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English as second language teaching, learning, and assessment

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English as second language teaching, learning, and assessment: Exploring university programs in China and the United States as examples

Arcadia University

Ed.D. Program in Educational Leadership

Jingyi Chang

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Presented to the Faculties of Arcadia University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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English As Second Language Teaching, Learning, And Assessment: Exploring University Programs In China And The United States As Examples

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Doctor of Education, Arcadia University.

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Special committee directing the doctoral work of Jingyi Chang

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# ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

As an international language in the development of globalization, English has become the focus of humanistic communication and language education and has also had an important impact on the reform and development of language education in China. At present, English is being taught at earlier ages in China due to people’s interest in learning English. How to develop effective English education, including teaching methods and assessments, and how Chinese educational programs should develop English education within the reality of internationalization, is a key issue of educational concern (Guo, 2016).

The following proposed qualitative, phenomenological study provides an in-depth understanding of the differences and challenges in adult second language English education and learning between China and the United States. The goal of this study is to uncover the perspectives of Chinese adult students, studying in China and the United States in post-secondary institutions, in relation to effective pedagogical elements supporting their ability to be successful in using reading, writing, listening and speaking in functional ways to communicate in English. Data collection methods include analysis of documents related to English language curriculum for Chinese students, as well as interviews with English teachers and Chinese English learners at universities in Beijing, China, and one specific university in the United States that have many Chinese international students. By comparing participants’ perspectives on English education in China and the United States, and the differences between the two countries in English pedagogy as informed by culture and by theories of second language acquisition, it is hoped that English education-related reform principles and insights in relation to helping students gain functional communication will be summarized.

Keywords: Chinese English teaching, English learning, Pedagogy, Cultures of learning, Assessment, Second language acquisition
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In addition, I would like to thank my parents and family for their wise counsel and a sympathetic ear. You are always there for me. Finally, there are my friends, who were of great support in assisting me with my research, as well as serving as a support system to rely on during my research process.
CHAPTER I
Introduction

The purpose and the goal of this proposed research are to provide an in-depth view of the perspectives of the adult Chinese students about effective pedagogical elements to support them in becoming successful in using reading, writing, listening and speaking in functional ways to communicate in English. Specifically, this investigation seeks to uncover the benefits and challenges in developing English language education, including teaching methods and assessments which meet the developmental and language learning goals as well as the acquisition needs of adult English learners in China and the United States.

This chapter will present a brief overview of the study, including the background of this study and the researcher's own experience. More comprehensive information about the research guiding this proposed study and the proposed methodology will be further detailed in the following chapters.

Background of the Study and Research Problem

Although consensus has been reached on the importance and value of second/other language acquisition and learning in today’s highly competitive learning environment, many students and educators struggle to find methods to learn and teach English in ways that result in effective, efficient, functional, second/other language acquisition and literacy proficiency outcomes for adult learners (National Research Council, 2012). Educating these learners also includes consideration of the contexts in which language education is occurring. This context not only refers to the specific, physical language learning environment for learners for a certain period but also includes the relationship and interaction between teachers, learners,

1 For this proposal, “second” and/or “other” language teaching and learning refers to teaching and learning a language that is not one’s own, or a student’s, first or home language; “acquisition” and/or “learning” will be used interchangeably to refer to explicit and implicit ways language processes and skills are developed (VanPatten & Williams, 2015).
and the learning environment.

China’s education system has traditionally been one of stress and rank. The structure of its rights, such as the pyramid, is a system in which the government exerts unquestionable power over the population. While the intensification of China's reform and opening to the world and global interactions has greatly improved education in China, it still needs a relatively lengthy process to thoroughly change the deep-rooted traditional ideas. The negative message of this advocating power is passed on to classroom teaching. Students prefer to believe that teachers have the authority and are not willing to believe their rational thinking (Liu, 2010). Students are accustomed to the way teachers teach, rather than self-thinking and self-solving the problem. Few students take the initiative to ask questions in class. According to Liu (2010), only 38% of Chinese students tried self-designed exercises, in contrast to 52% of American students, and about 80% of Chinese students thought they learned more effectively under the supervision of teachers.

In China, the government directly regulates higher education. The school's education policy, educational goals, and teaching management are subject to policies promulgated by the Education Bureau. In the United States, however, the power of government to intervene in higher education is limited, and higher education institutions have more autonomy than China. Meanwhile, Chinese education pays attention to the construction of the knowledge system and the accumulation and instilling of knowledge, fostering students' inheritance of knowledge and respect for academic authority. The United States education system, on the other hand, places more emphasis on students' ability to apply knowledge and focuses on cultivating students' ability to challenge and critique knowledge and authority as well as their ability to expand and innovate (Zhang, 2010).

This proposed study seeks to understand, from participants’ perspectives, the varied ways students and teachers engage in English language teaching and learning and what might lead to successful academic and functional language proficiency in English language communicative contexts. Theories of second/other
language learning guide language learning and instruction. Second language acquisition (SLA) refers to the process of gradual improvement of one's own second language proficiency. It is a process of psychological and cognitive activity. The goal of SLA theory is to describe, analyze, and interpret the above processes to reveal how people learn other languages and what factors influence the acquisition of the second language in these processes (Zhou, 2010). In general, according to VanPatten & Williams (2015b), second language acquisition theories include “sets of statements about natural phenomena that explain why these phenomena occur the way they do (p.1).” A variety of English instructional methods used in China and the United States represent theories of second language acquisition. All methods center on pedagogical systems gradually formed under the guidance of certain theories and in teaching practice. Its contents include a theoretical basis, teaching objectives, teaching principles, teaching content, teaching process, teaching form, teaching methods, and other pedagogical practices.

The theoretical framework of second language acquisition, and in particular Krashen's Monitor Theory and its elements, is particularly relevant to this proposed study. The focus on both academic learning and language acquisition helps second language learners obtain academic and functional language skills to ensure proficiency in the four literacy skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing of the second language. This theoretical framework and its connections with the research questions will be described in a more detailed way in Chapter II.

At present, the literature on Chinese students' experiences in English learning in both China and the United States does not address the differences in English language skill and proficiency outcomes. Also missing from the available research is information about the perceived gaps between formal skills that are taught and learned and practical skills that are needed by students to participate effectively across learning and living contexts (Li, 2009). It is the goal of this proposed study to extend current research findings by uncovering participants’ own experiences and perspectives on this topic, through interviews, observations,
document review, and data analysis.

**Research Goals and Questions**

The goal of this proposed study is to document participants’ perspectives on the benefits and challenges involved in the different programs, methods, and frameworks for English as second/other language teaching and learning. The findings of this study will be used to make recommendations for effective English language instruction that will support higher levels of proficiency and language use for Chinese post-secondary students in China and the United States. This proposed qualitative, phenomenological case study will invite adult, Chinese, English language learners, and educators (English educators or educators whose content-area course is taught in English) to share their experiences and perceptions of the benefits and challenges of English language education and/or teaching in the classroom with English language learners, including the goals of English language education in the different settings, curriculum and teaching methods, and assessment and functional language use outcomes. To seek these perspectives, the researcher will invite adult (18 or above), Chinese English language learners who have experienced English language education in K-12 public schooling in China to participate in this proposed study. Of this group of participants, the perspectives of those with involvement studying abroad experience in the U.S. and without any experiences of studying abroad will be invited and compared. Also, English language teachers who are native English speakers, and those for whom English is a second/other languages, and who work with Chinese international students will also be invited to participate in this research. Furthermore, both Chinese and U.S. English teaching classrooms will be observed in order to obtain a practical application of English teaching. Curricular documents will be analyzed in relation to pedagogical elements and theories of second language teaching and learning. Since this proposed study will invite participants from both China and the United States, the findings from this study will be presented in the format of a case study.
The research questions guiding this proposed investigation are as follows:

- What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?

- What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?

- What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?

**Context of the Study**

This study will invite Chinese students with or without study abroad experiences, English language educators, and educators whose content area course is taught in English to be participants in the proposed study. Chinese University Y is located in the southern region of China and currently has 35,000 students and 4,000 faculty. It is worth mentioning that in Chinese universities curriculum settings, all English majors and non-English majors with freshman and sophomore status must take the courses College English I, II and III (one course per semester, for a total of three semesters). This study will also invite Chinese students and educators in the U.S. university to participate in this study. In this research, university A, located in the Eastern United States, will be considered the context for this study. In 2018, there were approximately 3,700 current students and 3,000 study abroad participants.

The participant selection will be based on the following criteria:

**Student participants.** College students with more than ten years of English learning experience and who have participated in national college entrance exams (including English) will be invited to participate. Approximately five college students who are currently in China, and approximately five students in China
and/or the US who are Chinese and who are, or have, studied abroad in an English-speaking country will also be invited to participate.

**English educators/teachers.** College teachers with at least ten years of English as second language teaching experience or who have participated in related students' English assessment or English course setting and curriculum will be invited to participate, and/or content-area course taught in English, with valuable insight about teaching Chinese international students. Approximately eight Chinese-English language teachers in China, and fifteen English language teachers in University A will be invited to participate. Eleven (out of fifteen) teacher participants were working at the Computer Science and Mathematics Program at University A with 29 (out of 40) current Chinese international students enrolled in the program. Four (out of fifteen) teacher participants were working at the English Language Learning Program at University A.

For the purposes of this proposed study, both Chinese and American English teachers (non-native and native English speaking) in China and the U.S., as well as college level Chinese students and Chinese international students will be invited to participate due to their experiences and perspectives informing the questions guiding this study. Identical to the previous criteria, consideration for participation in the current study is dependent upon experience teaching English or working with English language learners for more than ten years.

**Rationale for and Significance of the Study**

Although consensus has been reached on the importance and value of language learning in today’s highly competitive learning environment, many students and teachers are challenged to find ways to learn and teach English that result in effective, efficient, and functional, language and literacy proficiency outcomes (Li, 2009). This dilemma still perplexes many English language learners and educators. Fortunately, context cannot be fortunately understood as a language learning environment for learners for a certain period. It should also
include the relationship and interaction between learners and the learning environment. In Cui’s (2013) research, she describes how she had been learning English for more than 20 years, in classrooms and educational programs in China. Yet, she felt her proficiency had not increased over this time, especially in relation to communicating effectively with native English speakers. However, the experience of studying abroad made her fully understand the importance of participating in the English language learning environment in the ongoing development of English language skills and proficiency. She states that after just a short span of six months of English learning in an English language learning environment, her English level greatly improved. Cui’s experience facilitates reflection as to why the English learning experience of nearly 20 years is not as effective as six months. It may be that is not only the English language environment, but also the learner's cultural background, learning purpose, and age that contribute to the language learning effect. Therefore, this research hopes to find the most effective factors in English teaching that help Chinese students succeed in using reading, writing, listening, and speaking in functional ways to communicate in English.

Similarly, as a Chinese doctoral student studying abroad in the United States, Cui’s (2013) discussion of her English language learning experiences mirror the researcher’s experiences. The researcher's experience serves as the foundation of the questions guiding this proposed study: How do English language teaching and learning goals and processes compare between typical post-secondary, Chinese, English language learning contexts and typical contexts in post-secondary settings in the United States? What are the benefits and challenges of each? Uncovering information related to these questions is of great interest to the researcher, who has a very powerful interest in English language learning and teaching and has spent eight years in education-related majors. Findings from this study may not only benefit the researcher's and others' instruction and obtainment of English, but also may inform the fields of adult language teaching and second language acquisition.
In summary, this proposed investigation may uncover valuable information, including differences, benefits, and challenges to varied assessment and instructional methods and curriculum existing in English teaching. By analyzing these as well as comparing the Chinese and the U.S. English teaching and assessment methods, it may be possible to uncover recommendations for effective and efficient adult Chinese student English teaching and learning methods.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This literature review will explore the concepts of English learning of second language learners among adults in China and the U.S., as well as examine how various instructional goals, curricula, assessment, and the context of learning influence instructional methods and language proficiency of adult Chinese students learning English as their second/other languages. This research is grounded in theories of language pedagogy and second language acquisition (SLA), presented initially to provide the history and findings from the literature related to central tenets and foundational principles of second/other language education. The discussion of this theoretical framework and examples of SLA teaching methods will be presented by an overview of cultural foundations of teaching and learning in China and the United States, followed by descriptions of and factors related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment in relation to English language teaching in China and the United States.

The research questions that guide this proposed investigation are as follows: From the perspectives of Chinese post-secondary students studying English, in China and the United States,

- What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?

- What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?

- What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?
Chinese English Education

Since the establishment of the Tongwen Guan in 1862, China's English education has held importance over 100 years of history. Since the mid-1970s, English gradually became the first foreign language taught in the country. In 1983, English was firmly established as part of the required college entrance examinations, together with the other major subjects, for secondary students seeking higher education. As a result, most of the secondary school courses in mainland China, consider English-as-foreign-language courses as compulsory (Cheng, 2010, p. 182).

At the required education stage of schooling (primary school to middle school\(^2\)) in China, and particularly in the secondary school stage, most schools choose English as their principal or only compulsory foreign language course. All Chinese students who decide to apply to Chinese universities must pass an English exam to be accepted to the university. Since the late 1980s to the beginning of the 1990s, Chinese universities began to implement the college English proficiency test. The results of this assessment determine whether students can graduate from university. (Liu & Wu, 2015)

At present, the most important language skill focus in Chinese-English-education college courses is on developing proficiency in reading and writing, supplemented by listening and speaking skills. Chinese English teachers believe that using complex grammar for writing is an indicator of high English language proficiency. With this as their main objective, many Chinese English educators predominantly focus their instruction on teaching written grammar and sentence structure (Li, 2017, p. 32). While English language education has become more integrated into compulsory coursework, there remains a gap between students' learning and students' use of English for practical purposes. Some educators believe this is due to the way

\(^2\) In China, the academic system includes 4 levels of learning: kindergarten is 3 years, elementary school is 6 years, middle school is 3 years, and high school is 3 years. Taking Shenzhen (China) students as an example, they begin formal schooling (kindergarten) at the age of 3, and they graduate from high school at the age of 17 ("2017 深圳幼儿园招生", 2017).
English is being taught based on the standardized tests, as well as the fact that most English language instructors lack higher levels of proficiency themselves. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing therefore often do not develop in a balanced way due to the Chinese culture of learning and Chinese English standardized tests.

Looking back, China's English teaching system has seen reform and development. The English teaching curriculum is increasingly effective, and the curriculum is constantly revised and improved. At the same time, with the introduction of English-speaking countries’ textbooks, the quality of Chinese English textbooks has been greatly improved. However, there are still some problems with English education in China. First, English learning is time-consuming and inefficient (Dai & Zhang, 2001): Chinese curriculum sets English as a compulsory course starting in elementary school, and English is an important part of the college entrance examination, which accounts for 150 out of 750 points. The period span and ability requirements of learning are strict, but the results are not very satisfactory. According to statistics, out of a possible 150 points, the average score of students from Beijing in 2016 was 100.28 (高考网, 2016). In the 2017 data released by ETS (Educational Testing Service), the average score of candidates whose native language was Chinese was only 79 out of a possible 120 (TOEFL). Among the 29 Asian countries participating in the TOEFL test, China ranks 19th with the average score 18 points behind Singapore (97 out of 120) (ETS, 2017, p. 14). Second, too much emphasis remains on the accumulation of knowledge as opposed to on authentic communication (Dai & Zhang, 2001): In the process of learning, students neglect the cultivation of communicative competence. In language applications, students may be unable to use language proficiency due to the interference of exam-oriented education, especially in writing, listening and speaking. Students might pay more attention to mastering exam skills and scoring high on exams.

After compulsory education, many students still cannot understand and use English as a tool to communicate with each other. Most of this disjunction comes from the traditional Chinese teaching philosophy
which is the overemphasis on standard written English (Li, 2017, p. 32). However, the standard English and the teaching standards at this stage are focused on the standardized tests. Chinese teachers teach for the test, and students learn for the test. This orientation toward teaching and learning English has its foundation in the mainstream cultural orientation toward teachers, learners, what is important to teach and learn, and the process of teaching and learning. These questions lead the researcher to consider how much influence cultural factors have on English learning. How do cultural differences between China and English-speaking countries/the U.S. affect English education and learning? The third research question asks about the impact cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional methods. For the purpose of this research, the cultures of learning in China and English-speaking countries/the United States will serve as a guide.

**Language Pedagogy**

Methods and approaches to second language teaching have emerged across time in the United States and China. Since English/second language education began, many English teaching methods have emerged. Each teaching method is based on the needs of learners at various times. Each teaching method has been developed over time, in different contexts and based on diverse goals and purposes for learning English as a second language. Each also follows ideas in the development of linguistics and the historical pedagogical theories prominent in education at different points in history. SLA methods have their roots in behaviorism, cognitive psychology, and humanism.

**Second Language Acquisition Theories**

Second language acquisition refers to the process of gradual improvement of one's own second language proficiency. It involves a combination of psychological and cognitive processes in the brain. The
goal of second language acquisition theory is to describe, analyze, and interpret the processes to reveal how people learn other languages and what factors influence the acquisition of the second language in these processes (Zhou, 2010).

In general, theories include “sets of statements about natural phenomena that explain why these phenomena occur the way they do” (VanPatten & Williams, 2015b, p.1). In the field of second language acquisition (SLA), there are competing theories not only about “what is to be acquired” (e.g., grammar, sound systems, syntax, writing conventions), but also about “how learning takes place, in other words, processes learners must undergo...processes that may be internal to the learner...or they may be external to the learner” (p. 8). For example, theories may describe a learner’s internal working memory or comprehension, or how the external learning context supports conversation and use of language between people, and ultimately, language learning outcomes.

Also included in the SLA sphere are many theories and approaches (also called “models”) that attempt to find ways that different learning and language processes come together to enhance second language learning in people. Some examples of guiding theories include structural linguistics; behaviorism; universal grammar theories (White, 2015); skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 2015); processability theory (Pienemann & Lenzing, 2015); complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2015); and sociocultural theory (Lantolf, Thorne, & Poehner, 2015). Other influences include models of concept-oriented approaches; usage-based approaches; input processing models; and declarative/procedural models, among others (Bardovi-Harlig, 2015; Ellis & Wulff, 2015; Ullman, 2015; VanPatten, 2015) (For a broad yet descriptive overview of what many researchers in the field of SLA consider to be the primary theories and approaches, and how they explain specific components of SLA, see Ortega, 2015) (In addition, specific theories and related teaching methods for SLA in China and the US are presented in Appendix A). According to VanPatten and Williams (2015b), generally accepted observations of processes involved in second language acquisition (Table 1) present common themes
in these theoretical frameworks:

<table>
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<th>Observation 1:</th>
<th>Exposure to input is necessary for SLA.</th>
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<td>Observation 2:</td>
<td>A good deal of SLA happens incidentally.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation 3:</td>
<td>Learners come to know more than what they have been exposed to in the input, through un/subconscious knowledge about L2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 4:</td>
<td>Learners’ output (speech) often follows predictable paths with predictable stages in the acquisition of a given structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 5:</td>
<td>Second language learning is variable in its outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 6:</td>
<td>Second language learning is variable across linguistic subsystems (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, comprehension, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 7:</td>
<td>There are limits on the effects of frequency of linguistic features on SLA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 8:</td>
<td>There are limits on the effect of a learner’s first language on SLA-its influence is selective and varies across individual learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 9:</td>
<td>There are limits on the effects of instruction on SLA, as instructional benefits often are indirect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation 10:</td>
<td>There are limits on the effects of output (learner production) on language acquisition.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional SLA theory that aligns with many of the observations listed above is the monitor theory. This theory and its elements provide a foundation for many second language instruction standards and principles advocated by the international organization Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and guide the teaching models of preparation of English as Second Language educators in programs across the United States.

**Monitor theory.** Stephen Krashen (1982), a seminal theorist in the field of second language education, developed a theory in the late 1970s to the early 1980s called the monitor theory. According to VanPatten and Williams (2015a), monitor theory “was the first to be developed specifically for SLA” and “has been particularly influential among practitioners, and it has also laid the foundation for important ideas in
contemporary theorizing within SLA. Its broader success rests, in part, on its resonance with the experience of language learners and language teachers” (p. 24). This theory is well aligned with the goals of this proposed study, to collect and document the perspectives of SLA teachers and learners.

Stephen Krashen (1982) emphasized that “the best methods are therefore those that supply “comprehensible input” in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are “ready”, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production” (p.7)

Krashen's (1982) second language acquisition monitor theory consists mainly of five elements or hypotheses that combine to explain why the observations (above, among others) occur: The acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. These provide the theoretical framework of this study.

**The acquisition-learning hypothesis.** For many SLA theorists, this is “perhaps the most important hypothesis in monitor theory” (VanPatten & Williams, 2015a, p. 25). Krashen (1982) sought to operationalize the ideas surrounding implicit language acquisition and explicit language learning as complementary second language development dimensions in language learning contexts, to help educators understand different elements of language teaching and learning. Implicit language acquisition includes language understandings that are acquired through participating in spaces where the second language is used in authentic, “spontaneous” ways “where the focus is on meaning. Neither instruction nor the intention to learn is necessary” (VanPatten & Williams, 2015a, p. 25). As language is being used, vocabulary, syntax, semantics, fluency, and comprehension, as well as all types of language-based skills, are “incidentally” (not always consciously) acquired through the natural and ongoing acts of using language for authentic purposes. This process is quite common in a child’s development of their first, or native language. Explicit language learning, on the other
hand, involves more formal instruction “about” the language - its forms, grammar, structures, and rules. Knowledge is gained through “conscious and effortful processes that are undertaken intentionally” (VanPatten & Williams, 2015a, p. 25). The separate outcomes in language understanding and use between these two processes is clarified in Krashen’s second hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis.

Table 2: Krashen’s View of Implicit/Explicit Language Development (Krashen, 1981)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language acquisition</th>
<th>Develop competence in a second language is by language learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A subconscious process</td>
<td>Use the term &quot;learning&quot; henceforth to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The monitor hypothesis.** The monitor hypothesis explains the relationship (rather, the lack thereof) between language acquisition and language learning. Language learning is only used as a monitoring or editing function. This monitoring function can occur either before the language is output or after the language is output. But whether it can play a role depends on the following three conditions:

The language user must have enough time to think to extract the grammar knowledge of the inventory adjustment system;

- The language user's attention is focused on language form rather than language content;

- Language users must have specific grammar rules.

According to VanPatten and Williams (2015a), “The crucial and most controversial part of the...
The distinction [between acquisition and learning] is that these two knowledge stores—the acquired system and the learned system—can never interact; that is, knowledge that is learned may not be converted into acquired knowledge via some kind of practice and become available for spontaneous use. This is why learners may ‘know’ rules; that is, they may be able to articulate them but may nevertheless be unable to use them in spontaneous production. Conversely, a learner may use a structure accurately and spontaneously yet be unable to verbalize the rule for its use” (p.25).

Krashen (1982) uses this distinction to support second language pedagogy focusing on acquisition, using language in meaningful, interactive and spontaneous ways, with incidental (if any) focus on formal instruction. He believed that actively and cognitively ‘monitoring’ slows down the acquisition of language, and often can impede communication.

The natural order hypothesis. Krashen (1982) included in the monitor theory the idea that in any language, individuals’ acquisition of language structures is based on a predictable order that starts with simpler structures and moves through the acquisition of increasingly more complex ones. Similar to first-language learning, there are predictable stages of language use and predictable language errors within those stages that also occur during second language acquisition (for example, using the -ed construction for all past-tense verbs although there are high-frequency exceptions).

According to Haynes (2013), second-language acquisition generally follows five stages of development that form the foundation of teaching and learning practices in SLA. Although different organizations may define these stages differently, the language skills (input and output) are typically described in the following ways:
Table 3: Five Stages of Development of Second-Language Acquisition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-production</td>
<td>Also called silent period. “English language learners are acquiring language, but they are not yet speaking. They have up to 500 words of receptive vocabulary. Although some students at this stage will repeat everything you say, they are not really producing language. They are simply parroting what they hear.” (Haynes, 2013, p. 29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early production</td>
<td>“This stage can last up to six months and students will develop both a receptive and an active vocabulary of about 1,000 words.” (Haynes, 2013, p. 30) “Students can usually speak in one or two word phrases.” (Haynes, 2013, p. 31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech emergence</td>
<td>“At this stage, students have developed an active and receptive vocabulary of 3,000 words and can communicate with simple phrase and short sentences.... They will be able to understand easy stories that they read in class with the support of pictures.” (Haynes, 2013, p. 32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate fluency</td>
<td>“Students have a vocabulary of 6,000 active words. they are beginning to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing and are willing to express opinions and share their thoughts...ELLS at this stage will use strategies from their native language to learn content in English.” (Haynes, 2013, p. 33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced fluency</td>
<td>“Students can take 5 to 10 years to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency in a second language… Students who have reached advanced fluency are close to performing like their native English-speaking peer in their content-area classes.” (Haynes, 2013, p. 34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this stage, teachers can:
“Offer continued support for oral communication by using more complex vocabulary and sentence structure.”
“Support independent reading of content-area materials.”
“Allow ELLs to use their native language to learn new concepts or vocabulary.”
“Help students expand their writing skills; this may be one area where students are still struggling.”
“Offer continued support for developing learning strategies and study skills.” (Haynes, 2013, p. 35)

The input hypothesis. This hypothesis centers on the construct of “comprehensible input” in language use and acquisition. According to Gass and Mackey (2015), “Input is the sine qua non of acquisition,” as input provides learners with opportunities to acquire increasingly more information about the language and its use (p. 181). Building on the natural order hypothesis, Krashen (1982) believed that the highest potential for language acquisition occurs in the communication with the learner that is “comprehensible.” Comprehensible
input is modified language use during communication “that contains language slightly beyond the current level of the learner’s internalized language” (VanPatten & Williams, 2015a, p. 26). This hypothesis states that a moderately adequate amount of "comprehensive input" is a necessary condition for language acquisition: “If learners cannot understand the language that is being addressed to them, then that language is not useful to them as they construct their second language grammars” (Gass & Mackey, 2015, p. 182). Only when the learner comes into contact with modified, comprehensible language input, that is, a second language input that is slightly higher than the current level of language skills, can the learner focus on meaning or understanding of information.

**The affective filter hypothesis.** However, Krashen (1982) asserts that even employing comprehensible input in natural communication activities is not a sufficient condition for second language acquisition. The process of second language acquisition is also influenced by many emotional factors. Krashen maintains that the learning environment, and each learner’s feelings of acceptance, safety to take risks, outside stresses or fears, all act as “filters” to the learners’ ability and willingness to interact with language input. For example, if a student is feeling unwelcome in a learning context or stressed by having to interact using language at levels not yet acquired, then those emotional conditions may have a negative effect on opportunities for language acquisition.

In summary, Krashen’s (1982) monitor theory provides a comprehensive framework for this proposed study in response to the research questions, with the goal of studying effective pedagogical elements for supporting English as a second language instruction, learning, and assessment in university systems that differ substantially in cultural foundations of pedagogy, including goals, instruction, and language proficiency outcomes.

What is missing, however, is a more complete understanding of English language education at the university level, in relation to pedagogical practices that help students become proficient in academic and
functional language skills in order to communicate effectively with English-speaking peers and colleagues in professional spaces. In other words, what is missing is an understanding of how the cultures, context, language learning theories, goals, and methods of instruction impact outcomes for English language learning for Chinese students. This forms the basis of the first two research questions guiding this proposed study:

- What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?

- What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?

- What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?

Other important considerations in examining pedagogy includes socio-historical and socio-cultural influences on the value of education and the teaching and learning processes in China and the United States. 

Cultures and Pedagogy

Teaching and learning in educational contexts are embedded in and reflect the overarching cultural ideas, values, and shared traditions of a society. Pedagogy and resulting methods of instruction and learning goals are informed by national and regional values and orientations toward social and academic expectations for citizens of those communities. English language education in Chinese secondary and post-secondary contexts differs significantly from many contexts in the United States based on socio-cultural history, values, and ideals.

Cultures of learning. Learning is rooted in a cultural context, focusing on revealing the impact of the national cultural context of learning. According to Cortazzi and Jin (1996), “much behavior in language
classrooms is set within taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education” (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996, pg. 169). Cultures of learning mainly refers to the implicit cognition and behavior related to learning formed by the influence of national cultural tradition. Also, “learning is cultural: members of different cultural communities may have different preferences, expectations, interpretations, values, and beliefs about how to learn or how to teach.” (Cortazzi and Jin, 2013, pg. 1), and through continuous research, the impact of cultures on learning is emphasized. According to Cortazzi and Jin (2013), learning cultures refer to a set of values, learning expectations and learning attitudes of teachers and learners in a given teaching environment.

Learning in China. In China, Confucian philosophy forms the basis of social interactions and ideas for living. As a “social and ethical philosophy,’ Confucianism guides “the social values, institutions, [human relationships], and transcendental ideas of traditional Chinese society” (Berling, 2018, pg.1). The philosophy has been passed down in China for more than 2,500 years and is deeply rooted in Chinese minds, influencing Chinese values and world outlook (Yu, 2016).

At the core of Confucianism, similar to collectivistic cultural dimensions, is the concept that each individual in a community (family, society, region, nation) has a “set of defined roles and mutual obligations; [and that] each participant should understand and conform to his/her proper role. Starting from individual and family, [the belief holds that] people acting rightly could reform and perfect the society” (Berling, 2018, pg3). In addition, the Confucian value of “ren (仁),” or humaneness, conscience, character, caring for others, and reflection forms is an equally important dimension of individuals’ identities and responsibilities to their communities (family, society, region, nation, etc.) (Berling, 2018). Thus, humanism, faithfulness, propriety, and wisdom form four virtues at the center of the Confucianist education theory and principles, and the norm of the ethical relations among Chinese people. In China, These virtues also align with the overarching cultural
dimension of collectivism (Hollins, 2015), an important part of socialist spiritual civilization and an important criterion of modern communication, interaction, and moral ethics (Ye & Huang, 2007).

Chinese English language (foreign language) learning classrooms are a formal and serious occasion for students; even hundreds of years ago, ancient Chinese private schools and current modern schools do not require students to interact with teachers, and teachers should be regarded as the most respected people in the culture. When students make mistakes in class, they often feel embarrassed or are ridiculed by their classmates, so they may refuse to actively participate in class. Students would rather remain silent in the classroom than risk getting the question wrong, putting themselves into an awkward position in front of classmates and teachers. In addition, students will worry that their own pronunciation and grammar is incorrect, which causes students to feel very anxious in English language (foreign language) learning classrooms. Whenever a teacher asks a question in class, most students rarely answer the questions and keep quiet even if they know the answers. The reason is that Confucian culture advocates doing things modestly. Under the influence of such cultural and moral standards, most students believe in "speech is silver, silence is gold" (Yu, 2016). Modesty and contributions to group harmony and well-being are also embedded in the cultural dimension of collectivism.

Chinese traditional culture emphasizes collectivism. Under the influence of this culture, Chinese students have formed a strong habit of relying on collectives or organizations. Thus, they regard the group as the decision-making body. The collective honor, the collective value, and the collective rules are firmly rooted in their thinking. According to this tradition, Chinese students rarely pay attention to or form their own individualistic or personal characteristics (Liu, 2010). For English learning, these thoughts are likely to make Chinese students ignore and reduce their initiative in developing and cultivating their own participation in classroom teaching or in solving problems independently. In Liu’s (2010) study, half of the Chinese students preferred group discussion, but they did not take the initiative to speak in the classroom; 42% of Chinese
students and 75% of American students were willing to speak in the class.

Chinese traditional culture does not promote the individual or pursuit of individuality. As a result, opinion and individual thinking in social status are not prominent. Chinese students who grew up in this traditional culture, accustomed to this high limitation type of educational environment, have indeed had a difficult time boldly publicizing their individualities and solving their problems independently (Yu, 2016).

Chinese people have a strong uncertainty avoidance, referring to the attitude of avoidance when encountering uncertainties. This kind of mentality often makes Chinese students unwilling to do something that they cannot grasp; that is, they are reluctant to take risks or hold a negative attitude toward new things or unpredictable things. Most Chinese students do not dare to break through obstacles, and almost never challenge the teacher. According to Liu (2010), only 38% of Chinese students were willing to study independently, while 62% of American students were willing to take part in independent study.

Teaching in China. Hundreds of years ago, ancient Chinese private schools were influenced by Confucian culture, which holds that teachers have the highest social status. There are some old sayings that persist about the high status role of teachers in Chinese education: "Teachers, the one who could propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts"; and "Even if someone is your teacher for only a day, you should regard him as your father for the rest of your life." The relationship between teachers and students is regarded as a kindred relationship. Chinese students tended to obey, respect, and rely on their teachers. Therefore, teachers have become the absolute authority in the classroom; however, this authority often leads to students rarely questioning or challenging the teacher (Yu, 2016).

In the instruction of English, China places immense importance on formal language teaching; most of the Chinese English teachers focus on English teaching as a skill. Most Chinese teachers and students report that proficiency in using a foreign language and getting a higher score in English tests is their primary goal of English learning, and they ignore the importance of language and culture, such as learning about the U.S.
culture and the culture of other English-speaking countries. Under the cultural background of China, the education model focuses on the instilling of knowledge, emphasizing the memorization of the content (Yang, 2014). Chinese teachers focus closely on the exam and they teach their students how to get the most points on each question of the exam by teaching examination skills. Instructional methods also allow most students to greatly improve test scores after a brief period of study (Li, 2016).

However, in the United States education model, the cultivation of student's personality, the stimulation of interest, and the formation of judgment ability are important foci during the teaching process. During this process, mechanical and rote learning modes are not recommended. Instead, students are encouraged to think independently and creatively in the process of learning and find the solution with the help of teachers (Yang, 2014). The content of the American teacher's class is interesting, but it is not always solely and directly related to the content of the examinations ("English language institute", n.d.), which means the students may not be able to improve their test scores in the short term.

**Culture of learning in the United States.** Jin and Cortazzi (2006) defines the culture of learning as framing “what teachers and students expect to happen in classrooms and how participants interpret the format of classroom instruction, the language of teaching and learning, and how interaction should be accomplished as part of the social construction of an educational discourse system” (p. 9).

The United States is a nation of people with diverse histories, ethnicities, languages, and communities. However, it is generally acknowledged that at a macro-national level, there are a set of common core values that prevail: freedom, equality, justice, and diversity are central to national institutions and law (Hollins, 2015). Although these are the national core values, there are subtle differences in the ways that the status of different groups in society influence national values. The United States education system values personalization, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, professional ethics, and personal achievement. (Hollins, 2008)

Diversity is valued in the United States and “Today, the National Council for the Accreditation of
Teacher Education (NCATE) and almost every state in the United States require that teacher education programs address student diversity” (Hollins, 2008). Even so, learning to teach in a multicultural society with students of diverse cultures and experiences is still a challenge. This challenge includes issues based on ideology, goals for schooling, and teaching ability. One of the goals of multicultural education is to ensure that teachers are prepared for different student populations (Hollins, 2008).

**Freedom.** The high regard for liberty stems from the historical origins of early settlers in England, and their desire to get rid of government restrictions preventing and suppressing certain freedoms, such as free speech and religious choice. Personal freedom is a basic feature of constitutional democracy.

**Equality.** American society has a basic belief that all citizens should have equal rights in economic, legal, political, and social aspects. In a democratic society, individuals are free to choose diverse ways to pursue "life, freedom, and happiness." This means choosing different lifestyles.

**Diversity.** The United States is characterized by economic, racial, political, ethnic, religious, and social diversity. The Constitution protects the rights of citizens differently within the scope of established laws, collective members, and personal preferences, in order to provide maximum personal and group freedom, while still maintaining relative peace and order.

Education in the United States, however, faces many challenges, despite its advantages (Hollins, 2008):

**Oppression.** The basic principle of oppression is the power of a group to marginalize other groups in society. Cities, towns, suburbs, and communities across the United States vary greatly in racial and economic stratification. Cities and urban centers often have high levels of people from various ethnic minority groups, and many live in poverty. The suburbs of cities have typically been communities where white, middle- and upper-class families live and represent lifestyle enclaves that further depict racial differences and social class status.
**Race/Racism.** At the national level, racism against non-whites functions as an institutionalized power system supported by individual behavior and participation. These actions and participation promote the advantages of a racial group and make it often a subconscious, internalized framework for policies and decisions that disadvantage non-white populations and individuals across issues of economics, access to goods and services, housing, employment, and education.

**Classism.** American society consists of a class structure that is maintained and replicated through social, economic, and government institutions. Members of the middle and upper socioeconomic classes have economic, educational, political, and social privileges that are often not accessible to lower-level citizens. Schools play a part in the separation of social classes and “Discrepancies in funding ‘public’ schools in affluent and poor neighborhoods is one example of how the social class structure is maintained and perpetuated. Children from affluent families are provided a better quality of education than children from poor families. Children from affluent families who receive a good education are prepared for jobs that will allow them to retain the social class status of their parents. Likewise, children from poor families who receive an inadequate education are prepared for jobs that limit them to the social class status of their parents.” (Hollins, 2008, p. 28)

**Gender Discrimination.** Women's status in relation to men's status is another form of oppression within society. Intersecting with race and class, (White, middle and upper-class) male dominance penetrates the country’s social, political, economic, and educational structures. Men's attitudes and behaviors are regarded as carrying authority, power, and leadership. Women’s attitudes and behaviors are often seen as more submissive and therefore more suitable for family life, caretaking, and childcare. Women’s attitudes and behaviors are often ignored in the leadership roles of society and the workplace.

According to a 2015-16 survey, “The 2015-16 survey estimates that there are 3.8 million public school teachers in the U.S. That’s up from about 3.4 million teachers four years ago, when the last survey was administered… About 77 percent of teachers are women—up slightly from 76 percent in 2012. In primary
schools, nearly 9 in 10 teachers are women. In high schools, less than two-thirds are” (Loewus, 2017). According to this data, although women account for the majority of teachers, in terms of grades the proportion of female teachers has declined in primary and high schools. In the stereotyped influence, male teachers tend to teach at higher grade levels, in specific content areas, and women are perceived as more caring and effective at the younger, comprehensive education grades.

**English Language Curriculum and Instruction: Chinese and the U. S. Postsecondary Institutions**

Curriculum refers to “the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program” (Great Schools Partnership, 2015). Curriculum also refers to “the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes” (Ebert, Ebert, & Bentley, 2013, p. 202). Although it can be broadly defined, curriculum typically refers to “Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning” (Great Schools Partnership, 2015).

**English language curriculum in China.** According to China Education Encyclopedia (Gu, 2012), the term "syllabus" refers to the instructional document that is written in the form of an outline dictating the teaching plan. It specifies the scope, purpose, tasks, depth, system, and structure of subject knowledge, teaching time and the specific requirements of pedagogy based on the characteristics of students, knowledge level and the need to develop students' intelligence. Eberly, Newton, and Wiggins (2001) mentioned that “A syllabus can be an important learning tool. It can articulate the goals of general education in addition to the course goals. It can direct student effort and outline expectations for student responsibility for their educational
success.” (p. 72)

According to College English Teaching Syllabus (大学文理科英语教学大纲修订组, 1986), the purpose of college English teaching in China is to cultivate students' ability to read, to listen to, and to write and speak, so that students can use English as a tool and acquire information often needed by specialized institutions, and to lay a better foundation for further improvement of English. In 1999 the purpose of college English teaching changed to more specifically develop students' abilities of reading, translating and listening, speaking, writing and translating so that they can exchange information in English. College English teaching should help students to lay a solid foundation of language, acquire good language learning methods, and improve their literacy skills to meet the needs of social development and economic construction. (大学文理科英语教学大纲修订组, 1999) In the College English Curriculum Requirements Trial, emphasized the purpose of college English teaching is to develop students' comprehensive English proficiency, especially listening and speaking ability, so that they work in the future, Chinese students who learn English should be able to communicate verbally and graphically in English. This will aid China as a whole in improving its comprehensive literacy in order to meet the needs of both social and international exchanges with other countries. (教育部高等教育司, 2004) According to College English Curriculum Requirements (教育部高等教育司, 2007), the objective of college English teaching is to develop students' comprehensive English proficiency, especially the ability to listen and speak so that they can use English effectively in future work and social interaction in oral and written information exchange.

These documents show China's English education curricula are undergoing progress, from the focus on students' reading ability to developing students' practical communication skills and comprehensive application capabilities.

**Chinese English language teachers.** Using Daqing City in China as an example, college English teachers recently engaged in gaining educational and academic qualifications displayed the following results:
of all college English teachers, only 54 (out of 124) had Master’s degrees when they started work in college, but currently, of all college English teachers have Master's degrees when it is 12 out of 124. Fifty-eight of this group have raised their educational level during the teaching period, accounting for 47% of the total number (124) of teachers. But there is no doctoral degree. As can be seen, while English teachers have a sense of self-improvement, this group still lacks highly educated personnel (Zhu, 2016).

Zhu (2016) mentioned that Chinese English teachers generally believe that undergraduate education cannot fully qualify someone to teach English; there needs to be an advanced study of the language to be effective. For higher academic qualifications, English teachers think that, despite improving their reputations, they have little incentive to pursue advanced degrees.

The results in Wen, Li, and Zeng’s (2007) study of 6 universities’ English teachers in China shows that the ages of Chinese college English teachers is getting younger and younger. The percentage of college English teachers under the age of 40 accounted for 75.65% of the educators in this field. In addition, only 1.55% of English teachers in this study had study abroad experiences in English speaking countries.

Table 4: 6 universities’ English teachers in China (Wen, Li and Zeng’s, 2007, p.54)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 20-29</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>44.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 30-39</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 40-49</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age above 50</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers who have study abroad experiences</td>
<td>3 (out of 193)</td>
<td>1.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, many college English teachers are not familiar with Chinese official college English
teaching documents, such as College English Teaching Syllabus, College English Curriculum Requirements Trial, and others. According to Wen, Li, and Zeng’s (2007) interview with teachers, Some teachers cannot clearly understand the objective of college English teaching, the nature of teaching and the requirements of students' English clearly. According to the results of the survey, 35.23% of the teachers are unfamiliar with or do not understand the aims and nature of college English teaching; most teachers do not know the requirements of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, translation for English language learning, and 45% of the teachers do not know how to evaluate the teaching methods (Wen, Li, & Zeng, 2007).

According to Deng’s (2005) research, a quarter of the English teachers from Hunan province need to strengthen their listening and speaking skills. One-third of the English teachers lacked proficiency in writing and translating. More than half of the English teachers lacked understanding of cross-cultural communication as well as the use of language in real, functional living contexts.

**Chinese instructional methods.** The current English teaching method in China is still dominated by the traditional model. Teachers give lectures with little interaction with students (Ding, 2017, p. 167). In the classroom, the teacher pays more attention to explaining the content of the text, and the use of English is not be taken seriously. Teachers explain the words and grammar by reading the textbook, thus, creating a boring environment not conducive to development of passion in students. Teachers only teach English as knowledge and ignore the language as an application-oriented skill. Dislocation of teaching purpose will inevitably lead to incorrect teaching methods (Li, 2009). The traditional teaching mode of explaining words and grammar ignores the basic rules of language learning and does not meet the needs of students and society. Due to the substantial number of students in the class\(^3\), it is impossible to teach the students by using personalized teaching. There are also few activities engaging students in authentic English language used both inside and

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\(^3\) The average size of classes in China is 52.9 students per class ("中国班级规模世界第一，小班教学纯属奢望," 2014).
outside the classroom (Li, 2009). Usually, teachers lecture, and students take notes without asking any questions. This lecture-based model can lead to a lack of engagement on the students’ part, influencing a loss of motivation to learn.

There are two kinds of modes adopted by foreign language teaching in China in recent decades (Li, 2009). For non-English majors, a teacher teaches various college English courses such as intensive reading, extensive reading, and listening. For English majors, courses are subdivided into different categories: precision, English literature, listening, speaking, interpreting, translation. These courses are usually taught by different English teachers.

According to Shi and Chen’s (2015) research on College English Teaching Satisfaction in non-English major students of Changchun colleges, 65% of students were dissatisfied with the teaching methods of college English, and most had a low interest in college English learning. Only 32% of students stated interest in learning English. The authors interviewed the students after the questionnaire and found that undergraduates were very interested in English learning during the first semester of freshman year. However, the lack of various teaching methods led to a lack of interest in pursuing English language learning in later college courses.

Chinese instructional materials. For most colleges and universities in China, the most common textbooks include the New College English published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, New Horizon College English Reading Course published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, and University Experience English published by Higher Education Press (Shi & