CONSTRUCTING MEMORIES:
A CASE FOR USING VIDEO
IN THE CHINESE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Master of Arts in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Yunxin Zhang, B.A.

****

The Ohio State University
2003

Master’s Examination Committee:
Dr. Galal Walker, Advisor
Dr. Mark Bender

Approved by

Galal Walker
Advisor
Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures
In this thesis, language and culture are interpreted as memory and our knowledge of culture and language is seen as composed of the stories we compile from the memories of experiences in our daily life. Story is considered as the unit of memory. Communication is based on understanding other people’s stories and selecting the stories that we know and telling or embodying them in relation to other people at the right time. Therefore, for people who are learning another culture and language, they are obtaining and accumulating experiences, i.e., constructing memories of that culture and language. The more stories they store, the more effectively they process new experiences in the culture. The final goal of compiling stories in foreign language learning is to construct a new worldview that incorporates the second-culture memory. Learners of the foreign language are thereby able to “think” in the language.

Video is the most suitable medium for vividly revealing the experience of daily life and the most effective channel for looking into the memory of another culture and language. Video delivers culture in the form of stories with clear-cut thematic content and short scenes edited together. Moreover, video, providing a coherent verbal and visual representation of a virtual communicative situation, can stimulate memory and has a more lasting effect in memory than simply verbal description. Thus, video should be used
as the core foreign language learning material. By using video, knowledge of foreign
language and culture can be delivered in communicative events, or experience, in its
“original state”, i.e., under authentic and integrated cultural context. Therefore, the goal
of foreign language teaching and learning, which is to obtain the ability to function in the
culture effectively, can be fulfilled more successfully.

According to different focuses of language learning, different types of video
material can be incorporated, including movie and various kinds of television programs.
When using video as core foreign language learning material, we need to make sure the
video we make and select meet the goal of language learning, thus both the content and
language use in the video need to be considered from the perspective of language
pedagogy. Meanwhile, we should also consider the nature of the instruction at different
levels and with different focuses, and the compilation of supplementary materials. Since
video, as a one-way communicative vehicle, has some defects that may detract from its
powerful effect as language learning material, video material must be supported by other
materials and the instruction so that the curriculum based on video can be the most
effective. In a video-core classroom, learners should also actively work with video,
supplementary material, the teacher and video equipment, so that communication in the
classroom is not just one-way from television to the learners, but a multi-way interaction,
in which these all components work together in a unified whole.
To Mom, Dad and Brother
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to give all the thanks I owe to those who gave me guidance, assistance, and support during the period I was writing this thesis. First, I want to express my deep gratitude to my advisor, Professor Galal Walker, for revealing me to this interesting topic, directing me to approach it from a new perspective, and guiding me in the right direction with stimulating discussions. I am also greatly grateful to Professor Mark Bender for his patience, invaluable comments and suggestions while reading multiple versions of this thesis. I also wish to thank Professor Mari Noda for helping me on my project of using television series as core Chinese language learning material, which is what this thesis developed from. Thanks must also go out to Professor Jianqi Wang, who shared his experience and views with me on making the talk show, *Shíhuà shíshuō* 实话实说 (Tell It Like It Is) into Chinese language learning material.

A special thank should go to Mr. Steven Knicely, who assigned and guided me to teach Chinese movie narration classes and *Shíhuà shíshuō* 实话实说 classes. This thesis would not become possible without the experience of teaching these video materials in the passed two years. I also wish to thank Professor Dan Boord from Department of Theater, who directed me on video production and using other video techniques, and help me obtain a better understanding of video as an artifact.
Special thanks and recognition must also be given to a number of friends who have offered great help and encouragement every step along the way.

Finally, I would like to thank from the bottom of my heart my grandparents, my parents, and my brother for their deep love and tremendous support.
VITA

November 18, 1978 .......................... Born: Chongqing, P. R. of China

2001 ........................................ B.A., East China Normal University,
                                 Shanghai, P. R. of China

2001 – 2003 ............................... Graduate Teaching Associate, Department
                                 of East Asian Languages and Literatures,
                                 The Ohio State University, Columbus,
                                 Ohio

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: East Asian Languages and Literatures

Chinese Language Pedagogy
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Language and Culture as Memory</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Language and Culture as Experience</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 Language as Experience</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Culture as Experience</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Language and Culture as Story</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 The Concept of Memory for Language and Culture</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Story: Unit of Memory for Communication</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Index of Story</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Case</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 Saga</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3 Theme</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Memory and Foreign Language Learning</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Learning a Foreign Language</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Obtaining Language Competence</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1.1 Linguistic Competence</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1.2 Communicative Competence</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1.3 Cultural Competence</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Recognizing Memory of Another Culture</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In the past two years of teaching Chinese as a foreign language, I have used several movies and talk shows as teaching material for speaking and listening classes. During the process, I was able to observe that the students of Chinese language had enjoyed learning the language from the authentic video materials. These videos enhance students’ interests, motivate them, and present useful information that is not easily conveyed in print, and provide authentic communicative contexts for language performance. However, the video has mostly been used just as supplementary material to printed textbooks. Since it is so effective, why don’t people use it as the core language learning material, and have the textbooks be the supplement? People have been accustomed to using the printed textbooks for a long time and the curriculum and instruction based on them have been completely structured. It will not be an easy job to reverse the status of the printed text as the core and the video as the supplement.

This work will explore and elaborate on the idea of using authentic video as foreign language materials. It discusses both why we should use the video as the core foreign language learning material and how to carry it out. It is based on the idea that the knowledge of language and culture is memory, for both acquiring the first language and
learning a foreign language. Video is believed to be the most effective tool to help language learners construct such memory.

The first chapter explains the rationale of the work. Language and culture are conventionalized over historical periods and socially shared by members of the society. To function in a culture easily and effectively, people must acquire or learn the skills of organizing knowledge and communicating in ways understandable to and shared by others in that culture. To achieve this, we compile stories from memories of our experiences in daily life. A story is our personal memory of an experience. We depend largely on having these stories available for assisting in the interpretation of people’s intentions in social interactions. In communicative activities, people share their experiences by telling them in the form of stories, and rely on remembered stories of related experiences to comprehend others’ stories. The story is regarded as the unit of memory. It is stored in a human being’s mind according to different types of indices. Therefore, when dealing with foreign language learning in this thesis, I take this point of view, and define the process of learning a foreign language as a process of gaining and accumulating experiences, i.e., constructing memory in the target language and culture.

The second chapter talks about learning a foreign language in terms of constructing memory. The process of learning a foreign language is a process of gaining and accumulating experiences in the target language and culture. Learners store the experiences into stories, index them, and compile them to form larger knowledge domains. When they encounter a new experience in the target culture, the stored stories help them figure out what they should do to process the new experience. The more stories that are compiled, the more effectively the learners can function in the target culture.
final goal of compiling stories in foreign language learning is to construct a new worldview that incorporates the second-culture memory. In this lifelong undertaking, when the knowledge structure of the target culture gets larger and more complex, it increasingly separates from the default reference of the learners’ base culture. This is what is meant by learning to “think” in the second language.

Following the groundwork of the previous chapters, the third chapter deals with a triangle relationship: video, memory, and foreign language learning. Video is believed to be the best tool that meets the nature of foreign language learning in terms of memory construction. Using video as the core material for foreign language learning will bring about a change in what is going to be taught and in how it is going to be taught in the classroom. The expansion of video in foreign language pedagogy shifts the focus in both the content and the method of the instruction. In terms of the content of instruction, the shift is to move away from canonical texts and situations toward actual speech events, observed contexts, and commonly recognized situations. As for the method of instruction, the coordination among the video, the textbooks and other supplements, the teacher, and the students is the first item to be addressed. Not only does video provide a context in which the language is used, it provides an important input base for the development of a schema to which subsequent knowledge can readily attach. More importantly, it conveys language and culture events in the forms of the story, and helps learners construct memory in the target culture. It is recommended that not only speaking and listening, but also reading and writing training, should be based on video. Nevertheless, it doesn’t mean that the video is the source of all instruction. Video’s effect as the core material is hard to bring into play without good supplementary materials, effective instructions, and active
learners. As video undertakes the responsibility of devising the overall situations in which language shall be presented, it leaves, perforce, to the instructor and supplementary material the job of organizing the learners' productive practice, and practice methods.

In the last chapter I discuss how to implement the idea of using video as the core language learning material by taking teaching Chinese as an example. According to different focuses of language learning, different types of video material can be incorporated, including movies and various kinds of television programs. The videos discussed in this work include rehearsed video especially for language learning, short video clips, movies, television series, documentary films, news reports, and talk shows. Various types of communicative performance can be organized. When selecting video, we need to make sure the video we make or choose meet the goals of language learning, thus both the content and language use in the video need to be considered from a perspective of language pedagogy. Meanwhile, we should also consider the nature of the instruction at different levels and with different focuses, and the compilation of supplementary materials. Since video, as a one-way communicative vehicle, has some defects that may detract from its powerful effect as language learning material, video material must be supported by other materials and the instruction so that the curriculum based on video can be the most effective. In a video-core classroom, learners should also actively work with the video, supplementary material, teacher and video equipment, so that communication in the classroom is not just one-way from television to the learners, but a multi-way interaction, in which these all components work together as a unified whole. Finally, an example of a lesson based on a Chinese talk show is given, to provide
a concrete idea about how classroom activities can be carried out based on the video, and what the teacher’s job is, and what the learners will be able to achieve after attending such a class.
CHAPTER 1

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AS MEMORY

1.1 Language and Culture as Experience

Communication with other humans is based on our prior experiences in language and culture. Successful communication is based on being able to figure out the intentions of others, namely, their communicative intentions, and more specifically, our understanding of others as intentional beings like ourselves.¹ Achieving that depends upon having a memory of prior experience available for assisting in the interpretation of the intention.² Furthermore, people must act in a socially appropriate way, i.e., using communicative conventions or symbols that are assumed in most contexts to be understood and also used by others in a culture. In the process of communication, we exchange thoughts, messages, or information we obtain from our everyday life, by speech, writing, and various nonverbal expressions, all of which are conventionalized over historical time and are socially shared.

² Roger Schank, Tell Me A Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, Macmillian Publishing, 1990), 1
1.1.1 Language as Experience

Linguistic symbols, as composing elements of speech which is the primary manifestation of language, are not depended on the nature of the reality to which they refer.\textsuperscript{3} It is the same with some of the paralinguistic uses of the vocal tract for communicative purposes,\textsuperscript{4} for example, coughing in a Chinese context to implicitly remind someone of something. Then how do we use language to communicate our ideas? How is the word “chair” connected to a piece of furniture consisting of a seat, legs, back, and often arms, designed to accommodate one person? When will a “heng” sound indicate scorn in China? The answer is that language, including linguistic and non-linguistic symbols, is socially conventionalized and passed on from generation to generation. It is a symbolic social institution that arose historically and was accumulated from previous human beings’ experience of communicative activities.\textsuperscript{5}

This social institution embodies “the ways that previous generations of human beings in a social group have found it useful to categorize and construe the world for purposes of interpersonal communication.”\textsuperscript{6}

In communicative activities, language is understood intersubjectively from both sides of the interaction. That is to say, both sides understand that they are using “a symbol that is socially ‘shared’ in the sense that they can assume in most circumstances

---

\textsuperscript{3} David Crystal, \textit{The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 401

\textsuperscript{4} According to Crystal (1997), some non-linguistic uses of the vocal tract are also possible to be used in communication. The suprasegmental aspects of vocal expression are usually included within the study of language, too. Crystal, 171-175, 403

\textsuperscript{5} Tomasello, \textit{The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition}, 94

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 8
that the listener both comprehends and can produce that same symbol.”

In acquiring the conventional use of the “shared symbol,” people engaged in communication must be able to understand each other’s communicative intention and the social context for acts of symbolic – including linguistic and non-linguistic – communication. To achieve that, we start with our previous experience of interpersonal activities, namely, a communicative act in our memory expressing a communicative intention as ground. Therefore, we are able to figure out why the people we are communicating with or observing are doing what they are doing, and also anticipate what might happen later.

1.1.2 Culture as Experience

Human beings are normally born into rich cultural environments. We grow up and live in a certain kind of complex social environment, and that extensive social environment is what we call culture. According to Gauvain, we move around everyday “through the appropriation, use, and adaptation of social practices, materials, and symbolic tools developed by our culture,” and culture is our developmental niche outside of which no human can function.

As Tomasello says, the people of a given social group lead their life in a certain way. They think of and resolve problems in certain ways, and go to certain places and do certain things. Human beings acquire such a way of living, first of all, by engaging in the normal practices of daily life in that culture and obtaining experience from it.

---

7 Ibid., 106
8 Ibid., 107
9 Ibid., 78-79
Human infants and young children depend on adults, and those who don’t know observe those who do know. The second way is from direct instruction. Kruger and Tomasello believe that in all human societies there is some knowledge that is considered to be so important and necessary that it must be directly taught to youngsters.\(^{12}\) This is why we have schools and educational systems. And such intentional instruction, what we refer to as “pedagogy,” is believed to be “a very powerful force in cultural transmission as it ensures that a specific skill or piece of knowledge will indeed be passed along.”\(^{13}\)

Just like language, culture is also conventionalized during a long historical period and shared by members of the culture. Human beings engage in meaningful communicative goal-oriented activities that reflect goals and values of their culture. We pass down our culture by inheriting our experiences of these activities, which “often involve historically devised means, such as material and symbolic tools; higher-level structures, such as scripts, rituals, and communicative conventions; and formal and informal social interaction practices, provided by the culture.”\(^{14}\) To move in a culture easily and effectively, social beings must acquire or learn the skills of organizing knowledge and communicating in understandable ways to others in that culture. Individuals therefore develop their skills in conventional forms to meet the goals of the culture they are in and satisfy the cultural values.\(^{15}\)


\(^{13}\) Tomasello, Cultural Origins of Human Cognition, 80.

\(^{14}\) Gauvain, “Thinking in Niches: Sociocultural Influences on Cognitive Development,” 41

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 36
1.2 Language and Culture as Story

Knowledge of culture and language is composed of the stories we compile from memories of our experiences in daily life. Schank believes that “what we know is embodied in what we tell, and what we tell strongly determines what we know, we know what we tell, and we tell what we know” and “one can’t be said to know something if one can’t find it in memory.” Therefore, rather than generating new ideas and questions, we search in our memory of past experience and finding a relevant one as a kind of guide to help us process new experiences. We compile our memory of experience into stories, and human beings communicative activities are based on understanding other people’s stories and selecting the stories that we know and telling them or embodying them to other people at the right time.

1.2.1 The Concept of Memory for Language and Culture

In order to assert that it is possible to demonstrate knowledge of language and culture through memory, an understanding of the concepts and processes involved in memory, which connects memory construction with language learning, is needed.

Memory is used in several different but interrelated senses. Firstly, it can be used as a general term for the function of reviving or reliving past experience. Secondly, memory can be viewed as the total store of things that can be remembered. Thirdly, any one particular experience that is called to mind is also called a memory. The word “memory” always implies some connection between a present impression and a past

---

16 Schank, Tell Me A Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory, 17, 1
17 Ibid., 10-11
event. The process of constructing a memory has been regarded classically as involving several distinct mechanisms: (a) impression, (b) retention, (c) re-emergence or recall, and (d) recognition. When people experience something, they form different memory representations of different aspects of the experience, and store the memory through different traces. The memory is retained as codes or a framework of an experience under different indices. When people have new experiences that are associated to past events, those elements that link or match the present impression and memories of past experiences, including key words, body actions, physical behavior, sounds, smells, images, or abstract thought, activate the stored information. The memory is thereby triggered.

1.2.2 Story: Unit of Memory for Communication

Everyone has a memory full of experiences that he or she can share with others for social-communicative activities. In communication, as Schank argues, "comprehending events around you depends upon having a memory of prior events available for helping in the interpretation of new events." The means that make our experiences more understandable to others is the compilation of our memory into

---

19 Ibid., 4
20 Harold Pashler and Mark Carrier, “Structures, Processes, and the Flow of Information,” in *Memory. Handbook of Perception and Cognition*, 2nd Edition, ed. Elizabeth Bjork and Robert Bjork, (San Diego: Academic Press, 1996), 4. This is an information processing approach to memory. Based on this perspective, it is assumed that different codes, i.e., different memory representations of different aspects of experience, dwell in different memory systems that have different temporal and other properties.
22 Schank, *Tell Me a Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory*, XI
23 Ibid., 1
stories and telling them. Meanwhile, we also rely on stories in our memory of related experiences to help us understand other people’s stories. We, as listeners, assess our understanding by mapping speakers’ stories onto our own stories.²⁴

It is easier for us to remember and understand a story, if it is good enough, than to remember and understand an abstract description, and “stories illustrate points better than simply stating the points themselves.”²⁵ Schank believes that stories give life to past experience, so that our stories make the events in memory memorable to others and also to ourselves. This power comes from stories’ narrative form, which is more effective in linking up with a particular piece of information, or making the information more lifelike, so that the world of experience can be well constructed and framed, and the opportunity for people to recall the experience is much higher.²⁶ For instance, when explaining a cultural theme, e.g., Chinese humility or modesty, people usually prefer telling several stories as examples about how a Chinese applies negative words to himself, or lowers himself by crediting his success to others, or by not accepting a compliment.

Since a story is a presentation of personal experience, different people may store, tell, and enact different stories about the same event, and a retelling of the same event by the same person at a different time result in a different story, too. We never expect to find ourselves in a situation that is a total repetition of same story that we had previously heard about. What a story conveys is the gist of an experience.²⁷ We don’t remember verbatim the stories we hear or tell, but when we listen to others’ stories, we

²⁴ Ibid., 79
²⁵ Ibid., 11
²⁶ Jerome Bruner, Acts of Meaning, (Cambriadge: Harvard University, 1990), 55-59
²⁷ Schank, Tell Me a Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory, 24-27
are extracting the gist, and when we tell a story, we are verbalizing the gist of the experience.\textsuperscript{28} Based on Schank's view, memory process is exactly a process of extracting "the gists from stories for storage in memory and transformation of gist into stories that express an intention."\textsuperscript{29}

In terms of culture, stories of cultural memory serve as essential criteria for all members living in a culture. As Schank argues, operating in the idiosyncratic world of our own culture, we must know our own stories, interpret our own experiences, construct and organize our own stories with reference to the standard stories of the culture.\textsuperscript{30} Moreover, the language of the culture also mirrors the stories of the culture. In Schank's view, we can observe the stories of a culture by looking into the vocabulary of the language of that culture and the words unique to a culture can reveal cultural differences.\textsuperscript{31} Therefore, sometimes even "one word or simple phrasal labels often describe the story adequately enough in what we have termed culturally common stories."\textsuperscript{32} One good example for this view can be the Chinese morpheme yáng 洋. It has been used to refer to people or things from developed western countries in China as early as the Qing dynasty, e.g., yángrén 洋人 for western people, yánghuō 洋火 for match, yángdīng 洋钉 for iron nails, dōngyáng 东洋 for Japan. Today when Chinese people describe a person who looks like or behaves a Westerner, or something that has a foreign flavor, they use the word yángqi 洋气 (foreign air and quality). Moreover, yáng 洋 is opposed to tǔ 土. This pair of words has extended their meaning beyond the

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 53-55
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Schank, \textit{Tell Me a Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory}, 207-212
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 149-150
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
usage of "foreign" and "local" in some contexts, and is hard to find exact English equivalents. Although many of the words with yáng 洋 in them are no longer used today, when appearing in speech or writing, stories of a culturally common memory of a past of more than 200 years are suggested, although most of the time they do so implicitly and unconsciously.

1.3 Index of Story

According to Schank, memory is stored in the form of stories according to different indices. The indices serve to categorize and manage our stories. It is similar to the indices we use in the library. When we search for a book in the library, we often rely on indices. We can find the book by looking up the index of the author’s name, title, subject, or call number. Similarly, there are different kinds of indices for stories in our memory storage system. The basic indices for compiling culture are case, saga, and theme.

1.3.1 Case

A case, here refers to a collection of stories about doing something in a culture.

One certain case usually reflects how different groups of people think of and deal with

---

33 In Xiàndài hàn yǔ cídiǎn 现代汉语词典 (Modern Chinese Dictionary), yáng 洋 can be interpreted as xiàndài huà de 现代化的 (modern), while tǔ 土 can be interpreted as local, or folk technology and skill, for example, tǔ jī 土鸡 (chicken raised by farmers at home) and yàn jī 洋鸡 (chicken raised by high-technological chicken farm), or not open-minded or not going with vogue. Xiàndài hàn yǔ cídiǎn 现代汉语词典 (Modern Chinese Dictionary), Comp. Zhōngguó shēnhuó kē xué yuàn yìyuán yánjiū suǒ cídiǎn biāoshi 中国社会科学院语言研究所词典编辑室 (Dictionary Compilation Office of Linguistics Research Branch of China Social science Institution), (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2001), 1277, 1457

34 Schank, Tell Me a Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory, 63-79

one certain problem, or get involved in one certain activity in different ways. Take the
case of “morning greetings” as an example. While in Japanese culture people of a
higher social status and those of a lower social status greet each other differently,
Americans' daily greetings do not show much hierarchical difference. In the case of
“requesting someone to do or not to do something” in a Chinese cultural context, the
speaker produces different directive sentence patterns depending on who he or she is
speaking to, a higher or lower status colleague or a closer or less familiar peer. What a
case reflects can vary from how different individuals ask for directions to go to some
place, or order a dish in a restaurant, or to eastern and western comparative studies on
language and culture.

Schank also argues that recognizing a case from memory is very important for us
to process new events.36 Remembering the case of ordering food in a Chinese restaurant
helps you function easily in another Chinese restaurant which you are patronizing for
the first time. But the prerequisite is your ability in recognizing the case of ordering
food and then recalling the appropriate script from your memory.

1.3.2 Saga

A saga, with respect to language and culture as memory, is a compilation of
stories about a specific set of people or a specific location in a culture.37 A saga, similar
to the Chinese romance 西游记 (Journey to the West), or the Greek epic, the
Odyssey, composed of stories happening to certain groups of characters at particular
settings. One person’s experience of growing up, doing all kinds of activities, studying

36 Schank, Tell Me a Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory, 224-225
37 Walker and Noda, “Remembering the Future: Compiling Knowledge of Another Culture,” 204
at school, hanging out with friends, going to see a movie, or viewing a television show or a soap opera, can be considered as saga.

Saga recognition helps us deal with people and setting in communicative activities. If we describe a person as patient, we may have multiple stories about the person’s patience. For example, he or she has patience when waiting for the food in a restaurant, or when waiting in a long line for a movie ticket, or when trying to figure out a complicated mathematics problem, or when cooking a dish which needs complex and time-consuming procedures. If we recommend a good restaurant to our friends, we may tell some stories about what good food and hospitable service the restaurant provides, how beautiful and clean the environment is. These stories are all belong to this sage of “a good restaurant.” Through sagas in memory which reflect many, if not all, aspects or features of a person, a group of people or a place, we can get familiar with that person, that group of people or that place, so that we can interact better socially in those contexts.

1.3.3 Theme

A theme is a cultural premise or value underlying communication practices. Schank’s definition of a theme is “general life topics that tend to generate goals related to those topics, and the results of those goals relate to the overarching theme.”\textsuperscript{38} Theme is not a regular conversation topic which is just about what people are talking about. Such life topic helps “guide human action along particular courses toward particular

\textsuperscript{38} Schank, \textit{Tell Me a Story: A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory}, 85-92
ends,39 and underlies all communicative intentions, goals, plans and performances in a culture. Theme is usually “unspoken, and may in many instances be unconscious” for the native member of a culture. It contains tacit understanding among members of a culture about what is an appropriate goal or what an acceptable performance should be.40

Compared to the concepts “case” and “saga”, a theme is a more abstract and general statement of certain features shared by more than one story in a culture. Cases and sagas are normally about doing something specific, about some particular persons, or about a particular location. If it is a collection of stories about going shopping, we can define them under the case of “shopping”, and they can be stories about shopping in many different places or shopping for different things; if it is a series of stories about a library, they can be defined under the saga of “library”, and includes different activities happening in the library; or if the stories are all about being a secretary, including handling correspondence, organizing files, then they can be put under the saga of “secretary”. But a theme can be extracted from several stories about different people doing different things at different places. To explain it, here I take the theme of “acknowledging hierarchy within a group” in Chinese culture as an example. The hierarchy in Chinese society is usually reflected in people’s way of addressing others. Xiǎo 小 (young) and lǎo 老 (old) are used as prefixes in front of people’s last name to indicate both age and statuses in a company hierarchy. In addition, people are usually recognized by their titles and professions, e.g., Zhù Xiàozhāng 祝校长 (Principal Zhu),

40 Ibid.
Wú Jiàoshòu 吴教授, Zhāng Lǎoshī 张老师 (Teacher Zhang), Wáng Zòngjīnglí 王总经理 (General Manager Wang), Hú Zhǔxī 胡主席 (Chairman Hu). Besides, the cultural theme of hierarchy is indicated in many other communicative social activities, other than addressing.

Below is an example from a Chinese movie Yīgè dōu bù néng shǎo (Not One Less). It is about a 12-year old substitute teacher from a remote village’s elementary school who goes to the city to look for her student. The student quit school and went to the city to earn money. The dialogue given below is between the young teacher, Wei Minzhi, who is trying to put a “Missing person” announcement on television, and the television station gatekeeper. The sentences reflecting the theme of recognizing social hierarchy are underlined.

大门收发员: 一分钱没有带是不是? 一分钱没有带你进去干什么去? 简直开玩笑，我就是让你进去，你也解决不了问题。快走开，走开啊。

魏敏芝: 那我怎么办啊?

大门收发员: 怎么办？我知道你怎么办？除非你是台长他们家亲戚，你是人家小姨子差不多。我们这儿台长说了算。

Gatekeeper: You didn’t even bring one cent, did you? Then what can you do without even one cent? No kidding. Even if I let you in, you can do nothing. Get out of here!

Wei: What shall I do then?

Gatekeeper: What should you do? How should I know? (You can do nothing) unless you are station chief’s relative, or you are his wife’s sister. The station chief decides everything here.

Another example is from a Chinese movie Běijīng de gùshì: 北京的故事 (A Great Wall). The story in this movie is about two families, the Zhao, Chinese, and the Fang,
Chinese-American. Mr. Fang, the younger brother of Mrs. Zhao, grows up and works in the United States. After he had a fight with his boss, he resigned and came back to China to visit his sister in Beijing. In the conversation quoted below, Mr. Fang is talking about his resignation. The sentences reflecting the theme of recognizing social hierarchy are underlined.

方先生: 跟老板闹翻了，我现在是个大闲人，待业中年，照你们这儿的话说。
赵太太: 真的么？都这么大岁数了，还要脾气，那怎么得了？找人说说，千万别跟领导闹意见，听见没有？

Mr. Fang: I had a big fight with my boss. Now I am a “waiting-for-employment” middle-aged person, using your term.
Mrs. Zhao: Really? Still acting up? Get someone to smooth things out. Never argue with your leader, you hear me?

The two conversations belong to two different cases, and two different sagas. However they share the same theme of recognizing and acting on hierarchy. In the first conversation, the gatekeeper is strictly following the rule of keeping the gate of the TV station, but she makes an exception for the station chief. Her words indicate that a person situated in a higher position in a hierarchy within a group in China can gain benefit beyond social justice. The second conversation indicates that Chinese people consider fighting with a person in a higher position as "yi xia fan shang" 以下犯上 (a person of lower status offends a person of higher status), which is not good in Chinese culture.
Language and culture are conventionalized over historical period and socially shared by members of the society. To move in a culture easily and effectively, people must acquire or learn the skills of organizing knowledge and communicating in ways understandable to and shared by others in that culture. To achieve this, we compile stories from memories of our experiences in daily life. And we depend largely on having these stories available for assisting in the interpretation of people’s intention in the social interaction. In communicative activities, people share their experiences by telling them in the form of stories, and rely on stories in their memory of related experiences to comprehend others’ stories. The story is considered as the unit of memory. It is stored in a human being’s mind according to different types of indices. Therefore, dealing with foreign language learning in this thesis, I take this point of view, and define the process of learning a foreign language as a process of gaining and accumulating experiences, i.e., constructing memory in the target language and culture.
CHAPTER 2

MEMORY AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

2.1 Learning a Foreign Language

The point of learning a foreign language is to obtain an ability to successfully communicate in and with another culture by means of the foreign language.\textsuperscript{41} The goal is to be able to function easily and effectively in a culture by using the language linguistically accurately, communicatively fluently, and culturally appropriately. Learning a foreign language involves developing knowledge of and about a language within the context of communicative and cultural competencies.\textsuperscript{42}

2.1.1 Obtaining Language Competence

A language is primarily for communication, and always functions within a cultural context.\textsuperscript{43} To be capable users of a foreign language, foreign language learners acquire and develop foreign language competence, which is knowledge that “enables a speaker to understand and use the language accurately, fluently, and appropriately to

\textsuperscript{41} Galal Walker and Scott McGinnis, \textit{Learning Less Commonly Taught Languages: An Agreement on the Bases for the Training of Teachers}, (Columbus, OH: OSU Foreign Language Publications, 1995), 3

\textsuperscript{42} Hector Hammerly, \textit{An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences}, (Blaine, Wash.: Second Language Publications, 1985), 53-56

\textsuperscript{43} Hammerly, \textit{An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences}, 68-70
meet all communicative needs in the corresponding cultural settings." Fairly well developed foreign language competence is represented as a demonstrable capacity to perform culturally appropriate social interactions by means of the language in communicative activities. It is composed of three interrelated types of competence: linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence. All three types involve the learning of procedural knowledge, or knowing how to do it, which involves the ability to perform an act, and declarative knowledge, knowing how to describe the ability to do something, which involves the ability to interpret a fact, for example, a language usage, a situation or item of culture.

2.1.1.1 Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence involves learning the structure and vocabulary of the target language. It includes four linguistic skills – listening comprehension, speaking ability, reading comprehension and writing ability, and also the nonverbal skills of decoding and encoding of such things as body language, and gestures.

According to Hammerly, a language learner is assumed to be able to use the language at all levels accurately and at normal speed to be considered as fully competent. To achieve this, language students need a long process of induced learning or practice of procedural skills – from sound system through morphology, syntax, semantics, and discourse. The process involves the conscious use of the

---

44 Hammerly, *An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences*, 54
45 Ibid., 54-56
48 Ibid.
language at the beginning, slowly building to largely unconscious use of the language at the higher levels.\textsuperscript{49} In addition, for learners of a foreign language, an appropriate amount of conscious declarative knowledge, e.g., knowledge about language subcomponents, are also necessary to facilitate the accumulation of procedural knowledge.\textsuperscript{50}

2.1.1.2 Communicative Competence

Based on Hammerly's definition, communicative competence refers to the ability to express oneself in a socially appropriate manner.\textsuperscript{51} Being more relevant to foreign language learning, communicative competence for a foreign language learner usually involves training for "skillful performance of everyday communication acts such as requesting, agreeing, refusing, apologizing, and so forth."\textsuperscript{52} Hammerly believes that all communication is made up such acts.

Austin's concept of "speech act" tries to interpret the communicative functions that are performed by many utterances in interpersonal interaction, e.g., apologizing, promising, denying.\textsuperscript{53} In such cases, the act is performed as a result of the speaker making a speech, i.e., "to say is to perform." For example, an act of apology takes place when a person says, "I apologize," or an act of interrogation happens when someone forms a question. In his Encyclopedia of Language, Crystal states that such speech acts have to be conducted in a "correct manner," i.e., in a socially appropriate

\textsuperscript{49} Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 55
\textsuperscript{50} Kubler, 60-61
\textsuperscript{51} Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 55
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 55
\textsuperscript{53} Crystal, 121
manner.\textsuperscript{54} The manner has to be shared by social members, and many are conventionalized during a long historical period, to be socially appreciated. A competent language learner needs to learn not only how to function appropriately, but also why functioning in such a manner is his or her benefit.

2.1.1.3 Cultural Competence

Hammerly's view on cultural competence is "knowledge about a culture and the ability to behave as its members behave."\textsuperscript{55} Since language is inseparably intertwined with culture, knowledge about the culture is essential for an effective understanding of the language. Moreover, culture provides rules to define what behavior is appropriate and acceptable in a communicative setting. Therefore, learning a language outside the appropriate culture will cause frustration about being unable to communicate effectively with the native speakers even though one may have perfect pronunciation, grammar structure, a large vocabulary, and the best of intentions.

Some cultural instruction takes place in the second language program from the very first class.\textsuperscript{56} For example, in the first lesson of Chinese 101 at The Ohio State University, it is a dialogue that two colleagues use to greet each other.\textsuperscript{57} The younger one addresses the older one with lǎo 老 (old) as prefix and his surname, and the older one addresses the younger one with xiǎo 小 (young) as prefix and his surname. This Chinese way of addressing indicates hierarchy by using lǎo 老 (old) and xiǎo 小

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 121
\textsuperscript{55} Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 56
\textsuperscript{56} Hector Hammerly, Synthesis in Second Language Teaching, (Blaine, Wash.: Second Language Publications, 1982), 515-517
\textsuperscript{57} Galal Walker, Chinese 101: Communicating in the Culture. A Field Test, (The Ohio State University: Foreign Language Publications, 1999), 35
(young). Although these two prefixes are not the only way of showing hierarchy in social life, it is enough for beginning students to *kuī báo yì hān* (see only one ringed spot to conjecture the whole leopard). Learning about another culture, together with language learning itself, goes on from the first day of class, continuing as long as one is in contact with the culture. It does not have to be a lot other than incidental to language learning at the beginning stage, and then steadily becoming the focus as the learner progresses to higher communicative levels.

Hammerly believes that language learners must develop cultural competence to obtain the ability to behave as the members of the target culture behave. However, one “can not assume communication between a competent foreigner and a native is the same as that between two native speakers,” as natives usually tend to treat cultural outsiders differently from other natives. This is because the native may lower his or her expectation or raise his or her tolerance to adjust his or her interaction manner for non-natives. It is also because the non-native speaker always has to negotiate between his or her base culture and the foreign culture he or she is studying for communicative interaction with natives, while a native does not have to do this when dealing with another native. Such an intercultural dimension makes the goal of speaking and behaving as a native unrealistic. Foreign language learners can only “be” in the target culture who they are allowed to be by the members of that culture. And, in order to maintain the contact with target natives that is necessary to

---

attain high level skills, their goals must be to function in a way that makes the target culture members comfortable and willing to sustain prolonged contact.\textsuperscript{60}

2.2 Recognizing Memory of Another Culture

In the first chapter, I discussed language and culture as knowledge that is conventionalized and shared by members of the culture. As Schank argues, “knowing a culture is knowing the stories that the culture provides and observing how people interpret their own experiences and construct their own stories in terms of the standard stories of the culture.”\textsuperscript{61} Hence, when learning a foreign language, learners need to develop the ability to recognize the stories of another culture, so that they are able to process new experience in the culture efficiently with the help of the stories stored beforehand.

To assist in recognizing stories of a foreign culture, the instructional discourse on the target culture can be divided into three parts: achievement culture, informational culture, and behavioral culture.\textsuperscript{62}

2.2.1 Achievement Culture and Informational Culture

Achievement culture is the artistic and literary accomplishment of a society.\textsuperscript{63} It is the “hallmark of a civilization,”\textsuperscript{64} and is basically what culture courses deal with.

Informational culture refers to the information and facts that members of a society

\textsuperscript{60} Galal Walker’s lecture for the course of EALL 705, winter, 2003 at the Ohio State University.
\textsuperscript{61} Schank, 149
\textsuperscript{62} Hammerly, Synthesis in Second Language Teaching, 513-515
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 515
value, including historical facts, social facts, geography — the kind of information that would appear in newspapers and as topics of community gossip.65

Achievement culture is the most prominent cultural memory. Students of a language, and even native speakers are more apt to recognize it and define it as culture.66 When a Chinese person talks about how 五千年中国文化源远流长 (the five thousand-year Chinese culture is as long standing and well established as a stream that runs a long course from a remote source), or when my students tell me how much they are attracted by Chinese culture, the “Chinese culture” they mention are those more easily recognized elements of the cultural tapestry: Martial arts, classical poetry, Confucianism, traditional folklore, folkdance and music, and so forth. From the pedagogical perspective, achievement culture and informational culture are not the emphasis of language study in the beginning stages of learning a language. The focus at that time is the behavior culture. They are, however, increasingly important as the learner expands his or her ability to interact in target culture situations. Hammerly believes that since people in a culture are proud of their accomplishment in arts, music, letters, their history and other facts about their society, foreign language learners need be able to recognize “whatever the members of the second culture cherish or consider very important.”67 Walker echoes that “as learners of a foreign language progress in their ability to function in the target culture, achievement culture and informational culture become increasingly useful

65 Ibid., see also Hammerly, Synthesis in Second Language Teaching, 513-514
66 Walker and Noda, 204
67 Hammerly, Synthesis in Second Language Teaching, 514
knowledge.  How they would help foreign language learners function in foreign culture will be further discussed in the section 2.3.

2.2.2 Behavior Culture

Behavior culture considers how the people in a society behave and includes conversation formulas, kinesics, ways of thinking, perspectives, and so forth. For foreign language learner, it is “the knowledge that enables a person to navigate daily life” in the culture he or she is studying. 69

I shall relate my experience as an example of the importance of behavior culture in negotiating everyday life in a foreign culture. Before I came to the United States, I had learned English for 10 years and was confident of communicating with English speakers without much difficulty. However, it turned out that I couldn’t even use “thank you” when it was needed in certain interactive settings although I could talk to my professor and classmates fluently on academic topics in class. One day, during the first week after I arrived in Columbus, I went to a United Dairy Farm convenience store and bought some candies there. After I checked out, the cashier said “thank you” to me before I left, and I felt quite puzzled when hearing that. Without thinking much, I responded right away with a mechanical “you are welcome”, which to my previous knowledge must be the correct response to a “thank you”. However, I realized my response was not an appropriate act right after I said that, because she served me and I should thank her. That was also the reason why I felt puzzled when I heard her thank me. In contrast, in a Chinese store, or similar places, like a restaurant, shopping mall,

68 Walker, “Perform Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture,” 234
69 Ibid. See also Hammerly, Synthesis in Second Language Teaching, 514-515
where a cashier or salesperson interacts with a customer, both sides seldom say “thank you” to the other side. Although nowadays more and more stores and malls in China are using **xièxiè nǐ guānglín běndiàn** 谢谢您光临本店 (thank you for choosing us) on banners, it is not usual that salespeople and customers thank each other when checking out. Influenced by American behavior culture, one time when I went back to China, I said **xièxiè nǐ** 谢谢你 (thank you) to a middle-age saleswoman in a small shop. She obviously didn’t expect this and her face told me she thought I was being unusually and unnecessarily polite. My story about the United Dairy Farm made me realize that although I learned the phrase “thank you” at the very beginning of my English study, I comprehended as Chinese behavior culture. Before the experience at the United Dairy Farm, I didn’t really recognize the stories of how Americans use “thank you” and how widely ranging the possible contexts in which such stories occur are. It is the same with my learning of “how are you” or “how are you doing”. While Chinese seldom use **nǐ hǎo ma** 你好吗 (how are you) for everyday greeting, Americans use “how are you” almost whenever one meets or calls on another, to greet or initiate a talk. I understand the greeting in terms of semantics, but my base culture always makes me the second one to say “how are you” to someone I encounter.

Recognizing and understanding patterns of behavior – actual behavior plus attitudes, values – is not only essential to communication, as Hammerly argues, it is also “very necessary to an understanding of literature and other forms of achievement culture”. 70 For example, an understanding of educated Chinese people’s **shāngchūn bēiqiū qìnghuái** 伤春悲秋情怀 (sentimental for or sad about seasons changing) can

---

70 Hammerly, *Synthesis in Second Language Teaching*, 515
help comprehending the classical literature about young scholars and elite females’
sadness about tree leaves falling and flowers fading; an understanding of yánwài zhī yì
言外之意 (More is meant than meets the ear) and hánxù 含蓄 (implicit communication)
can help our understanding of bǐ 比 (comparison, metaphor) in classical poetry and folk
songs.

As behavior culture is a form of cultural memory that is crucial to successful
communication, Hammerly claims that it should be emphasized throughout all levels of
a foreign language program.71 Walker further divides it into three sub-discourses of
behavior culture: revealed culture, ignored culture and suppressed culture. Revealed
culture is cultural memory that a native is generally willing or eager to communicate to
a nonnative. Ignored or hidden or covert culture is a form of “culture knowledge a
native is generally unaware of until the behavior of a nonnative brings it to light.
Suppressed culture is memory “about a culture that a native is generally unwilling to
communicate to a nonnative.”72

Walker believes that the presentation of the three behavior culture categories in an
instructional setting is based on “the ability of the instructor of a target culture to
present the knowledge to a learner of that culture as a foreign culture”.73 Although
revealed culture occupies most of the content of cultural notes in foreign language
textbook and classroom instructions, ignored or covert culture usually attracts foreign
language teachers’ attention, if they are observant enough.74 It becomes noticeable to

71 Ibid.
72 Walker, “Performed Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture,” 234. See also Hall, E. T. and
73 Walker, “Performed Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture,” 234
74 Ibid.
language teachers either when they observe outsiders misusing it, or when outsiders notice the difference and ask the teacher for an interpretation.

Let us take the use of nǐ hāo 你好 as example in terms of revealed culture and ignored culture. It is usually explained in dialogue setting in Chinese language textbook that nǐ hāo 你好 is the most neutral or context-free greeting in Chinese. However, although it is often translated as “Hello” or “How are you”, it is not used as “Hello” and “How are you” used in American English. Learners of Chinese as a foreign language are usually taught that nǐ hāo 你好 is “a way to greet acquaintances in particular circumstances and will not go down the street saying nǐ hāo 你好 to bewildered folks to whom they are not known and who do not know them.” As almost all the Chinese language textbooks put this phrase in the first lesson of communicating with Chinese, this item of behavior culture is usually revealed to students of Chinese as a foreign language. However, there is an ignored level in nǐ hāo 你好. A Chinese person does not say nǐ hāo 你好 to every acquaintance he or she knows. Two persons who see each other everyday do not use nǐ hāo 你好 as a greeting when they meet. Nǐ hāo 你好 is considered appropriated when used in the following contexts:

1. Two people meet for the first time, and are introduced to each other by someone else or self-introduced to each other. They can greet each other by using nǐ hāo 你好, which serves as “nice to meet you” in this context;

---

75 Ibid. See also Hall, Edward T. and Hall, Mildred R., Hidden Difference: Doing business with the Japanese, (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1987)
76 Galal Walker, Chinese 101: Communicating in the Culture, A Field Test, (The Ohio State University: Foreign Language Publications, 1999), 35
77 Walker and Noda, 200
2. Two people know each other already, but they just know each other’s name or just meet for one or two times. They are neither familiar nor close to each other. In this case, when they meet, they use nǐ hǎo 你好 to greet:

3. Two people might be close before, but haven’t seen each other for a long time. When they meet again and recognize each other, the conversation may involve nǐ hǎo 你好 in it:

   A: 哎，这不是张三吗？你好啊！
   B: 哎呀，李四啊，好久不见，你好你好！

   A: Hey, isn’t this Zhang San? How are you?  
   B: Hi, Li Si! Long time no see, how are you doing?

4. In business or formal context, for example, a waiter in a high-level restaurant, or a secretary in a business company, will use nǐ hǎo 你好 in their greeting to customers or guests. In this context, nǐ hǎo 你好 is equal to nín hǎo 您好, a polite form of nǐ hǎo 你好:

   (1) 你好，请问您要点什么？  
       Hello, may I help you?
   (2) 你好，请问您找哪位？  
       Hello, may I help you?

   Except for the formal or business context, basically, nǐ hǎo 你好 is used for greeting people you know but are not close to, or are just getting to know.

Identifying suppressed culture may be a bit trickier. One aspect of behavior culture may be thought of as negative when considered from the perspective of a learner’s base culture, but it is not necessarily always a negative aspect of culture, even though natives may appear unwilling to mention it or feel uneasy to talk about it. Take
rénqíng 人情 (human feeling) as an example. While rénqíng 人情 goes beyond greater social justice and fairness, such as in a case where an incapable person obtains a competitive job by taking advantage of rénqíng 人情. In this instance, westerners might consider rénqíng 人情 to be a negative aspect of Chinese culture. However, rénqíng 人情 exists everywhere in Chinese life and people are accustomed to rénqíng 人情 as a feature of life, since “the Chinese self is defined by relations with others.”78 A person will be considered as immature if he or she doesn’t know rénqíng 人情 in Chinese society. When it is connected with bào 报 (reciprocity), Rénqíng 人情 can lead to very positive mutually beneficial activities and will not be taken as suppressed culture by native Chinese offering explication of Chinese culture. Stories of suppressed culture might be avoided in foreign language teaching. And as Walker argues, “avoiding them can be justified on functional grounds except when they have direct bearing on the learners’ reception in the target culture.”79

2.3 Constructing Memory for Foreign Language Learning

According to Hammerly, learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in knowledge or behavior resulting from experience.80 If the first step for a foreign language learner is to recognize the stories in the target culture, the next step is to internalize these events into a storage system, to construct one’s own memory in that

79 Walker, “Performed Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture,” 234
80 Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 53
culture for future use.\textsuperscript{81} That memory, as Jerome Bruner posits, “allows us to go beyond one encounter by providing us with the tools that allow us to make predictions and extrapolations from our stored model of the world,” guides learners to process new experience in the target culture in the future.\textsuperscript{82} These views allow us to organize foreign language learning as the process of constructing a series of memories of experiencing language events in a particular culture.

2.3.1 Goals and Levels

According to Hammerly’s conclusions, the goals of foreign language learning involve three levels of memory construction in culture: knowledge, understanding, and behavior.\textsuperscript{83} Knowledge, in our formulation, refers to the ability to recognize stories, including information and patterns, of the culture, i.e., “knowing what.” Understanding is the ability to explain cultural information or patterns, i.e., “knowing why.” And behavior refers to the ability to use cultural information and patterns, i.e., “knowing how.”\textsuperscript{84} To be more specific, the three goals can be described in relation to the three types of discourses of culture.\textsuperscript{85}

Goals for behavioral culture involve all three levels. Learners of a foreign language need to be able to recognize, and understand the common behavior patterns of the culture he or she is studying, and perform the behavior in a manner that is appropriate to make natives comfortable, so that he can move around in the culture.

\textsuperscript{81} Bruner, 99-116
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Hammerly, \textit{Synthesis in Second Language Teaching}, 522
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
effectively. In learning to perform behavior culture, the ability to carry out certain behavior patterns sometimes is more connected to whether the learner is willing to do it or not, but not whether the learner can do it or not. For example, there are some American students of Japanese that are not willing to carry out some Japanese behavior culture as physically simple as bowing; one of my classmates, a Chinese student, always hesitates to call her American professor by his first name. If it is not a behavior pattern that has direct bearing on the learners’ reception in the target culture, e.g., calling an American professor by his or her given name, it is all right for the learner to just achieve the first two levels, recognizing and understanding, without performing it in the culture. However, if the case is that an American student in China always wants to call her Chinese professor by his first name, not by title, it will not help her succeed in Chinese culture.

Goal for informational culture includes “recognizing and interpreting major geographical features, historical events, and institutional characteristics of the second culture” such as economics, the educational system, and legal system.\textsuperscript{86} Goals for achievement culture include “being familiar with and appreciating the outstanding literary and artistic achievements of the second culture.”\textsuperscript{87} In terms of language learning, a more practical objective for informational and achievement culture is knowing the knowledge of these cultural elements that are shared by natives, understanding how natives think of them and being able to talk about them with natives.\textsuperscript{88} It is not to teach specific knowledge of achievement and information culture in language class, as

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Galal Walker’s lecture for the course of EALL 705, Winter, 2003 at the Ohio State University.
literature, culture, economics and similar classes that require academic or expert research. It is important that learners of a foreign language know how to deal with topics in achievement and information culture with natives. That is to say, learners need to know how to put informational and achievement culture in discourse. Moreover, it is beneficial for them to be able to deal with what the members of a culture cherish or consider as important. For instance, being able to use *chéngyǔ* 成语 (idioms) or quotes from Chinese literary works properly and effectively when talking or writing in Chinese will make an American’s words more intelligent, attractive and comfortable to natives; being able to share the excitement of watching American football and Oscar night may help a Chinese get involved in social activities in the United States. Learners of a foreign language can share empathy with natives, and gain *rèntónɡ gǎn* 认同感 (sense of identification) through being able to deal with topics in informational and achievement culture in a culture when interacting with natives from that culture.

2.3.2 Compilation

As we discussed above, foreign language learning can be considered as a process of constructing a series of memories of language events in a culture. As acquiring one’s own base language and base culture, students of a foreign language compile language and culture knowledge in the form of stories in the culture they are studying. Learners “add to their memory by putting the story together with other stories they know, to form larger knowledge domains,”89 by using the indices of cases, sagas, and themes. Similar to creating stories in one’s own culture, necessary understanding of intra-

89 Walker and Noda, 203
cultural development and changes is needed for foreign language learners. However, foreign language learners also need to obtain correct understanding of cross-cultural differences at the same time.

2.3.2.1 Intra-cultural Changes

Quinn asserts that the uses and meanings of a word will change over time when the word is put to work in contexts new to it, and the practice of communication fixes and alters uses and meanings of a word at any point in its history.\(^9\) When context changes, a word may express a different meaning and be used in a different way. More generally speaking, what cases, sagas, or themes reflect changes over time, too.

What foreign language learners learn in classroom most of the time is language and culture knowledge at one certain point in time. Language textbooks are compiled during certain periods. In textbooks, language and culture knowledge are all interpreted according to the social conditions of that period as well as the situational contexts, reflecting contemporary characteristic meanings and usages. An instructor is, to a large extent, also constrained by textbooks. Therefore, when jumping into another culture mid-stream in classroom, the individual may feel frustrated by not knowing that changes occurs in the stories of the culture, and how natives deal with those changes. The problem is that some language learners seldom think of the historical change of language in a culture, and assume what they learn is how the language always should be. Sometimes there are students who are competent

---

language learners as far as knowing that words, phrases, and sentences will change over time as they are put to work in new contexts, but they have limited knowledge about what the local practice lets a story mean.

The change of story for tóngzhì 同志 (comrade) can be an example here. Textbooks compiled before 1990s may use tóngzhì 同志 extensively in dialogues for addressing people. Instructors may explain that the word is nowadays more often used in government television news and newspapers, or official meetings in China, but not as extensively as before. The fact is that “comrade” now has been used in many cases for special effect, and loses its revolutionary flavor. For instance, it may be used between friends. When A finds that B has the same interest on something or they have the same plan for summer break, A could possibly say: “Wǒmen zhēnshì tóngzhī 我们真是同志啊!” (We are really comrades). The original meaning of the phrase zhítóng dàohé 志同道合 (cherish the same ideals and follow the same path to; have a common goal) in this case has an effect of humor. In addition, in certain Chinese speaking areas like Taiwan and Hong Kong, people now use tóngzhì 同志 to mean homosexual.

Surely, it is impossible to require a foreign language learner to have all memories of every expression in the cases and sagas that comprise communicative activities. Even a native knows only a limited quantity of stories of his or her base culture. But it is believed that if a learner knows more stories about how a word’s meaning and use changes when its contexts changes, he or she can use that word more effectively in more communicative situation in that culture.
2.3.2.2 Cases, Sagas, and Themes in Two Cultures

All language use is made meaningful by its cultural and social contexts. As language is never separated from a cultural context, learning Chinese for an American, for example, is not simply knowing the Chinese equivalent for an English word, phrase, or sentence. It requires understanding of the differences and similarities between cultures, and “a systematic comparison of two cultures offers the greatest insights into both” and benefits language learning. It is easy for a foreign language learner to look at the target culture from his or her base culture, because people can only interpret new experience in terms of previous knowledge. Therefore, successful foreign language learners’ learning processes always involve comparison and contrast between two cultures: recognizing and understanding, but not necessarily approving of, the difference and similarities of stories in the target culture and base culture.

If cases and sagas reflect what we can do in a culture, difference in the same case or in the same saga in two cultures shows how members of two cultures do with their respective definitions of “appropriateness”. For example, in the case of compliments, Chinese seldom use a “I like/love + noun phrase” pattern to compliment other people’s appearance or possessions while it is very common in the United States to say “I like your hair” or “I really like your car”. The only exception in Chinese culture may be using such pattern to compliment performance, e.g., wǒ

---

91 Walker and McGinnis, 3
92 Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 70
93 Walker and Noda, 204-205
hěn xīnshǎng nǐ de fēnggé 我很欣赏你的风格 (I really like your style.) or wǒ hěn xīnshǎng nǐ de wéirén 我很欣赏你的为人 (I like your way of conducting yourself).

If learners move in the target culture without considering and understanding the distinction, they may very often encounter communicative blocks when negotiating a cross-cultural interaction. An example that serves as evidence of such communicative malfunction occurs when an American girl tried to compliment her Chinese friends’ cute ornaments in Chinese. The girl, although possessing the ability to speak Chinese after having studied it several years, didn’t realize it is not appropriate to use the “I like your ...” pattern to compliment other people’s clothes, ornament, or belongings, in Chinese context. She found that after she complimented her Chinese friend’s ornaments by saying wǒ xīhuān nǐde ... 我喜欢你的..., she received the same objects as gifts from her friend, which surprised and embarrassed her, because her intention was not to receive them for herself. But from a Chinese’s point of view, the sentence wǒ xīhuān nǐde ... 我喜欢你的... is used for indirect requesting more often than complimenting.⁹⁴

The process of learning a foreign language is a process of gaining and accumulating experiences in the target language and culture. Learners store the experiences into stories, index them, and compile them to form larger knowledge domains. When they encounter new experience in the target culture, the stories thus stored help them figure out what they should do to process the new experience. The more stories are compiled, the more

effectively the learners can function in the target culture. The final goal of compiling stories in foreign language learning is to construct a new worldview that incorporates the second-culture memory.95 In this lifelong undertaking, when the knowledge structure of the target culture gets larger and more complex, it increasingly separates from the default reference to the learners’ base culture.96 This is what is meant by learning to “think” in the second language.

95 Walker, “Performed Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture,” 205
96 Ibid.
CHAPTER 3

VIDEO FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

3.1 Video Tells Stories

Video is an effective learning tool to impart language and cultural knowledge by depicting a process of experiences, i.e., telling stories, to foreign language students. It can present the learners with vivid and lively stories of the target culture, with both authentic lexical and grammatical aspects of language and full communicative and cultural contexts of language use.\(^7\) Using video as an instrument for language learning, learners can picture the cultural setting in which language is used, and also see how the language varies with corresponding settings. Consequentially, being able to deal with stories in video can help learners deal with experiences in authentic communicative situations in their entirety, that is, “the grasp of communicated signals in the form of speech or otherwise, information carrying a communicative function, and the correct reflection and interpretation of the intentions and situations in relation to the partner in a dialogue.”\(^8\)

Students who watch video construct a memory during the process, by receiving stories of

---


the target culture from the video, and integrating the video experience with the context that is provided by the video into their knowledge of the target culture.

3.1.1 Authenticity and Contextuality

One basic assumption of learning a foreign language is that learners study a foreign language “not just to learn vocabulary, grammar, or functions, but in order to use this knowledge as a tool for communication.” To communicate with natives successfully and function in the target culture effectively, both linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness are essential for foreign language learners. To achieve this, it is imperative that the foreign language instructor provides authentic language and cultural knowledge as a model for learners. Moreover, linguistic and cognitive science research shows that in most interpersonal communication, nonverbal modalities, consisting of body language and gesture, eye contact and expression, exceeds that of verbal channels in sense of their impact on the communication. Even when two people are talking through a telephone, the manner in which one uses non-linguistic elements to express oneself will play an important role in the communication. That is to say, interpersonal communication is accomplished through both verbal and nonverbal channels. Authentic gestures and other kinetic features as expressions of the target culture are not to be neglected in language instruction.

---

99 Kubler, et al, 61-62
101 Ibid.
As I mentioned in previous chapters, learning a foreign language is to learn stories of that language and its culture. The more learners have experienced and compiled stories of the target culture, the more situations will exist in which they feel comfortable and capable of playing their role in the culture effectively. Video can provide highly authentic stories for foreign language learning, inviting no competition from other language learning materials. Although putting learners into the community where the language is used offers the highest authenticity and reality, carefully selected video as language material can be more exact and reduce frustration, from a pedagogical perspective. According to McCoy and Weible, the notion of authenticity, “as applied to the video medium, describes language and its accompanying culturally bound paralinguistic phenomena, and therefore enhances foreign language learning as a holistic task.” Moreover, it refers to language and cultural behavior that might be used by native speakers in their ordinary social interactions. The language and culture use that is identifiable as having been created specifically for or by foreign learners, and that natives will not feel comfortable to use, is not authentic.

Video promotes students’ core language abilities, especially in the areas of listening and speaking, and represents “not only the linguistic expressions but also how these expressions are actually uttered.” Although foreign language teachers who are native speakers of the target language have the ability to present authentic and concrete

---

102 Schank, 8
105 Ibid. See also Tang, 286-287
examples of language and speech, the fact is that they may build up a habit of slowing
down their speaking speed when talking to students and thereby train students to
comprehend artificially slowed speech. In addition, the speaking of different people and
sound quality in some kind of video may be highly variable. This aspect may be
considered as a disadvantage of video, because the speakers’ voice may not be clear
enough for learners to listen to. However, this reflects the actual situation of language
use, where it is impossible to require natives to speak to accommodate non-natives’
listening abilities. Authentic but not clear speech, i.e., speech with error and accents,
needs to be exposed to language learner as early as the late beginning level, and even
more in advanced levels. As for the beginning level, rehearsed video, which is scripted,
and offers clear speech, are to be used to suit teaching purposes. This topic will be
further discussed in the next chapter. Secondly, as Berger claims, including video
materials in foreign language instruction can train students’ capacity to see as well as
hear, and especially, can introduce cultural and communicative contexts of the target
language, by presenting the language in concert with authentic and dynamic images.106
As there is usually only one instructor in a classroom, it is not easy to clearly depict
how two natives interact with each other. With video, learners can hear and see
communication between two natives “where an utterance from A causes a reaction
from B,” with not only linguistic and paralinguistic information, but also cultural and
visual information, including non-verbal modality.107

106 Trans. McCoy and Weible, 121-122
107 Eva Dam Jensen and Thora Vinther, “Video in Foreign Language Teaching,” in System 6, (Oxford; New
With such high authenticity, video can convey events in the form of a story in culturally situated language for foreign language learning. As Bauer argues, by way of video as language learning material, with which “sound and image are united into a real, authentic, methodologically non-manipulable situation,” the learner is always “confronted with the total cultural situation and not only a component.”\textsuperscript{108} It can “set formal teaching free from the constricting walls of the classroom,”\textsuperscript{109} and bring the world into the classroom, a street scene or a particular object, and therefore stimulate and provide information to be referred to in conversation, discussion and storytelling or narration of events. With video the learners are provided direct and insightful glimpses into the realistic context, which will not be so effective if being constructed verbally by only one or at most two instructors in classroom. It can be used as a reference point or stimulus for performance and memory. This is also what the effect of audiotape cannot present. If audiotape brings to the second language program authentic speech of native speakers, video delivers the communicative events in a holistic presentation.

3.1.2 Delivery of Cultural Theme

According to McCoy and Weible, the obvious advantage of using video materials concerns the teaching of the target cultural knowledge. As I discussed before, being able to communicate and participate in the target culture effectively requires the learners to be able to recognize the cultural stories and compile them into larger cultural knowledge domains. Therefore, it is very important that the presentation of culture is

\textsuperscript{108} Trans. McCoy and Weible, 121-122

brought to students without being separated from language knowledge. Cultural themes are usually difficult to transmit in the traditional classroom. The traditional way of delivering cultural facts in class usually relies on lectures or the explanations in cultural notes, which go along with dialogue and narratives in the textbook. The drawback to this method is the explanations are mainly general written descriptions of the cultural phenomena and their underlying themes. Using only the notes, learners cannot observe how natives really behave in communicative situations, and consequentially they do not know how to perform themselves to make natives comfortable. For example, Chinese language learners are usually told that when Chinese people are having dinner together, they often jockey around to pay the bill at the end. Students are taught sentences like wǒ qīngkè 我请客 (Let me treat), or wǒ lái wǒ lái 我来我来 (Let me pay), bié kèqi 别客气 (Don’t be polite). But when they are performing it, they usually just sit there and say the sentence without acting out any of their intentions. If a person only says wǒ lái wǒ lái, jīntiān wǒ qīngkè 我来我来, 今天我请客, but fails to show any accompanying action, such as taking out his wallet and money, Chinese people usually interpret this as insincerity. And the problem is that even though the students know about this, they do not know how to act appropriately and acceptably. Sometimes Chinese people try to get the waiter to take their money by grabbing him and pulling away the other people’s hands that hold the money. However for learners, it is difficult for them, if just provided with a written description of the theme, to figure out the degree to which they should carry this behavior. Grabbing the hand too forcefully would be considered rude.

110 McCoy and Weible, 123-126
Surely, model performance of native speakers such as instructors in a classroom can make up this drawback to some extent. However, it is difficult for the instructor to convey paralinguistic information to students.\textsuperscript{111} Sometimes it is because it is not easy for one instructor to act out certain themes, even with the help of the students. It also happens that the knowledge the instructor delivers is not sufficient or not authentic because he or she has not had that particular experience, or has been teaching foreign language for a long time and his or her threshold for students’ mistake has fallen, or because he or she has been in students’ base culture for too long and is affected by it. Many of my students like to greet me with \textit{nǐ hǎo ma} 你好吗 (how are you) when they meet me on campus. When I correct them and say that Chinese seldom use this phrase to greet acquaintances that they meet often, they told me that some other TAs always greet them this way.

Video can bring the culture into the classroom with living and authentic images and sounds, by showing how the language is used in a “real context” along with non-verbal information, and provide dimensions that other sources are unable to demonstrate so effectively.\textsuperscript{112} With video, students are able to see what people in the target culture really speak and do in culturally appropriate manner, for example, how to appropriately jockey to pay the bill at the dinner table in Chinese culture. Let’s take the theme under greeting acquaintances in Chinese culture as another example. As we know, Chinese seldom use \textit{nǐ hǎo} 你好 or \textit{nǐ hǎo ma} 你好吗 to greet people they meet everyday or often. This phrase is mainly restricted to use when a person is asking

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} White, Easton and Anderson, 171
someone he or she knows before but has not seen for a long time, and he or she really want to know how is this old friend’s life going. A very commonly used way that a Chinese person would greet those he or she meet often is pointing out obvious actions that the other is doing. If we put a dialogue of greeting acquaintances in Chinese in a textbook, there has to be either an additional description or a picture showing what the people are doing when greeting. Even so, students may still feel unclear about the obvious actions when they are in the context. While in the textbook description or picture, usually only the action that students are expected to point out will be indicated as a clue of the greeting dialogue, in real life, people may be doing several things at the same time, and not all actions need to be pointed out. For example, you see your friend walking to a classroom, eating a hotdog for lunch, and talking to his classmate, a good way of greeting him may be shàngkè  a 上课啊 (going to class), but not chī règōu  a 吃热狗啊 (eating hotdog), nor shuōhuà ne 说话呢 (talking). But if you see he is waiting in line to buy a hotdog, and reading a book or talking to some other people, the greeting words more appropriate would be mǎi règōu  a 买热狗啊 (buying hotdog). In this case, students need the whole visible context to judge which element to point out. Besides, the “pointing out” is not simply stating something, and there is usually an answer or response expected; however it is not really a question either, and people who “ask” do not really care about the answer. If trying to explain all these elements in the cultural notes of the textbook, the whole explanation is going to be lengthy. But if we use video, the theme here can be delivered much easier and clearer. Learners will be able to catch the main “obvious action” when watching the interaction. Here is an example from a Chinese TV show, Yīnián yòu yīnián 一年又一年 (Year After Year):
（陈焕走进院子，跟邻居打招呼）
邻居甲：焕儿回来了？
陈焕：哎，抬车呢？
邻居甲：嗯。
（陈焕继续往里走）
陈焕：哎，大爷，您出去啊？
邻居乙：哎，回来啦？我打点醋去。
（陈焕继续往里走）
陈焕：择菜呐？
邻居丙：啊。
（陈焕穿过一条很窄的过道，邻居丁和戊抱着孩子迎面走来）
陈焕：嗨。
邻居丁：回来了？来，先让叔叔过去。
陈焕：来来，你们先过，你们先过。
邻居戊：那我们先走。刚回来呀？回见。
陈焕：哎。

(Chen Huan walks into the courtyard, greeting his neighbors)
Neighbor A: Huanr, you are back?
Chen Huan: Yeah, fixing your bicycle?
Neighbor A: Yep.
(Chen Huan keeps on walking)
Chen Huan: Hi, Uncle, so you are going out?
Neighbor B: Hi, you’re back? I am going to buy some vinegar.
(Chen Huan keeps on walking)
Chen Huan: Cleaning vegetables?
Neighbor C: Yep.
(Chen Huan walks through a narrow alley; neighbor D and E, holding their kid, walking toward him)
Chen Huan: Hi.
Neighbor D: You’re back? Hey, let uncle go first.
Chen Huan: You go ahead, you go ahead.
Neighbor E: All right, we’ll go first then. Just coming back? See you later then.
Chen Huan: See you.

In the example, all Chen Huan’s neighbors greet him by pointing out that he is back home, and Chen Huan greets his neighbors by pointing out their main activity, fixing a bicycle, going out, cleaning vegetables. The question mark “?” is put at the end of their greeting sentences because they are not stating something, however as I said,
they are not questions either, because the action is obvious and there is no need to
“ask.” It is a way of greeting people in Chinese culture, and the theme here is Chinese
show their concern by pointing out obvious actions as greetings. With video, the theme
is clearly delivered.

3.2 Video Stimulates Memory

Video can be used to facilitate the recall of information presented in discourse and
behavior. The language and cultural knowledge in video can help learners process new
experiences. After watching the video, learners store the stories, which are their personal
experiences of the video, in their memory. When learners encounter a new experience, it
is compared to the previously constructed story and determined to be the same or
different, i.e., recognized.\textsuperscript{113} And that previously constructed story is recalled to help
process the new experience. The authentic visual image in video is demonstrably
effective as a memory aid for verbal stimuli.\textsuperscript{114} Moreover, the holistic communicative
context in video also provides learners clues for later recall of the appropriate story stored
in their mind. In White, Easton and Anderson’s study on students’ perceived value of
video in terms of its memory effect, seeing the visual setting – what is happening when
the speech occurs, and the overall context, including characters, setting, events – is

considered the most helpful and important aspect contributing to language uptake and recall.\footnote{White, Easton and Anderson (2000), 171-172}

3.2.1 Visual as Stimuli

As Mayer claims, a coherent verbal representation and a coherent visual representation that are contiguous, provide the best conditions for recall.\footnote{RE Mayer, “Multimedia Learning: Are We Asking the Right Question?” Educational Psychologist 32, no.1, (1997): 1-9. See also White, Easton and Anderson, 172} There has been widespread conviction in the field of media, psychology, communication, and education that visual material had more lasting effect in memory than verbal description.\footnote{Fleming, 44.} In terms of visual features, many researchers believe that pictures in the video can be very readily coded and stored in memory and, in addition, they associatively arouse memory images of the things they represent.\footnote{Allan Paivio, T.B. Rogers, and Padric C. Smythe, “Why are Pictures Easier to Recall than Words?” Psychon. Science 11, no.4, (1968): 137-138} They are mnemonically powerful and are especially useful as reminders of sequences and contexts of the events.\footnote{Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 85} Knowledge of photographic and electronic images also understandably encourages the assumption that images of the camera are reliably analogous to the images of the memory. Surely, the images in mind, which are built up after people watched the video, is not an object, e.g., a photograph, rather, an internal representation of such external objects.\footnote{Fleming, 43-45}

There are several categories of visual segments from video, which are compatible with verbal components and serve as pedagogical stimuli for recall: 1. the deictic

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\footnote{White, Easton and Anderson (2000), 171-172}{White, Easton and Anderson (2000), 171-172}
\footnote{Fleming, 44.}{Fleming, 44.}
\footnote{Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 85}{Hammerly, An integrated Theory of Language Teaching and Its Practical Consequences, 85}
\footnote{Fleming, 43-45}{Fleming, 43-45}
\end{thebibliography}
reference for the verbal component, for example, in pointing at objects or persons, e.g., "that one"; 2. an emotional dimension, as in an aggressive posture for an aggressive speech, or a dismissive expression in one's eyes for a dismissive remark; 3. the modal function, providing information about the speaker's characteristics via clothing, cosmetics, posture; 4. the visual communicative function, including, for example, the beckoning gesture accompanying the command "come here", or shaking of hand or head when speaking "no"; the situational visual function, conveying the sense of the spatio-temporal setting for the interaction.\textsuperscript{121}

3.2.2 Overall Context as Clue

Video can provide learners a holistic presentation of the cultural context. This overall context helps them recall the memory, i.e., language and culture knowledge, which they compiled during the learning process. The events are thereby situated, including the characters or roles, the settings including places, time and theme in the context, which can all be cues and clues for recall. The memories of the language and culture events are stored under different indices. They could be a series of stories under the saga of character A or location B in a movie, or a series of stories under the case of not accepting compliments from several movies and TV shows. That these elements in context are helpful for recall does not mean learners will encounter exactly the same person, the same place or the same case in the future in the target culture. But learners may have experience that can be associated to the stories in the video, via linkable words, visual body actions and postures, sounds, images, or abstract thought. The

\textsuperscript{121} McCoy and Weible, 123-126
linkable clues in contexts which learners encounter in real life activate the stored memory, and this stored memory created by video images can help learners deal with the new experience in real life.

3.3 Video as Core Material

As multimedia is becoming one of the most frequent topics among pedagogical material producers, video has been incorporated into language teaching widely. Language teachers favor video as foreign language learning material, for its effectiveness in enhancing students motivation and enthusiasm for learning the target language, for its advantages in teaching cultural elements that are difficult to present in the traditional classroom, and for its ability to promote core language abilities, especially listening comprehension. Nonetheless, it is usually used to supplement printed textbooks, rather than as core material.

As Wang argues, the domination of text-core mindset is influenced by key historical conditions. One is a tradition in linguistic inquiry on phonetics, lexical, syntax, semantics, which focus on written language as a manageable object of study. Another is that “text has been the only verifiable form of communication for thousands of years,” and the historical emphasis on written languages, on written style registers, and on literacy, persists in attitudes that give priority to the textbook: It has been the only form of pedagogical material for hundreds of years and thus it still enjoys a kind of patent monopoly in pedagogical material production that is slow to expire."

---

123 Ibid.
Video as foreign language teaching material suffers from two disadvantages. One is that video, when showed on television in class, is “a vehicle of one-way communication.” Hammerly believes that television is a passive medium, and mainly offers opportunity for students to listen and see but not speak, either manipulatively or communicatively. Another is that video, compared to textbooks, contributes less to the acquisition of reading and writing skills. Students can only hear and see people speaking in video, but have nothing to read on. Even though videos can provide subtitles in the target language on the screen, it offers very little information for the written format of the language, i.e., the overall structure of a text. For example, in Chinese writing, the first line of each paragraph should have two characters indent; in persuasive essay, the points come one by one in the form of separated paragraphs, with the topic sentence of each paragraph at either the beginning or the end of the paragraph.

Thus, language teachers usually refrain from using video instead of pedagogically oriented textbooks. Video’s main application is to supplement textbooks. The term “supplement,” according to Tang, means that “video provides the second language learner things that are absent from contrived textbooks,” and she points out that “video contextualized the truncated language of textbooks and causes the language to return, so to speak, to its original state of experience.” In other words, it means that there is discrepancy between textbook language and language as it is spoken in the target culture.

124 Corder, 239
125 Hammerly, Synthesis in Second Language Teaching, 605-606
126 White, Easton and Anderson, 170-171
127 Tang, 287
128 Wang, vii
video as a supplement, learners always have to put extra effort and time on adjusting themselves from canonical textbooks and situations toward speech events devised for native audiences, observed contexts, and commonly recognized situations.

As more and more researchers consider language to be inseparable from culture, cultural context of language and behavioral cultural aspects are accordingly emphasized in analyzing language exchanges and implementing language education.\textsuperscript{129} Moreover, language learning is no longer considered only as an internal process of an individual’s psychological mechanism, but also as an emergent product of behavioral interactions among human beings with bodies and minds collectively expressed in the world.\textsuperscript{130} Therefore, since video can deliver language and culture knowledge by conveying communicative events, or experience, in its “original state”, i.e., under authentic and integrated cultural context, it is more capable of fulfilling the goal of foreign language teaching and learning. On the one hand, video’s contextualization can provide an important input base for the development of a schema to which subsequent knowledge can readily attach.\textsuperscript{131} On the other hand, the fleeting electronic images can be connected to impressions from print and the two areas can act to reinforce each other.\textsuperscript{132}

Considering video’s defects as language learning material, as I mentioned above, it should not be used alone. Its power will not be carried out without support from textbooks and teachers’ effective instruction. It would be more integrated and hence better if the learner started with a focus on video and have the texts as a study-aid to

\textsuperscript{129} Walker and Noda. See also Walker, “Performed Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture.”
\textsuperscript{130} Wang, vii
\textsuperscript{131} White, Easton and Anderson, 168
supplement the video. In addition, successful communicative activities in the classroom are also largely relied on the teacher and the students, too.

Using video as the core material for foreign language learning will bring about a change in what is going to be taught and in how it is going to be taught in a language classroom. The expansion of video in foreign language pedagogy shifts the focus in both the content and the method of the instruction. In terms of the content of instruction, the shift is to move away from canonical texts and situations toward actual speech events, observed contexts, and commonly recognized situations. As for the method of the instruction, the relationship and coordination among the video, the textbooks and other supplements, the teacher, the student, and classroom activity is the first item to be addressed. It is not that video only provides a context in which the language is used; it provides an important input base for the development of a schema to which subsequent knowledge can readily attach. More importantly, it conveys language and culture events in the forms of the stories, and helps learners construct memory in the target culture. It is recommended that not only speaking and listening, but also reading and writing training, should be based on video. Nevertheless, it doesn’t mean that the video is the core of all instruction. Video’s effect as the core material is hard to bring into play without good supplementary materials, effective instructions, and active learners.

---

133 Corder, 248
CHAPTER 4

BASING CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNING ON VIDEO

4.1 Categories of Video as Core Materials in Chinese Language Learning

In the 1980s, the practice of using video in Chinese language instruction in the United States occurred, although only sporadically in individual programs.\textsuperscript{134} Many of them are educational television programs, which is video of a teaching and learning activity with a teacher and students in the classroom. This type of educational television program is usually used as self-study material. In this thesis, I focus on using video, mostly authentic video, in Chinese language classroom. Educational television programs will not be discussed. Authentic Chinese movies have been integrated into Chinese language curriculum to supplement textbook-centered instruction. As more and more videos, including movies and television programs that closely follow people’s daily lives and chronicle events in the real world, have been created, we should consider incorporating a wider variety of videos into the Chinese language curriculum. Aiming at different levels’ of study and training different language skills, these videos should be selected and reorganized for pedagogical purposes.

\textsuperscript{134} Tang, 294
4.1.1 Rehearsed Video and Authentic Video Clip

At the beginning level of learning Chinese language learning, the students’ learning objective is to be able to repeat, memorize and perform selected language items in a controlled way in limited cultural contexts.\textsuperscript{135} The role of video for this stage is to present new language and culture items in well-contextualized situations that illustrate language use, and to provide listening practice and opportunities for selective controlled oral performance in those particular contexts.\textsuperscript{136} Considering that Chinese has the most complex orthography of any modern language, it is better not to start reading and writing at the very first day of the class, waiting until students have been dealing with Chinese speaking and listening for 2-3 months and have become accustomed to the instruction based on video. For the beginning level, Chinese reading and writing class basically focuses on Chinese character recognition, recalling and composing. As “the fleeting electronic images can be connected to impressions from the print and the two areas can then act to reinforce each other,”\textsuperscript{137} the reading and writing activities can be based on the scripts and texts of the video. Students read and write what they listen to and speak.

For beginning levels, the new language and culture items are presented mostly in the form of a short sequence of exchanges, i.e., dialogues, and some very short extracts from monologues, e.g., short informal self-introductions. The length is usually 10 seconds to 1 minute. The video in this stage is scripted and rehearsed for language learning purposes. That is to say, the quantity of the language and culture knowledge in

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} Miller, 58-59
the video and the length of the video must be carefully controlled. In addition, "noises" like speech errors and local accents are cleaned up, so that the learners can focus on standard language use. Meanwhile, the authenticity of the video material needs to be guaranteed. That is to say, the short dialogue or monologue should happen in an authentic context, e.g., Chinese speaking country, place, or community. Secondly, the language use conveyed in the video in this stage should be linguistically accurate and culturally appropriate, i.e., the ways that natives talk and behave in the culture.

In addition to the rehearsed video which is especially made for language teaching, short clips from authentic movies, or television programs, in which language items are laid out in a controlled way with limited cultural contexts, can be used at the beginning levels, too. For example, the dialogue in the stage two of Chinese 101 at The Ohio State University is from a conversation in a Chinese movie Mòshēng de péngyou 陌生的朋友 (Strange Friend):

杜丘：请问，您贵姓？
张同生：姓张，张同生。
杜丘：哦，小张同志。
Du Qiu: Excuse me, may I know you name?
Zhang Tongsheng: Surname Zhang, Zhang Tongsheng.
Du Qiu: Oh, Comrade Xiao Zhang.

Short video clips from movies and television programs are more reliable than rehearsed video in terms of the authenticity, because the former one is created for natives while the latter one is made for language learners. To ensure authenticity, when creating video for language class, language material designers should have at not only language teachers, also other native speakers who never teach their native language as a
foreign language to read through the scripts and contexts beforehand and go over the
video after being made.

4.1.2 Movies

A movie is a cinematic narrative, which enacts stories of wider range of
communicative activities, usually with beginning, development, climax and ending in
the story line.

When getting into the higher levels of foreign language study, in terms of
speaking and listening class, Walker argues, working with the dialogue model most of
the time, the activity required of the students is very restricted to reacting to a linguistic
stimulus – either answering or asking a question as a practiced response in a specified
situation.\textsuperscript{138} As he says, not only does this activity become a bit dull after a year or so,
but as any foreign student of Chinese who has experienced interacting with native
Chinese speakers outside the classroom can testify, “the ability to react is not sufficient
to the survival of one’s linguistic degree of control in an encounter with a native
speaker.”\textsuperscript{139} Students at the intermediate level should be able to recognize wider
contexts and interactions.

The clear-cut thematic content of movies makes them particularly suitable for a
foreign language course for pedagogical purposes.\textsuperscript{140} Movies are “coherent treatments
of sets of characters often in particular settings.”\textsuperscript{141} They can give students practice in

Language Teachers Association (JCLTA)} 17, no. 2 (1982): 111-113
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Jack Lonergan, \textit{Video in Language Teaching}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 8-9
\textsuperscript{141} Walker, “Performed Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture,” 204
recognizing different realizations of similar functions by introducing fairly continuous stories. Those stories are composed of short scenes, which are units of the motion pictures and are edited and unified by location or dramatic incident. This feature makes it possible to isolate short segments from the whole and adapt them for a class or instructional session. Moreover, movies are “effective culture-learning devices.” Adapting movies as foreign language materials help learners obtain “the ability to tell tales and to recognize and participate in common performances of the target culture.”

Since the beginning of 1990s, integrating movies into Chinese language learning has become a widespread practice. Many Chinese movies have been incorporated into Chinese language classrooms for different levels based on their suitability. Most of them are telling stories set in a contemporary period after the Cultural Revolution and after China implemented its “Opening Policy.” Some of them are based on literary works from early in this century. They deliver valuable information about the knowledge of Chinese language and culture, although many students may complain that they are already outdated. Knowing how people used their language before can greatly help learners understand the current use of language and cultural elements, and realize the historical changes in language and culture development, which goes along with social changes. Building a comparison of the language of the film and contemporary language into your classroom presentation also provides an opportunity to develop a metalanguage, i.e., to train the learners to talk about the language they are studying.

This doesn’t mean that we have to keep a movie in the curriculum no matter how old it

142 Frank Beaver, Dictionary of Film Terms, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983), 256
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
145 Tang, 294
62
is. As social communication fixes and alters uses and meanings of language and cultural elements, it is important that movies used, as language learning material, be updated.

4.1.3 Television Series

Similar to movies, television series present ongoing stories about a specific set of people and at specific locations doing certain things in a culture – a perfect example of what we call a *saga*. While movies usually try to present a central theme in a limited period of time, television series have fewer limitations of time, which allows the stories to be told in a more carefree and relaxed manner. In addition, a movie usually involves one core story with beginning, development, climax and ending, but television series can tell one story after another continuously.

There are two types of television series: one is the episodic style narrative, and the other is the linear style of narrative. The previous type usually consists of separable sagas of the same group of people in each episode, e.g., soap opera. It is therefore able to represent various aspects of life. The latter type usually conveys events which are in sequence and involve cause and effect between earlier episodes and latter episodes. With less constraint of time, television series usually can expand stories in more detail. As students progress to more advanced levels, they need a far wider variety of relevant contexts. Both types of television series can meet such need.

Another benefit of using television series is that, the stories in some television series can span a long time, for example, twenty or thirty years, or even more. This kind of television series can reflect what happened earlier, and knowing what happened in
the past, and how events develop and change, for language learners, can provide a
invaluable clue for comprehending what is happening now. They can lead learners to
experience the past years, so that learners will be able to understand current natives’
memories and interpretations of historical movements and events, and their influence
on the present.

4.1.4 Documentary Film

A documentary is a nonfiction film. It is usually shot on location, using actual
persons rather than actors, and focusing thematically on historical, scientific, social, or
environmental subjects.\textsuperscript{146} The principal purpose of documentary is to enlighten, inform,
educate, persuade, and provide insight into the world in which people live.\textsuperscript{147} From the
perspective of language pedagogy, documentaries on social subjects are the most useful
and appropriate as foreign language learning material. Firstly, the language of such
films is more practical for leading a daily life and requires less professional knowledge.
Secondly, in terms of the content, documentaries on social topics can deliver useful
informational culture, and also evoke students’ oral and written discussion. Thus they
can practice both spoken and written language skills.

Chinese reading and writing classes in the first year mostly deal with recognizing
and writing single characters, or characters in words or short sentences. After the first
year, students need to learn to recognize and organize language items in wider contexts,
and begin to touch written style Chinese and pay attention to the distinctiveness of
spoken and written Chinese. It is also important that students learn the ability to transfer

\textsuperscript{146} Beaver, 96-97
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
between spoken and written Chinese, so that they will become able to express in both oral and written language what they encounter in both spoken and written Chinese. Documentary films on social subjects deliver real social events with real people involved, and there are usually voiceover narrations on the events, face-to-face interviews, and real-life interaction. One distinct feature of such documentary films is that it provides an interweaving of oral and written language, and gives the teacher opportunities to highlight the differences between oral and written language.

4.1.5 News Report

News reports provide information about recent events or happenings in the world. It tells stories about “who,” “what”, “when,” “where,” “why,” and “how” by using clear, precise and concise language. Video news report starts with the news reports’ brief summary of the event, followed with images and videos related to the event. Some news also comes with short interviews.

Authentic examples of journalistic Chinese have been adapted as learning tools for Chinese as a foreign language learning tool for a long time. In terms of listening, news reports can promote students’ listening comprehension with an emphasis on the particular challenges posed by the rapid pace of news reporters. Besides, viewing the video of the events reported can enhance the comprehension of the news. For speaking practice, using news reports doesn’t mean that the students are required to speak Chinese like a news reporter, but aims at training the students to be able to talk about the topics in news reports and comprehend the quick delivery of professional news.

148 Jin Honggang, Xu Debao, and John Berninghausen, Chinese breakthrough – Learning Chinese Language Through TV and Newspapers, (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company), viii
readers. As I explained before, being able to deal with the informational culture in the target language can permit foreign language learners to establish a bond with the natives. As for reading and writing activities, the special news report style language and the succinct structure of the news text should receive attention. Students should learn to distinguish the difference between the language of news reports and other styles of written languages, e.g., narrative, literary.

4.1.6 Talk Show

A talk show is a television or radio show in which noted people, such as authorities in a particular field, participate in discussions or are interviewed and often answer questions from the host, and audience. Different from the previous several types of video, the speech in a talk show is unscripted, in other words, spontaneous.

The talk show is the most demanding video material among the six, and should be arranged for use by students of fourth year level or higher. In terms of listening comprehension, to understand a Chinese talk show requires an understanding of natural Chinese utterances and exchanges within a virtual conversational setting, i.e., Chinese language with natural linguistic and logical speech errors, repetitions and repairs, and accents in recognizable cultural contexts.¹⁴⁹ For productive skill training, a talk show on controversial topics can show the students how to express one’s opinions appropriately in the culture, including direct and indirect, explicit and implicit, humorous or serious, polite or aggressive. Students can therefore learn to lay out their

¹⁴⁹ Wang, iv-v
real arguments and grounds for arguments on certain topics systematically in either oral
debate or a written persuasive essay.

4.2 Criteria for Selecting Video

There are basic principles of selecting video as the core material for foreign
language learning, just as there are for using printed textbooks. A video must be
appropriate to meet the language program goals. Not every video is appropriate for
foreign language teaching and learning, just because it delivers communicative events in
the target culture and language. Appropriate video materials can be coordinated with
other supplementary materials, instruction and classroom activities. Secondly, it should
be manageable for both teachers and students. In other words, video materials with
different levels of difficulty and different focuses should be carefully arranged, and how
to use them for teaching and learning activities also needs to be well planned. Only the
right kind of video exploited in the right way is appropriate for foreign language learning,
and can bring considerable benefits to the foreign language learner.150

4.2.1 Appropriateness

One of the tenets of choosing an appropriate video for foreign language learning
is that its content must fulfill the goal of language learning. It is not that only videos
with plain stories or topics are welcomed for learning a foreign language so that
students can focus on language use. It should not distract students from language study,
while being enjoyable, interesting, and stimulating enough to enhance students’

150 Dave Willis, “101 Ways to Use Video,” in Video Applications in English Language Teaching, ed. John
motivation and enthusiasm. Although there is a need for language learning materials to be entertaining, the nature of the entertainment is of course quite different.151

With respect to appropriateness of video as foreign language learning material, movie and television plays are the most difficult to choose, compared to other videos. Since they are used for foreign language class, not culture or literature, or theatre class, they need to meet the goal of language learning, not entertainment or culture and theatre research. First of all, it is recommended to avoid any video that has a confusing, bizarre or complicated story line. Otherwise, learners will waste their time and effort on figuring out the story line and have no energy to focus on the knowledge of language and culture when they watch and study the movies or television series. Secondly, it is also not encouraged to select those that are relatively far from normal people’s life, for example, gangsters, action-adventures, science fiction, and martial arts. Many of my students always complain that the movies we choose as language learning material are not exciting enough. However, the most direct result of selecting “exciting” movie or television shows for language materials is that there are many elements that may distract students from their goal of learning the language. Learners will be in the classroom enjoying the gunfight or space battle, instead of focusing on their main job of learning language and cultural use from the movie. Even though the “exciting” movies and television shows can still convey events and impart information to students, and the students do learn words, phrases or sentences from the characters’ dialogues and actions, the experience it creates and delivers will not be a direct guide for students to process new experiences. We do not expect that students would learn how to gunfight

151 Lonergan, 6
or use a time machine from their language class. The main use of such kinds of movies and television shows, from a foreign language pedagogical perspective, is as a conversation topic, where students can deal with it as achievement culture and informational culture, as I explained in section 2.3.1. Therefore, it is better to make them extracurricular language material, but not core material, because the classroom activities that can be developed from such movies and television shows are too limited.

For news reports and talk shows, it is better to avoid those whose topics are sensitive, e.g., religion, and politics. Students of a foreign language may have various opinions, positive or negative, praiseful or disparaging, about those topics in the target culture, according to the values they develop from their base culture and education. The goal of the classroom activities based on news reports and talk shows is not to reach a conclusion on the topics discussed, but to help learners acquire knowledge of the target language and culture, both interpretive and presentational, through them.

Documentary film is a good vehicle to deliver both formal and informal language at the same time. Since it usually includes face-to-face interviews, authentic conversation, narration, commentary, it can present both informal language and formal language. When making documentary film for foreign language learning, it is better to select those which are close to common people’s daily experiences, e.g., their interactions, their relationship with their society and culture. Outside of language for special purposes an instructor should not choose a documentary films that are too specialized in a certain domain, for example, scientific discovery, or historical review, which requires much more background knowledge in those areas.
Moreover, using video as the core material for foreign language learning doesn’t mean all other supplementary materials have to follow the video selected unconditionally. When choosing a video, we also think about what supplementary materials should be compiled as useful study-aid, which teaching methods can be used to deliver effective instruction, and what kind of classroom activity can be designed to mobilize the students to perform. As video undertakes the responsibility of devising the overall situations in which language shall be presented, it leaves, perforce, to the instructor and supplementary material the job of organizing the learner’s productive practice, and practice methods.\(^{152}\) Considering video’s defect as a “one-way communication vehicle,” supplementary materials and instruction are very important to help develop interaction between screen and learners as viewer, teachers and learners, and between learners. Therefore, if we choose a video which very limited classroom activities can be based on, this video is considered not appropriate to be language learning material. For example, it will be hard to carry out activities like narration, role-play, or discussion on a 2-hour movie with very little conversation but 50-minute scenic footage. In addition, if the video needs too much explanatory notes which might occupy more space than the conversation in every page of the video script, it is not appropriate either. For example, it is not wise to use a funny or humorous movie at levels lower than the fifth year. Different cultures’ senses of humor are different. To understand another culture’s humor usually requires a lot more memories about being humorous in the culture, i.e., knowledge about why certain language or culture elements are considered humorous and how to use them. Humorous movie should be the last thing

\(^{152}\) Corder, 244-246
that a language class should deal with. Otherwise, both the movie scripts and the instructor have to make much explanation, and even with their help, the students still have a difficult time comprehending and appreciating the humor. Using such movies as language learning material therefore become *shì bèi gōng bàn* 事倍功半 (get half the result with twice the effort).

4.2.2 Manageability

Since video can present real life, or at least a skillful simulation of it, the starting point for a video-based methodology will be the target language presented in its cultural context. That is to say, instead of beginning with individual sound and gradually building them up into more and more complex patterns, the instruction based on video starts from situations, selected with all the care and skill hitherto devoted to the selection of the linguistic items, and then show the language which grows out of them, or belongs to them.\(^{153}\) This kind of learning process is “top-down”-- from larger, more inclusive contexts down to the more local context.\(^{154}\) Compared with “bottom-up”, which “refers to an interpretive process that works through component parts to the integration of larger wholes,”\(^{155}\) learning a foreign language based on video is less easily manageable. While in the linguistically oriented course, the language can be, most of the time, closely controlled according to the categories of linguistic

\(^{153}\) Corder, 247-251
\(^{154}\) Quinn, 38-39
\(^{155}\) Ibid.
description, the video usually comes with more ungraded language and culture elements, which may be from the visual scene, speakers' behaviors, and speaking styles.

To be appropriate for foreign language learning and manageable for both teachers and students, the video should contain relatively stable structures representing the situation and participants in dialogues and discourses, which make demands on the students at gradually different levels. Since authentic video is not made for foreign language learners, it will be difficult for teachers to control the ungraded elements and patterns in it, and studying spontaneous speech events on video, which has, for example, local accent and speech errors, will be an overwhelming job for beginners. Therefore, it is better to start with rehearsed video, which takes place in the context of the target culture, but is scripted to suit teaching purposes. The ideal rehearsed video for lower level language learning includes various scenarios about different aspects of living in the target culture, e.g., daily greeting, going shopping, asking for directions, ordering food and drink, going to the post office. Similar to the dialogue performance presented in printed textbooks, in video language class, the length of the cases and sagas in the target culture and information in them are strictly controlled. It can be as short as two sentences at the beginning stages of study, presented in short, well-contextualized situations, and then including more and more information when gradually progressing to higher levels. The difference is that in video-based class, students learn to perform based on imitating speakers' visible speaking and behavior recorded on video.

Corder, 247-251
Biechele, 8
At the end of the first year, after learners build up numerous stories in the target culture, it is time to incorporate authentic video materials into language learning, such as movies, television series, documentary films, news reports, and talk shows, as the level goes higher and higher. According to their degree of authenticity, these materials and corresponding supplements need to be carefully selected and compiled for different pedagogical purposes, i.e., speaking and listening, reading and writing, and different levels. Furthermore, the length of these authentic video materials is also an important factor to be considered, so that the instruction based on them can fit into the class time of a quarter-term language course or a semester-term language course.

4.3 Samples of Video Material

Movie

*Hé nǐ zài yìqí* 和你在一起 (Together) was filmed and produced in China in 2002. It tells the story of a violin prodigy, Liu Xiaochun, and his father’s relocation from the rural part of China to Beijing in search of a good violin teacher, fame, and fortune. In the exciting new world, through the people he meets and seeing the consequences they have to face, Xiaochun learns how painful life’s choices can be. As his training intensifies, Xiaochun has to figure out what he wants for himself and how much he is willing to give up for it. Ultimately, Xiaochun realizes how he truly feels about music and comes to understand the strength of his father’s love. The story is touching and sometimes funny, but it also touches on social change in contemporary China in a thought-provoking and entertaining manner. It utilizes standard contemporary Chinese and reflects the natural speech of Chinese life. Although it is related to violin music, there are few technical
terms present. It is not thickly packed with dialogue, the exchanges are generally short and the language is fairly simple. It is appropriate for use by the students at earlier stages of the intermediate level, i.e., the second or third year of Chinese study.

**Xīzǎo 洗澡 (Shower)** was filmed and produced in China in 1999. In this movie, when successful businessman Liu Daming is summoned by his younger brother to come home from Shenzhen to his father’s old-style bathhouse in Beijing, he cannot wait to return to his fast-paced modern life back in Shenzhen. But spending time amongst the eccentric cast of characters that frequent the bathhouse gives him a new appreciation for traditional ways. When a tragic event causes a sudden change, Daming must choose between the prosperous life he’s made for himself and his responsibility to his family and his heritage. This movie interprets the typical Chinese concept of family, and love among family members. It also reflects the conflict between tradition and modernity, family and material gain, and depicts Chinese people’s contradictory feeling for the two sides. It is thus an invaluable tool for western students to learn about the changes underway in present-day China. The language in this movie is colloquial, conversational, and replete with a bit more Beijing local color. It is best suited for use by students of higher level, either in late intermediate level or advanced level, i.e., the third or the fourth year.

**Television Series**

**Kāixin jiù hǎo 开心就好 (Just For Happiness)** It is a short television series consisting of only 3 episodes. It was a hèsuì piān 贺岁片 (movie or television show for celebrating the new year) for the Spring Festival of 2000. The comedy tells stories about the Yu family, which is a mix of traditional thought, represented by the older generation,
the father and the mother, and modern thought, represented by the younger generation, two sons, one daughter, daughter-in-law, and their friends. It is also a mix of Chinese culture, represented by most of the members in the Yu family, and western culture, represented by the daughter-in-law, an American born Chinese. It is a revealing presentation of the cultural contrasts and conflicts between old and young, and between China and America. Although it is filmed in Beijing, the language used is fairly standard Chinese, with some localism of the Beijing area. Besides, since the actress who plays the daughter-in-law is from Hong Kong, she speaks with strong Cantonese accent, but most of the time, she speaks English. As students should not be expected to deal with regional language until after they have acquired basic skills in the standard language, this television series should not be introduced to students lower than the third year level.

*Yīnīán yǒu yīnīán* (Year After Year) can become ideal language learning material. This television series converges the stories of two common families in Beijing during the period from 1978, at the end of China’s Cultural Revolution, to 1998. It is in a chronicle style, and consists of 21 episodes, one episode for each year. The plot is straightforward: the number of the year shows up at the beginning of each episode; basically, representative social events that happened during each year are indicated by people listening to news on the radio, watching news on the television and reading news from newspapers; under such larger contexts, the change in common people’s ways of thinking and life style are embodied as the characters conduct their daily life. The scenario is not complicated, many complex social phenomena are simplified and only representative ones are selected for the show. It generally reflects social and cultural changes in China during the past several decades. Many words and expressions in this
television series evoke the political, social and economic climate of China during the last 21 years. Since it provides a fairly objective historical review of the past two decades in China, students will be able to “experience the past years” with characters in the show, and have the chance to reflect on what changes happen in both language use and culture in China during these years. As it is not easy to do all the episodes during class time, some episodes may have to be skipped in classroom instruction and assigned as homework. For this reason in particular, it is best suited for use by fourth year level students.

**Documentary Film**

*Shēnghuó kōngjiān* 生活空间 (Life Space)* China Central Television (CCTV) started to make the documentary films in 1993, and it was renamed as *Bāixìng gùshì* 百姓故事 (Common People’s Stories). This program is considered as a breakthrough in the documentary film field, because the tenet of this television show is to “*jiāngshù lāobāixìng zìjǐ de gùshì* 讲述老百姓自己的故事” (to tell common people’s own stories), rather than featuring celebrities, and it is on television everyday from Monday to Friday, one common Chinese person for each day. The protagonist can be a retired cadre, or a 16-year old high school student, or an immigrant worker in a city. The program usually picks up stories that reflect the *zhēn shàn měi* 真善美 (honesty, good, beauty) in common people’s life, and each story is usually about 10-15 minutes long. In this series of documentary films, the voiceover narrations are mostly in written and formal language.

---

Since documentary films use on-location sound recording, people in the events speak very colloquially, with natural speech errors and repairs. The language style in interviews is comparatively more formal than normal conversation, but people do not talk using written-style register. It is therefore better to consider it as formal oral language. The contrast between the uses of colloquial conversation and written style narrations is very valuable in helping students learn the difference between oral and written language. It is best suited for use by students from at least the third-year and upward.

**Talk Show**

A talk show made by the CCTV called *Shíhuà shíshuō* 实话实说 (Tell It Like It Is)\(^{160}\) has been used in the Chinese language program at the Ohio State University. CCTV started this television show in 1996. It focuses on issues of concern in contemporary China, with the main discussants being educated professionals from various walks of life. In addition to the guests on the stage, audience members are welcomed to get involved in the talk, too. It is a live program which features spontaneous utterances, initiations and responses concerning current social and cultural issues. Therefore, there are more uncontrived utterances in the talk show than in the previous several types of video materials. Presenting naturally occurring learning objects for observation and comprehension, it can be pre-training for advanced learners, who set out to learn to navigate unmediated Chinese culture in real life.

4.4 Supplementary Materials

Video’s effect as the core material is hard to bring into play without good supplementary materials. As a one-way communicative vehicle, video needs supplementary materials to encourage active viewing by the learners, and to help them to be more engaged, to make sure that the output from the video is not just a one-way communication to unresponsive audiences.\textsuperscript{161} Moreover, as a reading and writing class has to be dependant on printed or written text, print-based sources are greatly needed for reading and writing activity, and the role of video is to provide an important input base for the development of a schema to which knowledge and skill on reading and writing can readily attach.\textsuperscript{162}

4.4.1 Video Guide

Without a systematically prepared video guide, the video, even carefully selected or scripted, will be undoubtedly less effective and desirable. To help the teacher organize productive practice and guide the students to obtain functional communicative abilities, the printed guide must include:

- **Scripts:** Written version of speakers’ speech, and descriptions of related visual scenes, for example, speakers’ action, and surroundings. For authentic materials, like movies, television shows, the whole script is divided into segments based on scenes or topics;

\textsuperscript{161} Lonergan, 6
\textsuperscript{162} White, Easton and Anderson, 168
- **Preview and follow-up questions** concerning the scenario for previewing and after-show discussion;

- **Vocabulary annotations**: below at the footnote along with or at the side of the scripts;

- **Vocabulary acquisition exercises**;

- **Cultural and grammatical notes** on items: Explanation of culture-specific phenomenon, linguistic expression, sentence structure, in footnotes or at the side accompanying the scripts;

- **Grammar and culture acquisition exercises**;

- **Cumulative Chinese-English vocabulary** lists at the end of the book

4.4.2 Audiotape

Although the video itself has audio sound in it, audiotape with original sound track (OST) should be provided, too. The OST, without the visual "distraction" helps the students focus their attention on the linguistic utterances. But it is suggested by Wang that students should not listen to the OST before watching the video, and even when listening to the audiotape, students "should try to associate the utterances with the images on the video, the people who produced them and the contextual situations in which these utterances occurred." For beginning levels, clear and slower readings without background sound and other noises, for example, a car horn when the conversation happens in the street, should be provided after OST, so that students can concentrate on the linguistic features and build up a solid base for pronunciation.

---

163 Wang, XV
164 Ibid.
Modal narrations need to be recorded on cassette tapes to coordinate to movies and television series. Although the teacher will provide modal narration in class, not only does she usually tell what is taking place on the screen, she also stops from time to time when necessary to explain new vocabulary and sentence patterns, or to point out specific actions and objects being described,\(^{165}\) or to answer students questions on certain points or items. The modal narration provided in the tape includes "slow narration", in which the narration is recorded with sentence-by-sentence pacing and accompanied by Pinyin displays of new vocabulary, and "regular narration", which is coordinated with the episode and continuous.

4.4.3 Reading and Writing Material

Reading and writing materials should coordinate with movies, television series, documentary films, news reports and talk shows. That is to say, reading and writing class should be cooperative with speaking and listening class, so that students do not have to deal with two separated tracks and can focus their energy and attention on the same schema of knowledge. The reading and writing should go along with video material from the beginning level’s character recognizing and reading. Study on video needs support from reading and writing activities too. According to different video materials, textbooks for reading should include:

\(^{165}\) Walker, "Videotext: A Course in Intermediate to Advanced Chinese," 114
- Brief scenario summary of the movie, each episode of the television series, the
documentary film and the talk show;

- Background introduction of social events reflected in the movie, the television series,
and the documentary film and the talk show;

- Written version of narration for the movie and television series

- Articles collected from Chinese newspapers and magazines, organized according to
various topics, i.e., economics, culture, education, or sports;

- Persuasive articles on controversial topics reflected in talk shows;

- Vocabulary annotation and grammatical key points along with the readings;

- Vocabulary and grammar acquisition exercises;

- Questions over the reading for comprehension;

- Cumulative Chinese-English vocabulary lists at the end of the book

4.5 Classroom Activity

In addition to the supplementary materials, effective classroom activities are also
important to help get the learners involved in a “two-way communication” with the video,
and be active participants, not just passive viewers of the video. The activity should take
the feature of the video and its supplements into consideration when being designed, and
meet the goals of developing students’ communicative skills with both linguistic and
cultural sensibilities.\textsuperscript{166} In the lower levels of language study, the activities are more
controlled and in limited contexts. When it comes to higher levels, the activities are
going freer and less set.

\textsuperscript{166} Tang, 304
4.5.1 Role-playing

If learners are to use the Chinese language appropriately in communicative situations, it is important that they recognize and understand the situation as quickly as possible.\textsuperscript{167} Video presentations of scenes and events provide an excellent way of explaining all the aspects of a communicative situation.\textsuperscript{168} Following what the video showed as a model with role-play can build up experience and construct memories for future performance in actual Chinese contexts. There are two types of role-playing, one is that the learners memorize the original dialogue in the video and perform it in the classroom, and the other one is the learners re-enact the roles in a similar or relevant context, but improvise their language based on their understanding of the context. Being able to perform well in the first type can help the learners function effectively in the second type. This activity works well with rehearsed video or authentic video clips, movie, and television series.

4.5.2 Narration

Walker believes that one tactic for training students to control events in Chinese is to develop their narrative ability.\textsuperscript{169} The narration here means that students describe the events and scenes in the video in a linear and cohesive style.\textsuperscript{170} As Walker argues, if students learn how to describe specified events or series of events in Chinese, they also

\textsuperscript{167} Lonergan, 39-40
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{169} Walker, "Videotext: A Course in Intermediate to Advanced Chinese," 112
\textsuperscript{170} Tang, 309
gain in their ability to control conversations in Chinese.\textsuperscript{171} Being able to manage a bigger chunk of Chinese requires the students to learn to produce extended discourses rather than single sentences in Chinese, and the larger the chunk they can manage, the less they will be confined to respond to a situation in the target culture.\textsuperscript{172} Video presents a good means for training students’ narrative abilities, because it provides maximum direction and control over narration exercises with minimal preparation on the part of the teacher.\textsuperscript{173} Besides, it is also believed that being able to tell stories from popular target-culture movies or television shows, which can be considered as one type of achievement culture and can present informational and achievement culture, is one of the surest ways to establish a bond with members of that culture.\textsuperscript{174} Narration is suitable for video materials like movie, and television series.

4.5.3 Discussion

Video is a particularly suitable medium for presenting language learners with stimuli for discussion.\textsuperscript{175} Based on the information a video provides, students can practice their ability to evaluate and respond to the factual and inferred information appropriately. The discussion activities can be as simple as questioning and answering, by use of carefully controlled language, or as advanced as free discussion, on either a specific point or a general topic on cultural and social customs and values that the video

\textsuperscript{171} Walker, “Videotext: A Course in Intermediate to Advanced Chinese,” 112
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Walker, “Performing Culture: Learning to Converse in Another Culture,” 204
\textsuperscript{175} Lonergan, 65-66
reflects.\textsuperscript{176} Moreover, video as a discussion stimulus can involve the students talking about themselves, their own circumstances and interests, or provide them with the chance to express their own opinions. As a result, the learners are guided by such activity directly from the video presentation into the realm of the learners' own life.\textsuperscript{177} This activity fits movies, television series, documentary films, and talk shows.

4.5.4 Debate

When the video presents a controversial topic, it at the same time provides a good way to put students in an interactive situation that requires spontaneous application of their acquired knowledge of skills to argue their own points or to argue against others' points. Although debate may be assigned as a rehearsed activity which is less free and unscripted than discussion, it does more work in training students to challenge and argue in a way that would be considered as culturally appropriate in the target culture when opposite or different views on a topic takes place.\textsuperscript{178} Especially when the debate develops into an intense degree, it is important to be careful about not being offensive while being aggressive in the target culture. Therefore, video in which speakers debate a controversial topic could be used as a modal that students can follow in their use of words and expressions.\textsuperscript{179} This activity can be well carried out based on talk shows.

\textsuperscript{176} Willis, 45
\textsuperscript{177} Lonergan, 62
\textsuperscript{178} Tang, 308-309
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
4.6 Teacher’s Role

Although the video can do a lot more work than the teacher can achieve in the classroom, it does not rival or overshadow the teacher. Video is a useful aid for the language teacher, and it is the teacher who must harness the power of the video materials and who has the prime responsibility for creating a successful learning environment.180

The teacher should preview the video several times before arriving at a final selection, and think about the cogent points relating to the instructional objective in the video, and plan classroom activities according to the time and content of each segment of the video.181 When preparing a lesson, the teacher should design the syllabus based on the nature of the lesson and make sure the video can fit into it.182 It is also the teacher’s job to guide the students to prepare for the study based on video, and help the students learn how the video applies to or fits into the classwork and what real-life applications they can see, by creating situations which will allow the students to use the language socially, and devising and conducting useful practice methods.183 In the classroom, the teacher is in charge of monitoring and correcting students’ performance while the video is doing the job of showing a modal. In short, the teacher can choose to present video materials to learners in the most suitable way to facilitate successful language acquisition.184 Besides, the teacher should also know how to make good use of any other supporting aids, when they are necessary, such as printed materials, audiotapes, video equipments, computer.

180 Lonergan, 5-6
181 Miller, 59-60
182 Ibid.
183 Ibid. See also Coder, 243-244
184 Lonergan, 5
4.7 Learner’s Role

Watching video for language learning purposes should be an active process by the learners. When watching video language material, the expectation of learners is not that they are to be entertained. They must participate so that the output from the video is not just a one-way communication to unresponsive audiences.

Students are expected to watch the video for previewing beforehand. For longer television series, they do not have to watch all of them at one time, but to go along with the teaching schedule and learning process. For some video material, learners can take responsibility for choosing sequences for review. They can take control of the remote control when necessary, so that they can stop videos when they have questions about what is presented, or when doing narration, they can adjust their own narrating speed. In short, their role is to be a creative member in a joint partnership – the video material, the video equipment, the supporting material, the teacher, and the learner.

4.8 An Example Lesson Based on Video

Here is an example lesson based on a talk show on the topic of 不打不成材 (Spare the rod and spoil the child) from Shihua shishuo 实话实说 (Tell It Like It Is). This episode has been divided into nine stages based on both content and length in Wang’s Understanding the Locals, a textbook based on the talk show.

---

185 Ibid., 6
186 Ibid.
Introduction of the Topic

“The way in which people educate later generations is a yardstick of the level of cultural refinement of that people. Through thousands of years of agrarian culture and patriarchal society, the Chinese people have cultivated a paradoxical notion: If children are not physically punished, they will not become competent adults. Few people of generations past have ever doubted this view, and even fewer have probed the question deeply. Even today, when more and more parents have begun to admit that children have independent personalities that require respect, and that to strike a child is to violate a kind of natural bond between parent and child, in the heat of the moment, parents raising their fists against their children is still commonplace. It is obvious, then that there is still a gap between understanding and practice. This topic reflects the experiences, thoughts, and emotions of the Chinese people as their society evolves and the old guard is slowly changed.” ¹⁸⁷

Communicative Objective

The students will be able to perform in a way of discussing and debating freely and unscriptedly in Chinese in a culturally appropriate way on the topic of ぶだぶchengcai 不打不成材 (Spare the rod and spoil the child) among groups or persons holding opposite or different views on it.

This lesson trains students to obtain step by step the abilities to:

¹⁸⁷ Wang, 7-10
Step 1: Understand natural Chinese utterances and exchanges within a virtual conversational setting, i.e., Chinese language with natural linguistic and logical speech errors, repetitions and repairs, and accents in recognizable cultural contexts;

Step 2: Retell or describe from the third person the talk show guests’ and audience’s different points of view after watching the talk and discussions on the topic; at the same time, talk about the speakers’ various ways of expressing opinions, direct and indirect, explicit and implicit, humorous and serious, polite and impolite;

Step 3: Construct one’s own points on the topic starting with agreeing or disagreeing with guests’ and audience’s opinions, relating the points to or comparing with one’s own experience or other memories; debate with classmates in appropriate manners;

Step 4: Report orally and in writing by laying out one’s own arguments and grounds of arguments on the topic systematically.

Allotted Time and Activities

Study the video (9 – 11 Classes for step 1-3): Watch the video in class; observe and comprehend speakers’ intention in their conversations; pause the video from time to time for questioning and answering, discussing and debating on the speakers’ talking.

Review (one class): quiz on vocabulary and grammar; list out all the points in the talk, which support child spanking as a necessary method to educate a child, and which oppose the method.

Oral Report (5-8 minutes for each student): talk about the following questions -1. Do you think there is direct cause-and-effect relation between whether children can be
competent and successful in the future and whether parents spank them? 2. What is your definition of 成材 (being capable and successful)? 3. Is there any other way to educate a child? Compared to spanking, which one is better, and more effective? 4. What do you think about Chinese parents’ way of educate their kids? 5. How about American parents? What is the difference? How did your parents educate you when you are a kid? Do they spank you? 6. How are you going to educate your child in the future?
CONCLUSION

In this work, language and culture are interpreted as memory and our knowledge of culture and language is seen as composed of the stories we compile from the memories of experiences in our daily life. Story is considered as the unit of memory. Communication is based on understanding other people’s stories and selecting the stories that we know and telling or embodying them in relation to other people at the right time. Therefore, for people who are learning another culture and language, they are obtaining and accumulating experiences, i.e., constructing memories of that culture and language. The more stories they store, the more effectively they process new experiences in the culture. The final goal of compiling stories in foreign language learning is to construct a new worldview that incorporates the second-culture memory. Learners of the foreign language are thereby able to “think” in the language.

Video is the most suitable medium for vividly revealing the experience of daily life and the most effective channel for looking into the memory of another culture and language. Video delivers culture in the form of stories with clear-cut thematic content and short scenes edited together. Moreover, video, providing a coherent verbal and visual representation of a virtual communicative situation, can stimulate memory and has a more lasting effect in memory than simply verbal description. Thus, video should be used
as the core foreign language learning material. By using video, knowledge of foreign
language and culture can be delivered in communicative events, or experience, in its
“original state”, i.e., under authentic and integrated cultural context. Therefore, the goal
of foreign language teaching and learning, which is to obtain the ability to function in the
culture effectively, can be fulfilled more successfully.

According to different focuses of language learning, different types of video
material can be incorporated, including movie and various kinds of television programs.
When using video as core foreign language learning material, we need to make sure the
video we make and select meet the goal of language learning, thus both the content and
language use in the video need to be considered from the perspective of language
pedagogy. Meanwhile, we should also consider the nature of the instruction at different
levels and with different focuses, and the compilation of supplementary materials. Since
video, as a one-way communicative vehicle, has some defects that may detract from its
powerful effect as language learning material, video material must be supported by other
materials and the instruction so that the curriculum based on video can be the most
effective. In a video-core classroom, learners should also actively work with video,
supplementary material, the teacher and video equipment, so that communication in the
classroom is not just one-way from television to the learners, but a multi-way interaction,
in which these all components work together in a unified whole.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Hall, Edward T. and Hall, Mildred R. *Hidden Difference: Doing business with the*


