The Implementation of Culture Tasks in Teaching Chinese to Australian High School Beginners

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Bachelor of Arts
(Hebei University, China, 2009)

A research thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education (Honours)

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March, 2011
Declaration

I declare that except where due acknowledgement has been made, this thesis is my own original work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any university or other institute of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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7\textsuperscript{th} March, 2011
Abstract

This research was mainly focused on the combination of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) in the teaching of Mandarin as a second language during the Volunteer-Teacher-Researcher’s (VTR) teaching practices in an Australian high school. Based on the literature of TBLT, the researcher found a gap of cultural task in TBLT. To fix the gap, the VTR tried to implement cultural task into TBLT to promote Chinese culture and enhance the interest of students.

The research question of this thesis is ‘how to use culture tasks to teach beginners Chinese culture and to improve their interest in Chinese learning in Australia?’ The thesis demonstrates the process of action research which is the methodology of the research. Data was collected from observation and reflection of the VTR, the feedback from students, and interviews from an experienced teacher and the researchers of TCSL. The data was gathered and analysed to evaluate the culture tasks in terms of benefits to the student’s learning and the teacher’s Mandarin teaching.

In the thesis, some issues related to TBLT are discussed in accordance with the literature, opinion of teachers and the experience of the VTR, in terms of the role of the teacher and the language in teaching. It also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of culture tasks to provide further suggestions and references to the VTR’s further teaching and research career, and to other teachers in similar situations.

This research aimed to implement culture tasks in school to stimulate students’ interest in Mandarin learning. Although it has considerable limitation, the culture task has performed well in the teaching process and received the commendation from
students and teachers.
Author’s publications


Acknowledgements

During the study, I have received a lot of help from many people and I just want to express my big thanks to them. From the first day in Australia, the supervisory panel took care of everything for me. As supervisors, they taught me the knowledge and methodology of research, how to write a thesis, and how to learn from others. They brought me into the world of research, and the world of Australia. As friends, they provided me a lot of help in life. They arranged a house for me, took me to picnics, and helped me travel around Sydney. They also assessed my research progress in the way of a critical friend, which helped me to be a better volunteer-teacher-researcher. Especially my principal supervisor Dr Zhao; he did a lot in teaching and helping me both in study and life, and also provided me a lot of opportunities to participate in research and to understand Australia.

As a teacher, I would like to express my thanks to all of my school students. They are very lovely and smart. During the teaching, I also learned a lot from them. Most of them loved learning Chinese and enjoyed my teaching, which made me feel so proud and confident. They are honest in tests and feedback, and they treat me like their friend which provides me the most comfortable way of communication. My great thanks also go to the teachers working with me, especially Mrs. Yvonne and Miss Wang. They also provided me great support during my teaching in Australia. They taught me how to be a teacher, and helped me to solve teaching problems. They took me around and invited me to visit their homes. As a foreigner, I believe I have had a happy and interesting life in this one and half years.

Also I would like to give my appreciation to the teachers of Hebei University. I am very thankful that they could participate in this research as interviewees. They have provided me a lot of useful information, comments, suggestions and evaluation; which became the most important part of the thesis. As experienced teachers and
researchers, their modest attitude has impressed me. They treated me as their 
colleague and friend. They selflessly taught me the knowledge and gave of their 
experience.

My gratitude is also given to my follow volunteer-teacher-researchers. As friends 
and teammates, we have communicated a lot in research and teaching. We live 
together and take care of each other. They help me to be happier and stronger. 
Thanks for all you have done. Thanks, Australia.
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List of Abbreviation

HSK: Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi 汉语水平考试 (Chinese Proficiency Test)
IELTS: International English Language Testing System
ILT: Intercultural Language Teaching
TBLT: Task-Based Language Teaching
TCSL: Teaching Chinese as the Second Language
VTR: Volunteer-Teacher-Researcher
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION:

语言教学的情结

THE LOVE KNOT TO LANGUAGE TEACHING

This thesis focuses on the implementation of culture tasks into the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in teaching Chinese as the Second Language (TCSL) to Australian high school students and on the improvement of the volunteer-teacher-researcher (VTR) himself as a teacher-researcher during this teaching and research practice. The first part of the chapter introduces the VTR’s personal background and the reason why he is interested in TBLT of second language teaching especially in TCSL. The second part is the intellectual background of research including a brief review of TBLT and Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT), and the importance and feasibility of TBLT for TCSL in Australia. The third part describes the development of the research questions. The fourth part outlines the research methodology. The fifth part demonstrates the possible benefits of the study. The last part of the chapter presents a statement of the study and an outline of the remaining chapters.

1.1 THE RESEARCHER’S PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I was born in a teachers’ family in Ningbo city, the ‘Pearl Harbour’ on the east coast of China. In my childhood, my parents educated me very strictly in traditional Chinese ideology. But I was not a good boy. I always wanted to challenge the old regulations which seemed not suitable for me. It is a part of my personality which today directs my teaching and research focus. I just want to find a way which seems
most suitable for me and for my students.

In those six tame years in primary school, I met a Chinese language teacher who was very important for me because of her charming smile and continual encouragement. She is my model teacher. She did not focus on my exam result, but always wanted to make me learn through interests and emphasised my initiative. She treated me like her son. It is the highest compliment of a teacher in China. Although I cannot treat my Australian students as my son or daughter because of the different cultures, I can impart Chinese in the same way as my model teacher educated me. In Australia I found the students who I teach do not have the pressure of exams; so why not give them a chance to learn Chinese in a way that interests them? Emphasise on their initiative, give them enough space to spread their imagination and encourage their creativity. Based on my own experience, I want to give my students more support and more encouragement to improve their learning through promoting their interests in China and Chinese culture.

In contrast to my Chinese language learning, since year 3, the time I started to learn English I hated boring grammar and vocabulary which was taught in a text book. It was a lot of bad influence on my English learning. However, a big change came during my six years of high school life. In my year 8 summer holiday, I went to an English camp for a month. This one month changed my attitude towards English learning. The foreign teacher taught me English through a lot of interesting ways. We were playing, laughing and learning! This one month realised a big improvement in my listening and speaking. When I went back to school, I became the best student in my English class in listening and speaking. For me from then, it was more important to communicate than to get a high mark in an exam (we did not have an English speaking test in Chinese schools; my first speaking test was in IELTS). So I always received a poor mark in English until IELTS. That camp was my first impression of a new language teaching approach and it was also the main reason why I want to teach
Chinese to Australian students in a different way.

After twelve years of schooling and surviving the biggest exam of the world, the University Entrance Examination of China, I chose ‘Teaching Chinese as the Second Language’ as my major and began my university life. For the major of TCSL, teaching abroad is the best way to gain experiences and improve teaching skills. Also because my major is the new area of language teaching, as a Chinese teacher I think I have a responsibility to donate my own power to improving the TCSL system. My supervisors in the Humanities collage in Hebei University taught me in a rigorous way but treated me equally. They were professors in this area, but they treated me like a friend and a family member. I felt warm, free and safe in this college with my classmates and teachers. It was a very comfortable way to study, and also an efficient way. Is it also a good way to teach Chinese in Australia? I will try to find an answer to this question. So I will use my own teaching practice to explorer it during my teaching in an Australia high school. My university study also provided me with an understanding of culture - not only the content culture but also the soul of culture. I realised that culture is dynamic, and it is about time and communication. The communication is not only about the language, but also at a cultural level understanding and feeling.

My four years in Hebei University gave me a substantial foundation of Chinese language and culture and gave me a sense of belonging, made me feel more confident and like a fish in water. For teaching language, knowledge of culture is really a significant part. It is also my expertise, and I hope the Australian students will be interested in Chinese culture when they learn Mandarin with me.

After being chosen as a volunteer teacher of Chinese by Ningbo Municipal Education Bureau from three hundred graduates, I feel more confident to carry on my career in Australia. During my preparation for this journey, I thought a lot about
the teaching approach. At that time I was only a student. Although I had some experience in teaching a foreigner it was not enough for me to feel a spurt of inspiration for a teaching approach. After arriving in Australia, and especially through school observations and teaching and methodology training, I became interested in the TBLT in teaching Mandarin in Australia high school, and started to review the literature to understand the research about task-based teaching approach.

1.2 INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

The origin of task-based language teaching approach can be traced back to the end of the 1970's. Prabhu (1982) coined the ‘task-based approach’ formally in the early 1980’s. As a new teaching approach, it states ‘let students finish a group of actual language using task which designed by the teacher’ (Wang, 2005, p. 3). Later, some educators began to write the syllabus for the task-based teaching approach. For example, Yalden designed a syllabus for the Canadian government department and gave a particular introduction in Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching (Wang, 2005, p.3). Then, Nunan (1989) published his Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom. It introduced the basic theory of task-based language teaching, and also introduced some syllabuses. Compared with the old language teaching approach like ‘PPP’ (Presentation, Practise, Production) and Grammar translation, TBLT can be regarded as a new-born approach. Especially in Chinese teaching, the history of TBLT implementation is probably only ten years old (Ma, 2002). However, there is a lack of literature about the implementation of cultural elements in TBLT.

Culture, as a core of the Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) approach, has already been set as the object of language teaching. ‘It [learning language] involves fundamentally learning to communicate with others in that language and such communication involves an engagement with culture’ (Liddicoat, 2005, p. 1). In
TCSL, researchers and teachers have also recognised the importance of culture teaching. TCSL teachers are encouraged to teach more appropriate culture to the international students in China (Chen, 1997, p.2). A Chinese researcher provides his point of view on the relationship between language and culture as follows:

(语言是文化的载体，语言的学习与使用，总是与一个国家的文化密切相关的。对外汉语教学中的文化导入，主要是为提高学生跨文化交际能力服务的，多一点文化知识素养，就能向中国的思维方式靠近一步，也就能从侧面帮助留学生加快掌握所学知识的进程，从而更好地运用所学的知识。) Language is the carrier of culture. The learning and using of language, usually has a very close relationship with the culture of this country. The culture input of TCSL teaching, aim to improve the intercultural communication competence of students. More culture knowledge has been understood, more close to the Chinese thinking model, to some extent it can help to accelerate the process of learning knowledge and implement the knowledge which they learned better. (Liu, 2001, p. 34)

Communication is an important form of language, but culture is the content inside. As a volunteer-teacher-researcher, one year is not enough to teach students Mandarin or Chinese culture but it is an opportunity to explore the possibility of the implementation of culture tasks to the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in teaching Chinese as the Second Language (TCSL) to Australian high school students.

1.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research focuses on the combination of TBLT and ILT, which has been designed as ‘culture task’. It tries to teach Chinese culture as well as Chinese language to Australian high school students. At the beginning of the study, the main research question of this research is on teaching Chinese as a second language in Australia:

How to use task-based teaching approaches to teach Chinese as the second language for the beginner in Australia high schools?
The contributory research questions are:

1. What elements should be included in TBLT of TCSL (e.g. Time management, Classroom language, Task selection.)?
2. How to bring ‘Culture’ into the TBLT in TCSL while focusing on ‘Interest’ and ‘Communication’?

The original of the above research questions was from my early teaching experience in Australia. From classroom observations I found that Australian students in high school are passionate, enthusiastic, and full of courage to face a challenge. However, these positive characteristics can have a negative impact on teaching when we teach them in a dialectic way. The students sometimes are hard to control, too noisy, and easily lose interest. For a volunteer Mandarin teacher like the researcher, full of passion and ambition but empty in teaching experiences, it is really a big challenge. At first, I thought about adding more activities in teaching because I found it was useful during my observations in other schools arranged by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. This idea came from my early English learning experience, from which I recognised that teaching a language is about using the language. But I have not fulfilled this because in my observations, I also found the teaching process was still not as interesting as I thought. The engagement and concentration of students had a big undulation during the class or between several classes. Before I turned to a task-based teaching approach, the communicative and activity approaches were the first approaches I considered. I found that they were quite close to my ideas about teaching a language but there still were some differences between these approaches and my own understanding. Then, in one observation in a girl’s high school, a Chinese teacher mentioned the method of role play when he talked to us about his experience in teaching students Chinese culture like an opera mask. It suddenly gave me a flash of inspiration. After the observation, I researched the use of role play in teaching language. ‘Task-based teaching approach’ jumped out into my mind. Brown (2001, p. 179) divides tasks
into ten types: ‘games, role-play and simulations, drama, projects, interview, brainstorming, information gap, jigsaw, problem solving and decision making, opinion exchanges’. It is the approach which fits my imagination about the class; a long and continual ‘activity’ to make students concentrate and using the target language which makes teaching interesting and engaging. As a beginning Mandarin teacher, I planned to use the task-based teaching approach in my Chinese class in the high school.

After the first term of teaching, I give a small survey to my students. In the question of this survey ‘Why do you like Chinese learning’, I found that only one student chose ‘Culture learning’, which means I probably didn't emphasize the culture teaching as I meant to. As a result of the survey, I planned to narrow down the topic of my research and emphasize the culture task.

So the research question becomes:

**How to implement culture tasks in TCSL for high school beginner?**

The transformation of the question was based on the condition of my teaching situation. But it also intended to fill the gaps in the literature. The ‘culture task’, as the combination of TBLT and Culture teaching and learning, was implemented and observed in the class. The researcher focussed on the use of culture elements during the process of language teaching. As a new teacher, the implementation of ‘culture task’ was a first attempt in language teaching, as well as for the students. So the subsidiary research questions became:

1. How to combine the ‘culture task’ with language?
2. How does ‘culture task’ affect new teachers and beginning learner?

After the data had been gathered and analysed, the researcher found that the data
of this research is more about the evaluation of culture tasks and teaching, rather than about the interpretation of how to practise the culture task. The focus of the research has a little offset because of the collected data. As a result, the research questions changed to fit the new focus.

The main question is: **How can culture task be implemented in the school?**

The subsidiary questions are:
1. How can the culture task be evaluated?
2. What did I learn from the teaching?

### 1.4 THE OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, the methodology which was used in this research was Action Research. The methodology fits my research objectives well. First, I want to be a better teacher in TSCL. Through action research, I can review my teaching process with reflection on the its shortcoming, and then get a revised plan to improve my teaching. Second, the action cycle can be used to weigh the function and impact of every element in the task-based approach and the intercultural language teaching approach. I can contrast each cycle to investigate the important elements for stimulating students’ interests in Mandarin learning.

Action research, which is mainly aimed to develop my own teaching and research skills during the research process, is defined by Kemmis and McTaggart (2002) as:

> Action research is a form of collective, self-reflective that participants in social situations undertake to improve: (1) the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices; (2) the participants’ understanding of these practices and the situations in which they carry out these practices. Groups of participants can be teachers, students, parents, workplace colleagues, social activists or any other community members – that is, and group with a shared concern and the motivation and will to address their shared concern.
The approach is action research only when it is collaborative and achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members. (Altruchter et al. 2002, p. 125 – 126)

This research objective and plan fit the working definition of action research quite well. As Figure 1 shows, there are several conditions and situations and if the situation fits these outlines it means the action research is occurring.

At the first part, three aspects have been described which fit my research and teaching design well. The research is based on my own teaching experience and the aim of the reflection is to improve my teaching skills in TCSL. The research I planned is tightly linked with my teaching and its reflection. And as mentioned above, although the limitation in this research is obvious, I also want to share this research and my experience with other TCSL teacher or the people interested in it.

The second part provided the qualification which increasingly happened in the research and my plan fits some of these. Firstly, data collection is planned to be
gathered by myself and related to my own questions with the help of observation of students and their feedback which may be considered as ‘help’. Secondly, I used self-reflection in the research after language teaching classes which is my responsibility. My teaching process is a circle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, and these four phases circulated over a fortnight as the important data of research.

1.5 THE WORTHINESS AND BENEFIT OF THE RESEARCH

‘The task-based teaching approach was built up from the research of second language learning theory in 1980’s’ (Sheng, 2007, p. 65). Compared with other traditional teaching pedagogies it is a new teaching approach in second language teaching. It needs teachers and researchers to practise and promote its development. Especially for Teaching Chinese as the Second Language (TCSL), ‘(以交际任务为基础的语言教学并不是一个新的模式，只是从汉语作为第二语言教学的角度看，是一种新的教学模式) it is not a new mode for language teaching on the base of communicative task, but it is a new approach for TCSL’ (Sheng, 2007, p. 65). In China, compared with English teaching, task-based approach in TCSL has remains in the stage of introduction and understanding’ (Wang, 2005, p. 12). Through my teaching and reflection in an Australian high school, I hope to find some useful new understanding and experiences to contribute to the task-based teaching approach in TCSL. The combination of TBLT and ILT is an important process for this research. The relationship of these two new approaches of language is similar to the language and culture. I believe the linking of these two approaches could be worth trying in TCSL. This research is innovative and extends discussion around new and challenging insights in teaching Chinese as a second language. It aims to bridge a gap between the task-based teaching approach and intercultural learning. Through the extension of a discourse around ‘cultural task’ it will provide educators, especially language educators, with a well-considered method to improve Mandarin
teaching and learning. Opportunities for further research will emerge from this research within education in general and language education in particular.

As a volunteer-teacher-researcher, teaching and research are linked together. Doing research is a significant way to improve the teaching practice. Through continual reflection and research, I will learn to be a teacher-researcher, and my experience may provide some insights for other teacher-researchers.

This research explores a new approach in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (TCSL) in NSW government schools. Researching the task-based language approach and intercultural language teaching in TCSL will provide insights into the language teaching methodology for language teachers in general, and Mandarin teachers in particular, in NSW government schools. There are benefits for schools involved in this project because they will gain ideas for improving students' Mandarin learning.

1.6 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The first chapter provided the background of the research, which is based on the researcher’s teaching, involves ‘culture tasks’ in Mandarin language teaching. The culture and language are taught in the form of tasks. Action research is the methodology of this research, which aims to improve the volunteer-teacher-researcher’s teaching, as well as benefiting students. In the action circle of planning (acting, observing and reflecting) the teacher-researcher collects the data from students and reflection of his teaching. The rest of the thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 introduces the intellectual background of this research. First, the
research and teaching are built on the base of TBLT, with emphasis on the communication and practice of language. The term ‘task’ is defined and the gap of TBLT is found. To bridge the gap, the researcher turns to ILT, with focus on the competence of intercultural communication. The term ‘culture’ is defined, as was ‘task’, which leads to the integration of ‘culture task’.

Chapter 3 introduces the methodology of this research, which is action research. The background knowledge of action research will be demonstrated first, and then the research and teaching design and expected outcomes. The methods of data collection and analysis are also presented. Since the object of this research is for students and the teacher, the research ethics and generalisation are also discussed.

Chapter 4 presents two action research circles. These two circles are the representative topic of teaching, which are kite making and an excursion to China town. Through these two topics, the researcher demonstrates the process and structure of teaching, the observation and reflection of the researcher, and the feedback of students. The themes that emerge from the data and the analysis of data are also presented.

Chapter 5 provides the analysis of the interview data with emphasis on the opinions and ideas of teachers regarding the culture task. Different perspectives of teaching culture or language are discussed in the first section. It also presents the teachers’ views of what, and how, to teach culture in the lesson. More importantly, the evaluation of the culture task and the suggestion and comments of teachers is the main content of this chapter.

Chapter 6 is mainly about the findings and discussion about the culture task including the theoretical base of this research, the definition of culture task, and the characteristics of culture task. The findings and discussion are presented together to
show the close relationship between teaching of culture task and the language, the role of the teacher, judgement of success and the extensiveness of culture. Lastly, the teacher-researcher argues that the culture task is a satisfactory approach to teaching Mandarin to Australian high school students in accordance with the principles and evaluation of TBLT and ILT.

Chapter 7 concludes the research. It summarises the advantages and disadvantages of the culture task, and provides answers to the research questions. The development of the teacher-researcher in Australia is recalled and a future plan is designed for his return to China.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW:

他山之石，可以攻玉
THE STONE FROM ANOTHER HILL COULD BE USED TO GRIND
THE JADE

In this chapter, the task-based language teaching approach will be introduced first as one important part of the literature review. It contains the definition of task, task design, the process and principles of TBLT and some issues related to TBLT. After that, the gaps which reflected from TBLT will be pointed out as the reason lead research to ILT approach. Then, the definition of culture, two ways of understanding culture (static culture and dynamic culture) and some issues of ILT will be presented as another major part of the literature review. Lastly, a suggestion for combining TBLT and ILT will be introduced as ‘culture task’, which comes from the literature review and the researcher’s own teaching experience.

2.1 THE DEFINITION OF TASK

The Task-based teaching approach began at the end of 1970’s. Prabhu (1982) published his report of the Bangalore experiment in 1982 and coined the term ‘task-based approach’ formally. As a new teaching approach, it addresses; ‘let students finish a group of actual language using task which designed by the teacher’ (Wang, 2005, p. 3). Later, some educators began to write the syllabus for the task-based teaching approach. For example, Yalden designed a syllabus for the Canadian government department and gave a particular introduction in Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching (Wang, 2005, p.3). Then Nunan (1989) publish his Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom. It introduced the
The basic theory of task-based language teaching, and also included some syllabuses.

The idea of ‘Task-Based Language Teaching’ has been of considerable interest since 1980. Many researchers, such as Nunan (2004) and Ellis (2006), published their articles or books on this topic. One of the most important definitions in these books is that of the Task.

The dictionary explanation of task (Merriam-Webster, 2009) is; ‘A usually assigned piece of work often to be finished within a certain time.’ In a Chinese dictionary (现代汉语词典, 1992, p. 965), it means: (指定担任的工作和责任) some specific work or responsibility. Similarly it is suggested ‘Task is a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward’ (Long 1985, cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 3).

The definition above is a broad one. In task-based language teaching, it is argued that the task is based on the real world but not completely the same. Nunan (2004) draws a distinction between real world tasks (target tasks) and pedagogical tasks; ‘Target tasks, as the name implies, refer to uses of language in the world beyond the classroom; pedagogical tasks are those that occur in the classroom’ (Nunan, 2004, p. 3). Crookes also points out that ‘a task has a clearly education relationship with the real world language requirement’ (Crookes, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 4).

When the real world tasks are transformed into the target tasks in the classroom, ‘tasks become pedagogical in nature’ (Nunan, 2004, p. 2). Richard et al. (1986) also provided a definition of a pedagogical task:

…an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language. For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, listening to an instruction and performing a command may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in
language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative...since it provides a purpose for a classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake. (Richards, et al. 1986, p. 289)

The above definition suggests the pedagogical point of view, which looks on the classroom or language teaching needs. The outcome is not only in language form itself, but goes beyond; ‘emphasized the importance of having a non-linguistic outcome’ (Nunan, 2004, p. 4).

Ellis (2006) defines task in the following way; ‘A task is a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed’ (p. 3). This definition provides an important part of the task definition, which is related to evaluation of task.

As mentioned before, task-based language teaching has been used in many syllabuses of official curriculum departments. For example, In the Hong Kong curriculum for English, tasks are defined as activities in which ‘Learners are provided with purposeful contexts where they can learn and use English...for meaningful communication’ (Curriculum Development Council 2002, cited in Littlewood, 2007, p. 247). It again focuses on ‘use’ and ‘meaningful’ in learning. In 2004, Nunan provided his definition of tasks as:

A pedagogical task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. (Nunan, 2004, p. 4)

Nunan’s definition is most close to Wang’s (2005), as its main focus is on the language learning and the meaning of language. From the definition of task, we can see that the specialty of task in task-based language teaching, and also the creativity
of the task-based approach. Most recently, Littlewood (2009) defines task as ‘Every activity which can promote the language learning process’ (2009, p. 4). But it does not seem to emphasise the speciality of the task-based approach. A Chinese researcher, Gong (2003), divides these definitions into two groups:

‘Generalized’ and ‘strict’. Willis, as the representative of ‘strict’ group, figures that only the activity which using language for some communicative objective can be the task and task should has a non-language outcome. Pure practices of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary are not included in this outcome. On the other hand, ‘generalized’ group intituled the task of Willis ‘communicative task’, they argue that beside ‘communicative task’, is should have ‘learning task’, the activity focus on the language content (cited in Gao, 2008, p. 6).

From reading the literature, it is found that there are four similarities in the definitions. The first is that task-based approach is a pedagogy which emphasizes the meaning of language rather than the form or grammar. Meaning is the core of the task (Zeng, 2006, p. 17). The second is ‘there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities’ (Nunan, 2004, p. 3). Although there is a dividing line between them, pedagogical tasks come from the target tasks. ‘Task is a reappearance of the daily communicative process’ (Wang, 2005, p. 6). The third is task completion which has priority, and the assessment of the task is in terms of outcome. As Zeng (2006, p. 16) points out, ‘task often brings in the non-language result’. To measure whether a task is successful, the result or outcome is very important. The last similarity is that the task emphasises the process of cognition. It is a class activity involving understanding and using language to communicate. Task-based approach is belongs to the approach which is centred of learning. Its main emphasis is on the process of cognitive and psycholinguistics of second language teaching. It provides as many chances to learners as possible and lets them participate in the communicative task which is open and focused on meaning (Zeng, 2006, p. 16).
### 2.2 TASK DESIGN

Following the idea of the task-based approach, four issues including difficulty, types, components, and language form in task are considered important in the design of tasks for classroom teaching and learning.

First of all, the level of difficulty of task needs to be considered. Nunan (2004) describes three level of task activity as beginner, pre-intermediate and intermediate, but he doesn’t provide details in his book. Prabhu also gives a general explanation of level of difficulty which focuses a completion rate; ‘The glancing evaluation for reasonable challenge is that at least 50% of students can complete half of the tasks fluently’ (Prabhu, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 4). Skehan (1996) presents a table for Task sequencing features, which actually recognize the difficulty elements as ‘3C’:

![3C model](image)

Figure 2.1: 3C model (Skehan, 1996, p. 52)
According to Skehan (1996), ‘In brief, the scheme contrasts formal factors (code complexity) with content (cognitive complexity) and pressure to achieve communication (communicative stress)’ (p. 52). In the table, code complexity is related to traditional area of ‘syntactic’ and ‘Lexical’ difficult and range. Cognitive complexity include processing which is related with the number of on-line computations that is required in task doing, and familiarity which includes the ‘extent to which the task draws on ready-made or pre-packaged solutions’ (Skehan, 1996, p. 53). Communicative stress is a group of elements which are unconcerned with meaning or code, and they are the facets which affect the communication pressure. This table give a framework of task difficulty. It shows clearly which factor should be considered when examining the difficulty of a task.

Brown, Anderson, Shilecock, and Yule have investigated a number of task features, trying to build task difficulty on an ‘empirical basis’. They conclude that static tasks (e.g. description) are easier than dynamic tasks (e.g. narration), which is easier than abstract tasks (e.g. opinion giving). They focused on ‘the number of elements, participants, and relationships in a task makes it more difficult’ (Cited in Skehan, 1996, p. 40).

The second issue related to task design is the types of task. Due to the distinct definition, researchers emphasized types of task from different angles. Brown (2001) divided tasks into ten types: ‘games, role-play and simulations, drama, projects, interview, brainstorming, information gap, jigsaw, problem solving and decision making, opinion exchanges’. Willis (1996) sorts the task into listing, ordering and sorting, comparing, problem solving, sharing personal experience and creative tasks (p. 26) according to the implementation of teaching content. From the angle of three dimensionalities in education, aim, cognition, emotion and motivation, Bloom divides the task into six varieties: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, integration and evaluation (Wang, 2005, p. 5). Pica, Kanagy and Falodum (1993)
describes the types of tasks in the mode of interaction, including: jigsaw, information gap, problem solving, decision making, and opinion exchange. Littlewood (2007, p. 247) describes tasks range which include discrete forms with no attention to meaning, through to tasks which focus on form but meaning, to the tasks which focus on communication and meanings explicitly. These tasks are: ‘non-communicative learning’ tasks, ‘pre-communicative language practice’ tasks, ‘communicative language practice’ tasks, ‘structured communication’ tasks and ‘authentic communication’ tasks. Based on an analysis of communicative language use, Nunan (2004, p. 59) classifies the tasks according to the strategies underpinning them: cognitive, interpersonal, linguistic, affective and creative. The most important sorts, according to Wang (2005, p. 5), are the six types based on the area of task origin: information gap, knowledge gap, skill gap, opinion gap, culture gap, capacity gap. ‘This sort of classify mirrors the most important character of task-based language teaching in class, which is create the actual, meaningful communication and interaction’ (Wang, 2005, p. 5).

The third issue related to task design is task components. Shavelon and Stern (1981) suggest that in task-based language teaching, the following elements should be taken into consideration:

Content: the subject matter to be taught.
Materials: the things that learners can observe/manipulate.
Activities: the things that learners and teachers will be doing during a lesson.
Goals: the teachers’ general aims for the task (these are much more general and value than objectives).
Students: their abilities, needs and interests are important.
Social community: the class as a whole and its sense of ‘groupness’.

Candlin (1987) has a similar list of element which includes: input, roles, settings, actions, monitoring, outcomes and feedback. Input refers to the data presented for learners to work on. Roles specify the participants’ relationship in a task. Settings are
the location of task (indoor or outdoor). Actions are the performances of learners during the task. Monitoring is the supervision of the task. Outcomes are the results and goals of the tasks and feedback is the assessment of the task (Nunan, 2004, p. 40).

Nunan (2004, p. 41) proposes a minimum specification of task to include goals, input and procedures, which are supported by roles (Teacher’s role and Student’s role) and settings. It shows as the following Figure 2.2:

![Task minimum specification diagram](image)

(Nunan 2004, p. 41)

Figure 2.2: Task minimum specification

Another view of the task components is provided by Legutke and Thomas, whose understanding in task sees task as primarily a part of ‘interactive process whose rationale lies within a social and an educational framework rather than a purely psycholinguistic one’ (Lin, 2003, p. 7). There are three main elements of this interactive process, individual, the group and the theme, which they call ‘I’, ‘we’ and ‘theme’ dimensions of the tasks. The model is shown as the following figure:
The last issue to consider in task design is language modality. Nunan (2004) believes that the language modality which is needed in the task should be explained and practised specially. But others like Willis, Skehan, Ellis et al. figure that the grammar should be internalized through the application. They recommend not teaching grammar explicitly. Although these two opinions on the problem of language modality differ, they all put the task at the first place and the choice of language modality should at the central of task design.

