustration of a young group of neo-Marxist

literature teachers who wished to show the inadequacy of materialism through the subtext of Goethe's *Werther*. The students, to the teachers' collective dismay, simply refused to see beyond the romance that the teachers simply saw as framing device for the text's true meaning. From here, Richter extrapolates a whole cultural history of reading behavior and he notes the consistent failure of preconceived literatures to serve the official purpose for which they were pedagogically intended, or rather employed. The personal and the institutional interpretations seem destined always to oppose one another:

> *Their [the teachers'] experience gave them occasion to consider an important problem which arises again and again in practice in school and university, but which has played scarcely any role in scholarly discussions about teaching literature: the contradiction between institutional planning and individual realization. (Richter, 1976, p. 23)*

In an interestingly extrinsic historical analysis, Richter traces this refusal of educational and personal attitudes to agree back to the German Enlightenment. As with all Enlightenment theory, literature was to be in the service of the education and infinite improvement of the individual all in the service of the "relief of man's estate," and as such it of course should focus on the "right" things–fact, documentary material, and history–but what irritated the Enlightenment theorist Campe was the stubborn refusal to bow to such a rational program and the lamentable tendency for the majority to prefer "wrong reading" of a personal, emotional, and provocative nature instead of a civic, scientific, historical and rational form of material. Oddly enough, for Campe, it was the novel that was guilty and also hugely successful in "false reading": "Wrong books are above all novels, preferably sentimental novels, stories of knights and robbers and adventures as well as erotic literature" (as cited in Richter, 1976, p. 34).

Richter's study is no obsolete history lesson for the EFL teacher. Any teacher who wishes to establish the links between literary history, literary text, theme and extrinsic history must first of all bear in mind the connection between the readers' personal experience and the work (in Richter's case, the novel) and as such, teachers need to actively "pursue readers' experiences" just as the novelists and novels did (Richter, 1976, p. 39). Subjects need to be appropriate to readers' life experiences; otherwise, their expression will fall on deaf ears. Just as important then is genre itself; it must be close to the reader's experience to utilize familiarity and foster readability. Literary drills or treasure hunts where the teacher's questions elicit unambiguous, textual responses are likewise doomed to failure, since the aspect of the student's personal apprehension of the work is ignored. In this respect, novels can represent a prime example for the models of literature as a valuable authentic material and also of personal growth.

### *Cultural and generic familiarity*

Novels' inherent literary advantages make them more familiar and thus more readable than other genres of literature. Novels play upon that personal relationship between readers and material–most often between readers and narrator or focalizing character–which can draw the readers into literary and imaginative world, as it can also draw the students into the language. Of course, poetry could lay claim to this advantage along with brevity, which is particularly useful when time is of the essence in a class period or a short course. Nevertheless, the art of poetry, even modern verse, foregrounds, problematizes, and questions language use in ways and at levels novels usually do not. After the Russian Formalists, for example, poetry was a tool of "roughened" diction, difficult form, and "defamiliarized" subject matter (Scklovsky, 2005, p. 800). Literature served to refresh the jaded and clichéd apprehension, linguistic and psychological, by shocking the readers out of their habitual modes of perception and substituting new ways of expression. This

might work for the sensitive native speakers who can immediately tell novelty from staid metaphor/cliché, but for the EFL students the task may prove demotivating or impracticable. It is true that Short (1989) does use poetry to great linguistic effect in his presentation of Larkin's "Vers de Societe," where he focuses on the registers of greetings, invitations and acceptances to create a useful functional pedagogy. Yet Short is very careful to choose a poet who, as part of "the Movement," was consciously rebelling against what he saw as modernist obfuscation and elitism and who was trying to write a poetry fit for mass publication and mass appreciation; few other poets could be so readily accessible. In other cases, the special nuance and connotation involved in the poem will render it a real challenge to the aspiring student, with limited immediate perceptible reward. What is perhaps more of a problem is that poetry, unlike the realist novel or the Hollywood film, is no longer as familiar a literary genre. The novel is at least cross-culturally identifiable: it is "a prose narrative on a large scale" which is to be found in historical cultures as diverse as ancient Egypt, eleventh-century Japan, seventeenth-century France and eighteenth-century Britain (Hornstein, Percy & Brown, 2002, pp. 515–516). This is clearly not the case for the culture-specific modes of poetry, as witnessed by the distinctly different versions of Romantic work which emerged in Britain, France, and Germany (Hornstein et al., 2002), countries and nations who enjoy linguistic and cultural proximity, but whose poetry is nevertheless no less difficult to translate than between languages with many more degrees of separation.

Of course, it would be overly simplistic to set up an artificial dichotomy of poems and novels. The novel is not the only choice of prose available. Significant sections in Lazar (2004), Carter and Long (1991), and Collie and Slater (2007) deal with the short story and the play. Short stories provide characters, images, themes and actions with the brevity which may be a chief concern in the schedule. At the risk of stating the obvious, however, a short story is not a novel; something

needs to be sacrificed for the sake of length and that is almost invariably character development and complexity of plot, both of which areas are key to drawing the readers into sustained engagement with the text (of course the short story does not need to sustain by its very definition), and facilitating immersion into a literary world which gives readers the sense of investment in and ownership of a text. Characters in a short story, however, do not have time, space or convolution of plot to allow them to develop because its focus is essentially singular and exclusive: "A short story may be concerned with a scene, an episode, an experience, an action, the exhibition of a character or characters, the day's events, a meeting, a conversation, or a fantasy" (Cuddon, 2013, p. 653). Given this deliberate and necessary limitation in scope, when this genre is used, even in collections centered on focalizing characters such as in *The Extraordinary Cases of Sherlock Holmes*, the class can be reduced to a rather dry, drill-oriented, task-based analysis of character motivation and results. Even with a master of the short story with the surprise ending like Dahl (2007), the scope for student involvement remains highly limited due to the selectivity of the form. It is significant in this respect that Reynolds (2014) should choose Dahl's novel, *The BFG*, for reading as part of his study into nonce word acquisition among Taiwanese university students. Short stories tend to focus on a single event, not an interrelated succession of them as novels do; and the use of novels, partly due to their length and partly to less quantifiable interest and self-identification they may inspire, can have significant results. Yang (2001) found that the inclusion of the familiar genre of mystery novels noticeably increased motivation and language proficiency in comparison with students not using such texts. Horst, Cobb, and Meara (1998) also suggest longer texts for better vocabulary acquisition, since target words appear at frequencies which are simply unobtainable in shorter works.

The play too, while providing action, drama, dialogue, symbol, and character development, cannot, except in rare

cases of plays not really designed for performance, provide narrative. Significantly here too, Hill's (2013) fairly exhaustive survey of graded readers shows few dramas in comparison to narrative-driven novels and short stories. Not only do novels incorporate strengths of the other forms, but frequent translations into cinema increase the likelihood of EFL students' familiarity. In the cases of novels like *Lord of the Flies* or *The Great Gatsby*, these translations can be profitably employed in the furtherance of student interest both in literature and in English.

Film can be a fruitful avenue of approach to a genre as expansive as that of the novel, providing a palatable and relatively immediate impression for students to work from. Collie and Slater (2007) utilize a number of strategies based on cinema in their extensive exemplary treatment of *Lord of the Flies*, particularly in later classes where the class is already familiar with the bulk of the narrative. Their "highlights" activity asks students to choose six "mental snapshots" from the novel which could serve as illustrations for a promotional poster for a film of the book, or perhaps even be incorporated into a film trailer. Elsewhere, their "moviemaker" activity encourages students to translate their cinematic fluency into an interpretation of the book. Students, who role-play scriptwriters, are grouped and given a different directorial instruction regarding the dialogue of a particular scene—to tone down the tension, to spice up the acrimony, or to reemphasize the dynamic in favor of one character against another. In all cases the students are led to use their familiarity with film to foster their engagement with the novel. The film area is certainly fertile ground for the teacher to plow, and a rich source of associative imagery linking the students' own cultural experience with a novel. In some cases the proximity between film and text is much greater, as can be the benefits: Tsai's (2012) use of a short novelization of *Night at the Museum* allowed college students to transfer their cultural and literary knowledge of a popular film in Taiwan over to their reading due to the "close matching" between film and text.

The advantageous effect was that "The entertaining feature of movie-watching more or less brought forth pleasure to novel-reading and counteracted the anxiety provoked by the text" (p. 111).

Cutchins (2003) argues for a far more central role for film in teaching the novel, inverting many of the supposed weaknesses of film adaptations into strengths in the EFL environment. Rather than supportive, ancillary material, films are actively employed to understand key themes and techniques in the work. His case in point is interesting and informative. Cutchins chooses two different film adaptations of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* to show film's relevance in teaching the book, the classic 1970s version with Robert Redford (Merrick & Clayton, 1974), and a more recent, better-reviewed television adaptation. The 1970s version has a number of drawbacks which one might imagine would preclude it from pedagogical application, chief among which is the elegance and feline poise of the lead actor, who essentially accomplishes what Gatsby dearly wanted but failed to do, which leaves the character in the book looking faintly comic by comparison due to his clumsy and inappropriate efforts at grace. In the film, Redford elevates Gatsby to the romantic status and image which the novel necessarily and unambiguously denies him. However, Cutchins argues that all adaptations, whether poorly or masterfully done, can be of use in the classroom:

> *Watching a movie as part of the study of a written text can help move students of literature beyond understanding a novel or story simplistically, only in terms of its plot or characterization. Film can actually teach them some of the more delicate qualities of literature. In fact, movies can be used to teach things about literature accessible to inexperienced students in perhaps no other way. (Cutchins, 2003, p. 295)*

The artistic successes of a good adaptation allow students to see the subtlety of the writing made flesh, most notably in Gatsby's created world and his guests, which appeals to students' visual and cinematic acuity in order to develop their literary one. Likewise, the poorly adapted film may serve to elucidate the novel's devices and characteristics, conspicuous by their absence or their altered (and artistically diminished) emphasis:

> *For educators, however, the film's failure can be a good thing. Understanding why Gatsby collapses as a film can actually help students understand what is unique about the novel: what, in other words, makes this story good literature, and at the same time, apparently bad film. (Cutchins, 2003, p. 296)*

For Cutchins, the issue is the director's change of point of view while keeping the narrator the same, thereby illustrating the subtle but important difference between the narrator and the novel's point of view. Film, of whatever intrinsic worth, has thus been put to a vital literary and educational effect well beyond mere entertainment or narrative reinforcement.

The strength and depth of a whole world created within the form of the novel, referential largely to itself, is also something that Sunderland (1999) exploits in her use of Golding's *Lord of the Flies* with her literature class. Rather than a banal introduction of themes, novelist or literary period or social context, Sunderland took her class out into the woods on the first day of term and gave the students a scenario that, in the same progressive manner as the novel, rapidly degenerates into a crisis, like the one that confronts Ralph, Piggy and the boys. After some initial remonstrations, Sunderland notes that the students quickly got into the situation and organically developed the kinds of divisions and strategies that the characters do: "Soon they forgot I was watching from the top of the hill, and the experience became genuine. My students were slowly turning into the characters

in *Lord of the Flies*, and they didn't even know it" (Sunderland, 1999, p. 50). Sunderland's total immersion technique is no less powerful in the literature class as it can be in language learning. Putting the students into the positions inhabited by the novel's characters provided them with an insight into the text which otherwise they would have been unlikely to achieve, in a similar way, perhaps, to the benefit afforded by Cutchins' (2003) approach to film adaptations in the classroom, which is to say that Sunderland was able to bring into the realm of understanding themes and ideas which might be beyond the comprehension and competence, or perhaps outside the experience, of the younger learner. In her subsequent textual lessons, Sunderland notes:

> *They examined the text, analyzed the attitudes of the characters, made comparisons between themselves and the characters, compared the setting of the novel to their setting, and evaluated character actions. I just listened and recorded everything they were saying. (Sunderland, 1999, p. 51)*

Of course, Sunderland's creative approach must take much of the credit for sparking class interest and involvement in the text, but no less important is the characteristic of the genre itself in drawing the reader into an extended environment and situation of dimensions simply unavailable to a short story and particularly not to a poem. Sunderland's achievement comes, and could only come, with a novel. When that extended environment or self-contained world within the text concerns a culture or zeitgeist, moreover, the novel can represent a powerful source of justification for the acculturation model for literature.

## CONCLUSION

Novels may be a valid and expedient option for the EFL class. Singular readings of the novel prove difficult, but that

can be counted as an asset of the genre. Narrative play between the text and the reader, as well as multiplicity of voices within the text, provided an inbuilt safeguard against the possibility of distorted ideological readings as well as the probability of inherent didactic, conservative bias in the social science classroom. The recent marked increase in the number of works and genres in the graded reader market sidesteps key objections relating to linguistic complexity as well as unmanageable length besetting the "literary" novels used in the past. These graded readers can be a profitable resource in class as well as in extensive self-study or recreational reading, enabling both extensive reading and intensive in-class treatments. This kind of text also allows L2 readers access to what is a culturally ubiquitous literary form whose close link with film gives it even more traction owing to accessibility and familiarity to the language students. While students may cut their critical teeth on literary texts this way, novels may also supply the broader appeal of personal growth in that narratives offer not isolated thoughts, images or singular scenes, but vicarious new worlds to their readers, at once culturally particular and general, functioning as keys to understanding mores and attitudes specific to one culture in a format familiar to many or all. Conditions of the class must be paramount: if time is the prime concern, then other genres need to be used however abbreviated the form of novel could be; if literature per se is the subject, then its key forms need to be included; but if literature is taken as cultural, linguistic, or whole-person teaching resource, which seminal ELT texts seem to do, then there is no need to cover a genre simply because it exists in the corpus of literature. Because the novel genre is familiar, readable, varied and accessible, it represents a good fit for use in the tertiary EFL class in Taiwan.

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# Afterword

# Reflections on Global English Instruction:
# New Roles and Approaches

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In this afterword, we will be looking at the role of English in East Asia generally and how that affects the linguistic ecology of the region. We will situate the chapters of this book within that context and also within contemporary views on second language development, including the growing importance of intercultural communication competence. Those developments will be discussed in connection with the evolving roles of teachers of English. Finally, we will look at the growth in options for personalized instruction, which offers new approaches to English language instruction, as illustrated by the chapters of this book.

## "English fever" and its consequences

English today holds a unique position among world languages, a position that some have described as unprecedented in human history:

> *English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment in history. Although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use*

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> *it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is*
> *found and purposes it serves. (Dewey, 2007, p. 333)*

The extent of the spread of English as a lingua franca across the globe and its central role in diverse domains of human endeavor–education, entertainment, commerce, media, international organizations–bestow on English "a unique cultural pluralism, and a linguistic heterogeneity and diversity which are unrecorded to this extent in human history" (Kachru, 1985, p. 14). The number of people with "reasonable competence" in English was estimated at the beginning of the 21st-century to be somewhere around 1.5 billion (Crystal, 2003); that number is likely to be significantly higher now, with no indication that growth is slowing.

The ubiquity of English and its instrumental role in both institutions and private lives makes English language learning an intensely desired commodity worldwide: "People are ready to go to great lengths to achieve the goal of becoming proficient in English by investing a great deal of time, effort, and financial resources in language learning: English is viewed as a stepping stone to success in a globalized world" (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, p. 26). As discussed in the introduction to this book, English language learning has deep roots in Taiwan, with the country's unique economic and political position resulting in an ever-growing need for English proficiency. The situation in Taiwan reflects global trends, as well as the state of English education in other Asian countries, where there are as well intense government and private efforts to enhance English language learning. The importance of learning English in Korea, for example, has been described as a "veritable English language mania" (Park & Abelmann, 2004, p. 46), with government efforts supplemented by phenomena such as the creation of "English-only" villages or the practice of Korean mothers going abroad with their children to learn English (Butler, 2014b).

Similarly, in China there is "English fever" (Park, 2009); Zou and Zhang (2011) write that for many parents in China,

"English is more than just a school subject; it permeates into many aspects of social life" (p. 191). Butler's research (2014a) in Changzhou, China indicated that parents' zeal for English education was so intense that in her parental survey, 73% of parents responded positively to the statement, "I have no problem if my child will be able to speak English better than our home language(s)" (p. 109). The fervor for English language leads many parents to seek out additional opportunities for instruction through enrolling their children in so-called "cram schools", private institutions which provide English lessons after regular school hours or on weekends. This is a phenomenon occurring across East Asia, including in Taiwan (Lin, 2008; Lin & Byram, 2016). The use of cram schools is a reflection of the importance of English language proficiency in advancing educationally, including for high school and university admission. The sometimes problematic level of the English language proficiency of English teachers in public schools is one of the factors behind the widespread use of cram schools for English (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016).

The existence of such schools also highlights the fact that in many Asian countries (and elsewhere as well) there is "a problematic connection between policy and practice" (Liddicoat, 2014, p. 223) when it comes to English language instruction. While officially, national curricula may call for the use of a communicative language learning approach, emphasizing task-based instruction and the active use and development of speaking skills, classroom instruction may look quite different. In Japan, for example, the official curriculum reflects modern language pedagogy, but in reality a grammar-translation method is commonly used in teaching English, with a "great deal of focus in the English language classroom put on test-taking skills" (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, p. 62). This gulf is evident elsewhere as well; in Malaysia, strong governmental emphasis on English language development has not led to the expected results in terms of English language capabilities (Don, 2014).

A concern Butler (2014a) raises about the English mania in China is the possible negative affect on the use and promotion of minority languages. Liddicoat (2014) points out that in East Asia, language education policies emphasize bilingualism, usually in the form of a national language plus English. This is in contrast to other regions, such as the European Union, in which bilingualism has yielded to an emphasis on pluralingualism, including being proficient in two or more languages. The official disinterest for the development of multilingualism has unfortunate byproducts:

> *That has consequences for the linguistic ecology, especially in minority language contexts, where such thinking does not make space for the inclusion of learners' home languages within a bilingual framing of education or an openness to plurilingualism that could include home languages in addition to other forms of language learning. The policy focus on bilingualism at most creates a significant tension in a region where plurilingualism outside the educational system is widespread but largely ignored.* (Liddicoat, 2014, p. 225)

Bilingualism has consequences that go beyond language learning. The lack of support for minority languages is often accompanied by a concomitant social devaluation of minority groups. This relates as well to the different degrees of access families have to English learning resources (books, tutors, after-school classes) depending on socio-economic status and domicile: "To pay attention only to what is going on in formal English-language classrooms may result in a distorted and incomplete picture of English-language acquisition. That is because wealthier parents and their children typically have greater access to various forms of English education outside of the classroom" (Butler, 2014a, p. 96). These concerns, as well as an urban-rural divide, are evident in Taiwan as well (Lin & Ivinson, 2012).

# Trends in English language instruction

Given global movements towards greater use of English in a large variety of areas, English language instruction is booming, with integration into the school curricula at an early age in many countries (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Additionally, there are an increasing number of possibilities for learning English outside of formal educational settings. Those opportunities have expanded exponentially, with options available through online resources, extracurricular activities, work-related training, travel/study abroad, entertainment, and private schools. This book explores those expanded English learning opportunities in terms of younger learners (chapters 1 and 6), Internet tools and services (chapters 1 and 7), non-formal language learning (chapter 4), stays abroad (chapter 5), professional training (chapters 2, 3, and 6), and the use of media/entertainment (chapters 4 and 8). The variety of environments studied provides ample illustration of the penetration of English into all aspects of students' existence, from leisure-time activities to professional contexts.

In addition to this book illustrating different ways in which English language learning is occurring today in student lives (both in Taiwan and worldwide), there are several other important themes related to English language instruction which emerge as explicit subjects or subtexts:

1) a recognition of the importance of students developing competences in dealing with different varieties of English and with individuals from different cultures;
2) changes in the role of the English teacher today, as learning opportunities have expanded beyond the classroom;
3) the increasing personalization of English instruction to the needs/interests of individual learners.

### Global English and intercultural competence

Dewey (2007) coined the term "Global English" to describe the sense that English as a global lingua franca is not "owned" by native speakers. Indeed, "in today's global world, English is the language of international communication and the majority of interactions conducted in English are between non-native speakers" (Murray & Scarino, 2014, p. 9). Kachru (1992) uses the term "World Englishes" to describe the fact that there are a variety of "legitimate" versions of the language beyond the UK and USA. English is in that respect different from other world languages, where one variety of the language may be considered the accepted standard worldwide. For French, for example, the Académie Française is the official institutional custodian of the language.

Varieties of English take on linguistic and cultural characteristics from local and regional uses, giving them a unique combination of features. There are as well "emerging varieties" of English from its wide use in online tools and services (Liddicoat, 2014). Consequently, L2 uses of English are likely to encounter many variations of English both in face-to-face and online encounters. To deal with that situation, English L2 users will need more than knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary; they need pragmatic and strategic competences. They will also need flexibility and a willingness to accept language forms and uses different from their classroom experiences, i.e., the "ability to negotiate meaning through the medium of English with potential interlocutors from multifarious language and cultural backgrounds and who may speak a different variety of English" (Murray & Scarino, 2014, p. 10). That entails becoming comfortable with the increasing mix of languages and cultures evident in our globalized world. This calls for a level of intercultural competence that matches the increasingly multicultural world in which we live. That brings with it a need for the wider inclusion of culture in second language instruction: "We are on the cusp of a major change in how we think about not only languages, languages education and the teaching and learning

of languages, but also about the role of language and culture in learning more generally" (Murray & Scarino, 2014, p. 4).

The contributors to this book reflect this view of Global English as situated in a multilingual and multicultural world in which English learners need to be able "to adapt on the fly to any given interaction both linguistically and culturally" (Murray & Scarino, 2014, p. 10). Chapters 1 and 7 explore the use of information technology to broaden language exposure and expand standard methodologies of the classroom. Lin, Shie, and Holmes (chapter 1) introduce blogs as a means as well to develop greater linguistic and cultural awareness; the Taiwanese students encountered new uses and variations of English, as well as new perspectives on topics such as education, through blogging with UK counterparts. Students in Chiu's study (chapter 2) express their enjoyment in discovering cultural differences and in recognizing the fallacy of accepting broad national stereotypes ("not every German is hard-working and punctual"). The need for intercultural competence in the hotel industry is demonstrated in Weng (chapter 3), with results that could be useful in designing intercultural training programs. White (chapter 8) explores how the use of novels in English language instruction can enable "students to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own in time and space", as fiction enables exploration of "vicarious new worlds".

The activities in Yakoveleva's English club (chapter 4) venture beyond the binary of English-Taiwanese language/culture to incorporate multiple national cultures, providing a wider, intercultural understanding. Yakoveleva invited students to reflect on the topics discussed in connection with their own personal backgrounds and experiences, thereby contributing "to their awareness of the role of the Taiwanese culture". This reflects current SLA (second language acquisition) theory that second language learning should "build upon the learner's existing linguistic and cultural lifeworld" (Murray & Scarino, 2014, p. 6). The importance of reflexivity on cultural experiences is stressed in Yeh (chapter

5), who points out that "not all intercultural encounters lead to developing students' multicultural competence". Yeh shows how students engaged in international internships were able to take on the important role of "intercultural mediators of languages and cultures" (Murray & Scarino, 2014, p. 5).

Huang's essay (chapter 6) explores how international students working on translation projects learn to accommodate to different styles of communication, an experience duplicated by the investigator herself. During the semester, students were asked "to reflect on their learning and challenges". The importance of offering students opportunities for critical reflection on what they have learned and experienced is vital in deepening learning and avoiding facile explanations of observed behaviors/utterances. That can be accomplished through learning journals, blogs, or, as was the case here, through periodic student-researcher interviews. Recently, a new approach has been suggested, the joint instructor-student practice of critical conversation analysis of sample dialogs (McConachy, 2018).

The "intercultural perspective on language use" advocated by McConachy (2018),

> *foregrounds the importance of the learner's ability to direct close attention to how language is used in context, to reflect on what one has observed and experienced within interactions, to compare what has been observed with what one already knows, and to develop the capacities for viewing the exchange of meanings from multiple perspectives. (p. 7)*

Such an approach directs attention away from broad national characterizations and towards cultural values embedded in language. This aligns well with the concept of "small cultures" (Holliday, 1999), which focuses on the formation of affinity, job, or task related groups which develop dynamically their own behaviors and practices through emergent communicative activities. Learning the rules and roles of small cultures is

important in many environments, including in participation in online communities, where learning the cultures of use of different tools or services is a prerequisite for "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Thorne, 2003). That holds true for blogging practices (chapter 1), as it does for particular areas within English for special purposes, such as journalism (chapter 2) or workplaces (chapters 3, 5, and 6).

### *New roles and expectations for English teachers*

The studies together provide practical examples of the need for English teachers today to adapt learning and teaching approaches to the changing landscape of English language development. The ubiquity of English in all spheres of life has changed the dynamics of classroom English instruction: "Not so very long ago, the teacher was *the* main source of English for students, but times have changed" (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016, p. 5). Sundqvist & Sylvén's *Extramural English* (2016) chronicles how that change is manifested in the availability of rich online media and resources. Sockett's study of *Online Informal Learning of English* (2014) provides further examples. The availability and popularity of English language media (TV programs, movies, popular songs), especially among younger learners, means that many students in English language classrooms are also learning outside of class through what Chik and Ho (2017) label "recreational language learning". Additionally, students may be learning English through travel, work-study programs, private schools, or participation in extracurricular language-related activities, schools, or organizations.

Sundqvist & Sylvén (2016) describe the changing face of classroom instruction in English:

> *With the emergence of Global English and the digital era, L2 English classrooms began to change. From anecdotal evidence we know that teachers realized, slowly but surely, that their job "suddenly"*

*was a new job—and that job was challenging, to say the least. Previously, classrooms were more or less homogeneous in the sense that most learners had similar access to English input and also similar opportunities for English interaction and output. Further, the teacher could control learners' amount of exposure to English and, in most cases, the teacher was also the main (and often the only available) English role model for the learners. (p. 31)*

Differences among learners are no longer just in the areas of cognitive ability and aptitude for learning languages but can vary with the degree of outside-class English exposure. These changes lead to the ongoing need for professional development for English teachers. English teachers need to learn about new online affordances for language learning, as well as to explore experiential opportunities that connect language development with students' leisure, study, work, and travel activities (Godwin-Jones, 2015). At the same time, the dynamic shifts in English L2 development today bring with them the need for teachers to practice action research, which engages teachers as researchers. Using findings from research and from experiences of their own local situations, action researchers try to find improved methods of teaching English that take into account the multiple learning options available today. This is, in fact, the genesis of most of the content of this book.

The teacher-authors in this collection report on a variety of new approaches to both enhance learning and further motivate students. One of those areas is to introduce active use of technology tools and services, including blogging (chapter 1), translation software (chapter 6), and student response systems (chapter 4). In the latter study, the introduction of the Kahoot student response software, also called clicker or polling apps, involves student use of mobile devices in a BYOD mode (bring your own device). This usage echoes the call for greater integration of mobile devices in language

learning (Godwin-Jones, 2017), as well as the targeted use of mobile devices in the classroom (Godwin-Jones, 2018). It is interesting to note that recent studies have highlighted innovative uses of mobile technology for learners by Taiwanese teachers and researchers, with more studies from Taiwan than from any other area of the world (Crompton, Burke & Gregory, 2017). Given their universal popularity, mobile devices offer one of the most important means available today to connect language learning to students' real lives.

Part of the appeal of Kahoot (and of similar online tools), as Lin (chapter 7) discusses, is its game-based features. When students enjoy an activity–whether it be gaming or watching videos–that is likely to be a strong motivating factor, as well as providing the opportunity for more time on task in terms of language exposure (Sykes, 2018). Yakoveleva (chapter 4) makes use of videos and gaming to add variety to content presentations, as well as to send a message to young learners that "English could be fun". She also used popular English songs, scaffolding their use through preparation with vocabulary, listening to the songs while reading the English subtitles, and finally doing an activity with the lyrics, before having the students themselves sing the song. Sockett (2014) has shown how having students combine listening to music while working with song lyrics can enhance learning. English language media, along with other physical materials (food, board games, cards, souvenirs), can as Lin, Shie, and Holmes (chapter 1) state function as "cultural artifacts", serving as "mediational tools to facilitate cultural reflections and interactions". They also foster enjoyment in language learning. White (chapter 8) shows how much that can be the case as well for the reading of novels.

### *Learners as people*

Language learning can be enjoyable and personally fulfilling, but it can also be nerve-racking and anxiety-promoting. In fact, the discussion of learners'

emotional states runs like a leitmotif through much of this book. Recognizing and engaging students' emotional states has become recognized in SLA theory as central to effective learning (Busch, 2015; Murray & Lamb, 2018). Bloggers in chapter 1 express nervousness over their command of English, as well as surprise at some of the information they receive from their British partners. Likewise, in chapter 2, students expressed hesitation in engaging with foreigners in English, and Yeh (chapter 5) points to how "emotionally difficult" it is to be in a professional setting in which one is expected to communicate competently with culturally and linguistically different others. Finally, Huang (chapter 6) discusses the stress felt by students in a university-industry collaboration project. Huang states that this experience "helps participants learn to cope with stress and to develop higher stress resistance."

The practice of paying attention to stress-inducing, language-related situations aligns with recent studies that have highlighted the usefulness of critical incidents, both in terms of language learning and the development of intercultural communication competence (Reinders & Benson, 2017; McConachy, 2018). Those experiences can be disconcerting, but also present learning opportunities:

> *Without experiencing some discomfort in language learning, we cannot learn another language, and without some discomfort with some topics we cannot develop skills of criticality and intercultural citizenship. It is exactly when we need to negotiate meaning in learning a language and when we need to make sense of certain ambiguities in intercultural citizenship that we are required to learn new knowledge and skills as well as sometimes change our attitude. (Byram, Golubeva, Hui & Wagner, 2017, p. 258)*

This personal transformation comes as students "participate in learning and communicating in the target

language, over time that process of adjustment or adaptation will fundamentally alter their sense of who they are" (Murray & Scarino, 2014, p. 9). This view echoes the calls in recent studies that advocate a "relational perspective on language education" (Murray & Scarino, 2014) and a "dialogic approach to intercultural acquisition" (Garrett-Rucks, 2016). The ultimate goal is to guide students through L2 interactions and the development of critical skills via self-reflection towards an end goal of transformative intercultural citizenship (Byram, Golubeva, Hui & Wagner, 2016).

Intercultural experiences engage students as whole persons, not just as learners. It involves not just knowledge and skills, but attitudes as well. Recent voices in SLA have pleaded for a more "person-centered" approach to language instruction (Benson, 2017; Larsen-Freeman, 2018). This engages students "emotional selves" in their learning (Kennedy, Diaz & Dasli, 2017, p. 168). Identity theory in SLA (Norton, 2001) has demonstrated the importance for student motivation and longer-term uptake of their investment in becoming members of "imagined communities". Helping students construct an "English self" can increase students self-confidence, as shown in a recent large-scale study in China (You, Dörnyei & Csizér, 2016). Several studies in this book point to the need among Taiwanese students as well to boost their level of self-assurance, both in the use of English and in personal encounters with foreigners. The development of self-images of themselves as competent and confident English speakers may be of particular importance for students from migrant, minority, or disadvantaged communities, who may not "recognize themselves in the pedagogical practices of their English teachers" (Lin & Ivinson, 2012, p. 82). The shift towards a multicultural and multilingual view of language learning entails focusing on the learner as a unique individual who brings into the L2 classroom a variety of values, beliefs and behaviors from cultural experiences and languages. Teachers need not only to be aware of those backgrounds, but to draw on them as well, leveraging out-of-school experiences

(including online activities) to anchor L2 learning within students' own life experiences. This kind of "cultural bridging" (Lin & Ivinson, 2012, p. 83) or "bridging activities" (Thorne, 2003) makes it more likely that learning is meaningful and memorable, because it has been personalized.

This focus on the individual learner in SLA has naturally led to a rise in recent years of qualitative and mixed method studies, with a growing emphasis on the diversity of individual development paths (Dörnyei, 2009). The use of group averages, as is the general practice in quantitative studies, identifies general tendencies observed in a group which may not yield useful information in terms of individual outcomes. That interest in the variety of learner experiences is reflected in this collection. Chapter authors use a variety of methods to gather data on individual student experiences, including individual and group interviews, focus groups, learning journals, questionnaires, assessment instruments, and researcher observations. The case studies that were developed from analyzing these data provide a rich mosaic of student English learning in a variety of contexts.

## Conclusion: Towards global citizenship

Taken together, the studies in this collection demonstrate the utility (and need) of going beyond the textbook–and the classroom–to engage students in language-related activities. That process broadens cultural horizons while supplying greater interest/incentive to use English in different situations and with a variety of interlocutors. In the process, students gain confidence and competence, both in negotiating meaning and in building relationships through English.

The studies show that this goal can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The use of online interactions creates a "critical space for enhancing students' language and intercultural competences" (Lin, Shie & Holmes, chapter 1). Given the growth of activity in this area, it is critical for teachers to take advantage of the benefits of

technology-enhanced language learning in their own classrooms, as well as to acknowledge, encourage, and build on students' self-initiated online activities using English. At the same time, it is important as well to engage other aspects of their situated lives, whether that be travel or leisure time pursuits. That may involve participation in organized extracurricular activities or professionally oriented endeavors such as internships, work abroad, or service learning.

National curricula for English often highlight findings from research, such as the importance of broadening focus beyond the language typically encountered in the classroom and taking into consideration the complex, multicultural nature of language use today. Official curricula and pedagogical reforms are often slow in implementation in the classroom (for multiple examples for English, see Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). This collection demonstrates, at least, that in English language instruction at Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, teachers are actively seeking ways to expand student exposure to and learning of English in ways that connect with students' activities, interests, and needs.

The chapters of this book demonstrate the validity of new approaches for engaging and integrating a variety of learning options into English language instruction. While benefiting significantly English learners, these kinds of instructional innovation make the task of English teachers ever more complex, demanding both more knowledge and more flexibility:

> *Language teachers are working in a world which has changed in the past decades in fundamentally disruptive ways, through profound changes in the role that networked computers play in everyday life and through the social and demographic shifts brought on by an increasingly globalized society...Second language teachers need to be able to work effectively in this evolving environment, preparing students for work and life in a world likely*

> *to be quite different from that in which they grew up, and which is likely to continue to change in significant ways. (Godwin-Jones, 2015, p. 10)*

Teachers need not only to be proficient in the target language and have sufficient training in being effective classroom teachers, but they also will need to be able to cope with increased use of technology, and the need for all educated citizens to be global citizens (Kumaravadivelu, 2013; Byram, Golubeva, Hui & Wagner, 2016). That makes the job of teaching English both challenging and exciting, and as this book shows, offers to teachers a variety of ways to make English language instruction both meaningful and effective. The key to effectiveness is not just finding the right resources and approaches but adapting them to the local educational context. That combination of global and local is demonstrated in this collection of essays.

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