SECOND-CULTURE WORLDVIEW CONSTRUCTION:
INTEGRATING IN-CLASS AND OUT-OF-CLASS ACTIVITY IN IN-CHINA STUDY

THESIS

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Abstract

An in-country study program generally consists of an instructional setting within the classroom as well as informal contact with the target community outside the classroom. How does each of these settings facilitate the learning process and overall success of the program? This thesis closely examines the process through which American learners of Chinese shift from intermediate to truly advanced levels in their ability to use Chinese as a learner of Chinese. Performance of two Americans participating in a 9-week study program, their journal entries, pre-, mid-, and post-program interviews conducted with the students, and interviews conducted with their instructors and program director are analyzed to further inform us as to the nature of pedagogical paradigm shift to a model that utilizes the unique and important learning resources presented by the in-country study context to facilitate more sophisticated learning outcomes.

The study found that the level "advanced" marks a transition from learning a language to learning in the language, in which, an in-country study program particularly facilitates learners' use of the language to accomplish higher professional goals in China.

In class instruction leads students to read and discuss Chinese discourse on Sino-American relations, interview local residents as part of an individual research related to the reading topics, and give public presentation on one's research findings. Observation of these activities both in and out of class indicates that through a progression of

purposeful training advanced learners are able to shift from learning the language to learning in the language, to properly interpret Chinese intentions and to effectively negotiate with professionals within certain domain.

The students' reflections on their out-of-classroom contact with the social community shed light on how intermediate-advanced learners construct the learning context in the form of a social co-participation. Repeated performances within an identified community and guided reflections on those performances co-contribute to changing the learner from an observer on the periphery of the community to a competent member or even an expert in that field.

With a unit of a carefully designed formal instruction encouraging a "paradigm shifting" on the part of the learner and a guided participation within an identified community outside the classroom, an in-country study program designed for advanced learner not only maximizes learners' gain in language skills, but also facilitates a construction of learners' second-culture worldview by adding a set of new capacities to their existing cognitive system.

Dedication

Dedicated to my grandmother: Li Yinglin

献给姥姥

Acknowledgement

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CHAPTER ONE

CONSTRUCTING SECOND-CULTURE WORLDVIEW IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

LEARNING

1.1 Defining culture in language pedagogy

To understand the significance of second-culture worldview construction in the process of second language learning, the concept of "culture" in language pedagogy has to be first clarified. "Culture" may be considered as the most elusive term in the vocabulary of the social sciences, to the extent that social scientists like Marshall H. Segall even indicated that there is no point trying to make "culture" less ambiguous (Segall, 1983: 195). However, we still need the courage to try again if we have to tackle the issues of language and culture learning. Even though we are forewarned that "we do not have good definitions for either *culture* or *language* because we are totally enmired [sic] in both" (Kaplan, 1986: 19). Collaborative studies in the filed of anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, linguistics, literature, and education are yielding new knowledge in an extensive literature dealing with culture, especially the role of culture in the study of language. Despite falling short of perfection, the story we can now tell about the relationship between culture learning and language pedagogy is far richer than ever before.

1.1.1 Culture as a pool of artifacts

In the 1950s, in the fields of anthropology and sociology, it had long been held that culture should be seen as products of prior human activities that are located external to the individual. This representation of culture held the dominant place until the 1980s when experts, especially cultural psychologists began to put an emphasis on how culture influences the human's mind. In other words, culture is also inside the person (Shweder & LeVine, 1984).

In order to articulate a definition of "culture" that fits the idea that culture is also located internally in the human mind, Michael Cole conceptualized culture as "an entire pool of artifacts accumulated by a social group in the course of its historical experience" (Cole, 1996: 110). To better understand this definition of culture as artifacts, Cole proposed the dual material-conceptual nature of artifacts. The material form of artifacts is easy to understand if we look at the most commonly noted artifacts like axes and tables. However, an *artifact* is not limited to tangible physical objects, but also to ideal forms that impose intentions and attitudes into humans' heads.

According to this material-conceptual characteristic of culture, a language is also a kind of artifact as Rossi-Landi (1983) proposed. It is material since human beings created it as an aspect of the material world. It is simultaneously conceptual since its material form has been shaped by human participation in social interactions. The word of "axe" or "table" will never come into existence without the overt expression, the sound or the written form. On the other hand, they are also embodiments of intentions and attitudes, being used by human in interactions.

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              M
           (artifact)




  S                       O
(subject)             (object)
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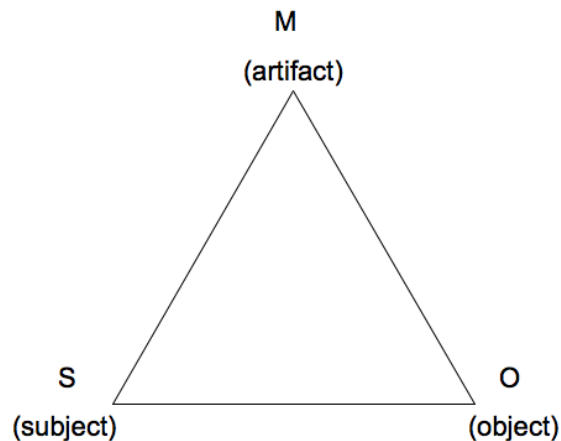
Figure 1.1 Cultural mediation triangle as proposed by Cole (1996:119)

To further understand the phenomenon of mediation through artifacts, Cole proposed a triadic relationship of subject-artifact-object as the triangle in Figure 1.1 indicates. Subjects and objects are directly linked to each other along the base of the triangle, but also indirectly connected with each other through the artifact (culture), as indicated by the vertex of the triangle. The direct connection between subject and object is natural and innate while the indirect relationship is cultural. It is this top line of the triangle, the mediated path, which distinguishes human beings from animals who only have the natural relationship between objects and themselves. For human beings, the extra indirect and cultural path adds another dimension to their world. For example, with the assistance of words, we cannot only manipulate things that are present, but also seemingly deal with things that belong to the past or the future.

1.1.2 Culture as control mechanisms

In believing in the notion of culture as thinking inside the human mind,

anthropologist Clifford Geertz suggested that culture should not be regarded as the complexes of specific human behavior, but a set of control mechanisms that governs the behavior (Geertz, 1973: 44). The metaphor of recipe or computer program best illustrates the image of a cultural program that orders one's behavior. In addition the game metaphor proposed by Galal Walker and Mari Noda (2000) is another good example to account for the role that culture plays as a set of control mechanisms. They defined game as cultural performances with agreed upon rules and shared goals. Culture, as the rules of the games, provide participants with an interpretive framework, through which we are able to construct and maintain social relations. Bruner's description of a human's everyday life as walking on a stage into a play further supports the treatment of culture as control mechanisms. As Bruner suggested "when we enter human life, it is as if we walk on stage into a play whose enactment is already in progress--a play whose somewhat open plot determines what parts we may play and toward what denouements we may be heading" (Bruner, 1990: 34). Culture, as a set of cognitive orientations, gives public and communal meaning to our action. With this notion of culture, more and more people begin to get rid of the naïve belief in a human being as a free spirit that is not programmed from childhood by his culture (qtd. in Dodge 10). Instead, they become willing to admit that human minds are not shaped only by biological inheritances, but also shaped by their cultures.

Therefore, with the two concepts of culture cited above, we can conclude that 1) language belongs to culture as a kind of artifact that is created by human beings with an intention to use it in communications; 2) culture is a set of control mechanisms that governs human behaviors by giving public and communal meaning to their actions; With

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these two clear notions of language and culture, we can further conclude that 3) learning a language is a process of learning culturally defined meanings and behaviors. To better understand this point, it is pivotal for me to introduce Galal Walker's notion of culture as performance in 1.2, which is also the major theoretical backbone of this thesis.

1.2 Culture as performance

1.2.1 Performed culture

Along with the concept that culture frames our behaviors and gives meaning to our actions, Galal Walker gives an operational concept of culture as performance. (Walker, 2000) The concept of performance is not new to us and is shaped by scholars in various disciplines such as psychology (Bruner 1990; Cole 1996), philosophy (Wittgenstein in Glock 1996), sociology (Goffman 1959) and linguistics (Gumperz 1972; Hymes 1972). Performances described in the above literature are social interactions that human actors enter in shared frameworks of agreements and anticipations. Meanings not only emerge from the performance, but also negotiated among actors in a dynamic way. In the field of language pedagogy, Walker defines performance as situated events, the enactment of scripts or behaviors situated at a specified time and place with roles and audiences specified. He further specified this "situated event" as five elements: 1) place of occurrence, 2) time of occurrence, 3) appropriate script/ program/ rules, 4) roles of participants, and 5) accepting and/ or accepted audience (Walker, 2000). From these five elements, we have good reason to expect that all everyday interactions can be identified and staged as performable chunks of culture and the most significant ones should be

prepared with repetitive and deliberate practice in the process of second language learning. This can be illustrated even clearly if we look at any excerption of interaction from daily life. The following excerpt is cited from the film *Mosheng de pengyou* (Strange Friends, 1983):

Time: In the morning

Place: On a train to Fuzhou

Roles: Du Qiu is a passenger on the train who is going on a business trip to Fuzhou. Zhang Tongsheng is another passenger on the train who also goes to Fuzhou.

Audience: All other passengers on the train in the China of the 80's.

Script:

杜秋：请问您贵姓？

Dù Qiū: Qǐngwèn nín guìxìng?

Du Qiu: Excuse me, can I know your last name?

张童生：姓张，张童生。

Zhāng Tóngshēng: Xìng Zhāng, Zhāng Tóngshēng.

Zhang Tongsheng: My last name is Zhang and the full name is Zhang Tongsheng.

杜秋：哦，小张同志。

Dù Qiū: O, xiǎo Zhāng tóngzhì.

Du Qiu: Oh, comrade Xiaozhang.

Our life exists in a series of performances and the above excerpt is one of them. In the context of language learning, this kind of performance provides students with an instructional sample of how to use the target language within a certain context, more specifically, a sample of greeting people and introducing oneself for the first meeting in

Chinese culture is presented to learners. In such a situated event above, the vocabulary "nín" and the sentence pattern "Qǐngwèn nín guìxìng" are expected in Chinese culture for showing the respect to people you meet for the first time. By performing the script repeatedly, language learners will end up building automaticity in greeting people for the first time without any need to recall consciously rules in target language. The five elements of a performance can be clearly identified in the above conversation, which are also labels for learners to trace their memory in the future when they encounter the same context consisting of similar elements.

1.2.2 Cultural Schemas and Scripts

From the above example of a performance, we can see that the script plays the central role among the five elements that define a performance since it references the actors' roles and the circumstances of their actions. To elaborate on the significance of a "script", the notion of "culture schema" needs to be introduced first. Schemas are selection mechanisms as Cole suggested, which specify how certain essential elements relate to one another, while leaving some less essential elements to be filled in as needed according to the circumstances and even some default values to be unspecified at all (Cole, 1996:125). Hiroko Nishida (1999) later proposed the Cultural Schema Theory, which explains the familiar and pre-acquiainted knowledge one uses when entering a familiar situation in his/her own culture. (Nishida, 1999) This understanding of cultural schema leads us to expect that people in the same cultural group should have shared cultural schema since they participate in the joint activity. Besides, in a certain circumstance, the sense of whether a certain element is essential or not should be shared

among people in the same cultural group as public and communal knowledge. However, it can differ in different circumstances or different cultures since human meaning making is context-specified. For example, in order to display modesty, Chinese people tend to downplay the importance of their achievement by making self-denigrating expression before giving a public speech or declining praises from others. All these elements mentioned here are crucial in Chinese culture, which are expected under the above circumstances. However, these behaviors will not be expected and specified at all in the American context since the culture schemata are functional here that action such as making self-denigrating before giving a presentation, becomes a default element in American culture. When giving a lecture to American audience, mentioning one's shortcomings is not expected and American people can view this as a lack of confidence and considered it as unprepared and unprofessional performance.

Script, which I discussed under the framework of "performed culture" in 1.21, is an especially important kind of schema that is known as *event schema*. As Cole states, "a script specifies the people who appropriately participate in an event, the social roles they play, the objects they use, and the sequence of actions and casual relations that applies" (Cole, 1996:126). The notion of script also supports Schank's metaphor of "entering into a play", in which, he explained many situations in life have the people who participate in them seemingly reading their roles in a kind of play. Life experience means quite often knowing how to act and how others will act in given stereotypical situations (Schank, 1990: 7). Accumulated scripts also constitute our memory system. When people enter in a novel event, they need to extract pre-stored scripts from their memories as guidance for appropriate behavior in the new context. Simultaneously, the changes they made

according to a new context form new behaviors that will enrich their pre-existing repertoire of scripts. The more scripts a person knows, the more situations there will be in which he/she will feel comfortable. Eventually, learners build the automaticity so that they respond to many situations by generating the right scripts without any awareness that they are doing so.

This process of acquiring and storing scripts is not only limited to the field of second language learning, but also exists from birth accompanying the experience of our first language and first culture acquisition. Adults direct children's behavior by posting constrains on their actions. Therefore, children are controlled within the adult scripts so as to fill in their set roles in the society they are born into. Acquiring and storing new scripts is not a process of once-and-for-all but a lifelong process since we will continuously encounter new contexts as long as our life is sustained.

Second language learners go through the same process but in most cases they acquire scripts from their language classes instead of their family. Being introduced to different kinds of scripts in class and storing them in memory through participating in a series of deliberate practices, second language learners gradually build their repertoire for their future interaction in real context of target society. In later chapters, we will discuss about an in-China study program, how learners' pre-stored scripts are used, tested, evaluated, and corrected as well as how their script repertoires are enlarged in an immersion environment.

1.3 Culture Knowledge Compilation

With the importance of "script", Nelson points out "without shared scripts, every social act would need to be negotiated afresh." Therefore, as she believes, "the acquisition of scripts is central to the acquisition of culture" (Nelson, 1981:109-110). To further look at the process of acquisition of culture, we have no reason to avoid mentioning two notions of "enculturation" and "acculturation" which are frequently associated with each other by anthropologists as two ways of learning the expressive ways and cultural behaviors of a certain group.

1.3.1 Enculturation

Our textbooks in elementary school teach us that humans differ from animals in that they can make and use tools. However, making and using tools are not the only things that humans can do. Under the definition of culture as a pool of artifacts, Cole further points out, in addition to using and making tools, human beings arrange for the rediscovery of the already-created tools in each succeeding generation. Therefore, the process of becoming a cultural being and arranging for others to become cultural beings is defined as enculturation (Cole, 1996:109). The fact that human beings can learn the created artifacts from the last generation enables them to accumulate human culture through the historical development. Infants come to this world and have to live and cope within a society that possesses a culture. Going through the enculturation process by acquiring the cultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, infants gradually grow into competent members in a certain cultural group. This process starts with birth and according to Shepherd, will continue through adulthood in the form of continuous resocialization (Shepherd, 2005:173).

Within Chinese society, a typical example of enculturation can be found in the process of how kids acquire the knowledge and practice of displaying modesty that is valued by their society as an important attribute through participating in the "game of showing modesty". Children are incorporated into the existing adult culture first by observing everyday adult behaviors in the real world to see that they always respond to others' praise or expressions of gratitude with an accompanying negation. Besides, they are also directly taught to use the most common expressions like *hai keyi* (just so so), *yiban* (mediocre), *butai hao* (not very good) to comment on their own performance, which all indicate a neutral and modest attitude. When they grow into bigger kids and enter kindergartens and schools, all the texts used to gain literacy are filled with fairy tales and historical accounts of how arrogant people are scorned and punished or how successful people behave in a modest way to earn respect.

However, this learning process will not stop after they leave school but will continue through their adulthood throughout which they will inevitably come across more novel situations. They come to specify situations requiring modesty according to different interlocutors, different events and different contexts. For example, they understand that to respond to a compliment on one's ability from one's boss or teacher being modest means making a refusal accompanied by thanks for the interlocutor's help or instruction. However, in the context of giving a speech or lecture, modesty can be shown in the opening remarks by actively mentioning a lot of expected shortcomings to the audience. All these cultural behaviors may not be acquired in school once and for all but will be continually acquired as a lifelong culture learning process.

1.3.2 Acculturation

If we see enculturation as the learning of appropriate behavior of one's own culture, acculturation can be seen as the learning of one's host culture that is always associated with the prevalent immigrant experience among American people. In the book *Your Land, My Land*, Clayton (1996) tells the story of four children's acculturation into elementary schools, in which he identifies six phases they have to experience during the process of acculturation. The first phase is the preparation and entry into the new culture, at which point the feelings are normal to high. In the second phase, the newcomer is a spectator, wherein emotions vary from mostly high to very low. The third phase involves increased participation that makes the newcomer realize the magnitude of the differences between the host culture and home culture. However, emotions become very negative in the fourth phase of shock and then adaptation happens in the fifth phase in which the newcomer learns to function in the host country. The sixth phase indicates the end of the process that is characterized by the minority person or group giving up its traditions, values, and language and replacing them with those of the majority culture (Clayton, 1996:5. From these six phases Clayton describes, we can see clearly that anthropologists tend to define acculturation as the process of giving up one's base culture, thereby losing one's own cultural identity in the process of establishing a new one in the dominant host culture. Therefore, scholarship on acculturation usually focuses on a unidimensional and zero-sum concept by equating acculturation with assimilation.

If we only see acculturation as the process of immigrants trying very hard to integrate into the mainstream society, the definition will not be problematic. However, if we extend acculturation to any kind of foreign language and culture learning, this

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equivalence will very likely influence our view on foreign culture learning and take the goal of a language learning or language teaching career toward the undesirable direction of extinguishing the base culture. If we look at the experience of American college students learning Chinese at college, it is obvious that along with their progress in language proficiency and the increasing awareness of cultural appropriateness, they neither lose their identity as Americans nor become real Chinese people even if some of them may wish so. As a matter of fact, foreign language teachers have rich experience of observing foreign learners who feel very reluctant to adjust their behaviors according to a new set of cultural norms. The resistance to making cultural adjustment indicates that foreign language learners may have fear of losing their identities and giving up their own cultural values. This phenomenon then requires experts in language pedagogy to restate the process of language and culture learning to learners from a more positive perspective. According to Jian and Shepherd, a better perspective may be seeing learning a foreign language and its culture as adding new skills to one's existing cognitive repertoire (Jian & Shepherd, 2010). Learners acquire the target culture, as a new set of control mechanism, or we can say, a kind of cognitive orientation, which should not exclude the original control mechanism they have already established in their base culture, which has been accumulating from birth. These two (even more if one learns multiple foreign languages) sets of mechanisms co-exist in their brain and will function differently according to different contexts.

If we borrow the concept of a metaphorical association of culture to sports game from Galal Walker (Walker & Noda, 2000), this co-existence of two or multiple sets of mechanisms can be explained in a clearer way. In our life, it is not difficult to find that

people who have great talents in sports are good at several kinds of sports game simultaneously. A talented sportsman who is truly good at basketball and golf will always know to "dunk" on the basketball court but try to go for a hole-in-one at golf course. If he still has passion and energy to learn and practice another ball game, say tennis, sooner or later, he will be able to execute a forearm smash before the net. But will this man therefore forget the familiar dunk when playing basketball? The answer is definitely "no" as long as he is truly skillful. The only possible influence generated by learning how to play tennis is that with more accesses to different games, the player may broaden his worldview and gain more wisdom and experience in general issues of sports such as psychological strategy, physical conditioning, sportsmanship and so on. Therefore, it is obvious to we foreign language teachers that our goal is to cultivate successful foreign language learners like performers in sports who can flexibly switch their moves such as dunking, smashing, swinging in the contexts of different sports games. Learning foreign language does not belong to the traditional acculturation paradigm, but is a process of culture knowledge compilation that leads to the construction of a second-culture worldview. This is a concept from Walker and Noda (2000) that I would like to introduce in next section.

1.3.3 Constructing second-culture worldview

The previous two sections list two main ways of learning culture: enculturation and acculturation. Enculturation describes the process by which a human being acquires the accumulated culture artifacts within the culture group he/she was born into, which more specifically, can be found in children's socialization into adult's world to acquire

culture knowledge, and appropriate values and behaviors that are required by the culture group that he/she is surrounded. Acculturation refers to immigrants' acquisition of the host culture to integrate themselves into the mainstream society. However, neither of them can satisfy foreign language teachers by informing the process of learning a second language. Learning a second language, as learning to play in a new sports game, involves acquiring new skills and establishing a new mechanism of memory through repetitive practice. The cycle of compiling cultural knowledge that proposed by Walker and Noda (2000) perfectly fits into the illustration for this process, which in fact, can be seen as a third kind of culture learning process. Before looking at the whole process, several concepts, which are important components constituting this cycle of compilation, should be introduced and clarified.

1.3.3.1 Game metaphor in culture learning

Looking at any kind of sports game, we are able to see some basic elements constituting a game, such as a set of recognized rules governing the game, an identified winning and losing. All these components can also be found in any kind of cultural activities. Shepherd (2005) defines games as social endeavors that are frequently associated with a given field of play. From his definition of game, cultural games can be further seen as activities involving established shared means of participation, exhibiting recognized means for generating particular intentions and achieving the desired goals associated with that type of activity, and being typically characterized by the presence of a culturally accepted mechanism for evaluating successful and unsuccessful performances – a scoring system (Shepherd, 2005: 157). In the flow of everyday life,

though we may not think of many activities that we are engaging in abstractly as playing games, it is not difficult for us to identify these elements such as rules and goals.

For example, "gift giving" can be seen as a very common cultural game for Chinese people since they enjoy doing that in a number of situations including visiting, business meetings and returning from trips. Rules of a gift giving game may involve the best occasion to give a gift such as after returning from a trip, appropriate types of gifts as well as taboos such as giving clocks to old people (for the undesirable homonyms of *song zhong* which means "visiting the dying") as well as polite means to present a gift (for example, in many cases, people who give the gift will not mention their gift too much and the receivers are not expected to open the gifts in the presence of the givers). This set of rules govern the gift giving activity within Chinese culture and anyone who breaks the rules will run the risk of upsetting players involved, usually, the gift giver or the receiver. Rules also provide people with an interpretive framework, as a means for maintaining social relations. In other words, the goal of such a gift giving game is quite obviously aimed at building or deepening relationships in Chinese culture. Players in this game include both gift giver and receiver. People who give the gift follow the rules to give an appropriate gift at an appropriate occasion in an appropriate way. At the same time, people who receive the gift recognize the intention of the action and should do something in a reciprocal way, which is also a part of the rules. Gift giving is a common cultural game but the rules vary in different cultures. As a language learner, one should learn the rules of target culture game first and then change their moves according the new set of rules when the game shifts. Scoring is the main goal in any sports game and this can be seen as establishing and interpreting one's intention in any cultural game.

1.3.3.2 Story: the basic unit of memory

Linguists tend to take the sentence as the basic unit for analyzing and presenting the linguistic code. This practice has also influenced most foreign language teachers. However, Walker and Noda (2000) suggest the foreign language teachers expand their focus to include the culturally determined contexts of the language, which indicates that the "story" should become the basic unit of analysis for learning the language.

In *Tell Me a Story,* Schank (1990) uses numerous stories to make his point that human memory is story-based and human intelligence consists largely of applying old stories to new situations. According to Walker and Noda (2000), in language pedagogy story is the personal memory of having experienced a performance or a game. When a language learner throws himself/herself into the target society, he/she begins to accumulate stories of having done various things (i.e., specifiable experiences) in the target culture. In a language course, in order to construct a classroom memory, learners have to go through repeated performances in class until they eventually possess their own stories of a specific performance. During the learning process, feedback received from instructors, classmates and other native people in the target community elaborate learners' memories of the performances and therefore enhance the construction of stories.

In terms of constructing an effective story, Schank (1990) concluded that an effective memory must contain both specific experiences (memories) and labels (memory traces). If we consider the enactment of any single performance as an experience, we can then look at the five elements constituting a performance as labels (time, location, script, audience, and roles). We may have completely different, sometimes even contrasting

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stories of the same performance in two different cultures. For example, Chinese and American stories of eating at a banquet may differ in many aspects. In a Chinese banquet, seating according to hierarchy and personal relationships is the first step, which is followed by a complicated procedure of etiquette such as toasting. The most important idea in a Chinese banquet is that the host has to take care of the guest by repeatedly offering drink and food though the guest has already declined. However, when shifting to the American story of attending a banquet, much more freedom will be given to the guest and hosting actions like repeated urging the guest to eat or drink will not be observed. Therefore, learning and adapting to another culture means learning the stories of that culture.

When a foreign language learner compiles enough stories of the target culture, he/she enters the target culture and reacts in an interaction by extracting appropriate scripts associated with the stories in their memory instead of thinking up a response in an impromptu way. They begin to build a kind of automaticity, in which the more stories they have learned about the target culture, the less they feel necessary to consciously ponder it.

1.3.3.3 Cases, sagas and cultural themes

According to Walker and Noda (2000), sagas and cases represent what a learner is capable of dealing with in the target culture. A language learner constructs stories (cultural memories) around utterances, managing and categorizing them into cases and sagas. Walker and Noda define a case as a collection of stories about doing something in a culture. For example, a case of shopping may consist of a series of stories such as

replying to greetings from a shop assistant, comparing different commodities, asking for information such as price, color and size, negotiating a purchase especially when bargaining is expected, exchanging opinions with partners and so on.

We experienced these stories everyday in our base culture. However, to learn these stories in another language, cases can be compiled by direct presentation, by extracting elements from dialogs and narratives, and by combining these elements with previously learned knowledge, as what Walker and Noda suggest. A story usually is not associated with a single case. Each story in the case of shopping can also be categorized into other cases; for example, the story of asking for price can also appear in the case of doing business with other companies while the story of exchanging opinions with friends may be found in the case of dining at restaurant, too.

A series of stories about a specific set of people or a specific location make up the concept of saga. Sagas represent what a learner knows about behaving around particular people such as cashiers, teachers, and family members or at particular places such as fast food restaurants, schools and home. With the help of the concept of saga, a language learner is able to identify different groups, recognize different group members and construct memories around different ways of dealing with them that are appreciated in the social setting of the target culture. As Walker and Noda (2000) propose, in the course of language learning, saga can be presented by using successful films, television programs, short stories, and novels, which are coherent treatments of sets of characters often in particular, settings—that is, they create sharable worlds.

In fact, it is understandable to everyone that we always feel more willing to deal with people we are familiar with in familiar places. Even in our own base culture, we

sometimes feel uneasy when we move into a new location or community surrounded by strangers. It takes time for us to observe the surroundings, and gradually establish new connections. If we have to go to some places that are completely new to us such as going to a jazz night club for the first time, we really have to stop and observe how people around us behave and then imitate carefully in order to give a better performance, at least, to avoid upsetting the old-timers. Therefore, according to Walker and Noda (2000), one advantage of compiling sagas in the course of language study is that it gives learners the impression of continuity and connectedness in their studied language even though the quantity of information in their knowledge of the target culture is much less than natives of that culture.

Compared with cases and sagas which both involve very specific stories, a culture "theme" is a set of actions associated with conveying a certain culture value such as modesty, harmony, face, which can be found as reoccurring elements in different cases and sagas. A culture theme is action associated with a cultural value, a series of beliefs, concepts and notions that are carried by a society and shared among people in the same culture. For example, actions like declining a compliment, yielding to other people, making self-criticism are three themes of showing modesty. Culture values penetrate everywhere in our life by affecting how people think, feel and behave. They not only carry dominance over our behaviors but also maintain a certain framework for interpretation and evaluation.

Pedagogy is about making selections and decisions. Therefore, the choice and arrangement of stories, cases, sagas and cultural themes should be made according to their respective levels of significance in the target culture, which is the most important

job of a language teacher. Besides, according to Walker and Noda (2000), to foster effective compilation, these items should also be arranged from simple to complex and from frequent to infrequent. Advanced learners coming into an in-China study program carry a large number of cases, sagas and cultural themes collected from previous Chinese classes, Chinese materials and interactions with Chinese people. Though the process of learning at this moment has already transcended from sitting in the classroom to learn Chinese language, this whole compilation still functions and will be tested and evaluated in the target culture. Besides, the compilation of cases, sagas and cultural themes will not stop and will be carried into another round of compilation cycle, which is described more specifically in next section.

1.3.3.4 Cycle of cultural knowledge compilation

   After discussing and clarifying the important concepts constituting the process of cultural knowledge compilation, we can put them all into this cycle of compilation indicated by Figure 1.2 and look at how it works within the learning experience.
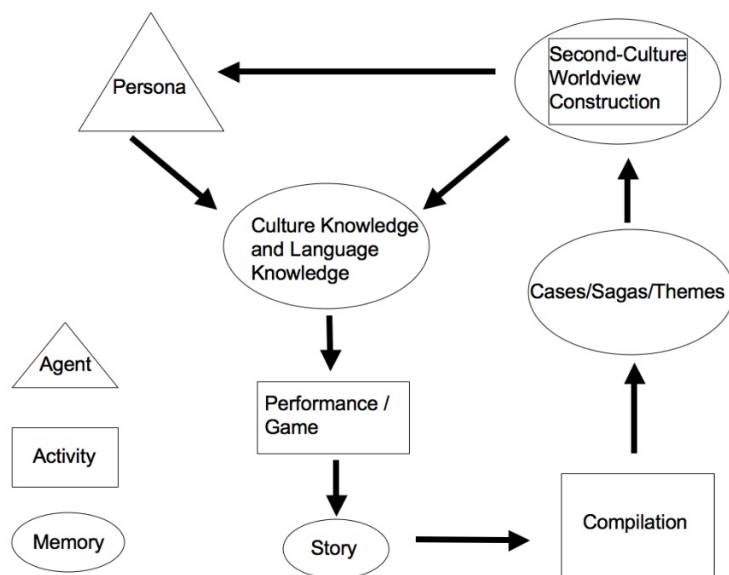
Figure 1.2 Cycle of Compilation as first proposed by Walker and Noda (2000:29) and revised by the author

The starting point of this cycle is the persona, the individual engaged in the learning process. The concept of persona should not be mixed up with the real psychological or physical self. Usually, people adopt more than one persona in their lives and they change personas according to different roles they are expected to play in different contexts. Persona in learning another language, as Walker and Noda (2000) explained, refers to the personal information that the learner is willing to commit to the learning experience. Persona can change rapidly in a period of language study with an increase in linguistic and cultural knowledge. Every learner enters into the learning process with culture knowledge and language knowledge they have already stored in memory. At the beginning level, most of the knowledge is based on their native cultures and languages and a limited portion of knowledge in target languages and cultures is picked up from other sources though not necessarily from an instructional setting. A foreign language

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class designed under the notion of *Performed Culture* is filled with a collection of communicative events that are performances and games serving as the pedagogical sample of language in the target culture as we have talked about in previous sections. Functional memories are constructed through activities as performances and games, in which learner continuously encounter one story after another and always associate the new story with the previously learned ones. With an increasing compilation of stories, learners come to categorize them into cases, sagas and themes, which constitute a learner's knowledge structure of the world. The result of this compilation is the construction of a second-culture worldview. The second-culture worldview represents to a new repertoire of knowledge and skills added to the previously existed one. However, this is not the end of the compilation but can be seen as another turn in the cycle that influences the identity of the learner and shapes a new persona for the learner to carry into next round of compilation. The construction of second-culture worldview is a lifelong undertaking that is especially important today for an increasing need for globalization and cross-cultural communication. Responsible foreign language teachers should see their mission as cultivating students who are going to join the global professions of the 21st Century instead of sending missionaries to correct the historical errancies of China as was often the case in recent centuries.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF AN IN-COUNTRY STUDY EXPERIENCE

2.1 Related literature on in-country study

An in-country study experience is believed to be a significant personal investment that involves consideration of how one's time and money can be spent during studies overseas. Such a program usually takes up one semester or even much longer, from one year to two years, and the cost is another factor that must be measured, especially compared with a study at the home college. A New York Times' article titled *Why Study Abroad Costs So Much*, *What to Do About It* reported that at Peking University in Beijing, "tuition" for a year under the auspices of Boston College comes to $35,150, which is much more than receiving education at home. Given this huge amount of investment in time and money, as well as the immersive environment in target society, language instructors have a persistent faith that an in-country study experience will definitely facilitate second-language learning. Besides, students who return from abroad, demonstrating greatly improved language skills and communicative strategies also reinforce this intuitive impression. A growing body of literature on this topic provides especially positive attitude towards the role that the in-country study experience plays in learning a second language. For example, Jorden and Walton (1986) state that true

functional competence in a truly foreign language such as Russian is nearly impossible to achieve without a sojourn abroad. Brecht also considers the long-term, in-country residence as the optimal environment for second language acquisition (Brecht et al. 1993).

With such deeply held beliefs, considerable studies have looked at the similarities and differences in learning a second language in an intensive domestic immersion and that in an in-country setting. The former refers to settings where learners study in domestic programs requiring many more hours per day of classroom instruction than normal academic program, and use the target language at all times outside of class too. Some programs of such also house learners with the foreign language instructors and other learners of the same language to ensure a pure L2 environment. The latter one, which has a more straightforward definition, involves learning L2 in the country where that language is spoken. The context of learning, as a crucial variable in second language acquisition, has become the focus of numerous researches today. In 1989, Weaver compiled a bibliography of 267 studies from all disciplines about United States students studying abroad. This comprehensive listing of studies is classified as cross-cultural issues, evaluations, guides, impact studies, miscellaneous, general overviews, program descriptions, research and theoretical presentations, which covers the year 1951 through 1987 and includes published reports as well as unpublished papers. A review of this bibliography as well as other recent studies, reveals the discussions of in-country study experience are usually limited to the categories described below.

2.11 Linguistic acquisition

An increase in linguistic competence should be the most significant justification for investing in an in-country study program. Most researches focus on a statistical study of learners' gain in language in the immersive environment of a target society (Brecht & Robinson (1993); Lapin, Hart & Swain (1995); and others) seeking to measure participants' exact linguistic gain during the in-country study experience, thus avoiding just assessing the impact of such a program relying on intuitions and subjective observations. The first large scale study of this category was the statistical study conducted by Brecht and Robinson, whose study looked at a group of American students studying Russian in Russia. Through the quantitative analysis of a large amount of data, they finally identify the three most salient predictors of successful language learning in the in-country study context: gender, experience in learning other foreign languages, and strong command of grammar and reading skills.