2.3 THE PROCESS OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

In terms of the process of task implementation, researchers share some similar ideas. The most popular theory divides task process into three parts: pre-task, task circle (or during task) and post task. As mentioned before, Willis (1996) has provided a framework of TBLT, the aim of which is to provide a substantial environment for language teaching, and to improve the initiative of students, and to reach fluency and accuracy of using language. The framework is shown below:
**Pre-task**

Teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases, helps students understand task instructions and prepare. Students may hear a recording of others doing a similar task.

**Task cycle**

- **Task**
  Students do the task, in pairs or small groups. Teacher monitors from a distance.

- **Planning**
  Students prepare to report to the whole class (orally or in writing) how they did the task, what they decide or discovered.

- **Report**
  Some groups present their reports to the class, or exchange written reports, and compare results.

**Language focus**

**Analysis**: Students examine and discuss specific features of the text or transcript of the recording.

**Practise**: Teacher conducts practice of new words, phrases and patterns occurring in the data, either during or after the analysis.
These three phases can be adjusted according to the situation of the individual class. ‘[If it is] for a revision lesson, it has a very short pre-task phase and the recording (giving some solutions) is played after the task.’ Otherwise ‘(if it is ) for a new topic, it has a long pre-task phase with the recording played before the task, to give students an idea of what they are to do’ (Willis 1996, p. 41)

As we can see that, the process of TBLT puts the communicative task into the core of framework. It begins with the experience of language operation, and ends with the modality practice and conclusion.

Other researchers like Ellis and Skehan also describe task process, which is slightly different from Willis’s. Ellis names the central part as ‘During task’ and provides some example of design options. Skehan names the first part as ‘Pre-emptive work’ and divides the post phase into two parts while giving the goal for each phase and typical techniques. These two figures show as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Examples of options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Pre-task</td>
<td>*Framing the activity (e.g. establishing the outcome of the task)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Planning time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Doing a similar task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. During task</td>
<td>*Time pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Post-task</td>
<td>*Number of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Learner report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Consciousness-raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Repeat task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ellis 2006, p. 80)

Figure 2.5: A framework for designing task-based lessons
Figure 2.6: Methodological stages in implementing tasks

These three phases are all in the centre of ‘task’ and have their own missions. Pre-task is the warm-up of a game. The purpose of the pre-task phase is ‘to prepare students to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition’ (Ellis, 2006, p. 80). Skehan (1996) addresses two goals of the pre-task stage which are ‘establish target language’ and ‘reduce cognitive load’. Ellis (2006) suggests four ways to achieve these two goals:

1. Supporting learners performing a task similar to the task they will perform in the during-task phase of the lesson.  
2. Asking students to observe a model of how to perform the task.  
3. Engaging learners in non-task activities designed to prepare them to perform the task.  
4. Strategic planning of the main task performance. (Ellis 2006, p. 81)

The second phase is the ‘task circle’ or ‘during task’. Skehan believes that ‘the main factor affecting performance during the task is the choice of the task itself’ (Skehan, 1996, p. 55). He emphasizes the elements which affect the difficulty of tasks. Further, Ellis (2006) expresses a more particular point of view about the
during-task phase and argues that there are two basic kinds of methodological options for teachers in the during-task phase; ‘task-performance options’ and ‘process options’. ‘Task-performance options’ is concerned with ‘how the task has to be undertaken that can be taken prior to the actual performance of the task and thus planned for by the teacher’ and ‘Process options’ is about ‘how to perform a task as it is being completed’ (Ellis, 2006, p. 85). There are three options in the task-performance part:

The first of these options concerns whether to require the students to perform the task under time pressure. The teacher can elect to allow students to complete the task in their own time or can set a time limit. This option is important because it can influence the nature of the language students’ produce...It seems, then, that if teachers want to emphasize accuracy in task performance, they need to ensure that the students can complete the task in their own time. However, if they want to encourage fluency they need to set a time limit. (Ellis 2006, p. 86)

The second option includes ‘whether to allow the students access to the input data while they perform a task’ (Ellis, 2006, p. 87). In some tasks, for example ‘information gap’ tasks, access to the input data is combined into the design. But for other task, it is optional. It will influence the complexity of tasks, since the task which provides more data to students is easier.

The third option concerns the surprise element introduced into the task. Skehan and Foster (1997) illustrate this option but their experiment failed to find the connection between surprise and fluency, complexity, or accuracy of language learning. As Ellis points out:

This does not mean that this option is of no pedagogic value, as requiring learners to cope with a surprise serves as an obvious way of extending the time learners spends on a task and thus increases the amount of talk. It may also help to enhance students’ intrinsic interest in a task. (Ellis 2006, p. 87)

Process options, another part of the during-task phase, is related to ‘the way in
which discourse arising from the task is enacted rather than pedagogical decisions about the way the task is to be handle’ (Ellis 2006, p. 88). It must be taken while the task is performed. Ellis indicates that the process options cannot be prescribed but can be identified, then he gives six kinds of processes that task performance should strive for:

1. Discourse that is essentially ‘conversational’ in nature. Such discourse can include ‘instructional conversations’.
2. Discourse that encourages the explicit formulation of messages.
3. Opportunities for students to take linguistic risks.
4. Occasions where the task participants focus implicitly and/or explicitly on specific linguistic forms.
5. Shared goals for the task (including the use of the L1 to establish these).
6. Effective scaffolding of the participants’ efforts to communicate in the L2 (Ellis 2006, p. 93)

To achieve all of these processes discussed is challenging. As Ellis points out, ‘It depends on how the participants orientate to a task and on their personal skills in navigating the role of interlocutor/language user and instructor/learner as the task is performed’ (Ellis, 2006, p. 93).

2.4 THE PRINCIPLES OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

After discussion of the process of implementation of task, four principles to understanding task-based language teaching are to be discussed in this section

First, authenticity is the most important principle to understanding TBLT. Lv (2007) points out that except for the accepted Textual Authenticity, the other three aspects should be covered: ‘Interpretation Authenticity for the understanding of
learners in language input; Practice Authenticity which benefit to the language learning; Situation Authenticity which concerned with the social environment reappear in class’ (Luo & Lu, cited in Lv, 2007, p. 13). The first authenticity, Textual Authenticity, does not mean high difficulty. It basically focuses on the authenticity of language material which should consider the different levels of Language to fit the students’ learning. The following three authenticities catch less attention but hold the balance of teaching in the process of implementation. Interpretation authenticity requires the activities which are designed for students. So they can activate the own language system and, make sure these activities are acceptable, familiar, and practical and can give the opportunity for communication and expanded horizons. Practice Authenticity, first means students should have an information gap to deal with and, have the necessary need to solve the problem and achieve the goal. Secondly, the chosen practice should meet the requirement of students, should rise from students and not the engrafting from teachers unilaterally. The third aspect, situation authenticity, means the teacher should understand and abide the unforeseeable outcome of task-based activities. There are no ‘standard answers’ in the task-based approach and this change of notion in teaching and education becomes a very important part of task-based language teaching (Wang, 2005). In summary: the content and modality of tasks should be authentic, the task should have the possibility to appear in real life but not in ‘fake communication’, and the learning and feeling of language should be put in a natural, real or stimulated real environment.

The second principle is about the primary of meaning. This does not mean the language modality can be overlooked but the attention is on meaning and modality. The attention is on the meaning firstly, then finish the tasks by target language communication, and after summarizing the grammar then practice it. The task-based approach should combine the modality and meaning together without lose any of fluency to preciseness and fluency (Li, 2006). On the other hand, this principle
benefits the students’ affection. Krashen (1986) point out that, when the students focus on the meaning, they will ‘forget’ that they are using a language which hasn’t been mastered temporarily. Students often lose their interests when they make a lot of grammatical mistakes. If we focus on the grammar, the class will become a place which uncovers the mistake. As a result, feelings of anxiety will increase which block the input of language (Lv, 2007, p. 14).

The third principle is group work. In other words, it is the principle which relates to class interaction. If the teachings of lessons only rely on the teacher and unilateral input from teacher to students, the language input will be limited even with the best text and teacher. As classmates, students are more familiar with each other than with their teachers. Ellis (2006) explains the reason for group work which is seen as central to task-based teaching:

In effect, task-based teaching call for the classroom participants to forget where they are and why they are there and to act in the belief that they can learn the language indirectly through communicating in it rather than directly through studying it. This is asking a lot of them, especially if the social practices the participants bring to the classroom belong to a pedagogy of transmission rather than of interpretation. It is probably easier to achieve when students are interacting among themselves, without the teacher being present, as the greater symmetry of social roles this affords leads naturally to the kinds of risk-taking behaviour required of a task-based pedagogy. (Ellis 2006, p. 89)

When designing a task, it will be better if we add group work as much as possible. The group work lets students help each other cooperatively, which makes up an interaction net and exploit the students’ creative mind and the potential for communication.

The fourth principle is student centred. It has been recognized as a significant difference of task-based language teaching compared with the traditional approaches. Students are the main executants of tasks, no matter in the designing or implementation of task. In the design phase of tasks, the interests, hobbies and the
language skill of students should be considered seriously. In the teaching process, teachers should provide the language material and environment as much as possible and combine the real life experience with the class learning activities to help students understand the meaning and the goal of the task. The way of learning in task-based is to structure and discover the meaning and the feeling of language by students themselves through their positive participation and questions. Finally, teachers should improve the confidence of students through encouragement and help them to solve the problem during the learning and create the appropriate environment of TCSL. A Chinese researcher also points out that ‘Task means the language activities which teachers present to students to accomplish in class. These activities are not centred in language modality but the communicative activities designed to suits the students’ future need of using language (一般认为，’任务’指教师在课堂上布置让学生完成的语言活动，但这些活动不是以语言形式为中心的教学活动，而是按学生将来使用语言的需要而设计的交际活动。)’ (Ma, 2002, p. 27). He regards students’ needs as the central part of task design and task-based teaching.

2.5 ISSUES OF TASK-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING

Task-based approach addresses the process of students’ participant in meaningful learning. It focuses on the students’ ability in language communication through the setting of real language environments, letting the language acquisition be the natural learning process from the language task implementation. ‘It (TBLT) more focuses on the real life task finishing participant in the language learning process which fills the gap of communicative approach. It is a teaching mode which contains the communicative approach but not instead of it’ (Sheng, 2007, p. 67). In the task-based approach class, student participants are full of interest and passion which leads to an energetic and effective learning process with teachers as the guide and students’ learning as the core. It has been advocated to change the role of teachers and learning styles. Teachers are not dominators any more but appear as organizer, guide, advisor and partner, and students’ learning becomes the process of
fulfilling their needs. It encourage the style of experience, practice, participant, research, communication and cooperation, which promotes students to understand language, use language, find the problem and the regular pattern, conclude the knowledge and feel the success (Gao, 2008, p. 8).

However, it is widely acknowledged that no matter what kind of language teaching approach, its superiorities cannot cover its shortage and limitation. As mentioned before, task is central to task-based language teaching, which brings up an issue: how to judge the activities in teaching as a task. Skehan (1996, p. 39) points out that sometimes it is hard to judge an activity as a task or not. This is because the most important characteristics (avoiding specific structure and meaning to accomplish the task) are an extent but not category. This is a point which has been oppugned by considerable researchers.

The judging of the task, in another word, which is concerned with the definition and assorting of task, is one of the issues mentioned by Zeng (2006):

‘(我们发现，任务型教学法在任务分类、分级与排列等方面所用标准各异，选择任务或活动时缺乏令人信服的依据或标准;无法说明某些活动与学习者的现实需求是一致的，难以确定教学任务是否合适)We found that, the standards of task-based approach are varied in assorting, classification and ranging of task. The choosing of task or activity is lack of compellent evidences and standards. It is hard to confirm that the teaching task is suitable for students because we cannot illuminate some tasks are consistent to the real demanding of learners’ (p. 17)

Similarly, Candlin (1987, cited in Nunan, 2004, p. 85) put forward a pack standard of task selection and task classification: cognition load, communicative pressure, the particularity and commonness of task destination, the complexity of language and interpretive density, and continuity of process. Skehan (1996, p. 52) divided the difficulties into three aspects according to the complexity of language, the degree of complexity in cognition, and pressure of communication. Nunan (1998, cited in Zeng, p. 17) divides it in the terms of the input language and activity. ‘The
learning tasks cannot indicate the range of cognition and communication or the complexity of language; the continuity and systematisation of task is hard to control’ (Zeng, 2006, p. 17).

Another issue is related to teaching, which may be affected by the language modality. According to Zeng (2006), from the definition of task, we can see that researchers have different understanding of it, and the standards of task haven’t be established yet. It provides a difficulty to the class design and organization. Some researchers describe the components of tasks but these components themselves are fluctuating concepts. There are questions such as: implement the task in what kind of language environment, what is the extent of students’ participation and the teachers’ role and so on. ‘If these questions cannot be solved, the hardness teaching implementation will be extruded’ (Zeng, 2006, p. 19).

Skehan (1996, p. 58) and other researchers point out that in the task-based language teaching process, the meaning and modality should be balanced and the complexity of language structure should be emphasized. Nevertheless it is not an easy job to achieve the goal within the balance of these several abilities and make sure the validity of language use.

Gao (2008, p. 8), whose vision is more emphasised towards the class implementation, has pointed out that task-based language teaching is an inefficient pedagogy. The task-based approach is centred on students learning; the initiative of learning is in the hands of students. Although teachers can adjust the class process according to the class situation, the tasks and items which are designed beforehand are hardly finished in the limited time. As a result, teachers always have to shorten the time of the task, or put some of the task after class which leaves the quality of teaching without guarantee and the implementation of the task becomes artificial. The second is the organization of the class and design and implementation of the
tasks which rely too much on the ability and skill of teacher, so it is hard to get an extensive improvement of the teaching. The third is the individual, which is hard to control and oversee with a low rate in feedback. The character of the task-based approach is to ‘task-like’ the class activities and allows students to get language acquisition through the task. But the situation, which often happens, is that students always use their first language to communicate in class but not the target language. Although it has been stressed consistently, the effect is disappointing. Meanwhile, because the accomplishment costs time, so the feedback of learning and language use is slower and this leads to hard control of teaching time and process.

In summary, the empirical research in task-based language teaching is not enough, neither in China nor abroad. ‘There is a need to deep and broad the research on task-based teaching’ (Zeng, 2006, p. 19).

2.6 RESEARCH GAP IN TBLT

Integrating my own teaching experience with the literature review, I found two important aspects of TBLT for my teaching and research. The first is the class designing part; I will give students more choice in the class teaching. The second is the task content; I will add a very important part of task - culture task.

In TCSL, most researchers and teachers still focus on the text book to design the tasks. Wang (2005) regards the application of textbook as the key of the task circle. However, in my class in the Australia high school, there is no textbook. My Chinese depend on students’ life experience and their needs of language.

Understanding of Chinese culture is a big task for TCSL. This kind of understanding can of benefit for the individual to individual conversation and communication; in another word it is interpersonal connection. To achieve
understanding, only learners’ language itself is not enough. Culture can be seen as the personality of a country or a nation. Language teaching can be of benefit to international communication and understanding when more cultural elements are added. Some researchers have pointed out the important of culture in the task-based approach. Ma and Lv (2008, p. 179) have mentioned a little about the culture element in English task design but not in TCSL. To fill this gap, my research will pay more attention to the cultural elements and the ‘culture task’.

Recognising the gaps of TBLT, especially the content gap, cultural element in language teaching could be a very important part of my Chinese teaching in Australia. As a researcher indicates, ‘(对外汉语教学界就在文化教学辅助语言教学的方面达成共识: 语言教学与文化教学密不可分.) The teachers and researchers of TCSL have already made a consensus in teaching Chinese: language teaching and culture teaching are inseparable’ (QIAO, 2009, p. 215).

In the following sections, the objective of language teaching will be provided to demonstrate the cultural element included in language teaching aims. Then the definition of culture and the relationship between culture and language will be reviewed and followed by the explanation of intercultural language teaching. Then, some issues of intercultural teaching and the relationship between culture and language will be discussed.

2.7 THE OBJECTIVE OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

Nowadays, the teachers and researchers pay more and more attention to the culture in language teaching. ‘A new exploration of the teaching and learning of culture in English language teaching and learning is overdue, given the particular importance of approaches to culture and intercultural communication in the teaching and learning of the ‘global language’” (Young et al, 2009, p. 149).
After decades developing, English teaching has a more clear definition of the goal of teaching. A TCSL researcher, Guo (2007), gives us a description of this definition which is increasingly expanded and consummated.

“教学目标已经从‘语言能力’扩展到‘交际能力’(Hymes 1972), 又扩展到‘跨文化交际能力’。越来越多的人认识到, 目的语使用的‘适宜性’是在跨文化交际的框架中定义的；学生需要一种跨文化交际能力, 他们能够受益于语言文化教育”。(Byram & Morgan 1994:62) (“The objective of teaching has already expanded from ‘language competence’ to ‘Communication competence’ (Hymes 1972), and then enlarged to ‘intercultural competence’. More and more people realised that, the suitability of target language using is defined in the framework of intercultural communication. Students need a competence of intercultural, so they can benefit from the language and culture education (Byram & Morgan 1994:62)”). (Guo, 2007, p. 71)

Other researchers have the similar emphasis on culture. ‘…except for ‘language’, ‘learning’ and ‘teaching’, there is no more central concept in the field of teaching English than ‘culture” (Atkinson 1999 cited in Young et al. 2009, p. 149). ‘For the language learner, culture is an important part of being able to communicate successfully and appropriately in another language’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 6).

But regarding TCSL, Guo also points out that the objective in TCSL is drop behind the development of second language teaching.

“如果说对外汉语教学目标定位的认识经历了从培养汉语听、说、读、写等语言技能到培养汉语交际能力的陈述的转变, 那么目前还需要一个新的转变, 那就是对外汉语教学的总体目标应定位为培养将汉语作为第二语言的学习者的跨文化交际能力” (“If the cognition in teaching objective of TCSL has going through a process of the changing from training the language skills of ‘listening’, ‘speaking’, ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ to the training of Chinese communication competence, now we need a new change, which is the general objective of TCSL teaching should turned to foster the intercultural communication competence of TCSL learners) (Guo, 2007, p. 73)

From Guo’s point of view, in terms of the objective of language teaching, the development of TCSL still needs to be accelerated in order to catch up with teaching
English as a second language. Similarly Wang (2004) points out that, ‘汉语学习, 说到底是一种文化的选择 (Chinese learning, in another words, is a selection of culture )’ (Wang, 2004, p. 107). Another TCSL teacher-as-researcher, Liu, provided his opinion that TCSL is a linkage of language and culture; culture is everywhere and cannot be separate from language:

对外汉语教学既是一个语言过程，也是一个文化过程，文化指的是一个社会的全部生活方式，这就意味着文化无处不在，无时不有，渗透在社会的任何角落。语言教学的目的是培养学生用这种语言进行交际的能力，这与相关文化因素的教学是分不开的。(TCSL teaching is not only a process of language, but also the culture’s, which is the summation of the way of life in a society. It means culture is anywhere in anytime, it infiltrate in any corners of a society. The objective of language teaching is training the competence of learners which communication in the target language.) (LIU, 2001, p. 33)

2.8 THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE

2.8.1 THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE

It is widely acknowledged that culture ‘comprises a set of symbolic systems, including knowledge, norms, values, beliefs, language, art, customs, as well as habits and skills learned by members of a given society’ (Shiraev and Levy 2004, cited in Young et al. 2009). In Chinese, culture can be understood as ‘(某一个社会在历史发展过程中所创造的物质和精神财富的总和，特指精神财富) In the developing process of history, both material wealth and spiritual wealth are created by the society, especially spiritual wealth’ (Chen, 1997, p. 1). From the description of the researcher, language is included in culture definitely. Culture could be represented all-around in our life, and one’s action and speaking all demonstrate the special culture of a nation which may not be noticed by him or her.

2.8.2 TWO WAYS TO UNDERSTAND CULTURE

Two ways have been suggested by researchers to comprehend culture. The first is
derived from the research of humanities. This view can be regarded as culture as the human-made part of our environment.

This has focused on the way a social group represents itself and others through its material productions, from art and literature, social institutions or practices of everyday life, to the mechanisms of their preservation and reproduction through history (Herkovits, 1948, cited in, Young et al. 2009, p. 150).

The humanities’ definition is based on the written tradition of texts; ‘It understands the present and imagines the future in light of the past; it derives its authority from time-honoured institutions, gatekeepers of the academy, that have codified the rules of exegesis and interpretation of written texts’ (Kramsch, 1995, p. 83). This kind of study is more static and serious, with emphasise very much on the past, and also a focus on academic and mainstream explanations.

The second way of understanding culture comes from the contributions of social scientists. ‘Here, culture refers to the attitudes and beliefs, ways of thinking, behaving and remembering shared by members of a community’ (Liberman 1994; Nostrand 1989; Steinmetz, Bush, and Joseph-Goldfarb 1994, cited in Young et al. 2009, p. 150). This definition is in many ways similar to the one which is given by social scientists like Richard Brislin (1990):

‘Culture, refers to widely shared ideals, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal-directed activities that become unconsciously or subconsciously accepted as ‘right’ and ‘correct’ by people who identify themselves as members of a society.’ (Brislin, 1990, p. 11)

This definition provides an approach to the study of culture, which is based on several methodologies to the oral phenomena; for example observation, data collection and analysis. It understands the present by viewing current events in the light of their social diversity and their relation to other contemporary events. It derives its authority from the discovery of laws that regulate social life. This kind of
The approach is more dynamic and agile, and also reflects a continuous developing world.

2.9 STATIC AND DYNAMIC VIEW OF CULTURE

The definitions of culture above have more emphasis on the content level, which provided teachers a concept of culture in a mass. In classroom teaching, teachers could choose the way to teach culture. How to demonstrate the culture of target language becomes a valuable question in the implementation of language teaching. Liddicoat (2002) provides useful sorts of culture to identify, which are static culture and dynamic culture.

2.9.1 STATIC VIEW OF CULTURE

The static view of culture treats cultural knowledge as either facts or artefacts. We learn information about a country or people, their lives, their history, their institutions, or their customs, or we learn about the cultural icons these people have produced, such as their literature, their art, their architecture, or their music. In each case, a cultural lesson is viewed as teaching pieces of information about the culture that are often separated from the other material being taught in the language.

In other words, the culture knowledge in the teaching is only a culture; it basically has less connection with language implementation. Similar to the history and culture lesson, the culture knowledge can be taught out of the language class rather than in the language class. The history, art and customs have not linked with the target language.

The problem of the static view of culture is that in language teaching, language implementation is at least a core of the teaching and ‘The core problem here for the
teaching of language and culture is that there is no clearly articulated link between cultural knowledge and language use, nor of the way the information taught will affect the learner as a user of the language’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 6). The culture knowledge which is taught in the view of static is normally associated with some assessment task and project but not the long term useful information.

To prove his opinion, Liddicoat provided an example in a German textbook Kontakte, this text book is chosen for its strong emphasis on the culture.

![Kulturprojekt](image)

Cultural project – Use an atlas to find the following information: Identify the latitude of your university town and find large European or North African cities that are at about the same latitude.

Identify the latitude of Hamburg and Vienna and look for North American cities that are at about the same latitude.

(Liddicoat, 2002, p. 7)

Figure 2.7: Static culture example

‘The cultural information, such as it is, does not truly reflect the needs of a user of German, except perhaps to know the vocabulary item InterCity Express’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 7). This figure contains some factual knowledge about the German train system, and ‘the culture input contained in this activity is limited…’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 7) The problem here may still be the relevance of culture content and language. It becomes simply a listening or reading activity rather than the culture
task. The culture in the activity is separate from the language implementation and turns into some static pieces. ‘The cultural component underlying the language is missing.’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 7)

### 2.9.2 Dynamic View of Culture

The dynamic approach to culture involves seeing culture as a set of practices in which people engage in order to live their lives. As such, culture is not about information and things; it is about actions and understanding. In order to learn about culture, it is necessary to engage with the linguistic and non-linguistic practices of the culture and to gain insights about the way of living in a particular cultural context. Cultural knowledge is not therefore a case of knowing information about the culture; it is about knowing how to engage with the culture. (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 7)

The different between static culture and dynamic culture is in the dynamic view of culture; cultural competence is seen as intercultural behaviour. ‘Intercultural behaviour: It is the ability to negotiate meaning across cultural boundaries and establish one's own identity as a user of another language’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 7).

The culture knowledge in the dynamic view is about how language is used and how these communications happen in the culture context. It is linked with language more closely than the static view, and could be an effective way to teach in the language classroom. For example, when you teach Chinese ‘你好ㄚ?’ (how are you?), the answer will might be ‘我很好’ (Pretty good), or ‘很不错’ (Not too bad), but after that, a further topic could be continued. ‘In many other languages, it is usual to talk further about what is wrong rather than moving on to a new topic’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 8). It is not a case of knowing facts about culture of a language; it is a case of knowing how to function when speaking a language. Another example is in some Chinese, people often use ‘你吃了么?’ (have you eaten up?) as a greeting, which is
very special way of Chinese culture in communication.

A number of levels have been raised to support the dynamic view, some of which are closely related to the ‘pure culture’ while others lean more to the ‘pure language’.


Figure 2.8: Points of articulation between culture and language

There are five levels: ‘world knowledge’, ‘genres’, ‘pragmatic norms’, ‘norms of interaction’ and ‘grammar, lexicon, pronunciation, prosody and kinesics’.

'World knowledge' is the least attached to language. It refers to the cultural knowledge we have about how the world works (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 8). For example, in Chinese teaching, some students are interested in ‘one-child policy’, ‘one party reign policy’. It has few connections with the language itself which is to be taught, but for more understanding and respect. A little explanation is likely to be recommended in class.
'Genres' are top level language structures and vary as cultural perceptions about what is an appropriate text (whether written or spoken) vary (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 8). The genres could reflect the character of a nation and what is considered as good and logical in this language. It might be totally different in another cultural context of language.

'Pragmatic norms' refer to norms of language use, especially to politeness (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 8). This level is evaluated by the culture. Liddicoat gives an example:

For example, French Donne-moi le livre and English 'Give me the book' may 'mean' the same thing, but they cannot be used in the same contexts. The French version would be considered adequately polite in a broader range of contexts than the English version. (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 8)

'Norms of interaction' refers to what it is appropriate to say at a particular point in a conversation, and what someone is expected to say at this point (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 8). As in the example above, conversation is not just ‘How are you?’, but the further way to communication.

The last level concerns the ways in which we encode ideas, concepts, and relationships in language, including things like appropriate registers (e.g. formal or informal), appropriate amounts of physical contact, and appropriate personal space. It is the level which is most close to the language and also presents more detail.
2.10 INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE TEACHING: PRESENTING DYNAMIC CULTURE.

In order to teach culture as a dynamic set rather than static model, ILT (Intercultural Language Teaching) established four main activities for learning, there are:

- Learning about culture
- Comparing cultures
- Exploring cultures
- Finding one's own 'third place' between cultures.

(Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9)

Here, the first activities, ‘learning about culture’ as Liddicoat describes the ‘culture’ which learned in ILT, are actually both one’s own culture and target language culture.

Learning about one's own culture is an important part of this process, because we often do not realize that our 'natural' ways of behaving are culturally determined. As a result, in order to learn about another culture, we need to learn about our own. (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9).

We cannot expect, and also do not intend, learners to abandon or forget their own culture when they speak another language. This is reflected in the goal of second language teaching via ILT. It is ‘The ultimate goal of ILT is not to assimilate learners into the target culture, but for learners to develop for themselves an intercultural position that moves beyond their own culture, but is not always like the target culture’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9). This position is usually regarded as ‘third place’ (Kramsch 1993, Crozet et al.1999, cited in Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9). This is a position learners feel comfortable between two cultures and could communicate with the people from other language comfortably while maintaining their own character of native culture. Their own culture could be the basis of target language culture.
learning and might be a useful tool during the intercultural comparison, which could help learners to understand more about the target culture.

In order to achieve these goals, ILT have five principles to spread an all-round approach to teach culture in the language class.

Firstly, culture is integrated into other language skills. As I mentioned before, culture has usually been considered as the fifth element after listening, speaking, reading and writing. ‘At its most extreme, this view considers culture as something that learners will pick up by themselves when they visit the foreign culture’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9). For example, ‘你’ (you) and ‘您’ (you, but more respectful) in Chinese pronoun could be considered as grammar. However, separated from culture, the using of this pronoun could be incorrect. In different contexts, different speaking accents, and different order, ‘您’ could also be impolite and as a quip when the conversation happens in an enantiosis language environment. How to judge this kind of enantiosis environment is dependant on the understanding of culture to some extent.

Secondly, culture is taught from the beginning. ‘Because culture is fundamental to language, we need to start teaching it at the very beginning of language teaching’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9). If we teach culture later, learners will build their own assumption during their language learning which is influenced by their first culture unanalysed and uninformed. As a result, the comparison and analysis of culture could be blocked by these ‘hemimetabolous’ understanding. In TCSL, Wang also agrees that:

‘重要的是要把握文化内涵, 要进行文化的阐释。这绝非一时之举, 或一日之功, 它应当贯穿在整个汉语语言教学过程中, 并逐步增强和逐步深入。 (The grasp of culture content and culture interpretation is important. Rome is not built in one day. The culture teaching should penetrate into the whole TCSL teaching process and be deeper and stronger) (Wang, 2004, p. 108).
The culture is not only taught from beginning, but also in further synchronization. Chinese researcher Xue provides the definition of this synchronization in culture and language:

所谓同步性,一方面指文化教学与语言教学是同步进行的,在外语教学的同时进行文化教学;另一方面还指文化教学和习得机制与语言教学和习得机制是协调一致的,即我们学得和习得了外语的同时,也学得和习得了该语言所包含的文化。(Synchronization, means language teaching and culture teaching are synchronous, teaching language as well as teaching culture at the same time. On the other hand, it means culture learning and acquisition mechanism is coordinated with language. When we learned and acquainted the foreign language, at the same time, we also learned the culture of this language.) (Xue, 2008, p. 100)

Thirdly, bilingual speakers are the norm. To develop the approach which focuses on the intercultural, we should give our learners a sort of goal which is ‘Usually aimed at making the learner as much like a native speaker of the language as possible. This is both an unrealistic goal (it is hardly ever achieved) and also an inappropriate one’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9). It is unrealistic because it might be an unachievable destination for most second language learners especially in their native environment. It is inappropriate because ‘it does not reflect the social and culture reality of using a second language’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10). Instead, for an unrealistic native speaker the second language teaching could aim to a more profitable goal which is a bilingual form. As Liddicoat (2002) explained, that is developing a speaker who is comfortable and capable in an intercultural context. Then he gives a further explanation of Bilinguals in language learning as below:

Bilinguals need to navigate between the languages and cultures they know and they need to create identities for themselves that work in these contexts. In order to become competent bilinguals, learners need to know what native speakers mean when they adopt certain behaviors but they do not have to reproduce these behaviors in the same way. This means we have to think about 'productive competence' and 'receptive competence' separately (Kasper 1998). As receivers of language, second language users need to be able to understand what native speakers mean in native-speaker-like ways. As producers of language, however, many second language users do not want to behave in
natlve-speaker-like ways, may not feel comfortable doing so, or may not need to do so.
(Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10)

The fourth principle is ‘language acquisition involves intercultural exploration’. As I mentioned in the view of TBLT, language learning focuses are divided between two groups of opinions; one is ‘language modality’, and another is ‘communication’. Here, in ITL, not only is the culture of target language important, but the discovery of comparing between two cultures. Because of the condition of first language, ‘most learners have not had opportunities to learn about the ways in which their own culture works and how their own language reflects their culture, and without this knowledge it is difficult to come to terms with a different culture’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10). The culture which is learned in classroom is relative rather than absolute. As Liddicoat (2002) points out, learning another culture can provided an opportunity for comparison with one’s own culture which is similar to the view of Xue. In other words, it is a kind of ‘compatibility of language and culture’ (XUE, 2008, p. 101).

The last principle is ‘develop intercultural competence’. ‘Intercultural competence means being aware that cultures are relative, that is, being aware that there is no one 'normal' way of doing things, but rather that all behaviour is culturally variable’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10). In language teaching, this intercultural competence includes the respect of another culture language speaking, achieve the objectives of cultural convention. Although it is impossible to learn everything in the classroom, it is a long term process. As Crozet and Liddicoat point out in 1999, culture maybe the most long-lasting outcome of language learning. Li provides a metaphor of this outcome; ‘language + culture + teacher = intercultural competence’ (Li, 1994, cited in Xue, 2008, p. 101).
The process of developing intercultural competence is demonstrated in the figure above. It is cyclical which is similar to the action research cycle. The first step is input. As the motivator of the whole process, the teacher needs to give enough emphasis to culture and input enough culture content in the classroom. And, not only be input, but it needs to be noticed. ‘Our cultural conventions are often invisible to us and noticing a cultural difference can be made more difficult because of this’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 11). As my own experience in teaching, students enjoy the differences of culture between Australia and China. How to attract the attention of students is one of the key tasks for language teacher in intercultural language teaching. Once the culture differences have been noticed, it turns to an important stage of ‘reflection’. Liddicoat explain it as below:

Once cultural difference has been noticed, the input is available for reflection and experimentation. In ILT, it is important for the learner who has noticed a difference in the input to reflect on the nature of the difference and to decide how to respond to that difference, that is, how far the learner will modify his or her practices to accommodate this new input. This decision is then introduced and leads to output in the language using a modified set of norms. (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 11)

After the output of what has been reflected, the students could get a sense of achievement and it may keep their interest. This helps them to find the new interests.
The new interests become the target of further reflection, which again provides the process of reflection to output, and it potentially become a cycle of learning.

2.11 ISSUES OF INTERCULTURAL TEACHING

As the design of this intercultural competence develops, the learning might be a benign and continuously cycle, but in reality, there are some blocks during this practice. In English teaching, which could be borrowed as a reference for Chinese teaching, there are four blocks for the intercultural teaching which were raised by Young et al. in 2009. In the level of implementation, learning of culture is stressed by the language teachers and students. ‘Additionally, it is apparent in the theoretical literature that there is an assumption that an effective approach to culture is not actively addressed on language learning programmes’ (Young et al. 2009, p. 151).

The follow reasons have been suggested.

Firstly, ‘non-native’ speaking (NNS) teachers of a language may lack the confidence to teach about the sociocultural milieu of a society which is not their own. This issue is particularly pertinent to English language teaching, where an increasingly large majority of teachers worldwide are not ‘NS’ of the language.

Secondly, and this point is said to apply to both ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ teachers of languages, it has been suggested by some theoreticians that teachers find it difficult to teach culture in the same principled way that they teach. For example, grammar and vocabulary training curricula is unusual: …Young (2007) notes that the main English Language teaching qualification for experienced teachers in the UK makes little, if any, mention of teaching the cultural component.

Thirdly, there are suggestions that teachers see learning culture as unimportant or irrelevant to the learning of languages. In this view, the learning of culture may more properly belong to subjects such as human geography, or ‘civics’.

A fourth suggestion, and one more particularly pertinent to learning the English language in environment where the language is not the main medium of communication, is that teachers’ and learners’ own negative attitudes towards ‘English-speaking’ societies, particularly the USA and UK, may tend to reduce the motivation to explore the sociocultural milieu which is inextricably linked with linguistic practice in majority English speaking societies.

(Young et al, 2009, p. 151-152)
It can be a suggestion for my teaching and research, but several differences and reflections need to be found out. The first issue is not a problem for me, because I am a native Chinese, and my major is Chinese. I have enough confidence and knowledge to teach my students Chinese culture, both traditional and modern. The second issue, pointed out is the different between culture element and normal language in teaching pedagogy. As I mentioned before in my opinion and planning, the combination of culture and communication could be a way to explore, which is ‘culture task.’ As a link between TBLT and ILT, culture task will combine culture elements with communication, and the culture will be taught in a dynamic way while communication will still be one of the cores in teaching.

2.12 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Culture, in the personal understanding, is a mirror to demonstrate the character of a nation, the way of think and understanding, and the manner of communication. It has a strong relationship with the language. ‘It is generally accepted that the interrelationship between language and culture is strong but complex’ (Risager 2006, cited in Young et al. 2009). As the tool of thinking, language is supported by the culture. ‘语言既是文化的一部分，又是文化的载体;语言教学既有工具性，还有人文性和教育性;外语教学不应仅仅是语言教学，还应当包括文化教学’ (Language is not only a part of culture, but also the carrier of culture; language teaching is much more than a Instrumental input, which should be a humanistic and educational process.) (Zhang, 2003, p. 41). This description is close to Hinkel in 1999, who presents this relationship as the all and the one with individual ‘Because language is both a transmitter of culture, and is the main tool for the internalization
of the cultural by the individual. Language is also a moulder of culture, and agentive entity, whereby cultural representations are shaped by the language used to express them’ (Hinkel 1999, cited in Young et al. 2009). As Hu (1991) points out, ‘language is the most important part of culture, and at the same time, it is the intermedium of transmitting culture. Which means culture teaching must included in the language teaching’ (cited in Chen, 1997, p. 1).

Language teaching, in other words, is actually bringing a kind of understanding. Perfect pronunciation and standard accent is the understanding of surface and the first level of comprehension. The culture which is inside the language is at a deeper, further level of understanding. As Liddicoat points out, ‘Developing intercultural competence is an ongoing process and the primary tool for this development is reflecting on one's own linguistic behaviour and that of one's interlocutors’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10). In teaching implementation, language could be the main body of classroom teaching, but culture, which might be the interesting point for students, also needs to be introduced during the process of communication or vocabulary teaching. It could be important as the reinforcer of language or sometimes as the static knowledge is introduced to students.

From the depiction of researcher, it is obvious that language and culture are well-knit together but in the teaching process the situation will be more practical. ‘虽然语言与文化是不可分的,文化因素在语言教学中无处不在,但在实际教学中或许是受传统和习惯的影响,忽视了语言使用中的文化因素’ (Although language and culture are inseparable and culture element is everywhere in language teaching, in the practical teaching, may because of the traditional and habitual influence, culture element could be overlooked in language using) (Xue, 2008, p. 100). As I mentioned before, one gap in TBLT might be the culture element. It is also an issue of combining culture with language.
2.13 COMBINE CULTURE WITH LANGUAGE IN TEACHING

In this study, TBLT and ILT will be combined together during the class planning and implementation. Since the TBLT is a recommended way of teaching a second language due to its well organized structure and interest enhancement for students. However, the researcher also found a gap in TBLT, which is the cultural element. Therefore, the approach of ILT with emphasised on culture and intercultural competence training has been considered to fill the gap and achieve the goal of teaching Chinese in Australia to beginner students.

The knowledge presented in the curriculum and textbooks is static, but culture is dynamic. Culture infiltrate into one’s life during the process of growing up. ‘When we come to learn another culture, we need to learn it as a dynamic process, not as a static set of isolated facts’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 11). Learners need to engage with the teaching process and teachers needs to provide the dynamic way to teach culture. The culture knowledge could be integrated into communication rather than passively received. The pedagogy of teaching could be an important way through, and ‘culture task’ might be the way to provide the dynamic culture and also the communication in a culture context. It could be a compromise of TBLT and ILT, not only to fill the potential gap in TBLT but also to combine the superiorities of thee two approaches.

As many researchers mentioned, culture could be regard as the background of language: ‘(留学生在学习汉语时，如果不同时学习这种语言所包含的文化因素，就无法理解这种语言，在交际中也不可能进行正确的表达。) For international students, when they learning Chinese, if the culture element which contained in the language has not been learned, the language could not be understood, and the correct express could be hardly to carry out in the communication’ (Liu, 2001, p. 33).
In the practical teaching process, I found two issues for this kind of compromise. The first is combining culture with communication or culture with language. Although TBLT emphasizes the communication in language teaching, for the students as beginners, language skill is far from the level of communication. This does not mean the communication could be replaced by simple language pieces, but the communication implementation may need a process according to the situation of students. On the other hand, the ‘culture task’ I designed, for example ‘kite making’ and ‘calligraphy tasting’ could be difficult to combine with communication. In the figure Points of articulation between culture and language above, these tasks are more close to culture than to language. It becomes the second issue; in ILT, dynamic culture in language is encouraged to be taught in the language class. Liddicoat criticizes the static culture teaching in German. But in the culture tasks, these elements seem like static culture teaching, which is an important culture experience of Chinese culture. Different from the ‘train system of German’, this ‘static culture’ is the clearest reflection of Chinese culture. This is the basic culture and an easy way for students to understand Chinese culture. It might be inconvenient to teach these culture tasks within communication, but through the appropriate guidance of the teacher, some conversation and vocabulary could be input to these tasks.

As a result, the combination of culture and language is more suitable in these ‘culture tasks’. ‘Culture task’ may contain the culture element but be implemented as a task rather than only present as a fact. As a kind of dialectical succession of two approaches, culture task in my teaching and research will be implemented following consideration of the students’ special situation and the Chinese culture.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY: ACTION RESEARCH

I WISH TO RIDE ON THE STRONG WIND, TO DEFEAT THE BILLOW FOR THOUSAND MILES

This chapter will present the overview of action research and the reason of my choice. Secondly, data collection and analysis of this research process will be demonstrated as the major part. Thirdly, the limitation of the study will be presented, both subjective and objective. After that, the research ethics will help to replenish the content of participants chosen and outline privacy issues.

The content of this chapter is structured as follows:

3.1 Introduction of action research;
3.2 Research design and outcome;
3.3 Data collection;
3.4 Data analysis;
3.5 Research ethics; and
3.6 Limitation and delimitation.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF ACTION RESEARCH

3.1.1 THE OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The goals of this research are: (1) to improve the researcher’s own teaching skills in teaching Chinese as a second language, (2) to improve students’
communicative skill through arousing their interests in Mandarin and Chinese culture, (3) to improve the research skills through linking teaching and research together, (4) to fill a gap between the task-based teaching approach and intercultural learning.

3.1.2 ACTION RESEARCH

Action research is the method in this research. Action research is a methodology which is defined as ‘any systematic inquiry conducted by teachers, administrators or others with a vested interest in the teaching and learning process or environment for the purpose of gathering information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how their students learn’ (Mills, 2007, p. 5). As Kemmis and McTaggart (2002) point out:

“Action research is a form of collective, self-reflective that participants in social situations undertake to improve: (1) the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices; (2) the participants’ understanding of these practices and the situations in which they carry out these practices” (Kemmis and McTaggart, Cited in Altruchter et al. 2002, pp. 125 – 126)

Action research is characterised as research that is done by teachers for themselves (Mertler, 2009, p. 12). The data are gathered with the aims of ‘gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment (and on educational practices in general), and improving students outcomes and the lives of those involved’ (Mills, 2007, p. 5). Another pragmatic form of defining and explaining action research is a diagrammatical model. This diagram shows the most important character of action research; cycle. Each cycle consists of four elements in action research show as follows:

(1) Planning;
(2) Acting;
(3) Observing; and
(4) Reflecting.

Zuber-Skerritt (2001, p. 15)

Figure 3.1: Action cycle

Action research has been distinguished by researchers from everyday actions of teachers.

It is not research done on other people. Action research is research by particular people on their own work, to help them improve what they do, including how they work with and for others… (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992, p. 21-22)

Researchers suggest several principles and characteristics of action research. Cohen et al. summarize the principles of action research.

- Enhances the competencies of participants
- Is undertaken directly in situ
- Use feedback from data in an ongoing cyclical process
- Is undertaken within an agreed framework of ethics

(Cohen et al, 2007, p. 299)
The action research cycle is similar to the process cycle in TBLT and ILT (Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.9), which gives the opportunity to research the combination of TBLT and ILT; the ‘culture task’ in this process and the associated process cycle.

![Diagram of process cycles comparison]

Figure 3.2: process cycles comparison

As Figure 3.1 shows, these three circles have some differences. Except for the ‘Action research cycle’, the end of cycles which link with the beginning part is by dashed line. It means these two cycles have a missing link in that stage. In my point of view, the cycle of TBLT is the ‘Acting’ stage of action research. As the result of this recognition, the ‘Acting’ stage could be replaced by the cycle of TBLT; the dashed line is the process from the stage of ‘Observing’, ‘Reflecting’ to ‘Planning’. And another cycle which belongs to ILT is crossing with the action research cycle. It contains the stage of reflection but the reflection of ILT is an incomplete process with an effect only on the ‘output’ phase. In other words, it is an inner-reflection but it could be separate from a continuous process of teaching or have limited effect on the
next new classes. The relationships between action research and ‘culture task’, in other words why research choose action research as the methodology of this research, is discussed in next part, ‘the research design and research outcome’.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH OUTCOME

3.2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research program design has been changed according to the situation of the teaching and research focus. At the beginning of teaching, the researcher designed the TBLT plan in both teaching and research. I intended to design a teaching plan for a whole term and a big task for the end of term which would be introduced at the beginning. It could be regarded as an assessment and also the main process of the term. Each lesson was also a small task, which followed the task cycle. The aim of a task is to teach students useful Chinese language during the practise of task-like communicative skills, Chinese culture and Chinese habits. Each lesson was to be linked to the big task and include the language related to the last topic or performance. At the end of the term, students were required to demonstrate their language using focusing on what they had learned (Figure 1). This design was trialled during one term (as Figure 1), before the focus changed to ‘culture task’.

Due to the change in term two, as I mentioned above, the design has been changed (figure 2) to fit the new situation. Firstly, ‘culture’ becomes the most important content in teaching. As a result, the ‘big task’ is replaced by ‘culture task’ in the design. For each class, according to the teaching content, ‘culture task’ will be integrated into the class and including communication, vocabulary, calligraphy and other activities. The first two or three classes not include a culture task because as beginners, students and teachers both need some time and a knowledge collection as a basis for a of ‘culture task’, some vocabulary and simple sentences would be helpful for the ‘culture task’.
Figure 3.3: former class design

Figure 3.4: Class design for 'culture task'

After each class, the researcher asked for comments and questions from the class.
teacher and wrote a reflective dairy to record the class process, the researcher’s reflections and further planning. This was very important evidence for my action research. At the end of term, feedback from students was collected for research data and reflection. The whole plan had four major phases: planning, teaching, observation and reflection, which fit the cycle of action research well.

3.2.2 FORECAST OF RESEARCH OUTCOME AND ARGUMENT

The outcomes of the research relate to the objective of research. These four goals, except the ‘improve research skills’ goal, can be used to answer my research question ‘How can culture task be implemented in TCSL for high school beginning learners?’ The data gathered can substantiate three interrelated questions (Figure 3). The first focuses on the ‘culture task’ itself; How can combination of ILT and TBLT appropriately in class teaching? The second emphasizes students; How does ‘culture task’ benefit students’ culture learning and understand via language use? The third is related to teachers; How does the ‘culture task’ help teachers in teaching process and what kind of issues should ‘culture task’ reflect?

After the research, I hope the outcomes answer these questions. For ‘culture task’ itself, whether the combination of ILT and TBLT is appropriate is a basic question. In other words, the answers to other questions can help get the answer to this question.
These three elements (Figure 3) are the contents to prove the argument of whether the ‘culture task’ is appropriate for teaching Chinese. Suppose that, through the data collection and analysis, the ‘culture task’ has been found to benefit students’ cultural learning and language acquisition then the aspect related to students in the ‘culture task’ is working. Then, if it is helpful to the teacher and the class teacher, not only in teaching content but also in class arrangement, class control, interest catching and the development of the new teacher, the teaching system of ‘culture task’ is activated. After that, some issues will be reflected on to summarize and prove that through several steps of reflection and amelioration, if the implementation of ‘culture task’ is valuable and effective then the protection and reflection system is working. As a result, whether ‘culture task’ is appropriate in this special situation and whether it could be a approach to other Chinese teachers will be discovered and discussed.

3.2.3 THE REASON OF CHOOSE ACTION RESEARCH AS METHODOLOGY
The reasons for choosing action research as the methodology are related to the objectives and research question. On one hand, the research objectives fit action research well. Firstly, the researcher wants to be a better teacher in TSCL. Action research can help to improve teaching practice through the reflective progress. By understanding action research, the teaching process could be reviewed and reflected on. If there are shortcomings then get a revised plan to improve the Chinese teaching through the research cycle. Secondly, the other three objectives((2) To improve students’ communicative skill through arousing their interests in Mandarin and Chinese culture; (3) To improve my research skills through linking teaching and research together; and (4) To fill a gap between task-based teaching approach and intercultural learning) could all be achieved through the implementation of action research. Objective two and three are the practice processes from both teaching and researching aspects. These two aspects could be included in the action cycle and benefit from the ‘planning-acting-observing-reflecting’ process. Objective four is the theoretical level. But as the literature review shows, although some research findings support the opinion that teachers should add more culture education in the TBLT for TCSL, for example Ma & Lv (2008), few of them implement it in practice. This research is a limited overture at culture teaching with the approach of TBLT, collecting implementation experiences through the action research.

On the other hand, the objectives of the research lead to the research questions. The question of this research, ‘How to implement culture task in TCSL for high school beginner’ is divided into four aspects: ‘appropriate’, ‘benefit students’, ‘help teachers’, and ‘reflection’. To answer these questions and combine with the teaching, action research is best. Through the observation of the class, the feasibility which validates the appropriation of ‘culture task’ will show from the record of students’ reaction and feedback, teacher’s implementation and management, and the class design and task structure. The aspects of ‘help teachers’ and ‘reflection’ could be
validated in the reflection process and the answer to ‘benefit students’ could be reflected from the whole process. All the data collection will surround the task evaluation standard, and intercultural teaching principle which will be introduced later in the data collection part. Relying on these standards, the observation, reflection, interview and survey will be organized in order.

3.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

According to Mertler (2009, p. 105), the data collection is dividing into two approaches, Qualitative data collection and Quantitative data collection. Each of them has several techniques to collect data. It shows as below:

(Mertler, 2009, p. 105)

Figure 3.6: data collection techniques for action research

For my action research I chose four techniques to collect data. They are: observation, interview, journal and surveys. As well as these methods in action research, task and class design is also be included in the data collection because it is
the basis of task-based teaching. As the structural-ramification of the task-based approach, the task and class designs of ‘culture task’ are the most important data for me to analyse for the task implementation and is also significant for the further stages of reflection and coding. These reflections of task design and class implementation will be reflected according to the standard of evaluation combined with TBLT and ILT.

3.4.1 TASK EVALUATION

Data analysis is based on the data collection. The first and significant part of this research data collection is the contrast and evaluation of tasks. The following checklist contains a set of questions for evaluating tasks. From the perspective of Nunan (2004), seven aspects could be considered in order to evaluate the task:

1) Goals and rationale
   - To what extent is the goal or goals of the task obvious a) to you b) to your students?
   - Is the task appropriate to the learners’ proficiency level?
   - To what extent does the task reflect a real-world? Is this appropriate?
   - Does the task encourage learners to apply classroom learning to the real world?
   - What beliefs about the nature of language and learning are inherent in the task?
   - Is the task likely to be interesting and motivation to the students?

2) Input
   - What form does the input take?
   - Is it authentic?
   - If not, is it appropriate to the goal of the task?

3) Procedures
   - Are the procedures appropriate to the goal of the task?
   - If not, can they be modified to make them more appropriate?
   - Is the task designed to stimulate students to use bottom-up or top-down processing skills?
   - Are the procedures appropriate to the input data?
   - Are the procedures designed in a way which will allow learners to communicate and cooperate in groups?
   - Is there a learning strategies dimension, and is this made explicit to the learners?

4) Roles and settings
   - What learner and teacher roles are inherent in the task?
   - Are they appropriate?
   - What levels of complexity are there in the classroom organization implicit in the task?
   - Is the setting confined to the classroom?
5) Implementation
- Does the task actually engage the learners’ interest?
- Do the procedures prompt genuine communicative interaction among students?
- Does anything unexpected occur as the task is being carried out?
- What type of language is actually stimulated by the task?
- Is this different from what might have been predicted?

6) Grading
- Is the task at the appropriate level of difficulty for the students?
- If not, is there any way in which the task might be modified in order to make it either easier or more challenging?
- Is the task structured so that it can be undertaken at different levels of difficulty?

7) Integration
- What are the principles upon which tasks are sequenced?
- Do tasks exhibit the ‘task continuity’ principle?
- Are a range of macro skills integrated into the sequence of tasks?
- If not, can you think of ways in which they might be integrated?
- Do tasks incorporate exercises in learning-how-to-learn?
- If not, are there ways in which such exercises might be introduced?

8) Assessment and evaluation
- What means exist for the teacher to determine how successfully the learners have performed?
- Does the task have built into it some means whereby learners might judge how well they have performed?
- Is the task realistic in terms of the resources and teacher-expertise it demands?
(Nunan, 2004, p. 174-175)

These seven aspects are the major characteristics of TBLT. According to this checklist, the researcher will analyse and compare ‘culture tasks’ to answer the first subsidiary question of this research; how can TBLT be used as a basis for teaching about Chinese culture. Through the process and result of evaluation on ‘culture task’, one aspect based on ‘task’ will be clear. Whether ‘culture task’ maintains the character of TBLT? Is the design of ‘culture task’ fit for the TBLT and be well applied? After answering these questions, the analysis from task design and implementation could be interpreted as one aspect of triangulation which is structured with reflective journal analysis and interview analysis.

As mentioned in chapter two, several principles have been raised by Liddicoat (2002):
Culture is integrated into other language skills;
Culture is taught from beginning and synchronized;
Bilingual speaker is the norm;
Language acquisition involves intercultural exploration; and
Develop intercultural competence.
(Liddicoat, 2002, pp. 9 – 10)

These principles are combined with the standard of TBLT as an evaluation standard of the ‘culture task’. Every two weeks, an action research cycle is taken as the task plan in teaching process and the data of a ‘culture task’ class is collected in observation. After that, the reflection is taken according to the observation and teaching. It also evaluates this class based on the ‘culture task’ evaluation standard as well as reflection of teaching process. At the end of term, the survey which is provided to students for feedback and the interviews of teachers is also be based on this ‘culture task’ evaluation standard.
3.3.2 OBSERVATION

First, observation, as a means of collecting qualitative data, involves carefully watching and systematically recording what you see and hear going on in a particular setting which includes structured observation and unstructured or semi structured observation (Mertler, 2009, p. 107). In my research, I use unstructured observation because it gives the teacher-researcher more flexibility and feasibility in class. As a teacher-researcher, it is hard to record everything in the class because half of the attention will be on the teaching process. From the ‘culture task’ evaluation standards above, three aspects have been extracted from the checklist. In this research, observation will mainly focus on three aspects:

1. Students' engagement, accomplishment of the tasks, and their feedback on the tasks.
2. The implementation of tasks in class including: time, efficiency, phases, implementation of language, and groupings.
3. Teacher's organization of tasks, problem solving, and classroom management.

3.3.3 REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

Teacher journals can provide teacher-researchers with the chance to maintain narrative accounts of their professional reflections on practice (Mertler, 2009, p. 112). As a teacher-researcher, it is difficult to record the class when teaching, so the observation will be recorded in the reflective journal. So my reflection will include the observations and teaching feeling and interpretation associated with the observations. On the other hand, the reflection of class design and task design will
also be recorded in the reflective journals for consideration and to help to improve teaching. These records and feelings will not only help me reflect on how to improve my teaching, but also become the evidence of the research. As I mentioned before, action research fits my research well at the objective of ‘reflect and improve own work or situation’. The reflective journal is an indispensable part of data collection and the major link to the new class design of the action research cycle. The reflective journals are integrated with the observations obviously, but the meaning of reflective journals is ‘reflective’. It means observations are recorded in the reflective journals, and the reflections on the observations will be pondered and combined into the journal as the evidence and support. In Chinese idiom ‘画龙点睛’, could describe this relationship, which means ‘draw a picture of dragon, colouring the eyes is giving the anima to the dragon’. The reflection is the eyes of the whole ‘dragon’. The reflection will focus on:

i. My own opinion about Chinese teaching, including: objectives, teacher’s role, and evaluation standard.

ii. The evaluation of ‘culture task’ according to the standard.

iii. The teacher’s performance in the class implementation and reflection.

iv. The student’s performance in the class and why.

3.3.4 INTERVIEW

Interviews, which ‘enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view’ (Cohen et al, 2007, p. 267) will be used in this research to collect data.

An interview is the conversation between teacher-researcher and participants in the study which researcher pose questions to the participant. (Mertler, 2007, p. 108)

In this study, the semi-structured interview will be the form of interview. As
Mertler (2007, p. 110) recommends that it is probably the best format for gathering truly qualitative data. The objective of interviews in this research is to find out the opinion and evaluation of the ‘culture task’ from a third angle, and to support or improve my point of view and teaching skills. The people who will be interviewed are the classroom teacher of my high school, the teacher of the DET curriculum unit and the TCSL teacher from China in the university. Interviews will be provided to teachers to ask their opinion about TCSL; especially their objectives for TCSL and their evaluation standards of a TCSL class. According to the evaluation standards shown before, and combined with every teacher’s own standard, the ‘culture task’ will be evaluated by these teachers. As a result, the interview will focus mostly on these several aspects:

1) The opinion of teachers to language teaching objectives.
2) The opinion of teachers to TBLT and ILT and their experiences in their use.
3) The perspective of teachers to the combination of ‘culture task’, including theory base, feasibility, result and objective.
4) Their evaluation of ‘culture task’ according to the standards.
5) The choice of teachers of these approaches in actual implementation and the reason of it.
6) The suggestions and advice of teachers to the new teacher about this approach.
7) The suggestions and advice of teachers when the students are beginners.
8) Other opinion and comments.

3.3.5 SURVEY

The last research instrument is a survey which will be used to provide the feedback of students. This term refers to ‘a collective group of quantitative data collection techniques that include the administration of a set questions or statements
to a sample of people’ (Mertler, 2007, p. 117). For survey, the more options that are provided the more complex the survey is but it can be more trustful. In my research, students in my class will be surveyed to investigate their attitude to Chinese culture study and the ‘culture task’ approach. It involves two parts, the pre-survey and post-survey. I want to use survey as a quantitative technique before the new term starts. From the comparison of these two surveys, the result may be positive or negative, No matter what it is, it provides important evidence for this research which may help me and other teacher-researchers understand task-based teaching. But according to the condition of the new term, especially the number of students, the quantitative meaning of the survey cannot be generalised. To my five students, the survey aims to get some feedback from them of my teaching and also the ‘culture task’, and to get enough data from the students’ perspective more than their response and performance in my observation. The survey will also be provided for students to evaluate the ‘culture task’. The questions will transfer into an easy language for these year 7 students while maintaining the meaning of ‘culture task’ evaluation standards. At the same time, the teacher’s performance will also be evaluated by them. So, the survey will focus on:

1) Students’ evaluation about the ‘culture task’ class.

2) Student’s evaluation about the teacher’s performance.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

3.4.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS
For other data except task design, in order to analyse other further information this research will follow the step model of content analysis. Content analysis is ‘…a technique that enables researchers to study human behaviour in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications’ (Fraenkel et al, 2009, p. 472). According to this definition, the content analysis could be used to analyse the human communications. After the definition, Fraenkel gives further explanation about the ‘content’:

It is just what its name implies: the analysis of the usually, but not necessarily, written contents of a communication. Textbooks, essays, newspapers, novels, magazine articles, cookbooks, songs, political speeches, advertisements, pictures (in fact, the contents of virtually any type of communication) can be analyzed. A person’s or group’s conscious and unconscious beliefs, attitudes, value, and ideas often are revealed in their
An author points out that content analysis occurred in the situations above, but ‘the analysis of the usually, but not necessarily…’ which means that there could be more types of the communication. The content in this research is an observation record, a reflective journal, survey result and n interview record. These four aspects could be all regarded as the data collected from the ‘communications’.

The interview analysis methods raised by Cohen (2007) show the similarity and feasibility of using content analysis in this research.

There are several stages in (interview) analysis, for example:
1) Generating natural units of meaning;
2) Classifying, categorizing and ordering these units of meaning;
3) Structuring narratives to describe the interview contents;
4) Interpreting the interview data.

(Cohen, 2007, p. 282)

Combining the idea of Cohen and the checklist which is advanced by Mills (2007, p. 132) as well as Figure 3.3, these steps will be followed by the researcher to analysis the data. Firstly, identification will be implemented to identify the major themes from the data resources, including observations, interviews, and reflective journals. Secondly, the researcher will code the surveys and interviews, ‘the process of trying to find patterns and meaning’ (Mills, 2007. p. 124). Then the researcher will classify these themes into several categories according to the elements of ‘culture task’. Figure 3.3 shows the process of category model steps in this research. After that, a concept map of elements will be developed and, according to this map frame, the data will be collected, compared and analysed. Then, the findings will be discussed which will include the perceptions and interpretations of research to the ‘culture task’.

For example, after the open coding, these are the themes of the observation data
which have been concluded from the observation data. Each theme will have several parts of the expanding points to analysis:

(1) Students:
   2. Students’ positivity and interest in learning and task implementation and the reason for it.
   3. The effect of students’ learning and task implementation and the reason for it. Have they learned some Chinese culture and language? Have they used what they have learned?
   4. The feedback of students during the class.
   5. Is there anything the students dislike?

(2) Culture task:
   1. The combination extent of culture and language.
   2. The range and depth of the culture in ‘culture task’.
   3. The implementation of static culture and dynamic culture.
   4. Class arrangement and class design, especially time and difficulties.

(3) Teacher:
   1. The teaching process and content arrangement.
   2. The implementation status, class management and problem solving.
   3. The shortcomings and improvement.

These parts are not separated and independent during the observation and reflection. They are connected with each other and cross like a net. Although they will be coded and analysed, the analysis will be taken against the whole background and environment of teaching with these reticular elements.

Then, according to the similar standard of ‘culture task’ evaluation in interview and
reflective journal, these several themes could compared with the data of the other three methods to show its reliability and validity. These data could support or conflict each other which results in argument. The data will be integrated to evaluate the ‘culture task’ from different angles of practice and theory. At last, the findings and perceptions of the researcher will be discussed.

The road map of this research is shown as Figure 3.5 to conclude the data collection and analysis.

![Figure 3.9 road map of this research](image)

3.5 LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

3.5.1 LIMITATION
For action research, generalizability is the major issue which needs to be addressed. According to Mills (2007), generalizability is a term that refers to the applicability of findings to settings and contexts different from the one in which they were obtained, that is, based on the behaviour of a wider group of people (p. 125).

In this research, because of the researcher’s special identity, not only as teacher-researcher, but ternary identity of volunteer-teacher-researcher, this research may not be able to give enough evidence to generalizability of the implementation of ‘culture task’ in TCSL. Some details of elements will effect the generalization of this research; like class density, each class length and even the volunteer’s identity (which may have an affect on the conclusion and judgement of the class implementation element.

Another limitation happens in data collection which further affects the data analysis. Due to the delay of ethics permission, the data collection only takes place in one term, about ten classes, which means the observation records and reflective journals are much less than expected. The class plans and task designs are also fewer, which may not give the teachers who have been interviewed enough information. As mentioned before, in the new term, the Chinese class had only five students. As a result, the researcher had to change the survey to provide feedback rather than a technical method to measure. In conclusion, three elements in triangulation are all limited by the status of teaching and other reasons.

3.5.2 DELIMITATION

As Mills points out that, “action research don’t need worry about the generalizability of data, because this research is not seeking to define ultimate truths” (Mills, 2007, p. 126). The power of action research is in the relevance of the finding
to the researcher or the audience of the research. One of the research purposes is to
demonstrate the experience of VTR teaching and research. It may not have enough
evidence and be limited, but it could provide a new approach to try and personal
recognition and understanding for the future researcher. This is meaningful to the
master degree student.

To ensure reliability, data will be collected from students and teachers honestly
which means it exactly records what happens in the classroom and at interview. The
reflective journal will be written after class to review the class observation and
record the researcher’s own feelings and thoughts. It will not be reworked but will
keep the original status. The important data, which is cited in the thesis, will be put in
the appendix.

With the respect to validity, ‘we think it should often be possible not only to
check manifest against latent content but also to compare either or both with results
from different instruments’ (Candlin, 1987, p. 154). In this research, ‘different
instruments’ will demonstrate as ‘triangulation’ which is composed of ‘student
performance and feedback’, ‘teacher’s implementation and reflection’, and ‘task and
class evaluation and analysis’. By using these three aspects, validity could be
enhanced to some extent. The framework of task evaluation and content analysis will
guide the research to follow the correct way during the data collection and analysis.
From these methods, the research could be delimited.
3.6 RESEARCH ETHICS

This research is undertaken in a DET school, Athena high school. Although the objective of this research is to enhance the interest of students in Chinese learning and to promulgate and provide the Chinese culture, it still has to guarantee that there is no risk for students and the school.

3.5.1 PARTICIPANTS

As the main resource for this research (except me, as a researcher and also a participant), the students and teachers are indispensable for this project because the data will be triangulated to ensure the reliability of the research. The first group of participants will be the year seven Chinese learning students of Athena high school; they will be surveyed to provide the feedback of my teaching and planning. The second group of participants are teachers. I choose my classroom teacher, who is also a Chinese teacher of the school. She always observes my class, and helps me with the class arrangement and management. Some VTRs are also be invited in the interview to provide me with further thinking and understanding from the same level but
different aspects of teacher-as-researcher. Other teacher participants are the language and culture teachers in China. They come from Hebei University from which I graduated with a Bachelor degree.

Before the data collection and analysis starts, every participants of the NSW DET school will get (or their caregiver will get) a participant information sheet which provides the information about this research. They will also get a consent form to agree to take part in this research. The students will be given the information sheets and consent forms at the beginning of the term for them and their parents to consider whether to agree to participate in this research. The classroom teacher and the VTRs will also get the information sheets and consent forms. I will contact the teachers through E-mail to give them pre-information before the data collection and invite them to participate. I will make it clear to all participants that participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time.

The project will be presented in a research thesis. This will be held electronically by the UWS Library and will be available to others. Major findings of the study will report to West Sydney Region (WSR) of NSW DET and the participating school. In addition, the personal practice of the teacher-researcher will be influenced by the research, along with the practices of educators he comes into contact with in Australia during professional situations.

3.5.2 CONSENT PROCESS

The consent for participants in this research is sought from all participants. The teacher participants are all over 18 years old and currently teaching in school. For other participants who are under 18 and need the permission of parents and caregivers, the information and consent forms are provided and students are asked to
give verbal consent. The students are indispensable due to the focus of this research with the emphasis on the school students’ Chinese learning.

The consent process is demonstrated as follows. A letter containing detailed information about the research project is provided to both teacher and student participants. The participants or their guardians need to sign if they agree to be part of the project. Students are asked for their consent to take part in the project.

Some issues are clarified to make sure the teaching to students is equal and reasonable. There are no specific consequences of which they should be made aware prior to making this decision if a participant or person on behalf of a participant chooses not to participate. No individual participants will be identifiable to avoid the risks that could be exposed due to the identification. If a participant, or person on behalf of a participant, chooses to withdraw from the research they will be made aware in the information letter that any data collected from them will be destroyed. There are no proposed incentives or payment or reimbursement to participants. The consent from individual participants in this research is obtained to use their stored data or samples for this research project.

3.5.3 RELATIONSHIP AND PRIVACY

The information of this research will be managed properly in the following ways. The observation with reflective journal, interview question and answer, and survey results will be kept as word documents in a folder locked on hard drive of the researcher’s computer. The supervisor will have the right to deal with this information in accordance with ethical guidelines. This information will be stored for 5 years which will be the mandatory period for storage for raw data. After 5 years, the data and information will be deleted and the paper information will be shredded.
The privacy of the participants will be protected well. No information about participants will be collected. There will be no naming of schools or of participants. Pseudonyms will be used for participants in school in the dissemination of research results to ensure confidentiality. As a result, the data information is non-identifiable.

The reporting of individual result to participants and others will also follow the ethics guidelines strictly. The researcher is understood to own the information resulting from the research, for example the final report or published form of the result. Owners of the information or any other party have no right to impose limitations or conditions on the publication of the results of this project. The results of the research that relate to a specific participant are not intended to be reported to that participant. That is for the directly benefit of the participant, and no result will be recorded to individual participant of the research. The information of personal significance of individual participants will not be produced by this research. No individual participants result will be recorded with their personal record. This research will not be a significant risk to the health or well-being of persons other than the participant, for example, family members, colleagues. This research will not have any risks that the dissemination of results could cause harm of any kind to individual participants whether to their physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional, social or financial well-being, or to their employability or professional relationships or to their communities. The result of this research will be intended to disseminate by the thesis for the degree of Master of Education.
CHAPTER FOUR
DOING TEACHING AND IMPROVING STUDENTS’ PERFORMANCE FROM ACTION RESEARCH

实践出真知

KNOWLEDGE COMES FROM PRACTICE

This research is closely linked to the researcher’s teaching. In this chapter, the process of teaching will be described. In another word, the action research circle will be demonstrated in detail. The researcher will choose two circles as examples to show the process of teaching which include: topic plan, teaching procedure, observation, and reflection. The data which related to students and the teaching process will be analysed in conclusion. The content of this chapter will structure as follows:

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Action research circle one: kite making
4.3 Action research circle two: excursion
4.4 Conclusion

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This research has taken place in Athena high school at Western Sydney Region, where five year 7 students have participated in the study. In the school there is a formal Chinese teacher who teaches these students’ Chinese. In even weeks, there are three Mandarin classes. But with odd weeks, there is only one class. The Mandarin lessons that the researcher taught was two lessons in even weeks. All the students are beginners of non-Chinese backgrounds although there are a large number of Chinese backgrounds students in that school. Before the start of the action research circle, the
researcher had taught these students Mandarin for one term, so they have some basic language knowledge and can speak a little Mandarin.

For Researcher, one action research circle is one topic. In action research, four stages will take place in one circle which is planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Applied in teaching, these four stages became: the topic plan as planning, teaching process as acting, observation of teacher and reflection of teacher. As a planning, topic plan have a general structure of teaching, what to teach and the process of teaching, especially the culture content and its combination with language. Teaching process is the application of the plan, during the teaching, the performance of students and teacher will be demonstrated. This process is recorded by observation, in the perspective of teacher. According to the planning and the observation of actual application of the plan, reflection of teacher could provide the advantages and disadvantages of the teaching. As summary from teaching, reflection could help to improve the teaching and planning of teacher. Observation is record after class, which lead to the combination with reflection. So, in this chapter, the presentation of action research circle has three stages, including topic plan, teaching process, observation and reflection.

Topic plan is based on the form of table as below:
The topic name and the amount of classes is a general introduction of the plan. The whole topic has four parts: Language input, culture input, task arrangement and assessment and revision. Language input has two perspectives, authentic text, sentences, vocabulary and skills. Authentic text is the material of real life, which is used to demonstrate for students to understanding, leads to the topic and help students to memorise. It could be pictures and real material. The sentences, vocabularies and skills are the language which students expected to learn in this topic. As a group of beginners, students are not required to learn a lot language but as a tool and stage of culture. Culture input including static culture and dynamic culture. Static culture is presenting and introducing culture to students, which is an intuitional impression for students about the culture. Another aspect of culture input, dynamic culture is the culture element which students could apply and practice. Both static and dynamic is important in the lesson to enhance the interests of students. As a main

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Class amount:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language input</td>
<td>Cultural input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic text</td>
<td>static</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures, vocabulary and skills</td>
<td>dynamic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task:</th>
<th>Assessment and revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 4.1: topic plan frame
objective of teaching, culture input is emphasised and the topic is design to achieve this objective. Task is the activity which provided to students as a practice of language and also the way of culture learning. Assessment and revision will help students to consolidate their learning.

The elements in the above frame could be combined or changed according to the teaching content and class arrangement. And the emphasis of each element could be different in single lesson according to the application of teaching.

The teaching process was built on the structure of TBLT which has three stages: pre-task, task, and post-task. Pre-task will focus on the input of language create the stage of applying language. On the other hand, culture content which related to the task will be introduced to students as a background of tasting the culture. Task is the process of taste the culture, no matter hand-making or experiencing. In the process of task, students are required to practice the language. The task phase consumes most of the time and this stage is the most important stage for students and teacher. Post-task is emphasised on the revision and knowledge expending. Not only consolidate the language they learned, but also explain more about the culture. It could relate to their real life and their experience which could be more interest to students and enhance their learning enthusiasm. The purpose of demonstrate the process is to provide a general situation about teaching. The reaction of students and the reflection of teacher will be written after the teaching process selectively.

4.2 ACTION RESEARCH CIRCLE ONE: KITE MAKING

Kite, as a traditional Chinese art, is invented two thousand years ago in China. Kite is colourful and beautiful. It is a suitable tool for students to learn language and culture. Students could learn the colours from the kites when they make it and also other tools. On the other hand, kite is full of the culture background of Chinese. It could reflect the characteristic and the way of life of Chinese. It is also a good chance
for students to compare the culture of Chinese and Australian in kite. This topic follows the structure of TBLT which makes the arrangement of language and culture input and practice more reasonable. Kite design and making is provided to students as a task to finish, during this task, students practice their language on the specified environment and condition.

4.2.1 TOPIC PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Kite making</th>
<th>Class amount: 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language input</td>
<td>Culture input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic text:</td>
<td>Static culture:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The picture of Chinese kite</td>
<td>The history of kite in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The picture of colour</td>
<td>The function of kite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures, vocabulary and skills:</td>
<td>Dynamic culture:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>要… (I want…)</td>
<td>The connotation of kite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>给我… (Give me…)</td>
<td>The art of kite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>这是… (This is…)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>那是… (That is…)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>帮我… (help me)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>没关系 (my pleasure)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>颜色 (colours), 笔 (pen), 纸 (paper), 橡皮 (eraser), 剪刀 (scissors), 钳子 (pliers), 线 (line)…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task:</td>
<td>Assessment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design a kite</td>
<td>Ask for tools and help during</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a kite</td>
<td>the making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This topic has taken in the second term of year 7. It takes three lessons to finish the topic which includes designing, making and flying. Each lesson is seventy-five minutes and divided into three parts: language and culture input as pre-task in fifteen minutes, kite designing, making and flying in forty-five minutes as task, revision and further knowledge expending in fifteen minutes as post-task. Before this topic, students have learned greetings and some useful sentence for communication, for example, 谢谢 xièxiè (thanks), 对不起 duì bù qǐ (I’m sorry), 晚安 wǎn ān (good night) and so on.

The main task of this topic is kite making, an authentic taste of Chinese art. The language has been inserted in the making process and also as an assessment of language input. This topic introduces several sentences including ‘帮助我 bāng zhù wǒ (help me)’, ‘给我这个 gěi wǒ zhè gè (give me this)’, ‘我要 wǒ yào (I want)…’. The vocabulary in this topic is all related to the kite making including colours and tools. These sentences and vocabularies are all required to be used in the class during the kite making. Students are encouraged to use Chinese as much as possible as they could. For example, if a student wants to have a paper from teachers, he has to ask it in Chinese, or the paper will not be given.

The kite designing and making is all finished by students. Five students have attended the classes and make three kites. During the classes of kite making, students learned the culture of Chinese art and the speaking Chinese within the guide of teachers. It is a good experience of learning language and culture.
4.2.2 TEACHING PROCESS

Teaching process is following the planning of the topic. Teacher implements the planning as the main line and also meet the requirement of students in language and culture. It is flexible for teacher to adjust the teaching content in the frame of the topic.

**Lesson one: design a kite**

**Pre-task:**

As it is the first class of the new term, revision has been put at the beginning of the class. Students have been reviewed most of their acquisition of last term including greetings, Chinese zodiac, numbers, and several vocabularies.

The post task begins with the authentic text which is the picture of Chinese kites. Teachers show several pictures of Chinese kites. Students have been told the arrangement of the topic and also been attracted by the beautiful colour and modelling of the kite. After arouse their interests of kite, teacher introduces the history of kite in China and the function of kite. Then, teacher provides a question for them: what's the difference between Chinese and Australian kites. This question is required to finish as a homework which students could do a little research on it.

For the language input, teacher asks students what we could learn from the kites as a guide. After conducting them how the beautiful and colourful kites are, students answer: colour. Then teacher asks students what are the popular colours in their life. After students answered, teacher begins to teach them these colours. Teacher use PowerPoint to demonstrate the colours with Chinese characters and Pinyin and teach them one by one.
The sentence of this lesson is ‘我要…wǒ yào… (I want…)’. After teaching the sentence, students are encouraged to use this structure to make sentence in the vocabularies of learned. The number and measure words are required to put in to the sentence. Then, teacher tells students they have to use this sentence in the kite making.

Task:

The task of this lesson is design a kite. At the beginning of the task stage, teacher ask the question of which is the most important for a kite. Students answer: flying. Teacher asks students the question of which is the most important for flying. After get the answer of ‘balance’, teacher introduces the ‘balance’ of Chinese culture, including Chinese character and characteristic.

Then, the designing of kite has been taught briefly. Teacher explain step by step of how to design the kite, how to draw the blueprint. First is design the frame of kite, the scale of kite, and then is the picture and logo.

In the designing process, students are all very active and begin to express their own idea of making the kite. The teacher is helping students to polish their plan. Students are talking what they have learned in Chinese while designing. One student even express his idea in Chinese: ‘我要做一只鸟 wǒ yào zuò yī zhī niǎo. (I want to make a bird kite)’.

Post-task:

The kite frame design is almost finish. Teacher asks students to finish the kite as a homework including the picture and logo. Teacher also reviews the sentence and vocabularies of today’s learning to help students remember them.

Not only revision in language, culture input should be review too. As a linkage
of culture communication, not only Chinese kite introduction, a little research homework has been required students to finish during the topic of three weeks. The research topic is the history of kite in western countries and the comparison between Chinese kite and western kite. Students have to write a little report of it to present their research. They could search it on the internet and also in library.

Reflection:

Students like this class very much and could remember all the words they have learned. Although in the sentence teaching, it is seems too hard for them, after practicing and repeating, students could use this sentence for a lot of item they want. Students are interested in the kite design and full of creativity.

In the designing of kite, students are all very actively during the class. They try to express their own idea of design…students tell me ‘it looks like a Chinese character’ and one student even speak in Chinese of ‘我要做一只鸟 wǒ yào zuò yī zhī niǎo (I want to make a bird)’. They are very happy in the lesson. (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

The language using of teacher is a problem, especially in English. It has a high requirement for teacher in English speaking. For example teacher don't know how to say scale when explain the structure of kite. And it is too hard for year 7 students to understand the scale.

When I begin to explain about the design of the kite, in designing blueprint and make scale, I don’t know how to say ‘scale’. My class teacher help me of this words but after class, she tell me that year 7 students haven't learn scale yet, so they don’t know how to deal with it. (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

Time consuming is another issue. Teacher plan to have twenty minutes in kite designing, but it has cost fifty minutes and students still cannot finish it. As a result, teacher has to change the plan and ask students to finish the design as homework.
I plan to give twenty minutes to design the kite but I obviously made a wrong estimate. It cost fifty minutes to design the kite and even not be finished. So I left the homework for them to finish the designing of structure and logo. Next lesson is making the kite.
(Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

**Lesson two: making a kite**

**Pre-task:**

The language input of this class is the sentence of ‘给我…(give me…)’. As same as the sentence learned last class, this sentence is required to use in the kite making, for example ‘给我一张黄色的纸. (Give me a piece of yellow paper.)’. Another sentence ‘帮助我 bāng zhù wǒ (help me)’ is also required to use when students want help from teacher. Except the vocabularies students learned last class, more words are introduced to them for application, ‘剪刀 jiǎndāo (scissors)’, ‘线 xiàn (line)’ and so on. The vocabularies are taught in the help of materials. Students are all going to making the kite with these materials, so they are very concentrated on it. After the revision and teaching the new words, teacher also introduces the culture of kite in the class including art, Chinese characteristics, and harmony mind.

**Task:**

The task of this class is mainly about making the kite. Students are expected to use Chinese as much as they can. After check the design of student as the homework last class, teacher gives some suggestions of their design. Students estimate all sorts of resources they need and ask teacher for it in Chinese. Teacher provides all the materials of kite making if students ask it in Chinese or the material will not be given to students.

After review and fix the design of kite. Students come to the teacher to get the material in the way of ‘我要一张黄色的纸 (I want a piece of yellow paper)’ or ‘我要剪刀 (I want scissors)’. All the students could get the material in this way, some
of them are not fluency but they still complete the conversation in the help of teacher.

Most of students choose to build the framework first. The first sentence they familiar to is ‘我要五根木棍 (I want five sticks)’. They correct the mistakes of each other and also speaking Chinese while making the kite. Students get every tool from teacher in Chinese and say thanks to teacher. After making the framework, students begin to cut and draw the paper as the body of kite. The sentence which learned from last class of ‘给我一张黄色的纸 (Give me a piece of yellow paper)’ has been used by them. Although the reflection believes this sentence is too hard for them, they could speak it clearly in the help of teacher.

Post-task:
Whole lesson has been used for the kite making. Teacher checks students’ homework and their research by asking some questions. The arrangement of next class is provided to the students.

Reflection:
Students could use the sentence which taught last class and this class very go od. Some of they are wish to express their idea in Chinese, and be proud of it.

I am very appreciate that students can use the sentence ‘我要 wǒ yào (I want)’ very well. Although they haven't learnt Chinese for a long time, some sentence they could not speak fluently, but they wish to and try their best to express in Chinese… One student says ‘我要五根木棍 wǒ yào wǔ gēn mùguǐn (I want five sticks)’. Another students quickly correct him ‘四根 sì gēn (four)’. (Observation and reflection, 11th May, 2010)

Students are very interested in the kite making. They are very happy to do the hand working, and enjoy the process of ask for help and tools from teacher.

They are happy and exciting. They keeping ask the question about the kite and Chinese culture. Teacher asks them whether they like this lesson, the answers are absolutely ‘yes’. (Observation and reflection, 11th May, 2010)
The language application of this class is not satisfied enough. Due to the kite making, a part of their attention has put in the making process, although teacher arranges the application chance for them.

The language using is not as good as I thought. Maybe they spend lot attention in making the kite. But in the requirement of teacher, they are applying the sentence and the new words. (Observation and reflection, 11th May, 2010)

It cost the whole class to make the kite. This kind of culture task is quite time consuming. Teacher has to provide another class for students to fly the kite outdoor. But teacher believe the time consuming is worthwhile due to the objectives of language teacher here.

We almost finish the kite making in this lesson, it really time consuming. But when I see the happiness of students, I believe they can learn Chinese well and they will like Chinese culture. (Observation and reflection, 11th May, 2010)

**Lesson three: Fly a kite**

**Pre-task:**

As an outdoor lesson, students love this lesson very much. Teacher believes give a taste lesson for them to fly the kite of their own making is quite important for student’s learning initiative and their interests towards Chinese. At the first class, the sentence and vocabularies which taught of last two classes have been reviewed to the students. It is very satisfied that they remember almost all the words. Teacher checks the kite they made and fixes the problem of it. Three kites have been made by them, a bird, a panda, and a warrior mask.

The language input is about action. ‘跑 (run)’ and ‘停 (stop)’ was taught to
students as a order. They are required to use these words for their kite flying. As all the lessons have been taught, students are encouraged to use as much Chinese as they could during the outdoor lesson.

Task:
Different from a formal language lesson, culture task is emphasis on the experience of students in Chinese culture activities. The main task today is flying the kite and teacher becomes a captain. Teacher introduces several important perspectives in kite flying, including wind, flying skills and controlling. Students even cannot wait to fly their own works. Teacher demonstrates how to fly the kite and then give every group the chance to fly the kite.

Students are very happy to fly the kite. Although in most of the time, they are running and laughing because they cannot fly the kites into the sky. But no one is frustrated by that. They are keeping running and flying the kite. When they tired, they ask teacher a lot question about the kite. Due to their research on internet, kite is invented for the war. They want to know why and whether it is real. Teacher explains the origin of kite in Chinese, and have communicate and comparison with them. In the flying of the kites, ‘跑 (run)’ and ‘停 (stop)’ is used by students, they are very happy to use these two orders. One student flying the kite, another is crying in Chinese: ‘跑跑跑’. when kite drop on the land, students are all shout : ‘停停停’ cheerfully.

When the happy comes, time flies. Although the kites didn't actually fly into the sky, students are quite happy with this lesson. They all say they are looking forward of the next class.

Post-task
Back to the classroom, teacher checks their homework of research. Students all
finish their research as a small thesis. It will become one part of their assessments of Chinese.

At the last ten minutes of lesson, teacher reviews all the sentence and vocabularies of this topic to students. Teacher provides the plan of next topic. They are all very exciting when they heard of the plan, which is the excursion to China town.

Reflection:

Students enjoy this lesson very much as same as the last two classes, especially this class. And the language application is satisfied according to the observation of teacher.

They are quite happy to have an outdoor lesson. Students could use the language as required from teacher and their memories of vocabularies are very good. Teacher believes their interesting in learning reduce their nervous of language application and improve the result of their acquisition. (Observation and reflection, 21th May, 2010)

The observation shows students learning result are quite good in language application, culture taste and also in culture comparison. The lesson provided the chance for students to practice language in the culture task. The homework research provides the culture comparison in students’ own perspective.

Different from the normal lesson, this culture task, especially the little research, intends to provide the chance to students and let them to discover the culture. And by the communication with teacher, their discovery could have a comparison with teacher’s opinion. Through this process, students are more interested in the Chinese and their works. (Observation and reflection, 21th May, 2010)

Except the time consuming, culture task has a high requirement to teachers. The outdoor lessons are interesting and relax, but teacher has to guide students to apply the language in their activities.
Students could forget the language when they fly the kites. Teacher has to join the activities with them; offers enough help and remind them to use the language. Once teacher release the students too much, their language using and learning will be reduced. (Observation and reflection, 21\textsuperscript{th} May, 2010)

**4.2.3 SUMMARY**

Kite making task is a successful plan for students. In the task, students learned several sentences which could be widely using in their life. Meanwhile, this task provides a cultural experience for student in hand making, art, and personality of Chinese.

In the task process, students are quite happy in learning language and finish the task. Observation and later feedback from students all show that students love this task and also the way of teaching. They feel relax and wish to follow the guide of teacher. The result of applying language and culture acquisition is satisfied according to the observation of teacher. For teacher, this culture task is a good try of teaching. As the first attempt of culture task, teacher believes this topic is successful. It provides enough confidence for teacher to carry on the designing for students in teaching.

Except the positive perspective, some issues should be pay attention and reflected. Previously, the language implementation is not good enough. How to deal with student’s attention, balanced in using language and doing task, should be consider in culture task. Secondly, how to test the students acquisition on culture? It could be a long time work to do; researcher hopes students could benefit from the culture task for their further life. In this perspective, their interest in the lesson is more important than assessment.
### 4.3 ACTION RESEARCH CIRCLE TWO: EXCURSION TO CHINA TOWN

#### 4.3.1 TOPIC PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Excursion to China town</th>
<th>Class amount: 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Cultural input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Authentic text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Static</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything in China town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese traditional clothes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynamic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eating Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using chopsticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink the tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese clothes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Structures, vocabulary and skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynamic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>how to order the food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘这是什么? ’ what is this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘我喜欢吃…’ I like to eat…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Food: 牛肉 (beef), 猪肉 (pork), 面条 (noodles), 米饭 (rice), 冰激凌 (ice cream), 土豆 (potato), 牛奶 (milk), 汉堡包 (hamburger)…

Others: 筷子 (chopsticks)…

#### Task: Ordering food

#### Assessment and revision:
Real life is the best teacher, as a good condition of Sydney, the China town in the city is the best way for students to taste the culture of Chinese. In China town, they can look and feel the authentic text in the environment. It is excellent experience for students in learning Chinese. The whole topic could be viewed as the process of a task. In the first two lessons, the language which students may need in the excursion is taught in the class, for example, how to order the food, and the vocabularies of their favourite food. These classes could be viewed as the preparation and the input of both language and culture for the task excursion. Students have to learn the sentence to express their attitude towards something, for example, ‘我喜欢… wǒ xǐ huān (I like…)’. And also learn the name of their favourite food, so they can order it from the server, for example, ‘牛肉 niú ròu (beef)’, ‘猪肉 zhū ròu (pork)’, ‘冰激凌 bīng jī líng (ice cream)’ and so on. In ordering food, the sentence which learned last topic of ‘我要… wǒ yào (I want…)’ is the main structure in practice.

The language input is for the purpose of excursion. The excursion to China town costs a whole day in 10th of June. The whole excursion is a task for students. Teacher provides a paper for students with the questions of Chinese culture and language. During the excursion, students are required to observe the environment for example the street name, the building, and the interest place. The most important task is eating Yum Cha in Chinese restaurant. Students have to order the food in Chinese as they learned in first two classes. After eating the lunch, Students are lead to the Chinese garden and trying the traditional Chinese clothes. Overall, excursion is a task and also as an assessment for students.
4.3.2 TEACHING PROCESS

The whole topic could be view as a task circle including language and culture input, practice, and revision and assessment. Each lesson is still follows the frameworks of TBLT teaching process. A small task is provided to students to practice their learning.

Lesson one: Chopsticks and Chinese food

Pre-task:

The planning of this lesson is to teach students using chopsticks and some supporting content for excursion. It is an important point of Chinese eating culture and also a part of intercultural comparison. But before the class, class teacher tell me that girls are all go to an activity of school and could not come to the class, only boys in the class. As a result, teacher change a little plan including reduce the new words learning and provide more revision.

At the beginning of lesson, the sentence and vocabularies of last topic are reviewed to students. The excursion is regarded as a composite assessment for language using. Students have to remember all the sentence they have learned to deal with the language implementation in excursion. The revision including: time and number, greeting, zodiac, and the language of last topic.

For example, in revision of time, teacher tell students the news of excursion in Chinese to review ‘年 nián (year)’, ‘月 yuè (month)’ and ‘日(rì) day’: ‘二零一零年六月十日，我们去 excursion (we will go to excursion on 10th of June, 2010)’. Although it seems unfamiliar for them, in the leading and guiding of teacher, students understand this sentence. They are required to repeat this sentence to each other.
Task:

Before teaching how to use chopsticks, how to say chopsticks is taught to students. Combining with the sentence of ‘我要 (I want)’ which taught last topic. Teacher taught them how to ask for a pair of chopsticks from waiter: ‘我要一双筷子 wǒ yào yí shuāng kuóu zi (I want a pair of chopsticks)’. The measure word ‘双 (pair)’ has been explained to students and also the relationship of noun and measure word. Teacher asks students anything else could be arrange in pairs of ‘双’. Students say shoes, hands and so on.

Then teacher teach how to say ‘吃 chī’. Teacher explains the relationship between the radical ‘口 kǒu (mouth)’ and the character with it. Then teacher ask them what they like to eat. Two boys say they like eat meat. So teacher teach them how to say meat: 肉 ròu. Because they already learned twelve zodiacs and other animal, after teacher taught meat, they begin to make the words with the vocabularies they have learned, for example beef (牛肉 niú ròu)and lamb (羊肉 yáng ròu). Linked with the sentence of ‘我要… (I want…)’, teacher tell students in excursion, they could use the sentence of ‘我要吃鸡肉 wǒ yào chī jī ròu’ to order the food. Then teacher explains the Chinese meal is including main staple food and main course, meat and vegetables is the main course, and staple food is normally rice (米饭 mǐ fàn) and noodle (面条 miàntiāo). Students tell me that yesterday they eat sushi and noodle for lunch. Teacher teaches them how to say rice and ask them what is sushi made of. They quickly answer in Chinese ‘米饭 mǐ fàn (rice)’. Teacher ask them ‘昨天你吃了什么？zuó tiān nǐ chī le shénme (what did you eat yesterday)’. In the explaining with action and gesture, after a while, they finally understand and answer teacher: ‘面条! Miàn tiáo (noodle) ’.

The small task of using chopsticks is taken after teach the language. Teacher has shows them the gesture of holding chopstick, then ask them try to use it. When they
feel like they can control the chopsticks, teacher provides some green bean to students for practicing; at the same time, they have to count it with Chinese. They practice very happy and do the task in pair: one student pick the bean and another student count.

Post-task

The vocabularies and sentences have been reviewed to students at the end of lesson. Teacher reviews 上午好 shang wu hao (good morning), 中午好 zhong wu hao (good midday), 下午好 (good afternoon), and relating to the food, teacher teach 早饭 zǎo fàn (breakfast), 午饭 wu fan (lunch), 晚饭 wan fan (dinner).

Reflection:

On the positive perspectives, teacher is very humours in teaching, and do well in closer the distance with students and make the lesson relax:

I tell students that they will be hungry if they cannot speak this sentence in excursion, because in China, almost every one eating with chopstick. (Observation and reflection 24th May, 2010)

Students learning very seriously in this lesson and they could apply the structure to other words very quickly. They also very interested in this lesson and like to ask how to say the food they like to eat:

They are very seriously in learning this lesson, it probably because the motivation of excursion. The effect of this class is fantastic; they apply their learning quite good. After I taught how to say ‘eat (吃chī)’, a student quickly say: 我要吃烧麦 wǒ yào chī shāo mài (I want to eat steam dumplings). He asks me how to say soy sauce. I tell him it is ‘酱油 jiàng yóu’. Then he say: 我要酱油! (I want soy sauce). The whole class is relax and orderly. They are happy and actively. I really like their attitude towards the learning. (Observation and reflection 24th May, 2010)

The plan of class has change due to the absent of three students, so the content of
teaching is limited. The task process is more like a language input according to the arrangement of the topic.

Lesson two: role play of restaurant

Pre-task:

At the beginning of lesson, the normal revision is provided to students. As the absentee of the last, the revision is also as a new language input teaching. Moreover, the new sentences are provided to the students which are how to deny something and express their own idea of something. The sentence added in the lesson are: ‘我不要 wǒ bù yào (I don't want...), ‘我喜欢 / 我不喜欢 wǒ xǐhuān / wǒ bù xǐhuān (I like... / I don't like...)’. As the preparation of task, students are required to make the sentence of what they like to eat. Students are all do it quite well, some forgetting are all could be fix by the mention of teacher. More words are required from students to teacher; they are more initiative to learning in this topic. For example, 蔬菜 shū cài (vegetable), 土豆 tǔ dòu (potato) and so on. Students are all likely to express their own idea of favourite food.

Other sentence and words are taught to students of what they could meet in the restaurant, for example ‘请等一下 qǐng děng yī xià (Please wait a moment)’, ‘一共…钱 yī gòng … qián (…dollar all together)’ and so on.

Task:

The task in this lesson is a role play. As the rehearsal of ordering food in Chinese restaurant, students are required to order the food in Chinese. One student is the lead of the team and repeats the ordering of students to teacher.

Teacher plays the waiter in the restaurant. At the first of role play, students are going in to the classroom as restaurant. Teacher and students are greeting to each
other as they learned. Teacher asks how many people they have, and students answer in Chinese number. Teacher is serves as the normal waiter to students and asks the question of what they want to eat. One student says ‘请等一下 (please wait for a moment)’.

Then students are discussing what they like to eat, the leader of the group ask the question of ‘你喜欢吃什么? Nǐ xǐ huò chī shénme (what do you like to eat)’ to other students. They answer the question one by one. After recording the answer of other students, the leader sum up the order and wave to me to tell what they want to order. Teacher record all the ordering in the book and ‘serve’ the dishes to them. After that, it is the time to check out. Teacher tell them they have to pay ‘九十一 ninety one dollars’ for meals. Students understand how many money they should paid and write the number on the paper as the check.

That is the whole process of task. After one circle finished, teacher points out several issues of student’s language using and correct them one by one. Students also ask some question to teacher including the words of their favourite food like ‘ice cream 冰激凌 bīng jī líng’ and ‘rice cake 年糕 nián gāo’. Students like this role play very much, and want to play it again. This time, teacher change the setting to let a best students play the role of waiter and teacher as a normal student.

Post-task:

The sentences and vocabularies of this lesson are review to students to reinforce the learning. Students learned very well in this lesson, so some extra words which they asked are taught to them. As the language input of the excursion, this lesson is satisfied according to the performance of students.

Except the language, the culture of Chinese eating is introduced to the students. Chinese eat the meal together rather than separately, everyone could enjoy the meal
on the table. Other small habits and forbidden are also mentioned to students, for example it is forbidden to interpolate the straight chopsticks in the rice. Students listen very carefully.

These preparations are all for the next lesson is the most important lesson of this topic. The confirm letter is send to students for their parents for the permission of excursion.

Reflection:
In this lesson, teacher observed students’ nervous about the language application. They speak the language very well and getting better and better, at the same time, their nervous on language using is reducing:

Today, I want to observe their language using nervous. Except an introvert girl will wave her head when she made a mistake, other students are quite relax when they speaking Chinese in the task. Although the language forms they used is not so fluency, but the psychological stress is not obviously. After saying a sentence correctly, they will smile as a successful achieve; after saying a sentence incorrectly, they didn’t feel frustrate, their classmate and me will help them to do it again. (Observation and reflection, 7th June, 2010)

On the other hand, teacher found that students could remember the words which they want to learn, and next class is a very good opportunity for them to apply all the language they have learned, at the same time, it is a good opportunity for experience Chinese culture:

I found that they could remember the words which they want to learn quite well. Vegetable, potato, ice cream even a serve of ice cream, they all remembered and I didn’t have to review for them. It may because that the role play provides a good chance for them to learn the language they want. Next lesson is excursion, it’s a good chance to use the language in real life, and also a good chance of tasting Chinese culture in outdoor. (Observation and reflection, 7th June, 2010)
Lesson three: excursion

This is the most significant lesson of the whole topic. After prepared for a whole term, this excursion comes true finally successfully. Students are required to gather at school then go to China town with teachers by train. This is the first time I go to excursion as a teacher. Teacher plan to text their language application competence and introduce the related culture.

Pre-task:

This is a happy day for students. Although I have told them today will be a challenge for them, they still jumping and cheering. On the train, teacher does a little oral test to students about the content of last lesson, including food and how to order the food.

Boys remember ‘汉堡包 hūn bāo bāo (hamburger)’ very well, maybe because they like to eat hamburger. They made a confuse in ‘牛奶 niú mài (milk)’ and ‘牛排 niú pāi (steak)’. I explain to them that ‘奶’ has the radical of ‘女’ which means female, only female cattle could have the milk. Then they all understand of that. (Observation and reflection, 10th Jun, 2010)

The first language input is a sentence: 这是什么? zhě shénme (what is). It is teach for them to ask the question in Chinese to teacher. Teacher has taught students ‘什么 (what)’ and ‘是 (is)’. These have been combining together to teach them the sentence. As teacher mentioned, students should speak Chinese as possible as they can, so they are more active in learning this question sentence. Not only students’ side, teacher also try to catch every chance to let students speak Chinese, for example, in waiting the train, teacher as them when will the train leaving and let them answer it in Chinese. The oral speaking which students have learned are all reviewed to them for their maximum application of Chinese, for example ‘谢谢, (thanks)’, ‘你好么? (How are you)’.
Task:

Students are provided a paper for their observation and understanding during the excursion. The question is all about the presentation of Chinese culture in China town. From the explanation of teacher, they could copy the observation and their answer on the paper.

The first question is about ‘Golden water mouth’. Students are asked why Chinese set a stature of a tree with golden and water. After get a lot of guess from students, teacher asks students what is the most important elements in our life. Teacher picks five of them and explains the five elements of traditional Chinese. The auxiliary and inhibition relationship between these elements and their lucky believe is also taught to students. As they copy it down as the answer and the acquisition of Chinese culture.

Then comes to the memorial arch of ‘四海一家 (all world as a family)’ and statue of stone lion. The first question students ask is why the sentence is written from right to left. After explain the meaning of the sentence, teacher tells students about the order of written from right to left in ancient China because of the writing brush. Different from Australian, Chinese believes that lion is the king of animal, so the stone lion could protect people from dangerous. From the lion, students ask several questions about Chinese legendary animal including dragon, kylin and phoenix. After visiting these places, we go to have the lunch.

The second task is eating, which has been prepared for a long times. Before enter the restaurant, teacher quickly reviewed the greeting words to students. When enter the restaurant, students are very polite to the waiter in greeting in Chinese. At first, teacher has to remind students to say thank you to waiter, and later, they are very used to it.
As the rehearsal task does, today is the real task for students to order the food. Students have to say what they want to eat in Chinese, or it will not be accepted. The host student asks the question in Chinese, but then student find that the name of dish is too hard to say. Although teacher could speak it first and students could copy the pronunciation to say, it still too hard for them, so teacher change the strategy a little. Every dish has a number, so the name is replaced by the number for students to order and they have to speak it to waiter directly. Every student could finish the conversation, it is excellent. During the waiting time, teacher let girls to give others tea. As a Chinese culture, tea is an important in respect. Teacher taught them to give and receive the tea in two hands to show the respect, and should say thanks after receive the tea, and some knowledge about tea are also introduced to students. In the eating, some eating etiquette is taught to them. Students are listening very carefully and do as teacher’s explaining. In eating, teacher finds that students could use chopsticks quite well and have no problem with picking in chopsticks. The eating process is relaxing and happy, students is using the language in real life experience.

The next stop is Chinese garden. Also related to student’s paper work, the dragon wall which represented as the friendship between China and Australia is the question for students. Teacher explains the origin of dragon and the meaning of dragon to Chinese. Students listen very carefully and ask question of why two dragons are different colour. Teacher explains that the yellow dragon is Guangdong province of China, and the blue dragon is New South Wales of Australia, that’s their representing colour. After that, students are experience the traditional clothes of Chinese in the garden. They are quite happy to wear the cloth of king, princess and guard. Students ask teacher about the identity with clothes and why dragon represented king. Teacher interprets the related culture to them and students understand why. After wearing the cloth, teacher give the money to students ask them to checkout from a Chinese staff. They do it quite well and very happy to do that.
On the way back, teacher reviewed the whole excursion about the language and the culture student’s have learned. The whole process of excursion is fluency and satisfied. Students were using the language very well and experience a lot of Chinese culture during the excursion.

Reflection:

In the excursion, Students ask several questions of their observed in the whole process, including culture and language. They are quite initiative in learning. That is teacher’s expectation, which turn the teacher’s teaching into students learning by them self.

They ask teacher why the words in shops looked different to which they have learned. Teacher explains that the words in some shops are traditional Chinese which is using in Hongkong and Taiwan; what they learned in class is the simplified character, which is using in mainland of China. One students ask teacher how to answer ‘你要这个么？’ nǐ yào zhè ge me (do you want this)’. Teacher tell her that the answer could be ‘我要 wǒ yào’ (I want) or ‘我不要 wǒ bù yào (I don’t want)’… When we passed a medical shop, they ask me some question about the Chinese traditional medicine. They feel quite amazing when they heard the explaining of Chinese medicine. (Observation and reflection, 10th Jun, 2010)

An unexpected issue has happened, which could be the reason of not enough preparation of excursion. A girl refused to eat any food:

A girl suddenly refused to eat any food, I was known that she is a vegetarian, so I prepare to order enough vegetable for her. But she still refused to eat, and didn’t want to explain the reason. The resolution is to but some chips and a bottle of cola for her, and she accepted. (Observation and reflection, 10th Jun, 2010)

Although some accident happened, in language application, students are actively and positively. Sometimes students will give a very satisfied using of language, but sometimes they will be lazy to speak the full sentence. But generally speaking, the implementation of language is satisfied:

In the ordering food stage, sometimes students are lazy to speak the full sentences, they
like to say ‘D501 (the number of dish)’ rather than ‘我喜欢吃D501 (I like to eat the number D501 dish)’. In eating, a boy ask me in Chinese with a dish: ‘这是什么? ’, I also answer him in Chinese ‘这是鸡肉.’ A girl ordered a bottle of drink in Chinese independently. I order a bottle of cola, waiter ask me ‘您还要什么? (Anything else you want?)’, students all ask me what does that mean. I explain it to them slowly. Then a girl understands that, and orders a cola too. The process of eating and speaking are relaxing, they don’t feel any nervous at all. In checking, teacher asks them to guess how much money we spend, and they all guess it in Chinese. When waiter speaks the number of money in Chinese, students are all understand that, and calculated how much money each people should pay. (Observation and reflection, 10th Jun, 2010)

This excursion is implementing successfully, not only in language using and culture acquisition, but also the satisfaction of students and teacher:

I asked the girl who didn't eat lunch whether she is happy today and whether she like this lesson. She is smiling and says yes, she feels quite happy. I think she just insists her own believe about life, it is not a conflict to Chinese learning, what I have to do is to consider more about this issue and reduce the negative effect on the language learning. I also ask other students that do they enjoy this lesson. They all say yes, they like it very much. They say they like this excursion and like to learn Chinese in the real life experience.

I like this class too, because it combined with the authentic life and there is a big language environment for students to experience the Chinese culture and language. In this environment which is mostly similar to Chinese, students could try their best to speak the language, to taste the culture in a close distance. So I believe this class is successful, no matter in revision effect, culture learning and experience, and language application is very satisfied. The only problem is, this lesson could not be taken frequently, it needs no much money and time which is also a limitation of culture task. (Observation and reflection, 10th Jun, 2010)

4.3.3 SUMMARY

This topic is the most important topic of the term, researcher want to demonstrate his core idea of culture task which is the combination of culture acquisition and language application. In the excursion preparation, students are taught in the language and culture which they could use in the excursion which is equal to the real life experience. And the excursion provides an excellent chance for them to implement these knowledge and language they have learned.
Students do the language very well in the topic, not only in rehearsal, but also in the real application in excursion. They are relaxed to speak Chinese in the class practice and also in Chinese restaurant. On the other hand, they have learned some Chinese culture including eating, medicine, and so on. Which inspire teacher most is, students are trying to learn some Chinese culture by them, they ask questions which related to Chinese culture initiatively. During the observation and discovery, students are quite engaging in the culture learning.

Students are very interested in this topic, they are happy to learn the culture and language. They always have positive reaction towards the learning. Researcher believes that though these topics, students will be more interest to the Chinese language and culture and more friendly and respectfully to the difference between two cultures.

Teacher is very satisfied with this topic, students like the outdoor lesson very much, so teacher are quite happy in teaching. Due to the well performance of students in language and culture, teacher is encouraged to carry out further plan.

There is some issues in this topic could be reflected to improve the teaching. The religion and hobbit could be considered more carefully in further planning. To protect the students’ believing, teacher needs to find a more suitable combination way to spread the task which could have some conflication with student’s normal life. One the other hand, this excursion task could not be taken so frequently due to the cost of money and time. In researcher’s opinion, the excursion could be taken once a term, and other methodologies could be taken more flexibly as the support and language and culture input of the learning.
4.4 CONCLUSION

As a conclusion of this chapter, more detail of the data from students and reflection will be analysed. This chapter is focus on the data of teaching process and the student feedback, the interview of teachers and their evaluation of researcher’s teaching will be put in chapter five.

Except the observation and reflection, another data will be demonstrated here is the feedback from students. This feedback questions are generated and interpret from the evaluation list (Nunan, 2004, p. 174-175) for task-based language teaching approach. It has been fixed according to the situation and understanding of students.

4.4.1 TEACHING PROCESS

The four themes which generate from the data of teaching process are teaching method, teaching language using, and the disadvantages of teaching. These three elements are most important in the data which related to the teaching process. The information which collected from observation and reflection will combine with the students’ feedback, and these data will be analysed to demonstrate the teaching.

Teaching methods:

The teaching methods are the teacher’s techniques which used in the classroom in teaching, for example, interpreting, inducting, assisting, and combining with real life and other contents. In the class, teacher will try best to improve the student’s learning. The techniques are different from the approach and strategy, it is a small but effective way to help and support students, and it will always lead to the good result of learning. As researcher introduced before, it is the first time for researcher to teach language, so these techniques could be viewed as the improving and the acquisition
of teacher.

Interpreting is the normal technique in teaching. In culture task, a lot teaching content is related to the Chinese culture, which is unfamiliar to students. It could confuse students and leads to the misunderstanding. To present the culture more clearly, teacher needs to interpret detail about the culture and the language to students.

For example, in teaching how to ask for a pair of chopsticks, teacher do not only teach the sentence, but also explain the measure words: ‘双 shuāng (pair)’:

I explained the measure word 双, the meaning of this character and its relationship with noun in sentence structure. Then I asked students any other noun could be used with 双, they thought of ‘一双鞋 (a pair of shoes)’, ‘一双手 (a pair of hands)’… (Observation and reflection, 24th May, 2010)

Another situation which teacher needs to interpret more is when students ask some question about the culture and the language. In culture task teaching process, students are well engaged and interested in it, as a result, they have a lot of questions to ask:

In the rest time, a student asked me that there is any relationship between the balances of kite with Chinese. I told him that it is the characteristics of Chinese; Chinese believe that stay in the middle is the best way of living, not conservative and not radical. Although he nod the head and seemed like understand a little, but I feel very happy about him question. (Observation and reflection, 7th June, 2010)

Inducting is the way of pilot students’ learning. It could help students thinking and learning the knowledge in an initiative way and to active the atmosphere of class. Sometimes, especially in the new knowledge teaching, inducting is better than directly presenting:

Next I have to teach them how to design the kite, to introduce the key of designing the kite,
I asked them the question of ‘what is the most important element for kite?’ One student said ‘flying’. I inducted them: ‘yes, but for flying, what is the most important? Think about the plane…’ Another student said ‘balance!’ Yes! Then related to the Chinese character, I explained a little about this balance… (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

Assisting, is the helping provided from teacher to students. In culture task, there are a lot of activities for students to do, for example making the kite, role play. Before the activities, teacher control the class with providing the language input and explaining prepared for the activities. But in these activities, teacher gives more space for students; most of the activity time is control by them. Instead of controlling, teacher is stand beside of students and providing more assisting for them, for example fixes the problem of designing, mentions some vocabularies which they forgot in a low voice. That is teacher’s improvement on the understanding of lesson control, sometimes in the centre of lesson, sometimes as an assistance of lesson.

In designing the kite, students are all very actively, they are designing as their own idea. I just stand beside and help them to fix the problem of the designing… (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

In the role play, I was be a part of the playing, and didn’t interrupt any conversation of students. Let students discuss by themselves, what I have done is, when student forgot some words and they all could not say it, I mentioned it in a low voice, and the conversation could go on. (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

Combining with the real life and other content, is an efficacious way of teaching. As Mr. Guo point out in interview, ‘teaching should be combined with student’s real life, which happens around them. (Mr. Guo, interview, 5th July, 2010)’. From the continually observation and reflection of teacher, combining with student’s real life, could enhance students interests on learning, as a task-based researcher argue that ‘a task has a clearly education relationship with the real world language requirement’ (Crookes, cited in Wang, 2005, p.4), so teacher keeping to use this technique to make lesson more interesting.

I found that they could remember the vocabularies which they want to learn quite well.
Vegetables, potato, ice cream, even a serve of ice cream, they all remember that! It seems like the role play of last lesson give a lot of help for them… (Observation and reflection, 7th June, 2010)

I introduced more sentences to ask for the identity. For example, I pretend on the call, or suppose having a gun point to someone to ask who you are. Or suppose you are playing the computer game, and someone knock the door hasty, how to ask who is he? Students are very committed with these setting. When I teach to use ‘谁 shéi (who)’ as the question, I pretend to have a gun pointing them and ask them ‘谁? ’ they pretend very scared and answer me: ‘我，XXX (it’s me, xxx)’. I feel that they are very committed in and like to way of teaching. (Observation and reflection, 29th March, 2010)

On the other hand, the connection between content is important in the teaching. It could provide more consolation and help to students in language and culture learning.

When I introduced the balance of kite, I also ask them about the writing order of Chinese, because Chinese character is a combination of balance too. (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

After I taught them how to say ‘肉 (meat)’, I ask them to recall anything they could combine with ‘肉’. When I inducted them how to say ‘猪肉 (pork)’ and ‘牛肉 (beef)’, they quickly linked with other animals and say ‘鸡肉 (chicken)’ and ‘羊肉 (lamb)’. (Observation and reflection, 24th May, 2010)

Teaching language using:

The teaching techniques could bring the good effects on learning and teaching, which are carried by the language of teacher. This perspective is mainly focus on the teacher’s language performance which is the language improvement of teacher in teaching. The idea of class language using will be put in next chapter.

At the first stage of teaching, due to the situation of students as beginner, teacher prefer to use English to teach except the vocabularies and sentence which students should learn in Chinese. But as a beginner teacher of foreign language, it is a challenge for the teacher. At first lesson of teaching, teacher feels nervous and
restricted.

I feel that I cannot use the English appropriately because students always seemed very confused when I am talking. I didn't have enough vocabulary to present and describe something. The class teacher always helps me, so I can go on in teacher. It is really embarrassed to be speechless in the class. (Observation and reflection, 1st March, 2010)

After teaching for a period of time, teacher feels better, and could use some Chinese in teaching which have been taught to students for example: 谢谢 (thanks).

Today I feel better. it may because I have taught for a month. I feel more relax in teaching. When I have to say thanks to someone, I say it in Chinese and I ask students to use it too, because they already learned it. And today I have correct some pronunciation mistake of Ms Wang in Chinese, just like she helped me. (Observation and reflection, 29th March, 2010)

When teacher observed the student’s language using, it will remind teacher of him in language nervous, so teacher could help students according to the experience. And in the implementation of culture task, teacher could assisting students very well and could expand more which related to the real life in teaching.

I explained some history of Chinese character and the relationship between Chinese culture and Korean, Japanese culture. And I also explain the twelve zodiacs and the twelve gestures in a cartoon which boys quite interested in. (Observation and reflection, 15th April, 2010)
I talk to students when we are on the train about the world cup. They correct me with the pronunciation of ‘world cup’ because I pronounced as ‘word cup’. I feel quite happy we have a equal communication. (Observation and reflection, 10th June, 2010)

Teaching disadvantages:

Although in the teaching techniques, teacher performs well and has a lot of improvement during the teaching, but as a new teacher, there are still a lot of disadvantage which have been record in the observation. It will provide the experience and reflection for teacher in the further teaching career.
There is an obviously perspective of teaching disadvantages for teacher, which is lack of execution. In observation and reflection record, in the beginning phase of teaching, teacher sometimes forgot to present the content which has prepared.

I forgot to introduce more sentences to ask for the age of one person… (Observation and reflection, 29th March, 2010)

I forgot to review the first task for students, and forgot to take the USB disk. So I have to use iphone to demonstrate the picture. I need to prepare more carefully… (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

For this disadvantage, teacher needs to accumulate more experience. In later observation, teacher found it getting better when becoming a more experience teacher. Not only in the execution of plan, but also in the controlling of teaching. In difficulty arrangement, teacher sometimes bring too hard content for students, which lead to the negative emotions of learning.

When I taught students how to say the sentence of ‘我要一张蓝色的纸 (I want a piece of blue paper)’, students seemed like not so active with this sentence. Is it too hard for them? After the lesson, Ms Wang tell me that, the explanation of my teaching is too hard for them, for example, the ‘scale’, for year 7 students, they haven't learn it yet. (Observation and reflection, 29th April, 2010)

After teaching for one term, teacher get more familiar with students and teaching, and at the same time students learn more from the lesson, teacher is more flexible and in his element in teaching.

Another issue which has been mentioned before is the conflict in excursion. It is because the reparation of task is not enough. Teacher fixed the conflict in a gentle and respect way. It is a good experience for teacher to plan and implement the task.

4.4.2 THE FEEDBACK OF STUDENTS

At the last lesson, a survey has been provided to students to get some feedback.
The questions are adjusted from the list of Nunan (2004), which is for evaluate the task implementation. Twenty questions have been asked to students, and most of them are yes or no questions. The questions have been list below:

1. What is your purpose of learning Chinese?
2. Is the class appropriate for your learning?
3. Do you think you can use what you have learned in real life?
4. Do you think you have been encouraged to use the language?
5. Is the task interesting?
6. Is the task authentic?
7. Are the lessons met your goal of learning?
8. Are the lessons appropriate to learning language?
9. Is the task designed for you to take part in a group work?
10. Are the task objectives, process, and result clearly for you to understand?
11. Do you think teachers perform well in the task? For example, are they confident enough? Are they organizing well?
12. Do you think the tasks have enhanced your interest to the Chinese learning?
13. Do you think the tasks provide you a chance to communicate with each other?
14. Does anything unexpected happen during our class?
15. In the tasks, which language you use more? Chinese or English or both?
16. Do you think the tasks are too hard for you?
17. Do you think your performance well in the tasks?
18. Do you think then language we have learned from the task could link with each other?
19. Do you think you have learned Chinese culture in our task?
20. Are these culture linked with the language?
21. Is the Culture taught from beginning of our term?
22. Can you explore the Chinese culture by yourself after the class?
23. Do you think now you can understand some way of Chinese life?

24. Do you think teachers provide you a lot pressure asking you to speak like native Chinese?

25. Do you think you have learned some Chinese culture? Do you think it is interesting?

26. Which aspects do you think teacher should be improved?

27. Other suggestions and comments?

The result of the feedback is encouraged and satisfied both students’ opinion and their comments on teachers. Combined with the reflection of teacher which demonstrates above, this analysis of the feedback could be viewed as the summary of this chapter.
4.5 SUMMARY

Generally speaking, the data from teacher’s reflection and students’ feedback are consistently. In the feedback of students, they present a high evaluation of the culture task lesson and love it. At the same time, some issues are also being mentioned in the feedback which has been observed by teacher.

The purpose of teacher is to teacher student Chinese culture and the culture task is designed to implement this idea. It is unified that in the feedback of students, four of them choose culture as their purpose of learning, and they think the lesson is designed appropriately for their learning. Students are quite satisfied of class. They all regard the class as a well organized and appropriate teaching process with group work, and clearly task objective, process and result.

In the character of task-based language teaching, authenticity is the most important principle to understanding. In the feedback, students believe the tasks is authentic, and three of them think they can use what they have learned in their real life while of them think maybe. Students evaluate the tasks as interesting and combining of culture and language. They said they could learn the culture and language from the task, and the tasks provide the chance for them and encourage them to communicate with each other in Chinese.

Interesting, is the focus of teacher’s designing. As the feedback shows, four students think the task is interesting and the culture task has enhanced their interests to the Chinese learning, and one student regard sometimes it is interesting. At the same time, most of them affirmed their own performance, they think they have learned some Chinese culture and it is interesting.
Not only pleased with their own performance, students are quite satisfied with teacher. All of them think teacher’s performance is very good, confident enough, and organize the teaching well. In the comments and suggestions, students think ‘they are good teacher’; ‘best language class ever’. And even in the question of ‘Which aspect do you think the teacher should be improved’, students answer ‘they don't need to be improved’. Although this comment could be a low validity evaluation, it is a high evaluation for culture task.

Some issues are also being mentioned in the feedback which linked with the reflection’s demonstration. Firstly, the preparation is sometimes not comprehensive, it lead to some unexpected situation happened. Students also found that, they think sometimes, some unexpected issue happened during the tasks. Secondly, in the tasks, their language using prefer English rather than, students choose English and both English and Chinese as the answer in the question of class language using. That is a question for teacher to solve in the further teacher career. Thirdly, students think sometimes the task is too hard for them and teacher sometimes provide too much pressure in the language using. In the features of ILT, bilingual is the norm. The language teaching in culture task is not requiring students to speak like a native speaker. How to reduce the pressure of their language and set the suitable level of difficulty for students should be pay more attention in the teaching. The culture acquisition has been put in the centre of the teaching and the difficulty should be appropriate for students. If teacher could fix these issues, the culture task will be better in teaching.

All in all, according to the reflection from teacher and feedback from students, it is showed that the result of culture task is successfully. The task is interesting, and suitable for student learning. Students like the lesson and they learned knowledge from it. From the culture task, students get more interested in Chinese culture and
language, which provides them a good impression on China. At the same time, teacher enjoy the teaching as well. On the other hand, some issues should be pay attention in further teaching, for example difficulty, preparation, and language pressure. Researcher believes that culture is a good approach for these students to learning Chinese, culture and language. In next Chapter, some experience teacher will provide their valuable opinion to the culture task, it could help researcher to be a better teacher from another side.
CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA:

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE TEACHING

This chapter will discuss the data from the interviews. There are four teachers who participated in the interviews; three of them are from Hebei University of China, and one of them is from an Australia high school. The chapter will present the teachers’ views towards Chinese teaching first. It is a discussion of teaching culture or language as the centre of language teaching, and how to teach culture. Then the evaluation of culture task will be presented in two parts, including the positive side and the negative side. The content will present as follows:

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Language or culture
5.3 Evaluation of culture task
5.4 Conclusion

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The interviews were made in June and July 2010. The first interviewee was Ms Wang, an Australia high school Chinese teacher. She is also the class teacher of the researcher. As she observed the entire culture task classes of the researcher, her evaluation is very important to the researcher. Another three interviewees are all from a Chinese university. Ms Liu is an experienced TCSL teacher at International Communication and Education College, who has taught Chinese to international students for over ten years. Most of her students are non-background students, both
junior and senior. Mr. Guo, is the professor of TCSL of International Communication and Education College, who has taught Chinese in Japan for many years. Mr. Zhang is an experienced teacher of culture and history.

In the interview, the researcher has introduced his research and teaching background and especially his planning and implementation of culture task to the interviewees. The interview questions were designed according to the evaluation list of Nunan (2004).

5.2 LANGUAGE OR CULTURE

5.2.1 CHINESE IS A LANGUAGE

In TBLT, Mangubhai (2006) believes ‘Learners need to focus on form also in order to develop a more complete grammatical repertoire in the second language’ (Mangubhai, 2006, p. 50). As mentioned before, the task-based approach emphasises the process of students’ participation in meaningful learning which focuses on the students’ language communication. At the early stage of teaching, the researcher also believes that teaching how to communication is most important in teaching: ‘I believe that teaching these kids how to use Chinese to communicate is more important than how many vocabularies and grammar they have learned, language is learning for communicate (Observation, Nov 16th 2009).’

In the interview, two of four teachers indicated that language itself should be put in first place for language teaching. An Australian Chinese teacher, Miss Wang, provides her opinion when asked the question ‘what’s your recognition of the purpose of your language teaching, especially in Chinese teaching’. She said:

To enlighten, obviously, first of all, for most, is their language. Now, like, obviously we
are teaching Chinese, they learn how to speak Chinese, they know how to engage with people with Chinese, with other people speak Chinese, which I think is the central for them. (Interview, Miss Wang 10th Jun 2010).

As she describes, students should learn how to speak Chinese. This means that in her opinion, communication and engaging with Chinese is most important. It has been put in the first place of her teaching. In her opinion, that is because of the economic relationship between China and Australia:

As Australia trade with China, for these students, they may to use it in their later life. Because I believe Chinese is a very important language, based on the economic situation which China and Australia has. (Interview, Miss Wang 10th Jun 2010)

Another interviewed teacher, Miss Liu, a TCSL teacher in Hebei University of China, has the same opinion. When the researcher expressed his idea about culture teaching and language teaching, she believes culture should be influenced gradually:

The culture teaching must fit in the class teaching. If students like Chinese language, they have to accept Chinese culture; if they interested in Chinese culture, then they can be more interested in Chinese language. My understanding is to put culture into the teaching process. I think language teaching should mainly focus on language, and we could put culture element into one part of the teaching circle. Implementing flexibly in teaching practice, teacher does not need to teach in the centered of culture. (Interview, Miss Liu, 5th July 2010)

In Miss Liu’s opinion, not only focus on the language but also teach culture gradually. This means teacher does not have to teach culture; language will influence students in the Chinese culture. ‘You cannot change the centre, which is language communicative competence. (Interview, Miss Liu, 5th July 2010)’

5.2.2 CHINESE IS A CULTURE

The task-based language teaching researcher Zeng raises several core problems about TBLT, which include ‘teaching standard’, ‘language forms’, ‘suitability’,
‘engagement’ and ‘practice research’ (Zeng, 2006, p. 17); nothing related to culture has been mentioned. The researcher regards TBLT as a well organized structure to teach Chinese but, as a gap, the researcher wants to find more support for teaching Chinese culture in practice and interview.

In Miss Wang’s interview, she also expresses her view of the importance of culture. She says: ‘…also, another key factor is culture’. She believes culture learning will benefit students for culture comparison:

Let them experience different culture, and this really does open many doors to the class, because there are different culture, not only Chinese, they can see it from Chinese, with every single culture; they have different custom, racial and basically a whole different way of life. After that, they could recognize that other culture, other sense. And hopefully, they could start to appreciate learning of culture, hopefully especially Chinese. (Interview, Miss Wang, 10th Jun 2010)

Miss Wang thinks culture learning could provide students a sense of a multicultural society, Australia. It could help them to feel, recognize and respect other cultures. Another Chinese teacher describes more theoretically. Mr. Zhang thinks language and culture should be generally balanced, “language and culture should not be separated. Language is a part of culture, because language is the carrier of culture, without language, culture is hardly inheriting (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July 2010)’. He believes emphasis on culture is due to the trend and the ignorance of culture in language teaching.

‘Nowadays, there is a trend of that (emphasis on culture teaching), I know a little about foreign language teaching, they emphasized on the practice of culture teaching in foreign language teaching. Actually, in our language teaching today, some teachers ignore some culture atmosphere which should be taken. If it has not been ignored, why do we talk about this issue?’ (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July 2010)

Mr. Zhang suggests the reason could be the teachers. He points out that some of our teachers did not emphasise the culture behind the symbol; ‘it probably due to our
teachers’ competence has some problem, because some teacher didn’t see the issue behind language when they are teaching. That is metaphysics.’ (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July 2010). The example he gives is an English teaching lesson about Winston Churchill’s lecture in 1941.

For example, in our English textbook, there is a lesson called <Churchill in 1941>, is a lecture after Nazi attacked Soviet Union. As I observed, a lot of English teachers only teach the content when they teaching this lesson. Actually, it is very hard for us to understand Churchill and that world by the words. As we know that, in history, Churchill is a standard-bearer of anti-communist and he never denies it. After the Second World War, he is the first one raising ‘Iron Curtain’ plan. But in his lecture, he said that for the human being, we have to reinforce Soviet Union which is actually a national interest. That is a culture, so I think, if our teacher teaching this lesson from this perspective, the understanding of students towards this lesson will deeper. At least, to Churchill, we will know better. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July 2010)

Mr. Guo, a professor of TCSL provides a commendation of the researcher’s idea after listening to the introduction of the background and conditions. Like the researcher, he agrees that for researcher and other same condition volunteers, activating student’s interest is benefited. The objective of the researcher is to open a door for them, leading the way and make students feel the world of Chinese is fantastic. Our language teaching is for guiding them and drawing them closer to China. He believes

For that students (not college Chinese learning students), the major objective of us is to disseminate Chinese culture. Let students know Chinese culture, have a good impression, like and love China. It could give him a motivation of travel to China or learning more about language and this country later. (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July)

In the researcher’s opinion, both language and culture should be taught in Chinese class. As the teacher explained before, culture and language should be combined, the separation of these ‘twins’ could not help students and teachers. But the focus of teaching, according to the situation and idea of the researcher and emphasised again, is that culture dissemination and understanding could be put in the
first place of teaching, which is opposite of Miss Wang who argues language could be put as the support of culture teaching and practice. To fill the gap of TBLT and change the trend of language teaching in some way, as a leader defines the state of Chinese teaching volunteers, we are the ambassadors of Chinese culture and the bridge of communication between two countries.

5.2.3 CULTURE, WHAT TO TEACH AND HOW TO TEACH

After arguing the teaching theory and the teaching content, the discussion will be how to teach and what to teach. What kind of culture could be taught during the Chinese teaching - modern or traditional? How to teach culture during the lesson - dynamic or static? These are the question that will be discussed here.

In interview, the teachers all mentioned the content of culture. In another words, what culture could be taught from different aspects including real life culture, cultural difference and comparison, modern culture and traditional culture.

The first perspective, real life culture is as important as the core of culture task teaching. As the researcher mentioned before, authenticity is a significant character of culture. Every culture demonstrated to students is what they could see in their life, and also in Chinese life. For example, a very simple but quite representative task: greeting. Students learn how to greet as a Chinese does. They greet each other according to the time and the way they meet. They could do the same greeting to a real Chinese in their real life, and they could get the same answer that they learned.

I also taught them other way to as for others identity. For example, if you are on the phone, how to ask a person’s name. Or suppose you are playing the computer games, someone suddenly knock the door, how to ask in an impatient way. (Observation and reflection, 29th March, 2010)
The TCSL professor Mr. Guo also has the same teaching experience when he taught Chinese in Japan. His teaching strategy is teaching students what happened in their life, for example in the text which he wrote for teaching, a lesson called ‘I live in Nagoya (a city in Japan)’ which is where students live.

I used want to teach them according to the standard textbook, but I find this method is not appropriate…then I write the text by myself, for example, I live in Nagoya, in another words, combining with their life reality, what happened around them. For example, through the lesson, introduce his (student) situation like ‘my birthday’. Teacher will know the day of student’s birthday, when the birthday of students come, prepare a little gift, and will make the class more warm and friendly. (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)

Another perspective was also mentioned in the interview of Mr. Guo; culture differences and culture comparisons are the same as the opinion of Liddicoat. Intercultural comparison is very important in the application of TCSL. Related to realism, Mr. Guo believes not only students but also teachers should put themselves into the culture; for students, it is about Chinese culture, for teachers, it is about native culture:

Teach Chinese in a foreign country mean teachers are foreigner for students. There is a problem of how to integrate into the native culture. If teachers are in the foreign country but could not understand foreign culture and national character, it is hardly for you to communicate with students and of course hardly to teach Chinese…For example when Japanese students introduce their family members including father, mother, brother, sister and a dog. They feel very natural to regard their pet as a family member. (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)

Teaching Chinese in Australia is not only about teaching Chinese, but also a comparison and communication between cultures of two countries. Mr. Zhang has given an example of culture comparison in his teaching. That is the idea of the dragon to explain the importance of culture comparison:

Something very easy to understand in our language environment could be hardly to comprehend in foreign culture. For example the dragon, in western culture, it is a monster,
a terrible legend animal which used as a symbol of brutal family. But in China, after thousands of years, it is an auspicious animal. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)

No matter dragons or dumplings, Chinese culture is always related to a profound traditional culture. It is also the perspective which makes every Chinese proud. But because of the late opening to the world, China has not been known for its modern condition. One of the researcher’s colleagues even met the question which students asked; whether Chinese people have colour television. As it had been ignored by the researcher, one of the experienced teachers suggested that the culture task should add more modern culture in Chinese teaching. ‘I hope you could add more modern culture in your further teaching (Interview, Miss Liu, 5th July, 2010). It is a disadvantage of the research’s teaching.

The methodology of teaching culture is another key for this research. Most of the teachers in the interviews believe culture could be taught combined with the language. No matter which should put as the focus of teaching, they all agree that language and culture should be integrated during the Chinese teaching. As a teacher who believes language should be taught as the centre of the class, Miss Liu also points out that ‘But I feel that culture teaching should be influenced gradually. We didn’t have to achieve this element deliberately, but combining into the teaching process…it means every perspective of language could relate to Chinese culture.’

Although Miss Liu provides her objective of Chinese teaching is ‘improve the language competence’, in the methodology of teaching culture she also provides the support of combining teaching. Mr. Zhang has using a Chinese poem to describe his idea of teaching culture: ‘润物细无声 (drizzling deeply mutedly)’:

Culture should be taught, but how to teach culture. If we indoctrinate the culture to students toughly, I don’t know how the effect is and I cannot promise. On the other hand, if we teach culture drizzling deeply mutedly, like some well-known experience teachers in our school, it could be better. Like me and some younger teacher, is far away from them. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)
Mr. Guo also believe the effect of combining culture into language is better, but he argues that it is difficult because the requirement to teachers.

I think the effect of integrating culture into language is better. The specialized presentation could including a lot centralized information and has a higher requirement to the teachers. If the teacher could not speak English well, it is hard for students to understand. (Interview, Mr Guo, 5th July, 2010)

The researcher also agrees with that, and tries to put language into the culture task; not only in learning, but also in application. On the other hand, in the researcher’s class, the presentation of culture is as important as combining with language. The researcher believes that the introduction of culture could enhance the interests of students which could lead students’ to initiate study of Chinese. After building up the interests and initiative of students’ learning, the objective of teaching Chinese for the researcher is achieved. But on the other hand, this presentation is interesting. The researcher tried to provide students more fresh and real feelings about Chinese culture, not only from the rigid text. For example, the researcher has taken students out of class for an excursion to Chinatown. A closer experience with the big Chinese cultural environment could bring students more direct and real feelings about Chinese culture. And of course students love it.

Students are all very happy today, although I told them at the beginning that today will be a challenge for them, but they still jumping and singing on the way to excursion…they ask me why the sentence in the horizontal inscribed board is written from right to left, I tell them that because ancient Chinese use written brush…one girl ask me how to answer the question of ‘你要这个么? (Do you want this?)’, I tell her that ‘我要 (Yes, I want)’ or ‘我不 (No, I don't want that.)’ could be the answers. (Observation, 10th June, 2010)

From the observation record above, it is clear that the presentation of the outdoor excursion has a very satisfactory result in that it enhanced students’ interests and they express their initiative. They will ask what they want to learn when they are interested in it. The combination of language and culture could be easy if students want to learn the language in the cultural environment.
5.3 EVALUATIONS FOR CULTURE TASK

The evaluation includes positive evaluation and negative evaluation. The positive evaluation could be viewed as the commendation of experienced teachers while the negative evaluation could be viewed as the suggestion and comments of them. Both sides of evaluation are very important. The positive evaluation of teachers presents their approval of the design and implementation of the culture task. On the other hand, the suggestions and comment could help the researcher to reflect and improve his teaching. As a process of action research, it will the benefit researcher’s further teaching.

5.3.1 THE COMMENDATION FOR CULTURE TASK

Generally speaking, four teachers are all agree with the researcher’s idea of culture task. They believe this approach is beneficial for students learning Chinese. They regard this approach as interesting, well organized, and suitable for students’ learning. Especially Ms Wang, who has taken part in the researcher’s lesson, provided a quite high evaluation of the culture task. At the beginning of the interview, she has evaluated the excursion as quite enjoyable, and of benefit to students’ learning language and culture.

Overall, I really enjoy today’s trip, I think it was very worthwhile for the students. They had a very good time. Most of them, of you ask them, they have been to China town, less than five times in their life time. So going there is a very good experience. It's really let them know that the culture and the way the Chinese people live. You know, in Sydney, because most of them think Chinese people live in China, not many of them live here. And they had a feel, the sense of the culture, and the traditions of Chinese. Firstly, what are we eat, at the restaurant, also, practice a lot of Chinese there, which I think they was very well done all of them. They also learn the traditional garden, I think it is quite interest for them, and they really enjoy it very much. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th June, 2010)
She believes culture could enhance students’ interest in culture and language learning. This fits in with the question of Nunan’s list about interest and motivation. The question is ‘Is the task likely to be interesting and motivation for the students?’

Of course, much, much more engagement from the culture activity task, than a normal ’talk and talk’ lesson. And for example today, the excursion activity, outside activity we did with the students, I am sure we both saw how engage and how interest the student was, not only they taste the experience they live in that culture, but they also enjoy it because it was especial. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th June, 2010)

Not only Ms Wang; after the researcher introduced the task plan and implementation, the TCSL teachers also believes that it is interesting for students. Mr. Zhang said:

I feel that it will be very interesting. Because I will also do some activities to conduct students, I feel that their enthusiasm has been shifted. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)

Mr. Zhang also regards the culture task as an authentic input and activity; it reflected a real-world for students.

The task itself is authentic, in my opinion, it is real. When we teach students in this task, it is benefit for their understanding of China… Not only itself, but also the reflection of China during the task, they are all authentic. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)

In the procedures evaluation of task, the appropriate of procedures for the goal of task is another issue of Nunan’s evaluation in task. In this perspective, Ms Wang reviews the culture task and points out that it is appropriate:

I think it (the task procedures) is very good. What you have done, introduce the language through the culture activities, reinforces their language during these culture activities. So, let’s go back with the culture activity of the kite that you start off with the students. You started off with introducing with colours, how to label colours, then you ask them to make a kite with a variety of colours, when they making the kite, they have to ask you what colour material they need, and that activities reinforce the language. So the culture activities basing go handing and handing together, and I really like the way you have
approached. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th June, 2010)

Although she has some different opinions about language teaching objectives, Ms Liu also agrees that the researcher’s design for inputing language and culture is appropriate.

Because your students are all year 7, so I think this approach is valuable. If we teach them in an adult way, that is unappropriated. So you entry point of language and culture input which use culture as the focus is very good, I agree that and believe it is appropriate. (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)

After the input of language, the implementation of the lesson is the important process for students’ learning. In the questions of Nunan, one perspective of implementation is ‘Do the procedures prompt genuine communicative interactions among students?’ To answer this question, not only by the researcher’s reflection which showed in last chapter that students are communication in Chinese with the teacher, but also the evaluation of Ms Wang:

Another thing I really like about your teaching is that you use a lot of dialog, with the students you always encourage students to speak in Chinese, which I think is excellent. Sometimes I forgot it. So that I learn of you, when you reinforce students to speak or implement the language in the class. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th June, 2010)

Actually in this perspective, another issue should be paid attention; this is the communication between students and their way of reaction. In the reflection and feedback from students, the researcher found that students didn’t speak enough Chinese when they talked to each other. As the feedback shows, students think they sometime speak English rather than Chinese in the lesson and their way of responding to the teacher is to translate the Chinese into English, think it in English and then reply in Chinese. This normally happens in TCSL class. For the researcher, it needs to be payed attention in further teaching to help students improve their language use.
课堂教学中，特别是初学者的教学中，学生使用目的语进行交流的情况并不理想。这是必然出现的，改变这种现象需要一个长时问的过程，已达到理想中的效果。

On one hand, we should insist to use the target language as a medium of class communication. But on the other hand, we should see that, in the actual teaching, especially beginner students, they don't use enough target language in communication between each other. It will happen, and need a long time to improve that and achieve the satisfied situation. (Yang, 2001, pp 62 – 66)

After the implementation stage, Nunan believes that the task difficulty should be appropriate for students and this is an important item for evaluation. As mentioned in chapter two, the literature review shows that a lot of researchers, including Nunan, Skehan and Prabhu et al. point out that difficulty of task is important in designing tasks. As Prabhu’s points out, ‘the glancing evaluation for reasonable challenge is that at least 50% of students can complete half of the task fluently’ (Prabhu, cited in Wang, 2005, p. 4). In the reflection of the researcher, most of students could finish the task fluently. The experienced teacher provides his opinion about the difficulty of task:

Researcher: Do you think these tasks difficulty appropriate? Whether they are too hard for students?
Mr. Zhang: Personally I believe it could be trying. We don't have to be too worried about the difficulty, because for foreign students, what we believe the easiest knowledge could be very hard. The important of task designing is how to inspire students during the task process. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)

The task difficulty is suitable for these beginners, from their reaction and the nervous language use; the researcher could say that the task is appropriate.

The last part of Nunan’s list is the assessment and evaluation. The answer to this part will be addressed in the discussion part. The learning result assessment and self evaluation of students has been mentioned in the teacher’s interview, but different teachers have different ideas about it. The last question of Nunan, which is related to the resources of task, should be put in the disadvantages of culture which will be discussed in chapter six.
5.3.2 THE SUGGESTION AND COMMENTS OF TEACHERS

According to Nunan’s list, teachers have provided commendation of the researcher’s planning and teaching. On the other hand, they also provide a lot of suggestions and comments to help the researcher reflect on the teaching and to improve. Not only in their different views and understanding of language teaching, teachers also impart their own experience to the teaching of the researcher.

As a new teacher in language teaching but an experienced teacher in math, Ms Wang points out that, in her opinion, the researcher is too hurried in implementing the task and sometimes forgot to consolidate the content.

However, I would like to have little more focus on the content of the language, so what I found that, lot of students they forgotten what colours in Chinese, and I think we need to probably focus a little bit more on the content before we move on the activity. Because although the activity is the centre, but they (students) need a strong foundation of the content, for example, they have to remember the label of colours before activity should proceed. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th June, 2010)

Similarly, other teachers also believe that helping students to remember the knowledge is helpful to the culture task design which the researcher didn’t focus so much on. Mr. Guo figures that the homework of language teaching is important too because it is also a revision and consolidation of learning.

For example, homework, how to provided the homework? We should let students accept and understand that the homework is benefit to their learning and acquisition. Sometimes students will not happy because they think they have a heavy burden. But it is a consolidation for them. In the learning discipline, timely revision is very important. According to Ebbinghaus’ theory, the easiest knowledge to forget is the just learned knowledge. So we have to supervise students to have a timely revision. (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)

Not only the focus on the revision of the knowledge, teachers also believe that
the preparation of lessons is significant. The preparation of lesson could belong to planning as the first stage of action research and this is emphasized in Ms Liu’s interview.

As a language class, we should have a well preparation in teaching mission, in another word, whether you have finished your mission of the lesson…
The method is right, but before the teaching, we should have a well preparation. Because sometimes the teaching will go from here to there and from there to anywhere and far away from your mission, the time will out of control and the mission will not be finished…
(Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)

In the interview, when the topic goes to the preparation of lesson, Ms Liu also points out that the design of culture tasks needs to have more connection between each other. She asks whether every lesson is linked together. And is there a whole plan for the term. After the researcher introduced the plan, she figures that:

In designing of the lesson, whether it has been put into teaching environment designing is a question for you. If it is a one of the circle, one by one, and go on, it will be fine. But, if it is designing without the whole plan, and teach in a random content, it will lead to the chaos. It probably achieves the objective of introducing the culture, but where students have learned and whether their language competences have been improved, it is hardly to say yes. Again, it is about the whole term planning and preparation. (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)

Mr. Zhang also thinks the lessons of the researcher could be connected, because language learning is continuous. He encouraged the researcher to do it better in the later teaching.

Researcher: that means my culture task design should be run through the language lesson designing as an overall connecting.
Mr. Zhang: yes. You need to design in a more macro way, rather than individual. I mean in your further teaching. Because as you introduced, there is a lot limitation in your teaching now.
Researcher: the connection now I have is a language connection, for example, this lesson I teach students one sentence and they could use it in next lesson’s excursion. But I didn’t have a overall plan in culture teaching, right?
Mr. Zhang: yes, it has the difficulty to do, but I think in the further teaching, it is necessary.
The lesson planning and preparation is the macro perspective in teaching. Some micro points of teaching have also been mentioned in the comments of teachers; for example the writing on the blackboard, the worksheet, the after class time. As a new teacher, the skill of teaching is not mature enough. Ms Wang points out one issue specially, which is the blackboard writing. In teaching, the researcher never considered this issue, until Ms Wang mentioned it. In interview, she said that the board writing and the worksheet should be payed more attention in the researcher’s teaching:

However, I would like to see more structure in your teaching, especially how you portrayed things on the white board. Sometimes you write things all over the place. You can divided the board into section and make sure it is very structured with the title, or topic underline and the words and meaning you need.
A very good thing to do is reinforce that not only through the culture activity even through our work sheet where they can write things on. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th July, 2010)

Then, she continually explains that the effect of the worksheet is to reinforce learning. To ask students to copy the words being taught has also been ignored by the researcher in teaching. These are small aspect of teaching, but it is worthwhile to pay attention to them:

Because when you want to write something down, you need to have a work sheet. You don’t ask students to copy the things on the board, but I will do that. If I write something on the white board, like a new word, I always ask the class to write it down that reinforces their learning. And also I ask them even before they write it down; they need to copy the note on the board. Once I finish the reading and writing, they copy the character and pinyin plus the meaning into their workbook in their book. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th July, 2010)

Ms Wang provides her idea of perfect teaching in class, and on the other hand, Mr. Guo figures that teachers we have to dedicate ourselves to teaching, which is a traditional characteristic of Chinese teachers. He says that teachers should do a lot of work out of the class. Although for the researcher it is hard to do because of the
identity of a volunteer. But it is worthwhile to reference because it is an experience of the TCSL professor.

As a teacher, we have to donate ourselves into the teaching. For the improvement of students, we have to do a lot of work out of the class. For example, I always use chatting as a method in TCSL class in China. The after-class time, they can come to my office and have a talk with anything they like. It is for helping them interested in the learning, and improving. For a student, could be only half an hour, it seems like a short time, but it has a big influence for him.

The importance of after-class time is the same as in-class time. Students come to the office in the break time. For teacher, it is also a good chance to understand the foreign culture. When I was in Japan, pizza and food could be delivery which is hardly to see in China at that time. In 5 pm, students are hungry, and they will order the food for delivery. That help me to know the way of delivery and at the same time, students learned how to say it in Chinese. In another word, it means to give a chance for students to express the life issue in a non-Chinese environment. If we didn't have that environment, no one will think about these words. So in office, and a relax way, ‘how to say delivery in China?’ (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)

In the opinion of Mr. Guo, after-class time has a powerful effect on students’ learning. The Chinese language teaching could also be taken out of the lesson, which is more relaxed and close to daily life. A TCSL researcher, Jiang, points out that, in the teaching and learning strategy, ‘除了正式的课堂学习外, 在自然交际环境中的非正式学习也是一个重要途径 (Except the formal class learning, the informal learning in natural communication environment is a significant way too.)’ (Jiang, 2000, p. 65). It provides another view of Chinese teaching that combining the class time and after-class time together could provide more benefit to student’s learning.

5.4 CONCLUSION

All in all, from the data of the interviews, teachers all support the idea of the researcher, especially the design of culture task. They provide a lot of support for the researcher in teaching theory and application. Teacher’s evaluate the design and implementation by the researcher, and agree with the idea of language teaching. As
well as the commendation of culture task, some advice and suggestions are also received from the teachers to improve the researcher’s teaching. It is a huge support for the researcher, not only in teaching theory, experience and accumulation, but also in the confidence for further teaching and researching.

In the first argument of the chapter, the objectives of language especially in TCSL has gathered different kinds of opinions of teachers including the view of researcher. Two teachers believe that the language learning is the centre of the TCSL. Ms Liu keeps reminding the researcher that ‘our objective of teaching is the improvement the language competence of students (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)’. Ms Wang, the class teacher of the researcher, regards culture and language as both very important in language teaching, and she describe the language is ‘the central of them’. But in this point, Mr. Zhang argues to put culture in front of the language for the beginner, and he also points out that language is everywhere, which is the same as Mr. Guo’s view. Culture could be put in the first place when combined with the language, but they believe that the culture should be fit into the lesson, rather than be separate. In the researcher’s view, culture could be emphasised due to the situation of VTR. At the same time, culture task is more likely to combine language, real life, and culture together to provide all round reinforcement for students.

After the objective of teaching is clear, what and how to teach culture leads to another discussion. Culture is about real life. According to the professor of TCSL, Mr. Guo, in his experience of teaching in China and Japan he prefers to have more authentic life content to teach Chinese. It is also combined with the after-class time learning and teaching in Mr. Guo’s opinion. The culture difference and comparison is also mentioned by him and Mr. Zhang, who believe students have the motivation to learn the difference between two countries. Mr. Zhang provides the example of the dragon to demonstrate the cultural difference and points out that ‘the same life is the
base of interpretation, which is actually the different views in same thing (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010). Not only traditional culture, modern culture has been recommended by Ms Liu for the researcher to teach in the class which has been ignored by the researcher. In the teaching method, most of the teachers point out that ‘drizzling deeply mutedly’ is the best way of teaching culture, but the culture task is a good try in the volunteer situation. The researcher believes that it is necessary to have a long time teaching experience to achieve the ‘drizzling deeply mutedly’ level. At this stage of teaching, as Mr. Guo figures that ‘for students, the main objective for us is to propagate the Chinese culture, let them know the Chinese culture, love and like China, it could affect on his impression to our country and our language’. Our teaching is a guide for them, to close their distance to China, and help them to have further communication with China.

The evaluation of culture task was also a significant part of the interview. The evaluation included two parts; the positive side and negative side. Generally speaking, teachers all regard the culture task as an interesting, appropriate approach for the beginner students. Ms Wang, the class teacher, has an appreciation of the culture task - ‘I also enjoy very much what you have taught the class, especially the culture activities, because I have seen that how much the student grows in learning, and how they well behave, and how they engage with your culture activity. (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th June, 2010)’ Mr. Zhang also provides positive comments on interest, authenticity, and appropriateness of the culture task. In the teacher’s opinions, which compared with Nunan’s list in evaluation of task, the culture task design and implementation is satisfactory to the researcher. The list will be combined with the data analysis to evaluate the culture task comprehensively in the last chapter.

On the other hand, teachers offered a lot of suggestions and comments for the researcher to improve teaching and culture task designing. Ms Liu suggests that the researcher should have a macro plan of culture task for a whole term as well as Mr.
Zhang, who believe that putting the culture tasks circle by circle is more beneficial; for the teacher and students to have a structured plan. Ms Wang points out that the researcher should be more patient in the language input stage rather than hurrying to move into the task stage. She also suggests that the board writing should be improved to be more clear and structured, and the worksheet could be provided to students to help them in copying and to concentrate. As well as agree with the researcher’s idea of culture task, Mr. Guo also emphasised the after-class time in TCSL teaching and believes that life is the best teacher. He recommends that in the researcher’s further teaching, more life teaching after class could be taken. It could help students’ cultural experience and benefit the relationship between teacher and students as well as the language acquisition.

In conclusion, the feedback from teachers is pleasing to the researcher. Not only is it proof of the feasibility of the culture task, but there are also a lot of suggestions and comments on it which could help the researcher’s further teaching. According to their comments and evaluation, the findings and discussion will be made in the last chapter as a preliminary exploration. In the researcher’s opinion, the culture task is of benefit to students learning and also for the improvement of the teacher. As Ms Wang said ‘I think you have been excellent help for having you here. It does give me some direction of what to teach and how to go about it.’
CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

鱼，还是熊掌
FISH OR BEAR’S PAW

In Chinese, there is a proverb, ‘You cannot get both fish and bear’s paw (鱼和熊掌不可兼得).’ As an endless argument, which of language or culture is the objective of language teaching, is still an important argument in this research. It is just like the proverb described; in language teaching, teacher could not emphasise both sides of the coin. After collection and analysis of all the data, the researcher will firstly present his understanding of this argument in his situation in this chapter. From the interview and feedback from the TCSL teachers, the research refined two opinions. Which is more suitable for this case, it needs more discussion. After that, this chapter will provide the finding of this research in culture task teaching and also the findings of data analysis about culture task including evaluation, advantages and disadvantages. A discussion will follow to argue about the issues in the research. At the end of the chapter, the summary of this section will be made to summarise the findings and discussion of this chapter.

The content of this chapter is structured as follows:
6.1 The discussion of culture task
6.2 Finding and discussion of culture task teaching
6.3 Culture task, a possible way
6.4 Summary
6.1 THE DISCUSSION OF CULTURE TASK

6.1.1 TCSL OR TCFL

In the literature review chapter, the issue of the theory background has been raised. Here is a more detailed discussion.

The term TCSL (teaching Chinese as a second language), has been used in this thesis frequently. There is an argument that this research is about teaching Chinese as a foreign language rather than teaching Chinese as a second language. Because, according to the definition of ‘second language’ which means ‘a non-native language learnt and used within one country (Wu, 2007, p. 61)’, the teaching of the researcher is more close to teaching Chinese as a foreign language which means ‘a non-native language learnt and used with reference to a speech community outside national or territorial boundaries (Stern, 1983, p. 16)’.

As the definition above shows, if an international student is learning Chinese in China, the teaching could be regarded as ‘teaching Chinese as a second language’. On the other hand, if a native Australian is learning Chinese in Australia school, it could be regarded as ‘teaching Chinese as a foreign language’. According to the situation of this researcher, teaching Chinese Australian students in Australia could be identified as teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Stern provides his opinion of the distinction:

A second language, because it is used within the country, is usually learnt with much more environmental support than a foreign language whose speech community may be thousands of miles away. A foreign language usually requires more formal instruction and other measures compensating for the lack of environmental support. By the contrast of its
widespread within the environment.

**These distinctions can be tabulated as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence of a specified linguistic and cultural reference group</th>
<th>Second language learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of L2 within country</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foreign language learning</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Stern, 1983, p. 16)

As the researcher understands, the description above could be interpreted as an emphasis on distinguishing the language environment which could probably be argued in this research. Learning a second language is different from learning a foreign language due to the language environment support. As we know, China has a lot of dialects and some of them are far away from Mandarin. Suppose a student is studying Mandarin in a dialect village within lots of people speaking a dialect rather than Mandarin in China. Should it be regarded as teaching Chinese as a second language? On the other hand, an Australia student is studying Chinese in a language school in Chinatown of Australia and there are Chinese around him; should it be regarded as teaching Chinese as a foreign language?

These two authors give their descriptions which could be used as the evidence to argue that the teaching in this research could be regarded as a kind of ‘second language’. Wu (2007, p. 12) has point out that ‘Second language usually has a official position or a recognised effect, but foreign language didn't have.’ Australia is a nation of immigrants. As reported in 2008, there 670 thousand Australian Chinese with 100 thousand international students and 30 thousand business men and engineers from China (www.chinaqw.com). The researcher believes that because of
the economic development of China and more Chinese in Australia, Chinese could be regarded as a recognised language.

A Chinese researcher Lv has a different opinion about the definition of second language and foreign language. It supports the researcher’s idea from another angle and provided a confirmation for this thesis to use the interview of TCSL teachers in China as important data to evaluate the researcher’s work:

Our definition about second language only considers the chronology of learning rather than language environment. That because: in second language learning, several aspects decide the learning and acquisition which include: human brain system and the character of language, the way of learning language (in school or in natural environment), target language environment, culture and society elements which closely related to the language understanding and implementation. Language environment is only one of them. It is not enough to distinct the second language and foreign language. We think the relationship between second language and foreign language should not be regarded as a correspondence relationship. It is an inclusive relationship, which is second language includes foreign language. That is why we regard teaching foreigner Chinese as a combination of second language teaching and foreign language teaching.

‘我们关于第二语言的定义只考虑学习的先后顺序，不考虑言语环境的因素，是基于下面的认识：……在第二语言学习中，决定学习和习得规律的因素是多方面的，其中包括：人的大脑机制和语言的特点、学习语言的方式（主要是指在自然环境中学习还是在学校里学习）、目的语环境、跟语言理解和语言使用有密切关系的社会文化因素等。语言环境只是影响第二语言学习和习得规律的因素之一，不足以作为区分第二语言和外语的主要依据。……我们认为不应当把第二语言和外语的关系看成一种对等关系，而应当看成一种包容关系，即第二语言也包括外语。这也是我们说对外汉语教学既是一种第二语言教学，又是一种外语教学的原因。’ (Lv, cited in Wu, 2007, p. 63)

Stern gives his opinion at the end of the chapter as a conclusion of clear the ground as follows:

‘Second language’ has two meanings. First, it refers to the chronology of language learning. A second language is any language acquired (or to be acquired) later than the native language… However, none of the consequences that have been indicated as characteristic of foreign versus second language are inherent in the conceptual distinction between an L2 with status within a country, a second language, or an L2 spoken by a community outside territorial boundaries, a foreign language. (Stern, 1983, p. 16)
Another Chinese researcher Zhao provides a diagram to prove the relationship between TCSL and TCFL:

![Diagram showing the relationship between TCSL, TCFL, Teaching Chinese as the native language, Teaching Chinese as a second language, Teaching foreigner Chinese, and Teaching minority Chinese.]

(Zhao cited in Zhai, 2009, p. 58)

Figure 6.1: The pedigree chart of language teaching in China

From the Chart, it is clear that TCFL corresponds with teaching minority Chinese; they all belong to TCSL. TCSL is one level higher than TCFL; it corresponds with teaching Chinese as the native language. That means, although TCFL has its own characteristics, it still fits the discipline of TCSL.

The researcher also believes TCSL could include TCFL. That is the reason the research includes several interviews of the TCSL teachers to evaluate the (probably) TCFL culture task work in Australia. Teaching Chinese to a foreigner in foreign country could be different from teaching Chinese to foreigner in China because the language environment and cultural support is different. The distinction is the language environment, which could be better interpreted as a cultural support. Which
means, the culture teaching should be more emphasised when teaching Chinese in the outside country? In this research, the objects are all 13 to 14 years old year 7 students, who are different from the adults; for example international students not only in China but also the adults learning Chinese in Australia. It requires teacher planning the class to be more suitable for younger students. In other words, if we teach Chinese to foreign kids in China, although there is the culture and language environment outside of the class, we could also need to teach them more culture rather than ignoring it. The argument of TCSL and TCFL could only mean the affect on the teaching methodology and the teaching form. These could be changed according to the different situation. But the belief and idea of teaching should be upheld, as a Chinese teacher, as a researcher. As the result of this argument, in this research the term TCSL will still be used when referring to the Chinese teaching rather than it is replaced by TCFL. All in all, the interviews of Chinese TCSL teacher have the evaluating significance for the researcher. At the same time, the features of the researcher’s Chinese teaching will be argued.

6.1.2 THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE TASK

Although it has been defined a little in the last chapter, with the passing of time and new implementation, the researcher has had more deep reflections about the definitions which have been suggested by supervisors and teachers.

Culture task, in this research, refer to an approach in language teaching which combines the task-based language teaching approach and intercultural language teaching together. Culture task was used in teaching Athena high school students in Australia. These students are all selective beginners in Chinese learning and were organized in a small class (five students in one class). The objectives of culture task language teaching are to enhance the interests, enthusiasm and initiative of students towards Chinese learning and give them more understanding about the culture and
language of Chinese. As the research’s opinion, give students the sense of comprehending Chinese, both language and culture, enhance their interest of learning and understanding Chinese at this stage, is more important, pragmatic and non-utilitarian. It is an approach which the research tries to develop to fit the situation of the students in Athena high school blending with his language teaching belief and understanding.

As the objectives are to let students taste, like and understand Chinese culture, the language form of teaching is put on an assistance side. It does not mean language is not important in this teaching approach, but is a tool to help students and teachers in this culture task. More discussion will be presented later about the different opinions towards this approach raised by the teacher interviews.

Culture task put more emphasis on culture taste rather than explanation. ‘…culture learning becomes an engagement with cultural practices rather than exposure to information about a culture (Liddicoat, 2005, p. 204).’ In several tasks, for example kite making, food making, excursions and role playing, students are engaging in the culture experience environments which are planned by the teacher. Although these could not provide every aspect of Chinese culture, these tasks could provide the chance for one aspect of Chinese culture to be tasted by students as much as possible. The aim of culture determines the way of teaching; it would be taken in a relaxed, free, and equal atmosphere. From another angle, it is more likely to be a culture experience class, but also needs language. because as the tool of teaching, language could maintain the taste characteristic of the teaching, also as a part of culture, learning language is also one of the objectives.

6.1.3 THE SPECIALITY OF CULTURE TASK

In the researcher’s own opinion, in the definition above, several characteristics
could be generated from the teaching implementation.

Culture taste and interest enhancement are the main objectives. Different from some language teaching approaches, culture task is designed to ‘open the door’ of Chinese to these students. Teacher-as-researcher will not force students to learn but lead the way to feeling the culture through culture activities. The classes are arranged to be more interesting, including language use, class arrangement, content, class location selection, group work, and activities to make the teaching interesting. These characteristics are generalized according to the reflection of the researcher. It could reflect the understanding and implementation of research on culture task to some extent.

Culture task is designed according to the special situation of the teacher as researcher. It may not fit other situations of teaching, but in similar conditions it could provide some reflections. It has been described several times that the researcher had a small class with 5 students. These students were selected and volunteered to learn Chinese. As a VTR (volunteer teacher as researcher), the author taught Chinese once a week. The small class with few lessons for year 7 beginners determined the researcher could not teach Chinese as a normal language teacher. The small class provide the flexibility to spread activities. Few lessons limit the content of teaching. Year 7 beginners and the identity of the researcher make the situation different from the adult and formal language teacher’s class. That is also the objective condition to push the researcher to find a special way to teach students language and introduce culture.

Language and culture are dynamic combinations in culture task. The structure of task-based teaching and the spirit of intercultural language teaching means the culture task tries to give students more intercultural comparison and culture feeling during the task. ‘I let them try to pick up the beans by chopsticks and count it in
Chinese. It has a good effect; they practice happily and do it in groups, one pick and one count. I like their status, interesting, happy and learning (Observation, 24th May 2010); ‘today, a role play has been taken in greeting learning. I write a time on the blackboard and suppose two students didn't know each other. One of them play the role of Chinese and they have to use what they have learnt to greeting in a Chinese way according to the time. (Observation, 29th March 2010).’

Teachers and students are all at the centre of culture task language teaching. As the dual core in class, teachers and students are closer in this language teaching. To some extent, students are equal with teachers as they could choose what to learn. The teacher could teach the language according to students’ interests: ‘I try to guide them: look at the kites we saw, they are not black and white, right? They all cry: today we will learn the colour! (Observation, 29th April 2010); ‘I ask them what do they like to eat, according to their answer, I teach them the Chinese of these food. One student says she likes ice-cream… (Observation, 7th Jun 2010).’

Culture tasks are flexible and relaxed. Due to the objective of Culture task teaching, no more test pressure will be put on students. Students are observed having less and less pressure on language use and learning through culture task. Relaxation is always demonstrated in language use, for example, ‘All the process is relax, they didn’t feel nervous when they are speaking Chinese (Observation, 10th Jun 2010); ‘except an introvert girl, when I require them to make sentence individually, they all looks relax (Observation, 7th Jun 2010).’ Flexibility is shown in the content of teaching. The vocabularies and sentences are taught according to students’ interests: ‘A boy asks me how to say soy sauce, because he always uses it. So I teach him soy sauce is 酱油 JiangYou (Observation, 24th May 2010).’

Culture task is designed and taught related to real life. The tasks include kite making, greeting, and excursions. The language they have learnt could be useful in
their life. The language was taught in a situation of real life rather than made up. For example, ‘I introduce more about asking “who are you?” in Chinese, for example in the telephone calling, or in an emergency time, or suppose when you are playing the computer games, someone knock the door, how do you ask in an impatient way (Observation, 29th March 2010)’; and in excursion, ‘In restaurant, Rolly even ask for a juice in Chinese, totally individually, I didn't give him any help! (Observation, 10th April 2010)’. Students are learning and using the language in a real life background, which, from the experience of the researcher, is more relaxed and effective in teaching.

6.2 FINDING AND DISCUSSION OF CULTURE TASK TEACHING

6.2.1 THE LANGUAGE IN CULTURE TASK TEACHING

The language in culture task teaching is mainly about the language of the teacher. The TCSL teaching language is ‘the teaching language which teacher uses in teaching Chinese as the second language teaching class (Sun, 2003, p. 99)’. This researcher Sun, has also point out that:

The teaching language of foreign language teaching could divide into two parts: the first is using students’ target language as the teaching language; the second is using student’s first language as the teaching language. In the teaching practice, which teaching language should be used, different people have different idea. (Sun, 2003, p. 99)

In the researcher’s teaching, most of the teaching language is English. That is because the students are all beginner. But as the teaching process carries on, more and more Chinese is used in the teaching. As Rao concludes of teaching language,
teaching language could be divided into two parts; instruction classroom language and explanation language. The Researcher always uses Chinese to praise and criticize students, and tries to use more learned Chinese in teaching, but in other parts of teaching language most is in English.

![Diagram showing teaching language categories]

(Rao, 1998, p. 49)

Figure 6.2: Teaching language categories

In the interview, Professor Guo figures out that for foreign language teachers, ‘teach Chinese abroad, teacher should speak the native language of students. It is more convenient for communication. If we still use Chinese especially in after-class time, it is inconvenient and unnatural.’ In the explanatory language of culture task, Mr. Guo points out that:

The special explanation of your culture task has a high requirement to teacher due to the large and centralized information. If you cannot speak the native language of students, it is hardly for them to understand. Although the effect of teaching culture in Chinese is better, but when we meet the beginner students, we still have to teach it in their native language, at least most of the teaching language should be.

In Mr. Guo’s opinion, in this condition of beginner teaching, especially in teaching culture, teacher could use English as the teaching language. The researcher
believes that for the higher level of students, more Chinese could be used in the teaching, and the range of Chinese using could be wider. But at this stage of teaching, as a researcher points out ‘According to the practice of students second language learning, we believe the principle of relying on student’s native language is better (Li, 1993, p. 68)’. On the other hand, using as much Chinese as possible in class is of benefit to the students, but it is a long term process.

6.2.2 THE ROLES OF TEACHER IN CULTURE TASK

As it has been mentioned before, one of the principles in TBLT is that it is student centred. The role of teacher in student centred teaching could be quite different to the traditional language teaching. Rogers believes that the traditional role of the teacher could be changed.

罗杰斯提出要废除传统意义上教师的角色，以促进者取而代之。促进者的任务是：提供各种学习的资源；提供一种促进学习的气氛；使学生知道如何学习。简言之，罗杰斯主张，废除教师中心，提倡学生中心；学生中心的关键，在于使学习具有个人意义。Rogers figures out that the traditional role of teacher should be abolished and replaced in facilitator. The missions of facilitator are: provide the recourses of learning; provide the atmosphere for learning; let students know how to learn. In another words, Rogers claims that abolish the teacher centre, advocate student centre; the key of students centre is making learning more meaningful to individual. (Dai, 2004, p. 10)

As the combination of TBLT and ILT, culture task is taken to exert the initiative of students as much as the researcher can, but that does not mean the culture task is students centred. Which role of the teacher is appropriate for teaching the culture task?

In the interviews, teachers raise their opinion according to their experience. Three Chinese teachers all believe that the teacher should be the centre of the class, especially Ms Liu. In her opinion, she strongly emphasises the teacher’s domination in the language class, she figures that:
In the class, no matter which approach in language teaching, teacher should dominate the class, has a pretty clear idea of class, and lead students developing the language competence. The teacher’s role in the class is stationary dominating. I have the objectives, I require students speaking some language, do something, I want to lead them to my teaching process to finish the teaching mission. (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)

It is a strong view of the teacher centred approach but it shows the importance of the teacher in language teaching, especially at the beginning stage of TCSL. Mr Zhang argues that it could be in conflict with the other language teaching theory, but he still think the teacher should ‘stand in the middle of the class’:

If I am a TCSL teacher, I will follow the way of your culture task, but in the class designing, I will have a little change… In these class experiments, teacher is a key point of success. It may have some conflict with the theory of foreign teaching theory (student centred), but I think at the first stage of teaching, teacher is very important. It may be inappropriate to use the student centred approach, because it needs teacher at first, at the beginning, to stand in the middle, to conduct, to introduce. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)

The attitude of Mr. Zhang towards the role of teacher is softer than Ms Liu. He has the same opinion as the researcher; that teacher should take more responsibilities of class arrangement and conducting at the beginning stage of language teaching. Professor Guo didn’t directly point out which role should be taken in teaching, but from the conversation with the researcher, the researcher finds out that Mr. Guo believes that in the teaching process, especially in new word and sentence teaching, and structure and grammar explanation, the teacher should take the responsibility for controlling the class and imparting knowledge. On the other hand, in the task process and activities process, more responsibility of language learning and application could be transferred to students. In other word, the teacher’s role could be changed according to the teaching situation.

Lin, a foreign language teacher, has argued that although the role of teacher has
been changed in the student centred approach, it does not mean that all the teaching responsibilities have been transferred to students. The teacher has been endowed with a new position of ‘learning advisor’ and still in charge of the learning.

Teaching is the activity which teacher provides the influence on students comprehensively. The tradition role of teacher is, firstly, the knowledge grantor; secondly, the organizer of class teaching activities. But in the student centred foreign language teaching mode, teacher has been endowed another new role of ‘Learning advisor’.

The student centered foreign language teaching mode could be viewed as a ‘partnership mode’ in language teaching (Eisler, 1987), because the content and forms of teaching could be negotiated by teacher and learner. Of course, it does not meaning all the teaching responsibility have been transferred to the language learner. Actually, in the student centred foreign language teaching mode class, if we want to guarantee the result of learning language, teacher should still in charge of the class. Which responsibilities could be taken by the students could estimate by teacher in the new mode, for example, the objectives of learning, the selection of teaching approach. (Lin, 2002, p. 153)

In the researcher’s opinion, as Mr. Guo and Lin point out, the role of teacher could be set according to the situation of teaching. In the class design and in knowledge teaching, teacher could be in charge of the class and have more control of time and manner. But in the task implementation, for example kite making and excursions, teacher is more likely to be an assistant of students, helping them and providing more free time and space for students. The role of teacher is flexible in culture task teaching. The objective of the setting the teacher’s role is to achieve the goal of teaching, which is benefit for the students. From the feedback of students and the observation of teacher, it is clear that students enjoy the lessons and teaching, they have learned the culture and language from the lesson, which makes teacher more flexible and natural in changing roles.

6.2.3 THE JUDGEMENT OF SUCCESS: THE SENSITIVE POINT OF STUDENTS AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

In language learning, especially in TCSL, there is an issue of how to judge whether students achieve success. The normal and traditional way is examination.
For example the HSK (汉语水平考试), which is similar to IELTS (International English Language Testing System), is an official way to test the language skill of students. But, in the teaching of the researcher, the examination is improper for the students. As Ms Liu argues ‘(Judging the success of students) does not depend on the examination (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)’. The researcher believes that the interest of students towards Chinese is more important than their exam result. In the interviews with teachers, the researcher raised the question of how to judge the success of students’ performance, which is related to Nunan’s question list of assessment and evaluation.

One phrase has been mentioned in the interviews, which is ‘sensitive point’ of students. It could be interpreted as the excited point of language learning. Ms Liu provides a further explanation of this ‘sensitive point’ as the impression and reaction of students towards the learning:

How to judge the success of students? It could be interpreted that when the student see or get something related to Chinese, whether he has the sensitive point, whether he could remember that the teacher has taught him of this. He has the interest in it, he know a little and could speak some language, for example, introduce to friends and family members, which means the lesson has given him the deep impression, that could mean the success of student. (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)

The explanation of Ms Liu still has emphasis on language recall. It is an important perspective. On the other hand, the researcher believes it could be also interpreted as culture knowledge recall. If a student meets some Chinese culture or the knowledge he has learned, he could remember and reduce the gap and conflict in culture difference. It could be viewed the success for this student.

Mr. Guo also regards the excited point of students is significant in teaching, which actually related to the interests of students and depends on the special situation of culture. He figures that:
The language knowledge should relate to the excited point and interest of students. How to find their excited point? It needs the input of teacher. For example, in dragon boat festival, middle autumn festival, the arrangement of lesson could relate to these culture events. If we put dragon boat festival in December, that will be meaningless, and students could not interested in it. If it happened tomorrow and we teach it today, students will interest in it and could use it immediately. (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)

Not only the sensitive point and interest of students, the communication is also an important perspective. This communication does not only mean the language level, but also the cultural communication, which is deeper than only language communication.

If we judge it from the perspective of culture and culture task, the final judgement is whether there is a communication barrier. Behind the language communication is the accessible culture communication. We could say that, most of the misunderstanding and conflict is due to the culture difference. That’s way I agree designing of your culture task. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)

Mr. Zhang’s opinion is similar to the researcher’s opinion. From the perspective of success judgement, the cultural understanding is one of the most important parts due to the design and theory of the researcher’s teaching. All in all, as a summary of three teachers, the judgement of students’ success in culture task could divide into three parts. Due to the researcher’s idea (with the support of Mr. Guo), interest is one of the standards to determine whether students achieve the objectives of teaching. Whether students have the sensitive or excited point in learning and recalling could be viewed as another perspective of judgement. Thirdly, the communication of students in Chinese, including language and culture (especially culture in this research), is the last point of evaluating the performance of students.

6.2.4 CULTURE IS EVERYWHERE

During the first stage of teaching, through the literature review, the researcher
believed that cultural elements should be the focus rather than only language skills. As a result, the researcher designed the lesson around culture task, which emphasised provision of the taste and acquisition of culture for students. The researcher has argued that culture could be put at the centre of teaching in this case and the culture task could actually benefit the learning of students. But from teaching the lessons, the researcher found that not only the specified content, but also the small aspects infiltrated in the teaching, for example, simple words, sentences, even the action and speaking of teacher, could all teach students about the Chinese culture. These micro aspects are presenting the culture of China. The researcher could use these to demonstrate the culture to students to assist culture teaching. It actually related to an idea of language teaching which is ‘culture is everywhere’.

In the interview, Mr. Guo put the idea of culture as a high requirement of the TCSL teacher, ‘Culture is everywhere and in every aspect, from eating to music, from movie to sports, these all could reflect the culture (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)’. Teacher needs to have a solid knowledge background of Chinese culture and a well prepared lesson plan to respond to these aspects. In other words, the understanding of culture could be more widely used in teaching. It is not in conflict with the researcher’s idea, which has been commended by Ms Liu; it means comprehensive teaching to students.

I believe that your understanding of culture in teaching should be more widely and deeply. It does not only mean pick a topic and teach the culture, but in the words and speaking, in the sentence and character, they all could present the culture. When it related to the culture in your teaching, you should explain to students about culture, that is your objective, and you should have a well preparation. (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)

The researcher paid more attention on these aspects in lessons and it has a satisfying effect as an aide to culture task. For example, in the lesson before the excursion, the researcher expanded the meaning of a word to etiquette and expanded its level of language use:
‘I explained the word ‘请 qǐng (please)’ to students, in Chinese, it does not only mean ‘please’, it could be view as a formal language to present the meaning of ‘help yourself’, or ‘this way’. ’ (Observation and reflection, 7th June, 2010)

As the TCSL researcher Wang points out, culture is not only in culture content, but also in the language, especially profound Chinese. In the Chinese language, three aspects could be pointed out which demonstrate the culture:

The culture precipitation in pronunciation of Chinese, for example, the reduplication in Chinese demonstrates the musical and rhythm sense with a feeling of relax, pleasure…
The culture implication in vocabulary of Chinese, for example, the colours could represent special meaning of attitude…
The culture habit in sentence of Chinese, for example, the inner meaning of a sentence…

The idea of ‘culture is everywhere’ provides another view towards culture teaching, which could be of assistance to the culture task. That is a finding related to the research and self teaching experience for the researcher. The researcher believes that in the further teaching of TCSL, culture could be taught more comprehensively. The researcher could combine all kinds of aspects in life to demonstrate the culture of Chinese, and benefit students learning more.

6.3 FINDING: CULTURE TASK, A POSSIBLE WAY

In implementation of teaching, the researcher is trying to combine TBLT and ILT together. In structure and class arrangement, TBLT is put as a framework to implement the lesson. In the lesson design and objectives, ILT is in a more central place. From the data of reflection and observation, interview, and student’s feedback, culture task has been viewed as a satisfactory approach but still has several disadvantages to fix. In this section, the evaluation and findings of culture task will be presented according to the data analysis and literature.
6.3.1 THE CHECKING OF CULTURE ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLE OF TBLT AND ILT.

As a combination of TBLT and ILT, one of the methods to judge whether culture task has achieved the objective of the combination is to check the satisfaction of culture task against the principles of both TBLT and ILT. The researcher believes that although it may have some unsatisfied points in the teaching of culture tasks, most of the principles are implemented into the practice.

Authenticity was the first principle of TBLT, which has four parts according to Lv (2007). They are ‘Textual authenticity’ which focuses on the language material, ‘Interpretation authenticity’ for the understanding of learners in language input, ‘Practice authenticity’ with benefit to language learning, and ‘Situation authenticity’ which is concerned with the social environment in class (Lv, 2007, p. 13). Authentic lessons are also an idea of the researcher, which means providing the most real culture to students. The language material of culture task is the practical and life language, for example, greetings, ordering food, asking for help. Students could use these languages in their life. The interpretation of language in culture task is also based on real life as it will be used in the practise of language, for example to order the food in a restaurant, and will be explained and practised in the an authentic way. The situation of teaching and practise, of course, is authentic in culture task. The task is taken in real situations, for example in Chinatown, while students are learning the culture and language through their own feelings and experience in this real environment and there is no standard answer for them in using the language. From these four parts, in conclusion, culture task satisfies the authenticity principles.

The second principle of TBLT is the primacy of meaning. It is a sequence in learning with emphasis on meaning first, and then on the modality. Culture task is
not emphasised in the modality, for example grammar. It more focuses on the practice in real life experience. The researcher requires students pay more attention in the transmitting of meaning, especially in the practice in real language environment. Mr. Guo figures that:

If the language could achieve the aim of communication, you could do less correct on their language mistake, especially grammar. It will benefit for their initiative of language learning, which sometimes means provide more relax requirement in language modality. (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)

In the culture task, students did well in using language to achieve the goal in the setting, not only to teachers, but also to other Chinese in real life. Although, on the other hand, culture task didn't emphasis the modality enough, it has designed in the objectives of teaching and implement in teaching. The researcher believes that students could get more formal and structured Chinese learning if they are interested in it.

The third principle of TBLT is group work. It has also been mentioned in the evaluation list of Nunan. The design of culture is implemented in the form of group working, for example, the kite making and the role play. The researcher encouraged students to learn as a group and to help each other. It has been recorded in the observation that students were very happy in the learning and practising of group work:

They are practicing very happily. They count it in group working, one student pick and another count, and then change the role to have the competition. (Observation and reflection, 24th May, 2010)

They are doing the role play as a group that they could help each other in ordering the food. And I found that they actually helping each other in the process of role playing. (Observation and reflection, 27th May, 2010)

In the feedback of students, they all agreed that they have participated in the group work of culture task. It could be said that in designing and implement the
element of group working has been practised well.

Student centred, which has been argued before in the section about the teacher’s role, is the fourth principle of TBLT. It is the idea that language teaching should consider the interests, hobbies and language skills of students more. The way of learning language in task-based lessons is to structure and discover the meaning and the feeling of language by the students themselves to benefit their cognitive process. Which means language teaching is serving students rather than instilling the knowledge. In culture task teaching, the researcher emphasised the needs of students, especially in the vocabularies and sentences they want to learn. For example, in preparing the lesson for the excursion, the researcher taught students the vocabularies which they need and could probably use on the excursion. In the lesson, the researcher also answered the students’ questions about things they were interested in. A lot of knowledge, which students want to learn about China and Chinese, was provided to them in the lesson. As Ma figures, the student centred task is actually ‘designed in the needs of students’ language using in future (Ma, 2007, p. 27)’. From the discussion above, the researcher argues that in the culture task, teacher centred and student centred combine together. In the pre-task, the language input is provided in a teacher centred mode; the, researcher controls the class more in this process. In the task stage, the researcher provides more space and activity for students, and tries best to enhance their initiative in the language learning.

After checking on the principles of TBLT, culture task could also be examined by the principles of ILT, which is absorbed by the researcher to fill the gap of TBLT in the design of culture task. The first principle in TBLT, which is integrating culture into other language elements, is similar to the idea of culture is everywhere. The researcher’s teaching is trying to bring the culture taste from aspects of teaching. In the teaching process, the researcher also teaches culture in the vocabularies, sentences, and speaking. But, on the other hand, more culture is taught in the form of
tasks which are specially designed to providing the culture taste. Culture task, in another word, could be viewed as an approach which combines culture and other language elements in a special design with a more on culture.

The second principle of ILT is teaching culture from the beginning and for it to be synchronised. As it is designed to teach culture as a task, the researcher believes that the culture task is taught from the beginning and synchronised with the language. In the feedback of students, they agreed that they have learned the culture from the beginning of teaching. From the objectives of the researcher and the observation, it is clear that culture is satisfied in this principle.

Thirdly, bilingualism is the norm. ‘Usually aim at making the learner as much like a native speaker of the language as possible. This is both an unrealistic goal (it is hardly ever achieved) and also an inappropriate one’ (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 9). In the interview, Mr. Guo also points out that:

The aim of language teaching is not turn our students into a Chinese. It aims to train students to be a bilingual, which understand China and Chinese culture. So, in the standard pronunciation and sentences, we could not require students to speak like a host of TV, which is unacceptable. (Interview, Mr. Guo, 5th July, 2010)

In the researcher’s reflection of teaching, it was not noticed because in the designing of culture task, language speaking it not the main objective. Language is taught as a tool for carrying culture. But in the feedback of students, it showed that students think teacher sometimes give a lot of pressure by asking them to speak like a native Chinese. It is probably because of the serious attitude of the researcher in teaching and brings over-correction when speaking to students. The bilingualism norm does not require ‘zero’ in speaking; the standard of this requirement could be ‘meet the needs of communication’ as Mr. Guo pointed out above. It still needs the requirement of pressure on students but controlling the balance of this issue could require a continuous practise and research process for the researcher.
The fourth and fifth principles of ILT could be combined together. They are ‘language acquisition involves intercultural exploration and develop intercultural competence.’ In ILT, discovery and comparison of two cultures is a significant part of lessons and which provide the opportunity for students to compare their own culture with the target language culture. As Liddicoat argues, it could help students to have the intercultural competence which includes respect of another culture and language and meets the target language culture convention (Liddicoat, 2002, p. 10). It will of benefit for students’ to recognize and respect another culture. Ms Wang points out that in this way, ‘students could appreciate learning of cultures, hopefully especially in Chinese (Interview, Ms Wang, 10th June, 2010)’. In the homework of culture task, as mentioned before, a culture comparison has been provided for students to develop their intercultural exploration and their intercultural competence. But as Liddicoat (2002) points out, it is a long term process of learning culture and developing the intercultural competence because students could not learn everything in the classroom. As for the researcher’s idea; interest is the best teacher for their further Chinese learning and that is what the researcher tries to achieve in the teaching. Not to teach them everything, but to provide them a reason to learn more about Chinese.

From the checking of the principles of TBLT and ILT, it could be concluded that the culture task teaching fits most of the principles in this combination. There are some small differences from two original frameworks due to the combining character. For example, student centred and the overlooking of modality, could be viewed as an appropriate change according to the situation of teaching. It does not mean culture task is perfect. It actually has a lot of issue to deal with; it could prove a commendation to the researcher’s design and teaching.

6.3.2 THE EVALUATION OF CULTURE TASK ACCORDING TO THE TASK
The evaluation list has been mentioned several times before. As a framework of evaluation of the task which has been adjusted to the situation of culture task, it could prove that the culture task fits in the structure and character of TBLT, and to some extent, is well organized and implemented in the teaching. The list and the result are demonstrated below:

1) Goal and rationale
   1. To what extent is the goal or goals of the task obvious to you and to your students? Very clear
   2. Is the task appropriate to the learners’ proficiency level? Yes
   3. To what extent does the task reflect a real-world? Is this appropriate? Yes
   4. Does the task encourage learners to apply classroom learning to the real world? Yes
   5. What beliefs about the nature of language and learning are inherent in the task? Communication and culture
   6. Is the task likely to be interesting and motivation to the students? Yes

2) Input
   1. What form does the input take? Mostly by explanations.
   2. Is it authentic? Yes

3) Procedures
   1. Are the procedures appropriate to the goal of the task? Yes
   2. Is the task designed to stimulate students to use bottom-up or top-down processing skills? I am not sure
   3. Are the procedures appropriate to the input data? Yes
   4. Are the procedures designed in a way which will allow learners to
communicate and cooperate in groups? Yes

5. Is there a learning strategies dimension, and is this made explicit to the learners? Yes

4) Roles and settings

1. What learner and teacher roles are inherent in the task? Teaching and learning.

2. Are they appropriate? I think so.

3. Is the setting confined to the classroom? Yes, also in the excursion

5) Implementation

1. Does the task actually engage the learners’ interest? Yes

2. Do the procedures prompt communicative interaction among students? Yes

3. Does anything unexpected occur as the task is being carries out? Yes

4. What language is actually stimulated by the task? Chinese

6) Grading

1. Is the task at the appropriate level of difficulty for the students? Yes, sometimes too hard.

2. Is the task structured so that it can be undertaken at different level of difficulty? Yes

7) Integration

1. What are the principles upon which tasks are sequenced? Easy to hard

2. Do tasks exhibit the ‘task continuity’ principle? To some extent.

3. Do task incorporate exercises in learning-how-to-learn? No. In their further study, maybe yes.

8) Assessment and evaluation
1. What means exist for the teacher to determine how successfully the learners have performed? They are interest in it, and could communicate in Chinese as required.

2. Does the task have built into it some means whereby learners might judge how well they have performed? Yes

3. Is the task realistic in terms of the resources and teacher-expertise it demands? Yes

Some of the questions have been mentioned in the feedback of students. The answers to these questions are made according to the feedback of students, the reflection and observation of the researcher, and the interviews of the teachers. Here, the researcher will explain some of these questions of evaluation. Firstly, what form does the input take? The language input of culture task is mainly in the form of teacher centred explanation. But, as in the action researcher cycle plan, the lesson before the task could be viewed as an input process. As a result, several forms, including group working discussion, role play, and games, could be the input of the topic. Secondly, the answer of question 'Is the task designed to stimulate students to use bottom-up or top-down processing skills? ' is not sure because the researcher didn’t pay attention to this part, and it is not directly related to teaching objectives. Thirdly, undertaking the task at different levels of difficulty is achievable. As Ms Liu points out ‘difficulty is not an issue because teacher could control it (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)’, and this is the same idea as Mr. Zhang’s, but, in the researcher’s teaching, it could not be tested. So, only from the point of the experienced teacher, it is achievable in culture task. Fourthly, the success judgement, as argued before, is mostly about the ‘sensitive point’ of students. It could be sensitive to both language and culture. From the researcher’s perspective, if students have a good impression and are interested in Chinese culture and language, it could mean both success to teacher and students.
From the evaluation list, it is shows that most of the results of evaluation are satisfied except the integration part. It has been suggested in the interview of teachers that the design of culture task should be more integrated and linked together. As Ms Liu points out that

The designing of your culture task should be put in the integrated teaching environment. It will be confused and chaos that teach the lesson randomly in a casually topic. (Interview, Ms Liu, 5th July, 2010)

The question about the task-continuity principle has been answered ‘to some extent’ because the researcher believes some elements have been connected in each culture task lesson. Although the language is not the most focussed part of the culture task, it actually has been connected in the lessons as the bridge. For example, in the excursion task, most of the language which was been taught could be used in the communication.

The last question which researcher wants to explain is ‘Do task incorporate exercises in learning-how-to-learn’. In the opinion of the researcher, culture task is of benefit for student’s further learning because it enhances their interest in learning. It also provides them a sense of learning Chinese, which could deliver the experience of how to learn. Mr. Zhang believes that it teaches students how to learn, because it is called ‘言传身教 (to teach by word and deed)’.

It contained teaching students how to learn because in my opinion, it is ‘言传身教 (to teach by word and deed)’. Students will be affected by your teaching. They will have the impression of how you teach, not only in their further study, but even in their teaching, if they become a teacher, they will remember your approach is benefit for the learning. That makes me feel quite please. (Interview, Mr. Zhang, 4th July, 2010)

From the answer evaluation list, culture task could be viewed as satisfied in most of the questions, which means culture task has maintained the character of TBLT to some extent. It could be regarded as a satisfied approach according to the evaluation
of TBLT. On the other hand, some issues need to have further research and implementation to improve.

6.4 SUMMARY

At the beginning of the chapter, some discussions are made to argue some issues about the culture task. The first issue is about the theory of foreign language teaching. If the theory of TCSL can be implemented in the culture task, which actually belongs to the TCFL according to the theory of language teaching? From the literature of TCSL research, it is believes that in the category of foreign language teaching, TCSL is a level higher than TCFL. In their opinion, TCFL is a part of TCSL. That means that although TCFL and TCSL are a little different in teaching, the theory of TCSL could be used in the TCFL teaching. It has been proven that the research and lesson of the researcher is reasonable to build on the base of TCSL. On the other hand, it should be paid attention that the TCFL has differences compared with TCSL. The researcher is encouraged to change the design and the evaluation according to the situation of his own teaching, for example, students, environment, and resources.

After approving the feasibility of research and teaching theory of culture task, the definition of culture task was reviewed and refined to provide the updated understanding of culture task. The culture task is defined in the operational aspect, which is implementation in a specific school and volunteer program. It is the combination of TBLT and ILT, and is applied in a small class with five students and with the objectives of enhancing the interests of students.

The definition of culture task leads to the specialty of culture task. Six aspects are mentioned in this chapter according to the research and teaching experience. Firstly, culture experience and interest is the most important aim in culture task. The researcher used the metaphor of ‘open the door’ to describe the objective of culture
task and the design of culture task. Secondly, the situation of culture task implementation is specific and special. It combines the role of VTR (volunteer teacher as researcher) with small class teaching, few lessons and beginner students together. As the specific implementation of culture task, it affects the objectives of plan, the lesson application and its generalisation. Thirdly, as he researcher described, language and culture are dynamic combinations in the culture task. The framework of culture task is the TBLT, while the soul inside is ILT. In the culture task teaching, the researcher paid attention to the combination of culture and language and tried to implement the lessons in a balanced way from the plan to assessment. Fourthly, teachers and students are all at the centre of teaching. As the dual core in a computer, the researcher also balances the role of teacher and student in the teaching, and tries to provide students with more initiative in language learning, especially in the task process. The fifth is about the class atmosphere, which is flexible and relaxed. It has been demonstrated in the class that students all love that relaxing and flexible lesson. The last aspect is about authenticity; that means culture task is based on real life. The culture knowledge and language are taught according the real Chinese life. The researcher believes all these aspects form the culture task. It could be viewed as the specialty of culture task, and also the identity of culture task teaching.

After the definition and identification of culture task, some findings and discussions in culture task teaching have been proved according to the literature, data, and experience of the researcher. At first, the language of the teacher in the Chinese class could be English and more Chinese as the process carries on. It could be debatable in the teaching, but actually some Chinese researchers, including interviewed teachers, agreed that the teacher could use English and Chinese according to the situation. Some researchers even regard it as a competency of the teacher. In the teaching of the researcher, the language the researcher uses is mostly English, and more and more Chinese which is taught to students is used after teaching.
The second discussion is about the role of teachers. Some researchers believe that the TBLT belongs to the student centred approach, which is advocate to make learning more meaningful to individuals. But some experienced teachers believe that in the Chinese teaching, teacher centred is still the effective approach to teaching. The researcher combines these two attitudes in the role of teacher. According to the culture task, in the language input stage, teacher should be in charge of the whole class to deliver the knowledge of language and culture. In the task stage, students could be the centre of the class, and the teacher could provide more freedom for them in learning and implementation.

As same as the role of teacher, some teachers figure the different idea in judgement of success to students. Because the exam system is not suitable for the culture task, the judgement of success could be taken in another way. The ‘sensitive point’ has been figured out from the TCSL researcher and teacher that when the students meet something related to Chinese, and they have learned before, they will recall the learning content and interest in it. If they could remember something or could say something due to the teaching, that could be viewed as a success for students and teacher. Not only the recalling of knowledge, but also the communication of students. It could be both language communication and culture communication, which could be viewed as the reduction of cultural conflict in their life. As the conclusion, the assessment and judgement of success could be checked from three parts, which are interest, recalling of knowledge, and communication.

From the success judgement, it is clear that culture is significant in the research. The researcher and teachers all believe that culture is everywhere. It contains two parts. Firstly, every aspect of life could reflect the culture, for example, music, sports, and food. Secondly, the language could also deliver the culture in pronunciation, vocabulary, and sentence. It also provides an idea to the researcher; the language
teaching and culture teaching could affect and help each other and the balance of
culture teaching and language teaching is important for the researcher’s future
research and teaching.

After the discussions of some issues of culture task, the findings of culture task
which actually prove the possibility and evaluation of culture task according to the
principles and the evaluation checklist was considered. From the principles of TBLT
and ILT, it was demonstrated that the culture fits most of the principles in designing
and teaching. Except for some principles, for example, the teaching process put too
much pressure in speaking accurately. Culture task is satisfied in other principle with
some changes depending on the situation and specialty of culture task teaching. The
checklist of Nunan also shows the satisfaction of culture task. Although in the
integration part, the culture task did not well with less connection and non-holistic
designing, which provide the suggestion to researcher. Overall, the culture task is
possible in designing and teaching, it is a encourage for researcher and also a
important evidence in this research.

The next chapter will mainly demonstrate the conclusion of this research. The
advantages and disadvantages of culture task will be concluded as the evaluation of
culture task from the teaching. The experience of the researcher as a VTR will also
be summarised to review the past, and look into the future.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EXPECTATION

以心相亲，以梦相承

TO KISS IT BY HEART, TO CARRY IT BY DREAM

In this chapter, the conclusion of the research will be made in terms of advantages and disadvantages of implementation of culture tasks, and which are generated from the action research. The chapter will answer the questions of the research in some way, and leave other questions for the researcher’s further study. The improvement of the researcher will also be demonstrated.

This chapter will be organised into the following four sections:

7.1 The advantages and disadvantages of culture task
7.2 Implementations for future research
7.3 The improvement of the researcher and a look into the future
7.4 Conclusion

7.1 THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CULTURE TASK

Since the issues related to culture task have been discussed before, this section will mainly focus on the advantage and disadvantage of culture task, and its implementation in TCSL teaching.

The advantage of culture task could be summarised from three aspects; benefits to the students, the teacher, and TCSL. Firstly, the culture task is of benefit to the
students for promoting their interest towards Chinese learning, which is one of the objectives of Mandarin teaching. The culture task teaches students both language and culture, and provides them more chance of understanding and communication. Secondly, culture task is also of benefit to the researcher who is the teacher of TCSL. The culture task class is relaxed and harmonious, which releases the burden of the teacher from simple language teaching. In his teaching, the researcher found that the mood of the teacher was quite happy as was that of his students. The design and teaching of culture task makes the teacher look forward to the Mandarin teaching; he loves to teach in this way and loves to see students are happy to learn. Third, in terms of TCSL teaching, the culture task affects not only the students in the class who learn Mandarin, but also the other students in school who didn’t choose the Chinese. It has been commented on by other students as a very interesting class and some students indicate that they are willing to attend the Chinese class to learn the culture task. The Chinese class was only five students in this term but the number of students will grows to thirty next term due to the contribution of culture task.

The disadvantages of culture task are drawn from the reflection of the researcher in teaching as well as from other teachers’ comments and literature. These can be divided into five parts; the time consumed, the fitting of the teaching content, class management, cost of material and high requirement of teachers.

First of all, time consumption may be considered a weakness of culture task. From action research the researcher found that the teaching process is quite slow in comparison with the normal Mandarin teaching classes; for example, the students and teachers spend one lesson just on kite designing. Other teachers shared the same feeling with the researcher, especially Miss Wang. She views the time consumed as the ‘main disadvantage’ of culture task. Similarly, Mr. Guo also points out that the task-based teaching need considerable time according to his own experience and other examples he knows. However, due to the character of TBLT, which use the task
as the teaching method, it is acceptable and necessary to included culture tasks into TBLT. The researcher believes that the process of promoting interest in learning culture and language is more important than the result of mastering the language. That means, the time consumed is worthwhile. But there is still a need to pay attention to this issue because the class time to VTR is very limited. This provides a high requirement of teachers in arrangement of teaching time.

Secondly, the content of culture teaching is not easy to fit into the task-based teaching. To suit the special design for the VTR’s situation, the culture task needs to be more balanced in terms of the teaching content and student’s interest. Teachers notice that there is a gap between the teaching content and students’ engaging activities. The researcher needs to do more in the connection of culture task and language use. In designing, the topic could be chosen to be more close to the language use; for example, the role play of greeting, buying a ticket to travel and so on. These conversational tasks will help the teacher to achieve the goals of both language and culture. In teaching, the teacher needs to supervise students in using language as well as promoting their interests.

Thirdly, class management is a difficult job. The researcher realised that the culture task was well implemented in the class partly because of the small class size. A classroom teacher pointed out that, if the class has thirty students, the teacher should concentrate on student management and on class control. That is a limitation of culture task, which probably fit in with small class teaching, rather than big class teaching. However, the researcher also believes that if students are interested in the tasks and Mandarin learning, their behaviour will be good. Because once the class has attracted their interest and the learning becomes fun rather than a burden, their motivation will lead them to good behaviour and initiative learning. As a result, the management pressure will be reduced.
Fourthly, time consumption and material costs are related to the application of culture task. After the kite making class and the excursion, Miss Wang told the researcher that the culture task could not be afforded if there were more students in our class. It is similar to the third point; that culture teaching is limited by class size. Culture tasks need a lot of material and money to support them, ‘If we want to bring this culture task to everyone and benefit all of them, I think small class is better’ (Interview, Miss Liu, 5th July, 2010). So, the researcher suggests that the class excursion or other material costly lessons could be taken once a term and fit into the whole program of teaching. These lessons could exert their best affect as reinforcement. It could be put at the end of the term; for students, it is a reward and also a practise of what they have learned.

Finally, the culture teaching has a high requirement of the teacher. It was found that the teacher of the culture task needs know the foreign language well and the language and culture of his own country. He also has to know the students and their culture well. The researcher faced some problem in the implication of culture task because of the religion of the students. But the researcher believes that after more experience of teaching and long term contact with students, the teacher can achieve these requirements in teaching. This issue could not be evaded. On one hand, teacher needs to familiar with the students, including their behaviour, religion, hobbies, and interests. That will be helpful in teaching to design and bring the suitable lesson to students. On the other hand, the teacher should be more professional in teaching, the knowledge of linguistics and native culture are recommended to equip teachers to deliver high quality lessons.

All in all, the culture task is of benefit to the students in terms of interest, learning, initiative, communication, and understanding in culture. It also helps the teacher to have a better teaching condition to disseminate the Chinese lesson and culture.
7.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The section provides answers to the questions of research in some way, and leaves questions for the researcher’s further study.

Firstly, as the conclusion, the research questions will be answered. As discussed in the first chapter, the research questions have been changed three times due to the change of condition of teaching and research. The main question of this research is ‘how can culture task be implemented in the school?’ To answer the main question, the process of teaching is demonstrated in chapter four in two action research circles. It provides a meticulous picture of culture task teaching, from class plan to every stage of task. The observation and reflection are used to answer the research question. From the design and implementation, culture task is taken as a practice to support learning, and also as a learning process for students. Students are learning language and culture from the task when they do kite making, or go on an excursion to Chinatown while they study the knowledge they have learned from the language input and the previous class. The input and revision could also be put into the task, which makes culture task more flexible. Teachers and students all have a high appraisal on culture task, because it is interesting and effective.

The question of what is culture task is also answered by the research. The operational definition has been presented as the conclusion. It has been changed a little, which tries to take a more balanced approach to language and culture teaching. It refers to an approach in language teaching which combines the task-based language teaching approach and intercultural language teaching together. It has been taken in one school which has only five students in the Chinese class. The situation of the teacher and the students brings both limitations and flexibility to the design and implementation of the culture task. Due to the teaching situation, the researcher
set the objectives of the culture task to bring more cultural elements into teaching, and to enhance the interest and initiative of students towards Chinese learning.

The question about the advantages and disadvantages of culture task is an important evaluation in this research. The advantages and disadvantages have been mentioned several times during the thesis in different ways. The students are interested in the lesson, which provides motivation to students and arouses their initiative and positive attitudes to learning. At the same time, the culture task lesson delivers the knowledge of culture and the skill of language to students and is mainly based on real life. From the task, which taken from the real life environment and experience, students are applying what they have learned, both language and culture. The teacher also benefits from the culture task teaching with relaxed and happy teaching, and at the same time, disseminates the Chinese culture to the students. The disadvantages of culture tasks have been discussed in the first part of this chapter.

However, this research about culture task, or in other words, the balance of teaching language and culture, is just a beginning. There are some questions for further research.

Firstly, the culture task in this research is mostly based on the material and environment. Fortunately, in Sydney, there is a Chinatown for students to experience the Chinese culture and language. And teachers also have enough materials for students to making the kite. The material teaching is a part of the method in diversified teaching. How to implement more methods, for example the most popular teaching method, multimedia, into the culture task teaching is worthwhile for further research and teaching.

Secondly, as mentioned before, the culture task was taken by a small class with only five students. The data is limited by the number of students and classes.
Hopefully, further research could be based on more students and more classes. It could make a comparison with this research and gain more information about the culture task. Even spread to different school, different area, and countries, the results and effects of culture task could be explored more systematically and specifically.

Thirdly, although the generalizability of action research is not so important, the further and expanded research is still needed to take and further consider the reliability and validity. Hopefully, the VTRs could use the culture task as an approach in Mandarin teaching, and generate their experience. The researcher’s ideas and experiences could be a reference for the other VTRs. And from other teachers’ experience, the reliability and validity of the research could be improved.

Fourthly, the researcher hopes to take a long time tracing of the students’ learning in his further research. According to the opinion of some researchers in the interview, culture task is a long term affective approach which benefits students in a sustainable way. In this research, it has been presented that the approach has a well and satisfied result in students’ motivation and learning. Further research would hopefully find out the longer effect and influence on students; probably their world views, their life attitude, their respect to other culture.

No matter for the researcher or other teacher-researchers, the culture task is a worthwhile approach in Chinese teaching. The researcher hopes it could help teacher in teaching and also benefits students in learning.

7.3 THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE RESEARCHER

As a teacher-researcher, the researcher has learnt a lot during the teaching and research, which affects the outlook of the researcher. Although at the beginning of his
foreign life, especially in teaching, the culture conflict is quite vehement, as the time went on, the researcher adapted the philosophy of quality education and got more happily into life.

From the perspective of the researcher, first of all, the education in Australia is about appreciation. Most of the students are encouraged to be better rather than be punished for their mistakes in learning. The researcher plays the role of VTR, which means the researcher is a research candidate as well as a teacher. As a research candidate, the researcher has been encouraged a lot during his teaching and learning. In his culture task teaching, the researcher found that it really is a benefit to students in learning when they want to learn. The researcher found that punishment never happened in the culture task class because when the students have the motivation to learn, there is a virtuous circle happening.

The researcher has learnt a lot about Australian education. For example, Australian education is student-centred. In the researcher’s opinion, Australian education has more emphasis on the process of teaching and learning. In the observation of the researcher to other teachers, the researcher found that students were encouraged to do everything they could do in the class including helping the teacher in teaching, and expressing their ideas and opinions more freely. Although the discipline and class management could be a burden for the teacher, if students have the they could receive a well organized class and teacher support.

In this one and half year, another important job for the researcher is learning how to do research. Different from formal learning, the researcher has learnt that the research process is as important as the research results. Although the topic and questions of research have been changed a lot, the researcher has learned considerably about research, and it will benefit the further teaching and learning. This research, has also taught the research a lot. In the process of researching, the
researcher learned to be more patient, careful about ethics, and about methodology. It is good that the research has been supported by teachers, students and supervisors.

Through the action research, the researcher believes that his teaching competence has improved through practise and reflection. The researcher learned how to be a good teacher, especially a good Mandarin teacher. From class design to lesson plan and to implementation, the researcher is learning by doing. On the other hand, the teaching has been combined with the research which links theory with practice. During the learning of how to be a researcher, the researcher has improved to be a good teacher. Teaching also helps in data collection and analysis of the researcher, which is a typical complementary relationship. The researcher also learned about self-cultivation, and also ways to treat issues, for example how to accept criticism and accept critical friends. Overall, the Australian experience provides the researcher the knowledge and method of teaching and research, and also how to be a better man.

What will be taken by the researcher when he goes back to China? Firstly, as a teacher, his philosophy of teaching has been changed. Combined with the traditional Chinese teaching values, the researcher will try to gain the respect from students by interesting and effective teaching, by love of students and of the work. Hopefully, the experience in Australia will help the researcher do better in teaching by allowing more freedom, more activity, more democracy, and more authenticity in teaching. Not only for the researcher, but hopefully for schools and even the education system, from the aspect of practice, a tiny experience and understanding may bring a little progress and change in his future work. Secondly, the research experience could help solve the problems of teaching and living. It not only provides skills, theory and methodology of research, but also an improvement in personality. It changed some weakness of the researcher, for example, impatience, over generalization and utilitarianism, during the learning and the supervisor’s teaching. In his future
working career, the researcher hopes to maintain all these good characteristics learned in Australia. On the other hand, the experience of the research could benefit the work of the researcher and of the school, improving the ability to solve problems and optimize the resources of school. Thirdly, the experience in Australia is an important wealth for the researcher. It is about the attitude towards life and living; a more peaceful and gentle attitude to oneself and other people. It is about being fair, which could be viewed as the spirit of Australia, about working hard and enjoying life more relaxed and loving.

7.4 CONCLUSION

Reviewing the research, the approach of culture task has carried a lot of the researcher’s hope of Chinese teaching. It is mainly about the combination of culture and language in language teaching. As an attempt at teaching culture and language, the research has demonstrated that culture could be put into the centre of language teaching, Chinese language in particular.

The culture task is suitable for language teaching with the objectives of promoting students’ interests and understanding of culture rather than passing exams. It is best undertaken in a small class, with enough supportive resources. It is better to have a long term plan rather than a short topic. The teacher should be patient, because the influence of teaching is slow but sustainable.

As a teacher-researcher, the researcher has improved his teaching skill and competence during the culture task teaching. It is pleasing to see the students were interested in learning Chinese and learned considerable knowledge about Chinese culture and language. Hopefully, it provides some useful information for the program of Mandarin teaching in the Western Sydney Region, and possibly provides some
ideas for the Chinese teacher in TCSL or TCFL.
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Appendix 1 SERAP approval letter from the NSW DET

Mr. J. Ma
Room J.1.01
Building J
Kingswood Campus
University of Western Sydney
Locked Bag 1797
KINGSWOOD NSW 1797

SERAP number: 2010000

Dear Mr. Ma,

I refer to your application to conduct in NSW government schools (Western Sydney Region) a research project entitled ‘Task-based Language Teaching Approach in teaching Chinese as the second language’.

I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved and that you may now contact the Principals of the nominated schools to seek their participation.

Your approval will remain valid until 31 December 2010.

You should include a copy of this letter with the documents you send to the schools.

I draw your attention to the following requirements for all researchers in NSW government schools:

- School Principals have the right to withdraw the school from the study at any time.
- The approval of the Principal for the specific method of gathering data must also be sought.
- The privacy of the school and the students is to be protected.
- The participation of teachers and students must be voluntary and must be at the school’s convenience.
- Any proposal to publish the outcomes of the study should be discussed with the research approvals officer before publication proceeds.

Yours sincerely,

Keerle Xue
School Education Director, The Hills
Western Sydney Region Education Research Manager
16 March 2010

NSW Department of Education & Training
Western Sydney Region, Locked Bag 1797, Kingswood 2747
www.det.nsw.edu.au
Appendix 2 Approval letter from the UWS Human Research Ethics Committee

Notification of Approval
19 February 2010
Email on behalf of the UWS Human Research Ethics Committee

Dear Dacheng and Ji

I'm writing to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has agreed to approve the project.

TITLE: The task-based approach to teaching Chinese as a second language
H7703: Student Ji Ma (Supervisor: Dacheng Zhao)
The Protocol Number for this project is H7703. Please ensure that this number is quoted in all relevant correspondence and on all information sheets, consent forms and other project documentation.

Please note the following:
1) The approval will expire on 31 December 2010. If you require an extension of approval beyond this period, please ensure that you notify the Human Ethics Officer humanethics@uws.edu.au prior to this date.
2) Please ensure that you notify the Human Ethics Officer of any future change to the research methodology, recruitment procedure, set of participants or research team.
3) If anything unexpected should occur while carrying out the research, please submit an Adverse Event Form to the Human Ethics Officer. This can be found at:
4) Once the project has been completed, a report on its ethical aspects must be submitted to the Human Ethics Officer. This can also be found at:

Finally, please contact the Human Ethics Officer, Kay Buckley on (02) 4736 0883 or at k.buckley@uws.edu.au if you require any further information.

The Committee wishes you well with your research.
Yours sincerely
Associate Professor Janette Perz,
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Kay Buckley
Human Ethics Officer
University of Western Sydney