This study as well as many other studies of this kind, especially those conducted in 1980s, uncritically used the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) as a criterion measure for analyzing the increase in language proficiency. According to Marysia Johnson's (2001) research findings, OPI only tests speaking ability in the context of an interview, instead of the real-life context of a conversation. Therefore, measurements of learners' gain based on an uncritical use of OPI score lack empirical evidence and fail to account for what the in-country study experience really adds to a learner's learning process.

There are also comparison studies looking at linguistic gain in both intensive domestic immersion and in-country study context in order to compare the advantages and disadvantages of each (Dewey (2004); Freed (1995); Lafford (1995), and others). In order

to investigate the role of context in reading development, Dewey (2004) looked at a group of learners learning Japanese as a second language in study abroad (SA) and intensive domestic immersion (IM) contexts to make a comparison of their reading comprehension and processes. From both the quantitative and qualitative data collected from these learners, Dewey found out that difference in reading comprehension and processes in these two contexts only exists in the aspect of self-assessments, in which, learners in the SA group felt more confident reading than those from IM group. However, no significant difference in reading competence was found in students with two to four years of previous study.

Freed (1995) was also one of those who were motivated by the desire to find empirical support for the intuitive belief in in-country study's positive role. Among numerous linguistic features, she chose to explore fluency in the speech of two groups of students, one who spent a semester studying French in Paris and the other whose language learning was limited to the formal on-campus language classroom in the United States. Evaluating the collected speech samples based on the OPI, Freed found that the study abroad group had higher fluency than then the domestic-study participants and therefore confirmed the positive role of an in-country study experience.

Most studies cited above verified the supportive role of an in-country study experience by using huge amounts of statistics measured by standardized test such as the ACTFL OPI. However, few of the previous studies examine the specific learning process that leads to what learners have gained. Due to this limitation, few factors were explored to account for the correlations between a remarkable progress in increasing linguistic competence and the context of in-country study.

2.12 Sociolinguistic competence acquisition

In addition to measuring the linguistic gain during an in-country study experience, recent studies shift the focus to learners' performance related to the sociolinguistic features of language. Researchers assume that greater access and exposure to sociolinguistic markers available in the target language community than in the foreign language classroom as well as increased opportunities for their use will enhance the acquisition of certain competence (Regan, 2009:24).

Among a few studies on the acquisition of a range of sociolinguistic variables by Canadian learners of French, Rehner and Mougeon (1999) reported that learners who spend more time with a French-speaking family have a higher level of deletion of the negative particle *ne*, which is an excellent indicator of an informal register in French. Therefore, they concluded that the in-France study experience that resulted in a dramatic rise in *ne* deletion rates enhances learners' acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. The variable use of politeness forms in Japanese is another focus of studies of in-country study and the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence. Marriott (1993, 1995) investigates the variable use of honorifics in Japanese by Australian learners of Japanese before and after a stay in Japan. However, contrary to Rehner and Mougeons' conclusion that in-France study exerts positive effects on learners' acquisition of sociolinguistic competence, Marriott finds that Australian high school students with one year in-Japan study experience did not show great improvement in sociolinguistic aspects concerning using honorifics according to native speaker norms although they do become more sensitive to such variation. However, relating these two researches with each other seems

to further suggest that the in-country study experience offer learners with more exposure to the informal use of language instead of instructing them with using formal styles, such as the honorifics in Japanese. A similar study provided by Hashimoto (1994) also supports Marriott's finding by manifesting that the use of honorifics in the learner's speech did not occur until after the learner had returned to Australia.

2.13 Attitude and psychology change

During an in-country study experience, in order to adapt to the demandingly new environment, participants have to make a series of adjustment not only in the linguistic aspect, but also in their attitudes and psychology. Therefore, in addition to the studies on gains in language, there are also various studies on psychological adjustment and attitude change of learners who learn a foreign language abroad. Carlson and Widaman (1988) conducted a comparison study of participants in a study-abroad program and non-participants to assess changes in attitudes and perceptions toward international understanding. They found that students who spent a year studying abroad at a European university have increased levels of international political concern, cross-cultural interest, and cultural cosmopolitanism. Compared with the non-participants, students with such an experience developed a positive, yet also more critical view of the United States.

Another pertinent research is one conducted by Aveni (2005) with a focus on learner's identity change within the context of in-country study. Taking her data from observation of students studying Russian abroad over two semesters in the 1995-1996 school year, Aveni claims that a discrepancy between real self and ideal self threatens learners' identities. Within the study abroad context, any confused look, unexpected

response, or slow, corrective speech of a native interlocutor can cause learners to believe they are perceived as inferior to other learners or to native speakers in terms of linguistic abilities, intellect, maturity, or social equality. The discrepancy arises since the real self abroad is considerably different from the ideal self they have constructed from study at home, through watching successful models of communications in the target language. Vivid examples collected from student's journal entries or interview transcripts initiate a meaningful discussion about learning the culture during an in-country study.

Numerous studies like the two mentioned above confirm the significant effect of an in-country study on broadening learners' view and cultural interests. Besides, they also identify frequently encountered difficulties and problems of adaptation elicited by the new cultural environment. Few, however, take a closer look at the process of change and even less research has been devoted to exploring the factors that facilitate the changing process. In another words, what elements constituting an in-country study experience eventually contribute to learners' increased levels of international political concern, cross-cultural interest, and cultural cosmopolitanism along the learning, as what Carlson and Widaman (1998) suggested? How do learners of Russian deal with the identity crisis imposed on them by the target society? Questions like this go unanswered and require more longitudinal researches and qualitative data on this topic.

2.14 In-China Study

Since 1950 when modern China opened its door for the first time to international students, six decades have passed with an amazing increase in the enrolments of international students in China. Undoubtedly, having hosted the 2010 World EXPO and

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2008 Olympics, China has become more attractive to the outside world. According to data reported from the Ministry of Education of The People's Republic of China in March 2011, the enrolment of international students in China exceeded 260,000, among which, American students ranked as the second biggest population. However, a review of previous studies reveals the majority of them concern Indo-European languages such as French, German and Spanish while researches on in-China study is still scarce. The international students in China remain one of the most under-studied populations so far (Yu, 2010).

Kubler (1997) proposed that an in-China study experience should not be considered an optional plan for learning Chinese but an essential component of a Chinese learning curriculum. In the main discussion of the curriculum for an ideal in-China study program, Kubler indicates that small-group language classes, tutorials, "field tasks" and Chinese university classes for some students should be combined together. Kubler also explores numerous key elements required for running an in-country study program such as time and location, selection criteria for students, instructors and program directors, language pledge, pre-study orientation, student housing and placement test. Based on his rich experience in directing and acting as advisor of in-country study programs, Kubler draws a clear overall picture of what a well-established in-country study program should look like. This study also stimulates the demands for more data collected from empirical studies to look at the key elements he has listed so as to support the overall organization he draws for us.

In addition to this overall research conducted by Kubler, there also exist a limited number of studies focusing on gains in linguistic competence (Hayden,1998; Tseng,

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2006), sociolinguistic competence (Zhang & Yu, 2008) and learners' attitude and motivation (Yu, 2010). However, none of these studies exceeds the coverage discussed above.

2.15 Conclusion

The notion that an in-country study experience is important may seem obvious to most of us and the general benefits of such an experience have been widely described in a number of publications. It is an important rite of passage during which language learners apply what they have previously acquired from classroom to more authentic social settings. During an in-country study, it is the time for learners to assume more responsibility for handling communicative tasks and social activities, since they are no longer given as much supervision and feedback from the instructors as before. However, without an accompanying shift in pedagogical approach, the benefits described above will never take place automatically. A few researchers have even revealed that "being there is not enough" (Marriott, 1993 &1995; Rivers, 1998 and others). To bring the above intuition into a justification, language instructors and program designers need to take the very different instructional setting and cultural environment into consideration, so as to make most use of the learning resources in the target culture community and facilitate more sophisticated learning outcome. Reviewing the previous studies, we are able to find that the neglect or narrow treatment given to the topic of in-country study experience fall short in the following aspects.

First, studies of in-country study experience by far still have a limited focus on the learners' linguistic gain and the dominant methodology used by researchers is

quantitative studies. Although the acquisition of linguistic competence may be the most significant purpose for taking part in an in-country study program, this should not be the only important change learners will surely experience during an in-country study. An in-country study experience changes participants as individuals in addition to providing linguistic gains (Pellegrino, 1998; Barrutia, 1971). Even though some recent studies has also been conducted on learners' change of attitude within an in-country study experience, a lack of longitude researches impedes the pursuit of a thorough account for the changing process. Moreover, most of these quantitative studies were conducted based on scores of the OPI, which only tests speaking ability in the context of an interview, instead of the real-life context of a conversation. Therefore, most studies like this lack empirical evidence and fail to account for what the in-country study experience really adds to a learner's learning process.

Second, most studies are able to answer the question about how much learners' language proficiencies really improve while abroad, but few can answer what the exact steps in a certain program that contribute to the improvement are. Most studies still stop at the stage of confirming the hypothesis that overseas experience leads to positive changes in students' attitude, but few of them look at the factors facilitating the changes or using qualitative data to account for the process of change. As second language instructors, we all believe that a shift in pedagogical approach has to be made when we move the language classroom experience in an US academic institution to an in-China study environment. What can a program designer do to change the traditional teacher-student mode of interaction to cope with the new context of learning? How do we develop effective mechanisms to maximize the language gain during the in-country study

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experience? Questions like these are given too little attention and are seldom discussed in the previous literature.

Third, as we know, an in-country study program usually combines language and content learning in the formal classroom setting with immersion in the native speech community known as informal contact. Among the previous literature, learning taking place in the formal classroom has always been the focus of studies. Besides, among the limited studies on the informal contact during an in-country study experience, the informal contact is simply equated with the home-stay experience (Martin, 1980; Rivers, 1998; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). In the perspective of this paper, a successful in-country study program should not look at the formal classroom learning and the informal contact separately. Instead, a unity of the classroom instruction and interactions within the immersive environment should be considered as the focus of the curriculum to be designed. Only when we explore both areas within an in-country study, we will be able to understand what constituents of the program can enrich the in-country study experience.

Fourth, concerning the methodology adopted in these previous studies mentioned above, few of them used qualitative study. It is true that large quantitative data can reveal some aspects of an in-country study experience such as learners' linguistic gain in a clear and efficient way. However, we should also realize that large scale quantitative studies fail to recognize the individuality of the participants' experiences and their accomplishments (Iwasaki, 2005), especially in the aspect of psychological change. On the other hand, ethnographic fieldwork though time-consuming, may reveal more valuable information to motivate the discussion on in-country study experience.

To address the limitations in the previous studies mentioned above, my current research was designed to suggest how we can fill the existing gap in the literature and to shed light on the contexts and processes of language and culture learning that occur the in-country study.

2.2. Some new thoughts motivating the current research

2.21 The role of domain in in-country study

The concept of domain is loosely defined by Kawamura and Noda (2006) as an entity that is constituted by a set of activities that are definable by certain types of knowledge and objectives. Within the filed of language pedagogy, more specifically, domain is the abstract structure that supports the concept *saga* that I introduced and discussed in 1.3.3.3, that is, the situation defined by a particular place or particular people. According to Kawamura and Noda (2006), three types of domains are identified: academic, occupational and social.

Within an in-country study program involving the domain activity, learners are found not to be limited to a single domain. Instead, they can be actively involved in more than one domain even at the same time. For example, a graduate level in-China study program requires all the participants to identify an academic domain for their future research. One of the students whose previous undergraduate major is music composition chose the research topic related to "art management and non-material cultural heritage" as his academic domain. Besides, in order to better work on his research, he joined a local calligraphy society and went to their forum and club activity very often. He gradually developed friendship with some of the group members, and this calligraphy society

naturally became his social domain (SAGA). After his one-year study in the field of art management, he developed his occupational domain by starting his internship in an art organization in the southwest of China.

Individuals new to a cultural environment are better able to handle the new set of conventions and expectations by limiting their spheres of activities to a small number of domains. (Kawamura & Noda, 2006) Therefore, during the process of becoming a recognized member of a certain domain group, individuals are able to gradually develop their domain-specific knowledge and eventually reach their goal of becoming a non-native profession in certain domain with a "more focused manner". A recent study conducted in 2010 by Nakamura, Fujii and Fudano provides us with interesting findings in the result of participating in Japanese college club activities, which lends credence to the statement that domain plays a positive role in language learning. This study focuses on a group of beginning and intermediate-level Japanese learners who participated in a 6-week summer intensive course in Japan. Besides the intensive learning within the classroom setting, participants were sent to five sports and four non-sports clubs in the local college. Self-evaluation and program evaluation collected from the participants show that through engaging in these Japanese clubs, learners are able to observe the hierarchical relationship underlying the club activities, which is crucial to the acquisition of Japanese socio-linguistic competence. Though this case study is largely based on participants' self-reports, it more or less reveals the function of a social domain during the in-country study experience.

Kawamura and Noda's study contains more detailed information of participants who are not just limited to participating in a college club. A student who participated in an

occupational domain by doing a part-time job in a moderately up-scale restaurant also increased her sociolinguistic competence by learning several honorific expressions and discourse patterns. Besides the language gain, the study also found that a domain could provide emotional security as well. The positive impact that a domain has on learners' learning process is quite obvious even when learners may not appreciate it emotionally.

The case study of a domain not only gave a close look at what learners are experiencing during an in-country study program, but also implied that an ethnographic approach like this may be an effective strategy for accumulating in-depth knowledge of the in-country study experiences in, shedding light on the traditional large-scale statistic studies.

2.2.2 Legitimate peripheral participation

The significant positive impact of a domain motivates teachers to rethink the relationship between learning and the social situation in which it occurs. The concept of learning, for most of us, always conjures up images of teacher, assignment, classroom and textbook. However, learners' experience in a domain group reveals to us that the learning process within an in-country study may not necessarily be the simple acquisition of knowledge from instructors in a classroom setting, but can also take place in the form of a social co-participation. The form of social co-participation well fits the notion of *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP), a very important concept from the social theory of learning.

Lave and Wenger proposed the notion of LPP in 1991, which concerns the process by which a newcomer becomes part of a community of practice. To understand this

process, the choice of terms should be clarified first. The word "legitimate" indicates the legitimacy of participation, which means ways of belonging to a certain community. "Peripheral" suggests that there are multiple, varied, more- or less-engaged and – inclusive ways of being located in the fields of participation defined by a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991:36). Within the context of participating in a domain activity, participants have to commit themselves to a certain organization and finally become a member of it. Their involvement in the domain activities change along with the time and it is impossible for them to reach full/complete participation at the very beginning. Therefore, the word "peripheral" has no negative implications such as "unrelatedness" or " irrelevance". It instead describes a dynamic concept that suggests an opening, a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement (1991: 37).

During the in-country study, learners are outsiders who have to habituate themselves to the local ways of speaking. When they identify themselves with a certain domain group, they observe the performance given by the old-timers (who can be seen as *senpai* as reported by Japanese learners in the previous two studies mentioned in 2.21), and gradually submit to and ultimately reproduce the standards shared among the domain group members.

The notion of LPP concerning the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice provides a new perspective to look at the learning process that learners are going through during the in-country study, especially during the out-of-classroom contact with people of the host culture. This concept is also in line with the idea of "performance" proposed by Walker (2000) introduced in the first chapter. Concerning the social theory of learning, the ability to learn would develop in close

relation to the ability to perform tasks. Learning is about increased access to performance, and the way to maximize it is to perform, not to talk about it (Lave & Wenger, 1991:21-22). When designing an in-country study program, it is especially important for the program designers to combine the instructional setting with the actual performance in the target community so as to avoid splitting the learner's ability to handle the learning situation apart from the ability to perform tasks.

CHAPTER THREE

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ADVANCED LEARNER'S GAIN DURING IN-
CHINA STUDY

3.1 Research Question

There has been much discussion in the field of foreign language pedagogy to consider moving away from a formal academic-year classroom setting. However, as reviewed in Chapter Two, limitations existing in previous research on in-country study have still left us with a myriad of unanswered questions. For this study, three research questions guide the attempt to describe advanced learners' Chinese language and culture learning process in an in-China study program:

1. What are the features of an effective in-China study program designed for intermediate to advanced level learners of Chinese that encourages a more meaningful immersion in the target culture and language? An in-country study program generally consists of an instructional setting within the classroom as well as informal contact with the target community outside the classroom. Moving students from domestic instructional setting to an in-China study program needs to be accompanied by a pedagogical shift to utilize the unique and important learning resources presented by both the two settings so as to facilitate more sophisticated learning outcomes. However, a review of the previous

literature in Chapter 2 shows that many study abroad programs still precisely maintain traditional teacher-student models without realizing the fundamentally different learning context. With this limitation in in-China study program design, this question needs answering first.

2. What do learners gain from such an effective program to be described in the answers to question one? Intensive domestic immersion programs have often been compared with in-country study programs. Though studying "at home," the program requires more hours of daily interaction in L2 by being housed with teachers and other learners under a certain language pledge so that learners are believed to learn in the same successful way without leaving their home country. If these findings are correct, how does the gain from an in-China study experience distinguish itself from that found in a domestic immersive learning setting? After defining what an effectively designed in-China study program looks like, this study is going to further look at what kind of learning outcomes will come out from such program.

3. Among all the findings discovered in answering the previous two questions, what marks the transition from intermediate level to truly advanced level? More specifically, what components of such a program distinguish the in-China study program from learners' previous learning experience? What achievements that learners made from such program mark the level of being "advanced" and enable them to further accomplish their professional goals in China?

3.2 Experimental design

3.2.1 Methodology

Researchers in the field of pedagogy and education typically choose between two broad types of methodology, quantitative and qualitative. As revealed in Chapter Two, most studies up-to-date are limited to large scale quantitative studies to measure in-country study participants' linguistic gain. However, the numerical picture may not be generalizable to all learners within the in-country study context, since quantitative studies alone usually fail to recognize the individuality of the participants' experiences and their accomplishments (Iwasaki, 2005).

The current study is a pure qualitative study, following a case study format, using various data sources as the primary method of data presentation. The qualitative methodology is well-suited to the present study for it often presents data from the perspective of participants, which is helpful to illustrate a clear picture of the learning process emerging during an in-China study and to record changes taking place in learners. As one of the three instructors teaching in this program, the researcher was on-site for the entire period of this in-China study program, from June 14th to August 14th in 2010. This provided the researcher with close observations of learners' learning experience both inside and outside the class, as well as their interactions with other instructors and the program designer. Instead of using a predetermined questionnaire to identify learners' in-China study experience, the researcher made field notes throughout the study, along with interviews and interactions with learners in the program, all of which add to the thickness of study data. Instead of just confirming what the researcher has already known or what she wants to see and hear, an approaching fieldwork like this helps receive the subjects' unbiased views that the researcher may not know to ask

before. This methodology will obviously contribute to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry.

Besides, the format of case study provides the researcher with the opportunity to present a variety of perspectives on a given subject, which leads to a well-round picture of each participant by combing participants' opinions and observations about themselves with those of their teachers and program administrators, as well as the researcher's.

3.2.2 Participants

The present study began with the collection of data for five pre-graduate students Bob, Tom, Mike, Amy and Linda, in an in-China study program in Qingdao, China during the Summer Quarter, 2010. Considering the diversity of the participants, these five students were chosen for various educational backgrounds, different placement test performances, and diverse personalities. Subsequent to data collection, two of them, Bob and Tom were chosen as the focus of this study. Their data will be fully presented in Chapter Four. The rationale for choosing this two students lies in their different, and almost contrasting backgrounds, which may provide the study with more meaningful observations of how the in-China study program deals with different learners, and how each of them accomplish their success during the in-China study experience? On the other hand, both of them had been actively involving in this program, whose journals reflect most information among the five participants. However, the experience of the other three participants Amy, Linda and Mike may also be included when corresponding to certain findings from the two main participants. To respect the subjects' privacy, a pseudonym was assigned to each participant and used in the thesis.

3.2.3 Data sources[1]

3.2.3.1 Journals

The primary source of data for the present study is student journals as part of the required assignments. Participants in this in-China study program are required to keep a bi-weekly journal and to post it on a blog open for public comments. Journals are required to be written in Chinese within two pages, dealing with three main topics. Learners were asked to choose one from the following three topics: 1. Recount a different cultural experience or cultural shock you have experienced with one or more photos to illustrate. A discussion of reasons behind the cultural difference should be included. 2. Report your participation in a certain domain group (a hobby class, a college club, a part-time job.) with details of the domain identification and various experiences in the routine domain activities. 3. Write down your experiences of misunderstanding or conflicts with your Chinese roommates. Please include detailed stories taking place between you and your roommates that worth discussing. If you solve the problem in the end, please restate the process with details. Besides writing, students are also required to share their journals with classmates in an oral presentation arranged for every Friday's class. Each student was given five minutes to restate his or her experience described in the journal and to initiate the class discussion of the cultural issue hidden in it.

These journals collected from learners are all subjective reflections, but they serve as the best way to capture learners' thoughts during such an experience. When a learner writes subjectively, there are considerable processing taking place and learners later

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[1] IRB Protocol Number: 2010E0366

reported in interviews that both their writing skills and cultural awareness were largely improved, which results from the journal writing. Besides, they also served as a springboard for discussion in follow-up interviews to probe more in-depth learners' cultural understanding.

3.2.3.2 Interviews

In addition to students' journals, another source of data was interviews. Ethnographic interviews designed for learners at three different stages, were conducted before, during and after the in-China study program. The pre-study interview was designed to gain in-depth understanding of learners' Chinese learning background, prior in-China study and other cross-cultural experiences as well as their expectation for linguistic and cultural gain from the program. Besides, each learner was asked to write an autobiographical statement in Chinese during the orientation, which is also included as a part of the data for analysis. This Chinese autobiographical statement was originally designed for the instructor to have a survey of learners' prior learning experience and a test of their language proficiency, especially the writing ability. However, more importantly, it can also help the research document learners' discourse styles for later comparison.

The interview conducted during the study was composed of several individual face-to-face on-site interviews. Interviews focused on learners' account of their daily experience, including both formal instructions within the classroom setting as well as the informal contact outside the classroom. Learners were also asked to evaluate their relationship with people around them, including instructors, Chinese roommates, local

administrators and other employees on site. Evaluations of the gains from the program were also included in the on-site interviews but are more focused in the post-program interview. Some follow-up questions were asked concerning the issues mentioned in learners' journals too.

Interviews with on-site program administrators, Chinese roommates, and instructors also served as source data. Program administrators and teachers were asked about general program goals, the idea of program design as well as their general impression about learners' participation and gain in language and culture and their psychological changes during the in-China study process. Chinese roommates were asked about their perception of American learners, especially their own roommates. For some of the roommates who were especially mentioned by American students in their journals, a request was made for the Chinese student to restate the event from his/her own perspective.

Post-program interview mainly involved learners' self-assessment of their gain from the in-China study experience, including the most successful and the most frustrating experience, learners' own changes in attitude and psychology as well as the overall impression of the program design and teaching methodology. Some of the learners' e-mail exchanges with the instructor during the study were also included as a part of the data under both the learner's and the instructor's permission.

3.2.3.3 Observations

The researcher's observation of learners added multiple perspectives of learners' in-China study experience, with an especial focus on their interaction with people within

the target community. Data from observation include observations of class, learner's interview activity, presentation to local public, participation in weekly cultural activity as well as two observations of three learners' domain activity in a Chinese Gongfu club. These observations all serve to strengthen the level of descriptive detail of each case study. The researcher found out that sometimes, learners' self reports were very different from what the researcher observed. For example, one female student who identified herself with a Chinese Gongfu club reported in both journal and interview that she did not really use Chinese in the Gongfu class, but just needed to follow the teacher's moves. However, during the two observations of her participation in the Gongfu classes, the researcher found that she in fact completely relied on her Chinese skills to learn Gongfu, since she not only had to memorize all the Chinese names for different moves but also needed to interact with the teacher in Chinese to confirm her understanding of the sequence of doing each move. Besides, the researcher observed a lot of Chinese slang the Gongfu teacher used to comment on learners' performance, which requires a good understanding of Chinese culture, especially the knowledge of Chinese idioms. This is just one example of the benefit of including on site observation as a part of data. As learners interact with different people, the various impressions generated help to add depth to the description and to evaluate their in-China study experience from multiple perspectives.

3.3 The in-China study

3.3.1 The Ohio State University Chinese Flagship program

The Ohio State University (OSU) has a good reputation for producing high performing students in the field of Chinese language and culture. The goal of its Chinese Flagship Program is to prepare Americans to reach the highest level of capabilities for building successful China-related careers.[2] The OSU Chinese Flagship has its China Center located in Qingdao, China, which offers Summer Quarter immersion programs for undergraduate and graduate students and operates the Flagship Internship Program. Intensive language programs at college levels 1-6 are available from novice through superior level. Students indicate their present level of competence when applying, and final placement is made based on standardized test results and on-site performance. More specifically, the program this study focuses on is the class at Level 5, a class of advanced level pre-graduate students enrolled in the Ohio State University Chinese Flagship program. The 5th level program is designed to introduce learners to accomplishing professional goals in China by challenging them with creating and completing a short-term community practicum. As indicated on the program's website, this level marks a transition from learning Chinese to learning **in** Chinese, preparing learners to conduct research and complete projects by using only Chinese. The program was nine weeks in total, starting from June 14th to August 14th 2010, at the Ocean University of China (OUC), a comprehensive university in the city of Qingdao. The program was composed of 8 weeks of instruction while the last week is devoted to a field trip within the Shandong province. Students who successfully complete Level 5 may begin taking Flagship content courses at OSU, Columbus in Autumn Quarter. After one year's graduate study in OSU, students will go back to Qingdao to take Level 6 classes during

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[2] "We prepare Americans for China-related careers." The Ohio State MidWest US-China Flagship Program. 21 March. 2011. <http://chineseflagship.osu.edu/graduate/index.html>

the summer and a domain-related Chinese internship follows for the whole second year of graduate study.

3.3.2 Materials: Investigate, digest and reflect on "hot topics" among Chinese people

The material used for this program was *Point of View, Perspective and Presentation: Chinese Discourse on Sino-American Relatio*ns, an unpublished textbook edited by Xiaobin Jian et al. The main goals of this course were to provide training in the area of properly interpreting Chinese intentions and to prepare non-native speakers to begin practicing negotiating with professionals. Therefore, the material was designed for students to investigate, analyze, and respond to Chinese discourse on a series of "hot topics" that are currently debated by Chinese natives at various levels and are important to the understanding of the Chinese people and their culture. The topics covered in the textbook change every year according to the latest controversial topics of discussion. For example, in 2010, four topics that were "heated" and widely discussed as well as having direct impact on Sino-American relations were included: economics and trade, the Taiwan issue, "universal value," and Chinese perceptions of American motivations. All four topics were complicated, sensitive and at the same time current, crucial and unavoidable. Each topic was presented in three different discourse styles: 1. Governmental discourse, including statements issued by the Chinese government, talks given by Chinese officials and major Chinese media editorials; 2. Scholarly discourse including short essays written by Chinese scholars and talks given by Chinese specialists; 3. Mass discourse including online discussion forums and Internet blogs. Two to three articles were usually assigned for each kind of discourse. Through studying the material,

students were expected to learn to approach and handle various types of related materials, familiarize themselves with major Chinese points of views, perspectives and presentations of these topics, and practice participating in such discourse as non-native professionals.

In addition to the textbook, selective broadcasting from CCTV constitutes the second source of material for learners. Broadcasting varies from ten-minute TV news spots to complete one-hour news analysis shows, all of which cover the four "hot topics" found in the textbook.

3.3.3 Course format

3.3.3.1 Reading and discussion

Instead of dividing the course into listening, speaking, reading and writing components, the course assigned a series of tasks for each topic that would require the learning and practicing of all these skills. The eight-week course with a one-week field trip in the middle of the program can be divided into four two-week sessions based on the four topics. The first week of each session was devoted to readings and discussions of five to six articles on the same topic belonging to three different discourse styles.

Before class, students were required to read each article and independently learn the new vocabulary, expressions, sentence structures and idiomatical presentations of ideas included. Each student was asked to create his or her own vocabulary list and prepare five notes concerning the usage of the new vocabulary and expressions to share with classmates. The three-hour morning class was divided into three sessions. During the first session that usually lasted one to one and a half hours, the instructor led class

discussions by asking several content questions designed to explore the main point of view held by the author. For some long and difficult articles, students were asked to summarize each paragraph or create an outline of the article as part of the in-class exercise. The instructor focused on how the author established his or her point of view rather than having the learners debate about the merits of this point of view since it was later revealed by the instructor in the interview that that was not the focus of the course. The second part of the class, which lasted thirty to forty minutes, was completely led by the students to introduce different linguistic aspects they had discovered during their independent study. The instructor's role at this time was to take notes, correct any mistakes or give complements or explanations when she felt it was necessary. The last class session was another round of discussion completely focused on the discourse style. The instructor led the class to skim the article in class for a second time to spot the characteristic way of presentation that represents the discourse. For example, when studying the governmental discourse, learners were told to pay attention to the typical ways of governmental presentation such as the frequently used parallel structures, very formal expressions and official terms used to describe certain situations. While reading and discussing the mass discourse, including Internet forum discussion and blog articles, students were encouraged to spot the typical Internet language and immense variation of literary devices and vernacular Chinese rhetoric present such as irony and metaphor.

3.3.3.2 Identifying a research topic related to the readings

After five days spent reading and digesting the presentation of a certain topic at three discourse levels, students began to think of the issues at hand and identify a sub-

topic related to the readings to conduct a manageable study in the following week. For example, during the week of reading articles related to the Sino-American economics and trade, students developed their study topics including "Rising Chinese Currency," "The Influence of American Enterprise in Qingdao," "China's purchase of American Treasury Securities" and so on. The purpose of the study was to establish communication with local natives, to analyze their points of view on a certain issue and more importantly, to record the ways in which they presented the topic for discussion. Learners were then asked to have individual meetings with the instructor to talk about their choice of topics and type of interview questions. The instructor's responsibility was to help learners identify an appropriate study topic and to go through their interview questions, making any adjustments if necessary.

3.3.3.3 Interviewing local Chinese Residents

Learners conducted interviews with ten to fifteen local residents in Qingdao after deciding on their study topics with the instructor. Learners were not allowed to conduct interviews with people they had already met, such as Chinese roommates, local instructors in OUC, on-site administrators or other employees. However, they were encouraged to have a mock interview with Chinese people around them for practice.

Before officially starting the interview, learners were given a one-hour lecture on "Interview Strategies" during which students watched videos of mock interviews and then discussed the pros and cons of the strategies the interviewers had used. After the discussion, the instructor and some invited local Chinese students had some role-playing games with students to put lessons from the video into practice. Moreover, when dealing

with some sensitive topics, students were encouraged to have an additional discussion about the specific methods they could use to initiate, maintain and expand the conversation with the local people. For example, during the third week before they went out for interviews on the "Taiwan Issue," a very sensitive topic for Chinese people, students discussed the importance of using appropriate terms (such as "*Taiwan sheng*" (Taiwan province) instead of "*guojia*" (country) when referring to Taiwan), as well as appropriate ways to introduce the topic to the interviewees and strategies to avoid or stop a drastic attack on the Chinese government.

Learners were encouraged to go off campus to conduct interviews with people from all walks of life. Individual tutorial sessions were held every afternoon during the week for the instructor to monitor the progress of students and answer any questions that might come up during the interview process. Upon completion of their interviews, students were required to submit a written report of their interview process with a special focus on any obstacles they came across and the specific expressions or methods the interviewees used to decline their interviews or avoid any undesirable questions. The instructor sometimes brought up some valuable or interesting points of discussion from these reports.

3.3.3.4 Public presentation to local audience

After having interviews with local residents, students continued their discussion of the topics through their presentations of their reports and responding to critiques of these presentations from the local audience. The presentation was open to the public and posters of the presentation were delivered in advance to the local bookstores, colleges,

and cultural salons. This group of public audience mainly consists of college students, teachers, white-collar workers and governmental officers. They were not only invited to listen to students' presentation, but more importantly, they are encouraged to ask tough questions to students and even to further interact with them individually after the presentation. Rehearsals for the presentations were held during the second week of class. The official presentations were held on the second Friday evening of every session. Each presentation lasted five minutes followed by a ten-minute Q&A session. The Q&A session was even more important than the presentation itself since students had to contend with numerous tough questions from audience members from various academic fields. A more detailed account of this process will be discussed in Chapter Four along with a discussion of the data.

3.3.3.5 Reflections and feedback

Public presentations were not an end to the discussion of "hot topics" and students continued to participate in the discussion by writing a report sharing their views on the entire process including what they had learned about the topics through both interviews and responses received from the audience during the presentations. The written report was required to be in a strict Chinese academic format with a length of no less than three pages. The instructor also organized a class discussion about presentation skills including strategies for answering tough questions from the audience. Since each presentation was video recorded, the instructor would play parts of the videos in class to initiate discussions about each presenter's performance. Though some participants reported in interviews that the review sessions made them "feel nervous and sometimes

embarrassed," all of them were still willing to participate in it since it is beneficial to discover myriads of "foreignism in presentation" that they had never noticed before.

3.3.4 Journal Writing on a Blog

In addition to readings, interviews, presentations, interview reports and research papers, a bi-weekly journal was required as an additional assignment for all students. The instructor determined three topics from which the students could choose and the journal was required to be posted on a blog accessible to every reader in China. Three journal topics were as follows: 1. Recount an instance of cultural shock you have experienced, with one or more photos to illustrate it. A discussion of reasons behind the cultural difference should be included. 2. Report your participation in a certain domain group (a hobby class, a college club, a part-time job) with details of the domain identification process and various experiences in the routine domain activities. 3. Write down your experiences of misunderstanding or conflicts with your Chinese roommates. Please include detailed accounts of these conflicts and any insights that occurred to you as a result. If you solved the problem in the end, please make note of this and how it was accomplished.

After writing the journal, students were asked to post their writings on any one of the local blog websites and to make it accessible to all Chinese readers. Students were also responsible for responding to the all the comments posted on their own blogs. Meanwhile, each student had to read at least three classmates' blogs and post comments on them. It must be noted that comments mainly focused on the content of writing instead of linguistic issues such as grammar and vocabulary. However, the instructor would pay

attention to both aspects and a face-to-face individual "writing clinic" was held during office hours to solve problems of language usage. The instructor chose some cultural issues that she thought would have great value for further discussion and arranged for an exchange of writings in class every other week.

3.3.5 Extracurricular activities

The program along with the local host university OUC arranged for weekly extracurricular activities that provided students with an opportunity to further explore Qingdao and have better opportunities to communicate with the local community. The extracurricular activities can be categorized into 5 types: 1. Visiting famous local enterprises including Tsingtao Brewery and Haier. 2. A sightseeing trip to well-known landscapes such as the Laoshan Mountain. 3. A cultural experience attending a performance of the Peking Opera Troupe. 4. Exchanges with local OUC students including a beach party celebrating Independence Day and a Chinese film salon. 5. Participation in local community events including a visit to a local high school and a visit to OUC students' family homes.

3.3.6 Field trip

A week's long field trip was arranged for the fifth week in the middle of the program. During the trip, students visited five important cities in Shandong province including Qingzhou, Weifang, Zibo, Taian and Qufu. Famous scenic spots included the Tai Mountain and the Temple, Cemetery and the Mansion of Confucius. Before the trip, students were assigned some tasks that gave them a chance to more deeply explore the

local communities. For example, after visiting a famous Chinese ghost story writer Pu Songlin's former residence in Zibo, students were asked to collect this writer's ghost stories which are posted everywhere in local public places, and to interview local people about their opinions of these stories. Similarly, when in Qufu, the hometown of Confucius, learners were asked to interview five local people to see whether their lives especially their educational experiences had been influenced by the great tradition of Confucius. Learners gave some informal oral presentation on their way to report their findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

TWO ADVANCED CHINESE LEARNERS' IN-CHINA STUDY EXPERIENCE

4.1 Bob

4.1.1 Interview with Bob

4.1.1.1 Bob's Chinese Learning Background

From 2006 - 2007, Bob was enrolled in his first year of Chinese classes (Chinese 101 to Chinese 103) at OSU, which was the only experience of formal instruction in Chinese he had before going to Qingdao. Before taking part in the Chinese Flagship program in Qingdao, Bob had another experience staying in Kaohsiung, Taiwan while serving a Fulbright Grant to teach English to elementary school children from August 2009 to June 2010. During his 10-month stay in Taiwan, he had a chance to travel around the island, and also went on a trip to Mainland China during the Chinese New Year break. Though he obviously spoke English most of the time, especially when working as an English instructor, Bob also tried his best to use his elementary Chinese skills to communicate with the people around him. As he recalled, "that was a slow process of language learning," but he could feel his skills gradually improve. After making the decision to apply for the Chinese Flagship Program at OSU as well as to take the summer course in Qingdao, he started his independent study plan to learn Chinese, with a specific emphasis on reading and writing. He spent two to four hours every day reading Chinese news articles online and studying each article line-by-line. He would write down every word or

character that he did not recognize and rewrite the new words over and over in his notebook until he filled up page after page. When recalling this process in his autobiographical statement, he considered it a "quite 'rudimentary' method of studying Chinese, a little bit odd, and very *xinku* (being of much hardship)."

4.1.1.2 Expectations and goals

Bob's plan was to study for a PhD in Chinese politics and then join the Foreign Service. He wanted to again study, important skills such as deeply comprehending Chinese texts, communicating complex ideas and understanding the responses in a formal setting such as the summer in-China program, so it fit perfectly with his personal goals. Also, considering his less than traditional training in Chinese and his relatively weak foundation, he expressed a need to improve markedly in every skill, especially his reading and writing skills.

In addition to making progress in language skills, he especially mentioned a desire for "greater knowledge of Chinese culture, particularly of Qingdao," as a personal reason for attending the program. He specifically wanted to increase his interpersonal skills in a Chinese context. He also wanted to compare life in the city of Qingdao in Mainland China to his previous experience in Taiwan.

4.1.1.3 Bob's Comments and Feedback on Course Format

By establishing a goal to realize success in a future profession, Bob felt that multiple aspects of the summer program would be useful in fulfilling his future goals. The most helpful activity from his perspective was making presentations in front of classmates,

teachers, and strangers on various topics, ranging from research results, to the challenges in interviewing strangers, to individual cultural experiences reported in journals. As he stated in the interview, "the process of having to continually produce language for 3-10 minutes is a great learning experience, and considering that each student had to prepare for many hours as well as to perform each presentation more than a dozen times in eight weeks, the repetition paid off." As a matter of fact, a positive review of making presentations can be found in all five participants' reports, in which "using the real-world Chinese to give a presentation in a professional manner" was highly appreciated and considered as the most important component to set this in-China study program apart from other language programs.

Bob ranked the process of interviewing, which was part of the biweekly research process, as the second most effective activity in challenging and improving his listening and speaking skills. Once again, he mentioned the great significance of "repetition" in language acquisition. Since he conducted around 100 interviews in eight weeks, the overall experience contributed to an impressive increase in his listening and speaking abilities. In addition to enhancing his linguistic skill, Bob also mentioned another important aspect of interviewing locals, saying that "all the interviews with locals as well as intimate talks with my Chinese friends and tutors on these issues (Sino-American relations) had alerted him to the kind of political environment that he would be working in." In other words, these interview experiences give him a precious opportunity to get an idea of Chinese people's perspectives on some critical issues affecting Sino-American relations, which are unavoidably what he would be dealing with in his future career working for the Foreign Service.

The third aspect that enhanced his in-China study experience was the "time-consuming" reading tasks every other week. Not only did he improve his reading skills and expand his vocabulary "through the process of 'mauling' through those articles" as he put it in his interview, but also he was appreciative to be able to achieve a deep understanding of Chinese people's perspectives of these selected "hot topics" and the way they presented their opinions, which is "drastically different" from what he had expected. He gave an example of the third and fourth week's readings on the Taiwan issue, during which he was surprised to see that the governmental documents consisted of nothing but repetitive statements of "There is only one China in the world. (Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Chinese territory." He was even more surprised to see even the articles chosen from online forum and blogs, which were supposed to be very different from the governmental documents, were filled with similar statements as well. This undoubtedly alerted him of the atmosphere in Mainland China in regard to the Taiwan issue, which is completely different from the city of Kaohsiung, where he spent 10 months before going to Qingdao. Bob expressed in a later interview that though his own opinions of the Taiwan Issue are still quite different from what he had read in class, he felt it crucial for him to know how people in Mainland China felt about this issue so as to avoid offending the locals in Qingdao. He was especially interested in the perspectives of the citizens since their metaphorical ways of presentation were quite intriguing to him. The last thing Bob mentioned as a positive aspect of the program was the journal writing though he believed that writing would not be a skill that he would utilize most often in his future endeavors. However, he still stated that learning language comprehensively was very effective and he was quite satisfied with his progress in writing through casually

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writing for blogs, managing comments and correspondences as well as academic writing on small research topics.

Bob's interview with the researcher revealed that he was quite satisfied with the overall design of this in-China study program. Except for a specific suggestion given concerning the choice of the two articles in the material that he felt were outdated and less pertinent, Bob made no negative comments. As for that suggestion, Bob's instructor and the program director later responded it was quite constructive and they have already considered how to fix this issue.

4.1.1.4 Comments on out-of-Classroom Activities

When asked about his most memorable time in this program, most of Bob's answers are related to his experience outside of classroom instruction. Making new Chinese friends and spending a lot of time with them and their families provided him with a deep understanding of social networks in the community. He even developed a particularly good relationship with some shopkeepers on campus who he thought were very enthusiastic and friendly to him. Since he went to those shops buying meals almost every day, some shopkeepers even treated him as part of their family. He remembered a woman, Mrs. Liu, always let him pick out his favorite pork chop in her small restaurant. More interesting experiences in making friends with shopkeepers were revealed in his written journals and will be analyzed in detail in next section. In addition to numerous informal contacts with people in the community, Bob especially gave credit to the weeklong field trip around Shandong province -- which he praised as "quite interesting and worthwhile." Although, he did suggest that in order to get more out of a tour guide's

presentation, the students should be provided with some background information relevant to a particular place before the trip. He admitted to having neither the listening comprehension nor broad vocabulary to grasp even the basic outline of the presentation.

4.1.1. 5 Self-assessment

Though all the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) have improved markedly, Bob indicated that the greatest progress took place in the areas of listening and speaking. He recalled that on his first day, he was not able to comprehend most of things an elderly Chinese friend of his family, Lulu said to him in Chinese. Not only did his friend Lulu speak with a Qingdao accent, but also his listening comprehension at that time was the weakest one of all his language skills. However, comparing his experience of meeting Lulu before he went back home during the ninth week, he noticed that he was able to understand the majority of what she said without much of a problem. Even though there were still some misunderstandings, he was usually able to quickly clear them up in Chinese. As for improvements in speaking, Bob mentioned his first presentation to the local public, which he described as "rough." He recalled how he was even shaking a bit when he began, which was "totally unlike his 'English identity' because public speaking is relatively second nature for him". However, the feeling of being nervous and unsure of his ability gradually disappeared through the repetition of presentations, and he felt notably more comfortable and spoke with more ease at his last formal presentation in front of his teachers, classmates, and local college students and other professionals. Furthermore, in the Q&A period afterward, he not only understood and successfully responded to all of the questions, but also managed to give

some diplomatic responses to avoid directly answering some questions dealing with very sensitive issues, which were not suitable to be discussed publicly.

Progress in reading and writing were also mentioned, including a remarkable increase in reading speed, less grammatical mistakes in writing, the expansion of vocabulary with an especially important accumulation of formal expressions and academic writing styles.

However, according to Bob, such a significant increase in all linguistic skills though very desirable, was not the most valuable lesson he has gained from the program. During the interview, he mentioned an email exchange between him and his instructor that illustrated the biggest gain he has received from the program concerning how to adjust his behaviors and even personality so as to fit into the Chinese culture values. Going through several frustrations and confrontations with some Chinese people and even his instructor, Bob expressed his gratitude to his "failures" for helping him realize the significance to make a paradigm shift in communicating in Chinese culture, which was completely overlooked in his previous Chinese learning experience.

4.1.2 Bob's writing journals

Bob made a series of observations of various cultural differences from his daily life, including different eating habits and dining etiquette, Chinese people's use of gym, discussions of "sincerity" with Chinese friends. Among all his journals, one writing with the title "*Wo jiao ni shenme?*" (How should I address you) accompanied by a photo taken with an elderly Chinese couple not only describes his experience of establishing friendship with a Chinese family (a couple who owned a grocery store on campus)

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received highest praise from his instructor and was thus closely examined by the researcher. During his nine-week stay, Bob always went to a grocery store on campus to buy snacks and lunch. When he went there for the first time, he noticed that two female students shopping there called the female shop owner *ayi* (aunt) and he just assumed that they were her actual nieces. However, after visiting there for the second and third time, he began to doubt that since he found that lady had too many "relatives" on campus. He then guessed that those people were not the lady's actual relatives, but they just used *ayi* as a term of endearment to show friendliness. Bob wrote this observation in his journal and also discussed his speculation that using familial terms can help to build and strengthen social networks. In his journal, he also recorded the process in which he gradually established a friendship with that lady and her "family," and as he remarked, "it is sweet that this old couple always treat me as their own child." This issue will be discussed further in Chapter Five how the interaction within a certain community contributes to learning of both language and culture.

4.1.3 Observing Bob from the instructor's perspective

According to the instructor, Bob was the most hard-working student in the class; however, due to his weaker foundation in Chinese, he was simultaneously among the slower and less capable students in class. The instructor had no doubt that Bob put in the most effort into the summer program. According to her observation, Bob was "an ambitious and focused person." Learning Chinese was obviously all he focused on that summer so that Bob seemed "going crazy trying to improve his Chinese," the instructor commented. Interestingly, the instructor considered his personality type as partly good

and partly problematic for the program. A letter exchange between Bob and the instructor brought to light a story that can illustrate the "disadvantage" of being an ambitious person. The instructor recalled that in every class, Bob was the most talkative one though his Chinese skills at that time were far below the other students. Therefore, his talkativeness did hurt some of his classmates who thought Bob took up too much of the class' time. The instructor admitted frankly that this even made her feel frustrated sometimes since it would disturb the pace of instruction. Besides being very active in class, Bob's ambition was also shown in his interaction with people around him. According to the instructor, Bob was the only student who vigorously defended his positions against the criticism of the local audience after his presentation. What worried the instructor more was that Bob always adopted a very satirical manner to respond to the comments, which tended to irritate his audience. After a presentation during which Bob strongly defended himself when several audience members raised a question about the data he had collected for a study on "Chinese People's Political Rights," the instructor confronted him with a warning about the rudeness and rashness in his "attack" of the audience. Bob was almost shocked to find he was considered to be overbearing in Chinese peoples' eyes. In his later letter to the instructor, he expressed a strong insecurity since he realized that what once helped him win the respect from others now brought him frustration and embarrassment, with huge misunderstanding from people around him. According to the instructor, the biggest problem she found with Bob was that he insisted on transferring everything that once spelled success in his life to his current Chinese learning experience, without any understanding that learning to perform in another culture sometimes requires a new set of cognitive skills, and even an establishment of a

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new persona. This also became the main hurdle in his Chinese learning though he had spared no effort in achieving his goals.

4.2 Tom

4.2.1 Interview with Tom

4.2.1.1 Tom's Chinese Learning Background

Compared with Bob, Tom spent a much longer time and had richer experience in studying and living in China. His first experience with China took place in an undergraduate study abroad program in Beijing. He spent a summer and the following Fall Semester in Beijing, and took intensive Chinese language courses at Tsinghua Universitiy as well as traveling a lot on some study tours including visiting minorities in the Guizhou and Sichuan Provinces and traveling to some famous scenic spots such as the Yellow Mountain, Suzhou, and Shanghai.

After his first visit to China, he wanted nothing more than to go back and continue to improve his Mandarin. It made sense that he ended up applying for a job teaching English at the New Oriental School, a famous language-training center in China. However, he felt that this experience was actually very negative for him since his busy teaching schedule left him with almost no time to study. The only advantage he mentioned about this job was an opportunity to explore all over the city, from the suburbs of Changping to New Oriental's headquarters in Haidian.

After graduating from college, Tom received a Chinese government scholarship to study Chinese for one year at Sichuan University in Chengdu. The focus of the course was almost completely on language and very little on the actual content of what they

were reading or on Chinese culture. As Tom commented, the texts they used for study were also much more literary than the articles on Sino-American relations that they used in the Qingdao summer program. However, this experience of China for the third time was extremely valued by him since he intentionally tried very hard to avoid staying with his American friends and to make Chinese friends instead, and ended up having some close relationships with local people. He specifically mentioned his friendships with people in a martial arts community who met in and around Chengdu. Becoming very close with his martial arts teacher and his family, he ended up celebrating Chinese New Year with them. Towards the end of the session, after being sick for a long time that winter, he broke down and started hanging out with other foreigners more.

Comparing his study abroad experience in Sichuan with his experience in this program, he later responded in the post-program interview that "the good thing about this is that we were exposed to a wide variety of language on many different topics, and we learned specifics of certain word usages and differences in words with similar meanings. On a whole though, I found flagship classes this summer much more interesting because we read articles and wrote about interesting problems that have real world significance, not topics like *what is true happiness* or *describe the landscape pictured below*.

4.2.1.2 Expectations and goals

Having studied Chinese in Chengdu for nine months, Tom looked forward to applying his Chinese language and cultural knowledge gained from that experience to interact in a new Chinese community at a higher level during his two months stay in Qingdao. Regarding the language skills, Tom revealed that his previous Chinese learning

experience was targeted towards foreign students and focused a lot on literary language as opposed to practical tasks and understanding Chinese culture and thinking. Therefore, he especially hoped the summer program in Qingdao would offer him a new chance to be exposed to a new style of language study, resulting in improvements in all Chinese skills. Before going to Qingdao, his listening and speaking competence were much better than his reading and writing, which he believed were the aspects to improve the most during the summer program.

Aside from language, he said he would like to gain connections useful for his future and to have the experience of relationship building and development with the Chinese people. In his pre-site autobiographical statement, he wrote, "as a culture that highly values relationships, the relationships that I make over the next two months will hopefully help me out a lot in the future." By establishing his goal to pursue a career in China, he looked forward to cultivating these Chinese style relationship-building skills so that he could use them in his future job to build business relationships.

4.2.1.3 Comments and feedback on course format

Similarly to Bob, Tom also mentioned the course on Sino-American relations including readings, interviews and presentations as the most helpful class activities that helped him improve the most. But the detailed reasons he gave to account for this improvement differ from Bob's in some important aspects. In his interview, Tom expressed that the strong focus on primary source material and presentation giving was of great value in working towards the goal of becoming a global professional, as indicated by the Chinese Flagship program as its ultimate goal. Unlike Bob who put more

emphasis on the effectiveness of giving presentations in improving his listening and speaking skills, Tom gave more credit to the reading and discussion portions, during which, he was able to see how Chinese government officials, scholars, and citizens express themselves, which he felt very was helpful in understanding how to express his own ideas to different groups of people. By learning various conventional expressions used by different groups of people in different genres, as well as paying close attention to the rhetorical styles used in different styles of writing, Tom was able to engage in the reading more effectively to catch the meaning beyond the words. In addition to readings, presentations and interviews, assignments were also very valuable to him in learning to communicate in Chinese. Tom recalled the most successful moment of the entire program was his first presentation, at which, he was the first student in his class who successfully made a pertinent response to a question asked by a local audience member. Considering it was his first presentation, he was very proud of himself. As for the interview, he commented that it not only improved his listening and speaking skills, but also more importantly, forced him to come out of his shell and to communicate with total strangers. Tom recalled a very difficult but influential experience when he was trying to interview two immigrants working on a construction site on Xianggang Zhong Rd. in order to look at the influence of increasing currency on different groups of people. At the end of the program, he still remembered how his knees ached as he squatted all through the interview next to those working immigrants, trying to minimize the distance between them. Understanding the heavy unfamiliar accents of the interviewees as well as attempting to explain complex economic terminology in the most simple and direct way possible were challenging yet valuable experiences for Tom.

The only dissatisfaction with the course was that Tom felt there was too much time spent on presentation practice in class and as he considered that listening to other students talk was of limited value compared to listening to a native speaker. Though he appreciated that the course put a strong emphasis on the application of language instead of the language itself, he still wished some more time could be spent in introducing new vocabulary and explaining grammar more thoroughly. However, other students participating in this study expressed completely opposite opinions from Tom's. For some other students including Bob, who were not among the top of the class, listening to classmates' presentations and their comments not only gave then a break from the very intense class discussions, but also provided them a good opportunity to learn from some common mistakes especially when the instructor gave some criticism and led some very useful follow-up drills targeted on correcting certain types of mistakes.

4.2.1.4 Comments on out-of-class activities

Though the overall design of the course format lived up to his expectations and significantly increased his language skills, Tom still remarked in his post-program interview that the greatest and most valuable lesson was not learned in class. Instead, he felt a transformation taking place after numerous excursions into the local community as well as a series of cultural activities designed and organized by the program or explored on his own.

The most important out-of-class experience to Tom was his Chinese martial arts class that he attended three times a week. This experience takes up most of his written journal, in which, he told numerous stories, ranging from finding a martial arts school, to

identifying himself with that group, to learning martial arts with local young kids as well as establishing a meaningful relationship with his marital arts teacher. More detailed experiences will be revealed in 4.1.2 when analyzing his journals.

Reviewing his rich cultural experience out of the classroom, Tom commented that the biggest gain from those activities was "a framework through which to look at culture and interacting in a society different from one's own." For example, Chinese style banquets were something that he was very familiar with from his previous stay in Sichuan, but he never knew the rules, and remembered just going along and feeling things out blindly. However, during his stay in Qingdao, numerous out-of-class contacts with the local community accompanying a class instruction on the cultural rules behind learners' individual experiences, helped him establish a framework in which to view all his experiences, which he felt was most helpful. For example, receiving a lecture on attending Chinese style banquets before the field trip and practicing on several real banquets with local heads of certain governmental organizations or corporations in different cities, helped Tom to learn the customs about *zhupei* (principal host) and *fupei* (assistant host), and how to give toasts, and he gradually got more comfortable with those complicated procedures. Through this framework, he was also allowed to reflect on his past numerous experiences attending some Chinese banquets in China, and understand things that he did well or poorly also.

4.2.1.5 Self-assessment

Tom's evaluation of his own performance especially considering the effort he had put into the program, was very low, which is very different from his instructor's

extremely positive observations about him. Though it is very likely that Tom just wanted to show his modesty by downplaying the progress he had made when talking to the researcher during his interview, he still gave a quite reasonable explanation for why he didn't put forth much effort during the program. As he said, though he was very sure his Chinese would be improved after this academically intense program, he was still a little reluctant about whether to attend or not since another nine week program would definitely lengthen his stay in China. After spending one year immersing himself in a completely Chinese atmosphere in Chengdu, he started to miss home a lot especially after being sick all winter. This homesickness influenced his motivation during the summer program, and he became less diligent in his studies and spent less effort socializing with his new Chinese friends.

When commenting on his progress made during the summer program, Tom's evaluation was still positive. However, instead of listing any language skill as the first thing he was able to improve, Tom considered a gain in cultural knowledge to be more valuable to him which he did not expect before coming to this program. As already reviewed in 4.2.1.4," the biggest gain was a framework through which to look at culture and interacting in a society different from one's own." In addition, Tom also valued his new friendships in Qingdao, including his Gongfu teacher and some local Chinese students.

4.2.2 Tom's writing journals

Tom's four cultural journals consist mainly of records of his experience of learning Chinese Gongfu after class and his two observations of cultural phenomenon that

attracted his attention. In the first journal, he recorded his observation of a group of elderly people exercising on some outdoor fitness equipment outside the campus. With a strong interest in doing physical exercises and Chinese Gongfu, Tom showed a keen interest in this scene before him. This very common activity in China attracted his attention because there is no outdoor fitness equipment in the U.S. and it is more difficult for elderly people to exercise. Tom expressed his appreciation of Chinese elderly people's attitude in his writings since his observation that there are much more elderly people exercising with a higher frequency in China than in the U.S. Tom believed this must have something to do with China's mandatory retirement age. He also tried to give some deeper reflection on his observation by relating it to the close relationship within Chinese families and his understanding of *xiao* (filial piety) in Chinese culture. The observation of old people doing exercises at an outdoor gym was also mentioned in the other three students' journals, and interestingly, they also all tried to relate this to the Chinese values of family and their tradition of *xiao* (filial piety).

Another observation that Tom brought to his cultural journal aroused more heated discussion. In that journal, Tom expressed his shock when seeing a few commercials on induced abortions posted on a bus, a huge signboard on the street and other public places. This finding was completely contrary to his impression of China as conservative and traditional. In his writing, he said, in some aspects, China is even more capitalistic than America. In his journal, he expressed his full understanding of the necessity of induced abortion in China to uphold the one-child policy. However, he expressed his surprise to see how abortions can be commercialized in a way that would never happen in America. Tom also mentioned the change that China is going through after carrying out its reform

and opening-up policy. Discussions in both journals represent Tom's deep understanding of the Chinese society and his sophisticated way of expressing his thoughts in Chinese.

In addition, the two journals both recorded his experience in learning Chinese Gongfu which involved looking for a Gongfu society, routine activities in the group, introductions of his teacher and fellow students. Tom's journal shows that he was confused when he failed to find any websites advertizing Gongfu classes. After that, his local Chinese tutor whose son was practicing tae kwon do introduced him to a quite well-known Gongfu teacher who owned a martial arts school in Qingdao. After joining that group, he asked his teacher one day if he needed any help to post an advertisement online. However, the teacher felt very confused since he never bothered to do that before because he had always had a lot of students sent to him through *guanxi* (connections). Tom reported this interesting finding to his instructor, with whose help, Tom was able to understand that in order to establish a *guanxi*, it is very important to be properly introduced, preferably through a mutual third party.

Besides maintaining a record of domain activities, Tom's journal especially expressed his respect to his teacher, a man filled with strong *renqingwei* (human touch). More importantly, he came to realize that this *renqingwei* is a crucial criterion in evaluating a *guanxi*. Tom's record of his experience of learning Chinese Gongfu as well as the instructor's analysis in class brought very meaningful observation to an out-of-classroom activity and proved that learning can take place without formal teaching, which will be given a detailed discussion and analysis in Chapter Five.

4.2.3 Observing Tom from the instructor's perspective

Having one year's study in Chengdu before coming to the summer program, Tom obviously had a more solid foundation in both language skills and culture understanding than some of the other students. The instructor gave the most positive comments on Tom's performance in the program among all the five participants observed in this study. In addition to Tom's large vocabulary and comparatively sophisticated writing skills, the instructor especially gave high praise to Tom's manners and his cultural understanding, which she felt made Tom stand out among his peers. According to the instructor, "it is always comfortable to talk with Tom since he always nodded his head while talking to show his attentiveness and interest in the conversation, which was seldom always shown in other American students' manners. The instructor commented, "He is even more Chinese than most Chinese people" which reveals that he was deeply influenced by the Chinese culture and even carried it into his daily life. The instructor believed that this must have something to do with his strong interest in Chinese Gongfu since his behavior always reflected the Confucian norms and values. When asked about this students' disadvantages, the instructor said his introverted personality may have somewhat prevented him from making good use of the rich learning resources in the community by missing some good opportunities for more effective communication with people around him. However, with a strong determination to make greater progress in learning Chinese, as introduced by the instructor, "he had forced himself out of his shell to actively make contact with people from all walks of life." According to the instructor, during the interview assignment, unlike some students who usually stuck to interviewing college students who they are very familiar with, Tom always forced himself to interview people from different backgrounds. Interviewees for his studies even involved immigrants

working at a construction site, university professors and civil servants working for the municipal government. Overall, with a solid foundation in Chinese and a strong determination to achieve greater success in the current study program, the instructor's evaluation of Tom was highest in the class.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRANSITION FROM LEARNING CHINESE TO LEARNING IN CHINESE

5.1 Transition from Learning Chinese to Learning in Chinese

An analysis of two subjects' interview responses reveals that the Chinese Flagship program is unique in that it incorporates trainings on all four language skills as well as cultural understandings and strategies of using language into an integral language course whereas other more "traditional" programs focus exclusively on learning linguistic items. According to the two subjects, the most effective class activities involve reading about different perspectives on the Sino-American relationship, conducting studies on related topics, interviewing local people to get a regional viewpoint and giving public presentations on findings to a local audience. When making a comparison between the current course format and their previous Chinese language classes, both of the subjects noted a vast improvement in the course design. Bob recalled his previous classroom experience by saying "the only thing we discussed in class was the language itself." Therefore, he was excited to discuss non-language related topics in Chinese, realizing that as an advanced student, improving language skills and cultural understanding is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. He also believed this to be one of the highlights of this program, which as he said, "set the Chinese Flagship program apart from other language programs." Similarly, Tom also discussed several differences of his

one-year study abroad experience at Sichuan University compared to others in which he had participated:

Studying at Sichuan University in Chengdu, I found that the focus was almost completely on language and very little on the actual content of what we were reading. The texts were also much more literary than the articles on Sino-American relations that we read this summer. The good thing about this is that we were exposed to a wide variety of language on many different topics, and we learned specifics of certain word usages and differences in words with similar meaning. On a whole though, I found flagship classes this summer much more interesting and effective because we read articles and wrote about interesting problems that have real world significance, not topics like "what is true happiness" or "describe the landscape pictured below."

The other three participants in the program, who all had previous traditional study abroad experience in China, whole heartedly agreed that their current program was much improved particularly the course format which included readings, interviews and presentations. All participants commented that these particular aspects of the program were the most useful "in regards to becoming a global professional."

There is a distinct stage of learning any language at an advanced level where one ceases to be consciously aware of the linguistic items such as the grammar and vocabulary. All of these aspects come together and begin to "click." Suddenly the student finds that he or she has transitioned from the stage of simply learning Chinese to learning in Chinese. Feedback from participants, especially a comparison with one's previous study experience in China commented that this program made that vital transition easier and more natural. They were able to effortlessly apply their existing Chinese language skills and cultural knowledge to problem-solving tasks within the culture in order to gain understanding of a body of knowledge in domain-related topics as well as further their knowledge of Chinese.

This aspect of language learning and instruction at this stage can be better explained

by discussing two types of instruction for designing an intensive Chinese curriculum proposed by Walker (2010): *learning model instruction* (LMI) and *acquisition model instruction* (AMI). LMI is concerned teaching items—vocabulary, grammatical patterns, cultural mores, and appropriate linguistic responses to specified situations (Walker, 2010:58). The goal at this stage is to expand the learners' inventory of linguistic and cultural knowledge through a series of dialogues, drills and exercises. According to Walker, the initial stage of an elementary Chinese course will consist entirely of LMI, but will gradually be taken over by the other model: AMI. AMI is concerned with processes of using language, which is designed to practice the application of the learners' existing Chinese skills to problem-solving tasks (Walker, 2010:58). This supports what has been revealed from learners' reports of the current Chinese Flagship program, which is concerned with applying students' existing inventory of language skills and cultural knowledge to Chinese events, with an emphasis on imparting strategies and tactics for using them appropriately in a wide variety of occasions.

According to Walker, as the level of instruction advances, AMI will steadily increase until it becomes "the exclusive type of instruction at the highest levels of the curriculum" (Walker, 2010:60). However, learners' reviews of their previous in-China study experiences reflect that AMI had only a minor presence in those courses they attended, partly because some programs were designed for beginners such as Bob and Linda, and fell short of meaningful curriculum design for advanced level learners like Tom, Mike and Amy.

In this section, a detailed analysis of the current course format based on participants' reports and researcher's observations presented in Chapter Four, tend to look at how the

design of the course facilitates learners' capacities for learning Chinese through the medium of Chinese and how learners eventually grow independent of the learning environment, increasing their ability in the macro- and microsystems of the language and culture by making the fullest use of the local community.

5.1.1   Reading different discourses from government, scholars and netizens

As introduced in Chapter Three, the reading material used in class was edited by Xiaobin Jian, the director of the summer program in Qingdao, and consists of articles on Sino-American relations some of which include "hot topics," which are controversial, but crucial and unavoidable issues which are currently debated among Chinese citizens throughout the country. All the articles were collected from Chinese mass media sources and presented in their original form without any changes in the texts. This selection of texts in this program supports what Walker proposed for instructional materials used in AMI, which should be linguistic artifacts from the society, or societies, in which the language is spoken and written (Walker, 2010: 60).

Using these authentic reading materials, the students took up to a week to read and analyze each article. The second week was devoted to interviews and presentations on the specific issues found in the articles. In proposing a performance-based reading instruction program, Yongfang Zhang (2009) explores the fundamental nature of reading by defining it as a purposeful social activity, involving three steps: identifying the purpose of reading, reading comprehension, and performing to achieve the purpose. Interestingly, it is clear from the participants' critiques of the reading portion of the program, presented in Chapter Four, that they had no problem understanding the purpose of their reading

assignments. As Tom noted in his interview, he felt that the main course consisting of reading different articles on "hot topics" did an excellent job in helping him prepare to express his own ideas to different groups of people in the future, including Chinese government officials with whom he may work, professors in universities with whom he is likely to study, as well as numerous people he may encounter such as Chinese colleagues, classmates, neighbors, strangers he might meet at a café. Students' understanding of the purpose of reading is also in line with the course objectives: to provide training in the area of properly interpreting Chinese intentions and to prepare non-native learners to begin practicing negotiating with such intentions as professionals.

From the researcher's observation of the classes, we can see that the pedagogical goal of the reading class has already surpassed the stage of decoding and a passive search of linguistic rules to aid in determining meaning. Instead, learners were guided to use their existing inventory of vocabulary, syntactic and semantic competence, contextual knowledge as well as their accumulated cultural knowledge to give a meaningful interpretation to the text. This process of reading is constructive and dynamic. More importantly, when leading the discussion of readings, the instructor put a great emphasis on typical text structure of a certain type of discourse and the cultural background knowledge pertinent to the topic. For example, in discussing the article "Chimerica: the greatest achievement of U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue", the instructor first guided learners to give a hierarchical summary of the scholar's point of view, by pointing out that separating from numerous rhetorical expressions first such as irony and metaphor, to catch the key sentence and central point-of-view is a typical strategy of reading scholarly texts of this kind. After achieving a clear idea of the perspective taken

by the writer, students were asked to look over the article a second time, during which, they needed to focus only on the rhetorical expressions to discover their connotations and various tones expressed in the article. With training like this for every article, students soon developed their knowledge of text structures of different discourses, which helped them to recall more textual information and eventually achieve better comprehension. During the reading class, new vocabulary, idiomatic expressions as well as syntactic structures are all left for students' independent study time, and the instructor therefore, was able to spend less time introducing new vocabulary and expressions in class. During the classes that the researcher observed, the instructor only spent twenty minutes out of three hours in class answering questions from students about those linguistic items that they failed to understand through independent study. However, the instructor did draw students' attention to certain rhetorical expressions when they were essential to the creation of a certain style of discourse. For example, students had group discussions in class about numerous metaphors used throughout the articles and eventually came to understand that it is quite common for Chinese writers to use metaphorical expressions to refer to some controversial people or events as well as to reveal one's individual style or achieve some humorous or ironic effects. During his interview, Bob expressed his surprise when he came across the satirical styles present in many of the Chinese scholars' articles. This indicates that a reading assignment such as this is quite necessary for students to gain access to a wide variety of texts and develop a deep understanding of them by gaining familiarity with the conventional expressions, textual structure as well as the varied styles of different discourses.

From observation, the role of the instructor is not simply to give direct assessment of

students' interpretation of textual meanings by showing the "correct" answers, instead, by emphasizing different parts of the text step by step, the instructor implicitly revealed her teaching style to students, which closely resembles the reading strategies native Chinese people usually adopt for analyzing certain types of text. In addition, when sharing her understanding of the text with students the instructor again presented learners with a typical interpretation from the perspective of a native Chinese reader, which is determined by his or her social context. The reading instruction and learning process revealed in this program sets it apart from the prevalent philosophy that as long as students can understand characters, words and syntactic structures, they will comprehend the text, which is also seen as the ultimate goal of reading. To lower the linguistic threshold for reading, focus has been taken away from explaining linguistic items by introducing the typical reading strategies determined by the social context.

5.1.2   Conducting individual studies: Paradigm shifting in viewing the Sino-American relationship

As stated in 5.1.1, it is obvious to students, instructors and program designers that the ultimate goal of the reading course in this program is to help learners participate in conversations with native Chinese to negotiate their intentions and interpret others' at the same time. Reading itself is not the end goal, but a means to help learners engage in an unfamiliar and challenging task that requires them to apply knowledge from previous lessons. Specifically speaking, within this course, this novel task involves conducting an individual study by interviewing a local Chinese citizen about a topic related to those discussed in class and reporting findings to a local audience including professionals in the

field of learning research. The first step is to define a research topic based on students' knowledge of what topics of conversation are likely to be of interest to Chinese people. Students often find inspiration for appropriate topics from texts studied in class., However, from Bob's example presented in Chapter Four, we are able to see that misunderstanding still exists when it requires some paradigm shifting between two different cultures. When conducting the research on "Chinese people's perspectives on universal values" during the seventh week, almost all the topics chosen by the students involved personal choice, freedom, human rights, and governmental dictatorship and censorship concerning the arts. However, judging from the comments later from the local audience, all these issues the students chose for their studies did not rank highly on the natives' list of concerns, and therefore definitely cannot be called "universal values" from the Chinese perspective. The choice of research topics and the feedback from the Chinese audience revealed that there is a huge gap between what American students perceived as a worldwide value in China and what the natives perceived as essential to their lives. Through this experience, students are continually reminded about differing cultural values and perceptions of the world. It is essential that students be aware of this shifting paradigm. Linda's feedback reveals to us that though the paradigm shift will not take place automatically and overnight, students were eventually able to realize its significance and remind themselves of its importance during their conversations with Chinese people:

"This course has a clear emphasis on Chinese's point of view. Through continuously re-thinking and re-designing our interview questions, I came to learn how they actually view and express their views on those issues affecting US-Sino relationship. Though I don't agree with some of their opinions, it is important for me to know what's in their mind. I need to communicate with them in an effective way, instead of telling them what's wrong

with their point of view from my (foreigner's) perspective."

5.1.3 Interviewing local strangers

From class readings, students were already familiar with each topic on the three different levels of governmental discourse, scholarly discourse, and mass discourse. Interviews with local people were a particularly important follow-up activity and added a new perspective on the topics being studied. Conducting interviews with the locals became a crucial first step in gaining practice for future discussions..

From the researcher's observation, interviews usually took place after class and mainly over the weekend. During the first interview, most students chose to ask their Chinese roommates to accompany them as suggested by the instructor. However, the Chinese roommate was not allowed to help in anyway. His or her job was to stand by observing the interview and to write down mistakes made by students and note any misunderstanding that took place during the interview process. Most local Chinese students were able to give suggestions on suitable places to find a willing subject, such as a district with a dense population, a neighborhood with more elderly residents, a district having numerous foreign businesses. Having some Chinese students share their knowledge about particular regions is very important not only for pedagogical reasons, but also for safety reasons, especially during the first week. Chinese students also played the role of go-betweens, which is also a crucial element for establishing new relationships and participating in negotiations in Chinese culture. Through his roommate, one student was able to interview some high school political science teachers, who were able to explain widely held points of view on the Taiwan issue since they were party members.

However, the Chinese students were forbidden to help the American students make a request, start a conversation, or negotiate intentions of the locals.

Though learners were required to conduct the interview independently, they were still given specific instructions and directions before every interview, with a focus on strategies to initiate, expand and end a conversation, including conventional expressions to start a discussion, appropriate use of different terms of address, polite closing words and good wishes to end a conversation. Before the interview concerning the Taiwan issue, learners were specially trained on how to begin a talk on this sensitive issue in an indirect way as well as the choice of wording during the interview process to avoid some potential conflicts (from students' reports, we can see they learned to use "台湾省" (Taiwan Province) instead of "国家" (country) when referring to Taiwan so as not to offend Chinese people's sense of nationalism). Learners were also encouraged to interview different groups of people in order to get contrasting points of view instead of focusing exclusively on, Chinese students on the campus. Tom's account of his successful experience of interviewing immigrants working on a construction site is a good example to see how strategic learning plays a vital role in instructing students to conduct effective communication with different groups of people within a target community. By sitting with that worker he intended to interview and continuously adjusting his use of terms to make the questions easier to understand, Tom came to realize that to talk with ordinary Chinese people on serious topics; you must first minimize the distance between the interviewee and yourself and pretend that their answers do not matter a lot to the interviewer so that they are allowed to talk in the way they preferred as "乱说" (talk randomly) or "随便说说" (talk in a casual way). Other

students also reported that listening to strangers' talk is a beneficial experience which exposed them to interlocutors' various speech patterns, strong accents and dialectal expressions, all of which are quite different from the standard Mandarin that they were familiar with everyday from their instructors.

5.1.4   Giving public presentations to a local audience

From the students' feedback, giving presentations to the local public in a professional manner was considered the most useful activity in regards to becoming "a global professional." In defining professionally useful foreign language skills at an advanced level, Patrick McAloon listed being able to give convincing presentations and conduct negotiations in a culturally-appropriate manner as the most crucial abilities in establishing an expert persona in one's domain.

Through giving presentations on their individual studies, students not only made the best use of their language skills such as correct pronunciation, good fluency and extensive vocabulary, but also more importantly, focused on other strategic aspects such as coherence, clarity, content and improvisational performance to deal with questions and feedback from the audience. In addition, through repetitive public presentations, learners gradually developed a sense of the conventional Chinese way of delivering presentations expected by the Chinese audience such as behaving with both confidence and modesty. From students' experiences reported in Chapter Four, it seems that local audience's focus was not only on the discussion of a certain topic, but also on the manner in which students conducted their research and delivered their presentations, with the latter aspect usually receiving more attention and sometimes generating controversial opinions among

the audience. For example, from the audience's reaction, Bob realized that using satire in his presentation that could be a very successful tactic in American culture failed to achieve a humorous effect among his Chinese audience. Instead, it ended up bringing embarrassment and even humiliation to the class, especially to his teachers. After apologizing profusely to the instructor, Bob came to an essential realization that it is dangerous to blindly transfer a successful tactic in one culture (such as using satire to show wisdom and humor) to a different culture people of which have no appreciation of it and may even interpret it as a lack of respect. In addition, he came to know that sometimes, along with a paradigm shift, it is even necessary to change his personality to suit a different situation. In his example, as a quite successful student who enjoys debating and leadership, Bob's continuous defending of his own opinions during the Q&A session of the presentation made the Chinese audience feel uncomfortable and consider him to be overbearing and arrogant. Through engaging in presentations that were guided and framed largely by the cultural norms of the target community, students were able to acquire knowledge of both obvious and hidden cultural norms in an implicit way. The report from the program director indicates that having the presentation open to the public and encouraging the audience to ask "tough" questions are pedagogical decisions intentionally, aimed at forcing learners to step out of their comfort zones and to see the huge gap between their cultural values and those of the Chinese. Students may be "just learners" in the eyes of their teachers, but to the unknown Chinese audience attending their presentations, students are already treated as American professionals who have a genuine interest in learning about a Chinese language, culture and the people, by discussing Sino-American issues with Chinese people. Unlike the "role playing" games

most language learners use during their traditional classroom experience, in this "real life" game, Chinese audiences asked real questions off the top of their heads. Only through this kind of repeated exposure to and practice in the real world, can learners develop the capability of working effectively in a multi-cultural and multi-lingual world in the future.

5.2 Learning in Social Co-participation

A language-learning program that consists of instructional settings isolated from actual performance would tend to split the learner's ability to manage the learning context apart from his/her ability to perform the skill in the broader social world. This observation is especially true when considering an in-country study program, in which classroom instruction and out-of-classroom activities are supposed to be two integral and inseparable components, together built into the curriculum design. It is undisputed that the living experience itself is supposed to be the most valuable instructional resource that can distinguish an in-country study experience from a domestic language program. However, the out-of-classroom contact should not simply be equated with informal experience-based learning, involving some random attempts at communication with citizens of the community. Numerous previous studies have cautioned us that simply living in the target society does not guarantee that meaningful learning is going to take place since a haphazard sojourn into the target society may only end up as a series of missed learning opportunities. Students' personal journals are the most important window to reflect their experience of living in the target society. A review of two subjects' journals presented in Chapter Four along with the researcher's observation of class

discussions on these journals reveals to us how the out-of-classroom activities were integrated into an instructional setting which was able to enhance students' in-China study experience, serving as an effective mechanism to maximize learners' gain in language and culture learning during the in-China study. In addition, the two subjects' experience recorded in the journals also supports the theory of LLP reviewed in 2.2.2, which asserts that learning takes place in the form of a social co-participation, in which learners as newcomers move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community.

5.2.1 *Ayi* (aunt), *shushu* (uncle) and *dage* (elder brother): Addressing strangers as family members

Bob's first cultural journal entilted, *"Wo jiao ni shen me? "* (How should I address you?) accompanied by a photo taken with an elderly Chinese couple not only describes his experience of establishing friendship with a Chinese family (a couple who owned a grocery store on campus), but also reveals details about his transformation from a newcomer to an experienced member of that society. When Bob went to the shop the first few times, he played the role of an observer, who was only able to see the community from the outside. He stood outside the store and watched people laughing and talking together and wondered who they were and what they were saying. As he continued to watch, he soon began to understand the complex relationships between them. For example, as recorded in his journal, he assumed that those young girls who called the female shop owner a*yi* (aunt) were not her actual relatives. This was simply a term of endearment used to show their friendliness towards her. Bob also believed that if he

adopted this term of address it would help build a solid friendship and a relationship of trust. Though he still felt uncomfortable about using the familiar term to greet the shop owner, he started his first conversation just as the other young people did, respectfully calling the male and female owners "*dashu*" and "*ayi*." According to his journal entry, it is obvious that this strategy actually brought him success in moving closer to the people in the community. This eventually led to the female owner introducing her whole family to Bob and treating him like her own son. Simultaneously, Bob was getting more and more comfortable with addressing strangers as family members. Even his identity, the way he views and understands himself, was slightly changed during this process, as he remarked, "it is sweet that this old couple always treat the regular student customers as their own children."

However, the learning did not cease here and continued to be enhanced after Bob wrote about this experience in his journal. The instructor decided to share this passage with the whole class and posted it on the Internet which presented Bob's observations and discussion to a broader group of Chinese readers he did not know before. The instructor decided to base a deeper discussion around this phenomenon, concerning the fundamental reasons behind Bob's experience and brought out the differences between the two cultures. With the assistance of a class discussion, all the students were able to reach the conclusion that the importance of the in-group identity is embodied in the Chinese terms of address. In informal situations, family terms are extensively used in people's daily lives to include friends of the family into the inner circle. The instructor further explained to Bob and the other students that using family terms is not only limited to people you know, such as regular customers in a shop, but can also be applied to strangers. For

example, when requesting help from others like asking directions on the street or shopping in a store, this kind of term of address is expected to be used since it always indicates a close relationship between speakers. In Chinese culture, it is believed that by using familial terms, relationships are easier to build in the community. It is people's obligation to help outsiders become part of the group and this relationship usually brings many benefits as Bob reported in his later interview that the *ayi* always gave him first choice of the best pork chop for lunch.

Two pedagogical implications can be drawn from Bob's case. First, obviously learning can take place where there is formal teaching, but intentional instruction is not the only source of learning. The in-country study experience provides students with broader access to the target language and culture and students' growth during this process is based on a series of specific experiences that they have accumulated in a set of identifiable social networks. Through repeated participation in certain cultural rituals, learners not only gain an understanding of the surrounding socio-cultural context, but also acquire the skills to maneuver through the situation on their own. Second, in addition to taking advantage of the surroundings, students' experience in the program also reveals to us that an integration of their living experience into the curriculum will further enhance the learning process. Without the assignment of keeping a cultural journal, Bob may not have necessarily paid much attention to his experience, let alone reflected on the larger cultural issue of the in-group and out-group identities. After going in that store to buy lunch almost everyday, he was very likely to observe the custom of using *ayi* and *dashu* to greet the shop owners like other Chinese students did there. However, it is the design of this assignment that motivated the student not to stop at the observation stage, but to

instead complete a learning cycle by reflecting on the reasons behind the seemingly common phenomenon, generalizing a hypothesis about his questions and eventually putting it into action through a conversation with the shop owners. In addition, class discussion on cultural issues revealed in students' writing that by sharing their experiences in a blog, they become more meaningful. Because of this means of sharing, students who were not able to sensitively observe this phenomenon could vicariously "live" the experience and learn similar lessons about the culture.

5.2.2 *Yi ri wei shi, zhong sheng wei fu* (One who is your teacher one day, is your father for your entire lifetime.): A lesson about *renqing* (the human touch) from Chinese Gongfu class

Tom's several cultural journals about his growing involvement in a Chinese Gongfu group provides a look at how the increased access to a nexus of relationships within a domain group can facilitate the learning of both language and culture of the target society. From Tom's interactions with his Gongfu teacher and fellow group members, it is obvious that information is shared among all participants within a certain community. The first meaningful observation provided by Tom's experience is that learning does not just take place during participation in various activities in the group, but starts earlier in the initial stage when the learner identifies himself with that new group. When Tom searched online for a Gongfu class, he could not find any websites advertising these classes. At that time, he even wondered why the field of martial arts didn't have a larger presence on the Internet. Later, he had his local Chinese tutor act as a go-between to make initial contact with a Gongfu teacher she was familiar with, allowing Tom to eventually join in the group. This

experience taught him how to establish relationships in Chinese society. The whole process of his presentation and later identification with that community was made possible by having a go-between to recommend him to the group, and eventually joining in the group and meeting his new teacher and fellow students, had taught him a lot about establishing relationships in Chinese society. Similarly, due to his mentioning the story of looking for a Gongfu class in Qingdao in his journal and later in the class discussion, his fellow classmates were also able to achieve a deep understanding of establishing social networks in Chinese culture. The discussion led by the instructor finally reached the conclusion that in order to establish a *guanxi* (relationship), it is very important to be properly introduced, preferably through a mutual third party. Having the connection of a mutual friend usually is much more effective than attempting to establish a *guanxi* as a total stranger. Moreover, this notion of *guanxi* is far more appreciated in the traditional Chinese culture and therefore was especially valued by his Chinese Gongfu teacher. Tom's Gongfu teacher later expressed that it is common to accept new students only when they are recommended by reliable people in his social networks, most of them from the world of Chinese Gongfu, and he had never thought of posting an advertisement to the world outside. Through the conversation with his Gongfu teacher and a follow-up class discussion of his experience, it became clearer to Tom why he had failed to get the information he needed before.

From the researcher's observation, Tom's language skills were greatly improved as a result of his weekly participation in that group. Since his teacher was a very traditional Chinese man who knew no English and had no interest in Western culture at all, Tom had no choice but to communicate exclusively in Chinese. Not only did the teacher use a lot of jargon to refer to different moves in a set of pattern, but also he used numerous Chinese

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sayings and slang such as "*tai shang yi fen zhong, tai xia shi nian gong*" (One minute on stage takes ten years of practice.), "*lao niu la po che*" (An old bullock pulling a broken cart, which indicates cumbersome moves and very slow progress) to comment on students' performance. The language used by the Gongfu teacher was quite different from the "standard" Chinese learners are exposed to in everyday class, and therefore was a big challenge to the American students. However, at the same time, repeated participation in the group made learning easier for them. According to Tom's journal, he became familiar with all the moves' names soon and picked up many interesting sayings from his teacher. The other two students who joined the Gongfu group with Tom were also observed to use the sayings and new expressions in their Chinese writings. When using these expressions, they even developed a sense of pride in their new identity as a "*xi wu zhi ren*" (people who practice martial arts).

In addition to an increase in language skills, the long time immersion in the Gongfu group also enhanced the students' understanding of Chinese culture and gradually constructed a new persona for him. Besides maintaining a record of domain activities, Tom's journal especially expressed his respect for the Gongfu teacher, who was a man filled with strong *renqingwei*. It is very difficult to find an equivalent in English for *renqingwei*. Jian and Shpherd (2010) gave a quite clear explanation of the word. The first two characters together mean "human feelings" and here they refer to kindness and thoughtfulness. The third character in the term means "taste," "smell," and "feel." The term then can be understood as "a feeling of human kindness," "human touch" (Jian & Shepherd 2010: 111) In Tom's observation of his Gongfu teacher and his interaction with his students, he realized. that the whole Gongfu group was filled with strong *renqingwei*. This cannot

only be reflected in the familial terms of address, such as *shifu, shixiong,* and *shidi.* but also

shown in their mutual care for each other even out of the class. Tom came to realize that

this *renqingwei* is a crucial criterion in evaluating a *guanxi*. He also recalled his other

experience in joining a Gongfu group during his previous in-China study experience in S

Sichuan:

"I not only learned the skills of martial arts, but also learned how to be a good human being through observations of others' behavior. My Gongfu teacher Master Duan in Sichuan also has a lot of qualities that are valued in Chinese culture: he is very generous, and he really appreciates "renqing." I think the biggest difference between Chinese culture and Western culture is the much higher status of social relationships in Chinese culture. I am very close to Master Duan. In the Confucian thoughts, a famous saying goes that: if someone acts as your teacher for one day, he/she will be your father forever". There (in the martial arts group), I have also learned the traditional moral values such as filial piety in Chinese culture."

In the interview, Tom frankly expressed to the researcher that after joining this Gongfu

group, he felt himself becoming different from many of his American classmates in the U.S.

He said some of his American classmates were too ego-centered, and it would be good if

Western people could learn caring for others from Chinese culture. Bob also mentioned this

in his interview that he felt he acted a "little weird" after coming back to the U.S, since he

could not help becoming sensitive to people around him and started caring a lot for them

instead of just "being himself." Both of the students considered this change to be a positive

one, saying that this made them different from their friends at home though they may still

switch back to their American persona long after they came back to the U.S.

Tom's case shows to us there is no single teacher-student or master-apprentice model

in the learning process. Instead, the role of "instructor" is shared among all members of the

community. In the above cases, there is little observable teaching, but much learning taking

place. Students were able to learn the "curriculum" in a broader sense by interacting with

different members of the community, in which, they gradually develop a view of what the whole enterprise looks like and what they are expected to acquire. During such experiences, though language learning is part of the lesson, it is not the ultimate goal of it. Instead, during participation in community life, Chinese language becomes the central medium of transformation, by which, learners are able to acquire conventional expressions and behaviors as well as cultural norms maintained by a certain group. Since it is impossible for learners to master everything about a language and culture, limiting one's scope to a small group makes the lessons more manageable.

5.2.3 *Reqinghaoke* (hospitality) or *chongyangmeiwai* (worship of foreign things and fawn over foreign power): A criticism from a blog commenter

The two cases mentioned in the above sections both involve learning taking place specifically when students actively identified themselves with a certain group. In addition, they were able to reflect on what they had learned about the culture when they shared their experiences with the community on the Internet, which further contributed to their learning. The interaction online itself expands learners' repertoire of vocabulary and expressions and gives them more opportunities to practice establishing their own intention while interpreting other's and negotiate with Chinese people concerning various issues. As a result of listing the key words of their blog post, the blog system always brought them into contact with professionals in their field, which facilitated their understanding of certain cultural issues. In Bob's example, we can see that a sociology professor was able to provide further explanation about terms of address saying that the use of family terms for strangers results from the fact that Chinese social networks are derived from blood relationships,

which is a typical characteristic of an agricultural society. This professor's point-of-view definitely brought a new level of understanding to Bob's reflection and more importantly, it brought Bob more confidence since he had never expected that an actual professor would visit his blog, and be interested in his post enough to comment and start a discussion with him. In addition, with the assistance of the Internet, their reflections and discussions were exposed to people who could be more objective about them than their teachers. Mike, a student who was not as lucky as Bob, whose blog did not attract a professor with an illuminating point-of-view, but an irritated Chinese reader who was very antagonistic toward one of his posts.

As revealed in Chapter Four, Mike mistakenly chose the word *chongyanmeiwai* (worship of foreign things and fawning over foreign power) to describe his fellow group members in a Chinese calligraphy forum, which truly irritated an anonymous Chinese reader of his blog. Though Mike believed that he did not say anything negative about Chinese people and "just slightly complained about their over enthusiasm" as he recalled in the interview, the word he chose was actually very negative and strong enough to insult Chinese readers. The heavy criticisms from his reader made Mike feel very frustrated and regretful, but also forced him to reflect more on the Chinese tradition of hospitality. Moreover, Mike gained much from the experience because during the process of, explaining the misunderstanding and making an apology to the Chinese reader, his language skills, cultural understanding and tactics and strategies in Chinese negotiation all grew as a result of the negative experience.

5.2.4 Conclusion

The analysis of the collected data affords us with several observations of students' identification in a certain domain community, in which learning takes place in the form of a social co-participation. First, during an in-country study, a large part of the learning is likely to take place where there is no formal teaching. This learning process, as we observed, best fits the model of LPP elaborated in Chapter Two. Shop owners and regular customers shopping in the store, a Chinese Gongfu teacher, and his fellow students are all experienced "old-timers" who helped learners to increase their sociolinguistic competence in order to establish a closer relationship with the people around them. At first, the learner was on the periphery of the community, but he gradually identified himself with a social group by observing old-timers' behavior as well as directly asking them to explain aspects of it that confused him. More importantly, writing a journal for reflection on such experiences helped the learner to think more profoundly about what he had experienced so that he could explore the hidden but important cultural issues behind the experience. Bob's experience even motivated his initial interest in the topic of identity, and he later chose "Chinese workers' collective identity" for his graduate thesis to further conduct independent interviews and studies on this issue. By moving closer to the center of the community, the learner will not only become a competent member of the society, but may even become an expert in that field.

Second, participating in a certain domain group helps to increase learners' linguistic skills in all aspects. Tom's experience in the Gongfu class reveals to us that by being forced out of the teacher-student role in a classroom setting, the learner must assume all the responsibility of initiating, maintaining and expanding a conversation which occurred when he took part in the activities with the Gongfu group. This interaction challenged

learners' language proficiency and pushed them to actively listen to others. By taking part in the online communication by the means of blog writing and responding to comments, especially handling the harsh criticism from the readers they did not know, learners improved their communicative strategies in their new language.

Interactions within a domain community specifically improve learners' sociolinguistic skills and eventually help them construct a second-culture worldview after a series of psychological changes. Acquiring appropriate terms of address to build an intimate relationship, understanding and performing the traditional cultural norms shared by most Chinese people, learning a Chinese way of showing hospitality all represent valuable gains in sociolinguistic competence as well as a deeper understanding of the Chinese culture. Besides, experiences in a domain community also provide learners with confidence that supports what Kawamura and Noda (2006) reported in their studies. Both Tom and Bob described their experiences as "being treated as a family member" and "very warm and encouraging." From the interview, we can see that they even mentioned that they prefer Chinese culture more since learning the ways of establishing and maintaining relationships have made them feel more comfortable in this culture.

Fourth, though most of the learning takes place without formal instruction, the learning outcomes can be maximized if the program designers and instructors consider integrating the extracurricular activities into the regular curriculum. From learners' experiences discussed above, we are able to see that an extracurricular experience will bring more effective learning if it can be closely combined with classroom instruction instead of being ignored. The requirement of keeping a journal and the formal topics for learners to choose from motivates them to become acute observers during their in-China

study. A class exchange of student writings brings the cultural issues observed by individuals to every learner and a further discussion led by the instructor facilitates a deep understanding of the cultural themes hidden in the experiences and expands students' cultural knowledge.

5.3 A new look at intermediate to advanced level learners' experience during the in-China study

The combination of interviews, field observations and journal studies has produced strong data that provides us with a new look at what advanced learners of Chinese gain during in-China study and how they construct the learning context in which they achieve success. Based on the discussion of the collected data in the previous two chapters, this section is going to answer the three research questions posed in chapter three: 1) What are the features of an effective in-China study program designed for intermediate to advanced level learners of Chinese that encourages a more meaningful immersion in the target culture and language? 2) What do learners gain from such an effective program and how are these achievements different from those in a domestic instructional setting?
3) Among all the findings discovered in answering the previous two questions, what marks the transition from intermediate level to truly advanced level? More specifically, what components of such a program distinguish itself from learners' previous learning experience? What achievements indicate learners' progress in moving towards "truly advanced" level? Following the research questions, this paper will conclude with two suggestions respectively for further research and in-China study program design.

5.3.1 What are the features of an effective in-China study program designed for intermediate to advanced level learners of Chinese?

Designing a curriculum for a *second language learning environment* (SLLE) may be more difficult than for a *foreign language learning environment* (FLLE) since the former requires dealing with the complexity of the actual culture (Walker, 1989). However, at the same time, the intractable abundance of a SLLE facility is also attractive to both language learners and instructors and the challenge eventually becomes how to manage the abundant learning resources and encourage learners to optimally exploit them.

Data collected and analyzed in this study revealed that an integration of formal classroom instruction and extracurricular activities involving a broader access to the target society contributed to the efficiency and the effectiveness of learning. With the help of a well-designed curriculum involving sensitive but significant issues related to the Sino-American relationship, students in a domestic academic program might also increase their four language skills in a similarly effective way. However, follow-up activities including establishing research topics, interviewing local Chinese people, giving public presentation to a local audience, which largely enhanced learners' understanding of culture are hard to accomplish to the same extent in a foreign language learning environment.

More importantly, within the academic setting at home, the instructor is the only evaluator to discern whether the stories students have developed are acceptable to members of the target culture and students integrate teachers' reaction as part of their potential story of the future. However, during the in-China study period, all interlocutors

involved in students' lives become evaluators, who forced learners to continuously adjust their behavior to match the audience's expectations. During this process, students developed an awareness that successful communication is in the eye of the beholder and eventually led to their actively adopting a new set of skills and attitudes relating to the second culture.

On the other hand, in addition to associating the formal class instruction with extracurricular activities, students' experience of the program also revealed that an integration of their living experience into the curriculum would further enhance the learning process. Most performances taking place in an in-China study setting are uncontrolled improvisation, which is very different from the formal arrangement of language and cultural knowledge they were accustomed to in previous learning experiences. Instead of being given carefully designed context to extract the stored script in their minds, learners encountering numerous uncontrolled improvisation within the in-country study contexts need to go through the cultural knowledge compilation cycle by self-managing the memories of successful or unsuccessful interactions. This requires instructors to step into the background to give students an opportunity to come to their own conclusions. Without the assignment of keeping a cultural journal, learners might not have necessarily paid much attention to their rich experiences, let alone reflected on the larger cultural issues around them. Motivated by the writing assignments, students were able to go beyond the observation stage, and complete a learning cycle by reflecting on the reasons behind the seemingly common phenomenon by generalizing a hypothesis about their ideas and eventually putting it into action through conversations with local Chinese people. In addition, the means of sharing of one's experiences in class

discussion, students who were not able to sensitively observe this phenomenon could vicariously "re-live" the experience and learn similar lessons about the culture.

All in all, during an in-China study period, students are able to grow as a result of specific experiences that they have accumulated in a set of identifiable social networks. Through repeated participation in certain cultural rituals, students gained both an understanding of the surrounding socio-cultural context and skills to maneuver through the situation on their own. With a well-designed curriculum that provided motivation and supervision of students' extracurricular experiences, learning in the target society produced more meaningful outcomes.

5.3.2 What do learners gain from such a program described as above?

According to the participants in this study, the most valuable gain came about in establishing a new repertoire of attitudes and skills and even the sense of a new self. Through reading assignments with a clear emphasis on Chinese points of view in class and going through numerous incidents of direct inquiry of Chinese peoples' perspectives outside the class, students realized that their understanding of a topic was largely dependent on their understanding of cultural values. Failures to adopt this paradigm shift led directly to a discontinuation of the conversation particularly on sensitive topics such as Taiwan issues or the lack of reaction when students chose topics that were unimportant to most Chinese people. By experiencing failures, students gradually developed a sense of what is valued in Chinese culture and became more alert about adopting a paradigm shift when conducting conversations with Chinese people.

The construction of a second-culture worldview is also enhanced by long-time contact with the target community. The cycle of cultural knowledge compilation suggests that learners bring with them to the in-China study program increasing numbers of cases, sagas and themes that they accumulated in repeated rounds of compilations. Previous lessons from their domestic Chinese classes as well as dialogues and narratives in their Chinese reading materials contributed greatly to this compilation. As they moved to an in-China study context, the old compilations had become the foundation for how they approach and learn about a new culture and language they have directly encountered in the target community. On the other hand, the new reading materials and direct experiences also provided learners with a new perspective on the old points of view. All the examples revealed in students' journals presented in 5.2 indicated that moving from the most familiar classroom situation to multiple environments available in the target community such as a corner store on campus, a Chinese Gongfu group, online blog community, learners continued to use their cultural knowledge and expand the construction of their second-culture worldview. Learners interacting in a new community are moving towards its center from being an observer at the peripheral side to a competent member or even expert of the group. This process also influences the persona that students bring to their learning experience. A use of familial terms to greet strangers in order to minimize distance and to show friendliness, an appreciation of the traditional Chinese value *renqing,* and two subjects' claims of "becoming different and acting a little weird" after going back to U.S. are all examples to show how a new persona was constructed during the in-China study experience, bringing changes to students' attitudes and behaviors.

In addition to the construction of a second-culture worldview, a remarkable improvement in all four language skills took place as we expected and intuitively believed. A nine-week immersion in China with frequent interactions with people in the local community contributed to great progress in listening and speaking. More importantly, repeated activities such as interviews and presentations, as part of the curriculum, helped students become familiar with the spoken discourse in the domain they have previously studied. Not only did they expand their vocabulary, improve sentence structures and familiarity with conventional expressions, but they also acquired the sociolinguistic strategies to start, expand and end real conversations, or more sophisticatedly and specifically, discussions on certain domain-related topics and how to negotiate one's own intentions. These improved strategies can be seen in the diplomatic responses of students in their later presentations to avoid dealing with sensitive issues publicly and students' attempts in finding ways to minimize the distance between the interviewees and themselves, such as Tom's squatting all through the interview with some working immigrants.

Through reading a wide variety of articles representing three different discourse styles, students were able to learn how different groups of Chinese people establish their intentions and reveal their views in different genres, which also helped to expand their vocabulary and knowledge of graphs and grammatical structures. In addition, through accumulating various conventional expressions as well as the rhetorical styles used in different discourses, students acquired the ability to catch the meaning beyond the words so that they could more fully understand the readings more fully. Students' reading speed was also been remarkably increased, not only due to an immense amount of reading

assignments, but also because of the reading strategies they had acquired with an emphasis in the knowledge of text structures of different discourses. As for writing, students continued to build their inventory of literacy strategies through frequent blog journal writing. More importantly, they also developed knowledge of the difference between *shumianyu* (written Chinese) and *koutouyu* (spoken Chinese) and began to transition from using *koutouyu* as the medium of written communication to using *shumianyu* in their writing assignments with an imposed context that strictly defines the writer and reader, --more specifically they became adept in academic writings on Sino-American relations.

Lastly, students were eventually able to apply their existing Chinese skills to problem-solving tasks. In the long run this will help students to become experts in selected Chinese discourses by acquiring learning strategies to assist them to independently exploit the learning opportunities around them and advance their knowledge of language and culture. After all, the second-culture worldview is a lifelong construction and will continue all throughout their lives.

5.3.3 What features of the program mark the stage of "advanced"?

From the review of the current in-China study presented in the previous chapter, a transition from learning Chinese to learning **in** Chinese marks the stage of "advanced." In other words, at this stage, the AMI had become the dominant, if not exclusive, type of instruction and the content course took place of the language class to become the dominant type of course provided to students. During such a period, the goal to increase language skills was given equal weight with the intent to convey one's expertise in the

target discourse. Learning language at an advanced level means all language skills come together and begin to "click," without a conscious awareness of isolated linguistic items.

More significantly, coming to an in-China study context with accumulated knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures and cultural knowledge, advanced students of Chinese are able to continue their learning in the form of a social co-participation. During the process of changing from an observer at the edge of a community to a competent member or even an expert within a certain domain, students acquire the sociolinguistic competence from all the experienced "old-timers" in the community. As for advanced learners, previous knowledge has already equipped them with necessary perceptual tools to exploit the environment so that most learning could take place where there is no intentional instruction.

5.3.4 Recommendations for in-country study program design and for future research

This study can be concluded with two recommendations, respectively for in-China study program design and for further research. First, identifying oneself with a certain domain group such as what Tom did within the Chinese Gongfu group should be built into the in-China study curriculum, as part of the required activities. The task of initiating a new relationship within a certain community itself has great value in preparing students for becoming independent culture navigators in the future. Instructors may coach learners about necessary strategies and resources for identifying a group related to their interests and domain knowledge. They can also play the role of a go-between to help students who have encountered difficulties in identifying a certain group for themselves. Besides, keeping a record of the domain group activities such as writing a journal and bring the

experience to class for sharing with other students should also be integrated into the curriculum as an effective mechanism to maximize all students' gain.

Second, research on in-country study should go beyond the traditional statistical studies since the numerical findings usually fail to recognize the uniqueness of the participants' experiences and their accomplishments (Iwasaki, 2005). Instead, an ethnographic case study like this, is able to present data from the perspective of participants, which is helpful to illustrate a clear picture of the learning process emerging during an in-China study and to record changes taking place in individual students. Besides, students' gain during an in-China study experience should not be measured by OPI only. Not only because the questionable validity and utility of this test is still questionable, but also findings in this study reveal that most valuable gains involving a series of changes in attitudes and perception, a construction of the second-culture worldview as well as the increasing independent learning strategies cannot be simply measured by a test score. In order to achieve an in-depth picture of learners' in-country study experience, we need to design more longitudinal research as a next step to record the diversity and complexity that students have experienced within the in-country study context.

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Appendix:

Interview Guide

Pre-study interview

1. Have you ever been to China? If so, when, how long, and in what capacity?

2. What are you looking forward to most in your up-coming study in China?

3. Regarding language skills, what are you expecting to gain the most in China? How?

4. Besides language skills, what else are you expecting to gain during the study? How?

5. What are your strengths and weakness in your use of language?

6. Do you feel nervous about your up-coming stay in China? If so, in what aspect?

On-site interview

1. What's your memorable days/time in China? Why?

2. What surprised you when you first came in China?

3. Regarding language skills, what do you think you gained most?

4. What components of this program you think help you study the language most?

Post-program Interview

1. What's your overall impression of your experience?

2. Could you recount a moment you felt you had a real success?

3. Could you recount a moment you felt you were lost or frustrated?

4. Did your attitude about China or the Chinese change over the course?

5. At what point during your stay did you feel comfortable dealing with the people around you?

6. Besides the linguistic gain, what else have you gained from the study? How do you evaluate the gain?

7. Which aspect(s) of the program were most useful to you in regards to becoming a "global professional"?

8. Which aspect(s) of the program could be improved?

9. How do you compare this with your previous in-China study experience?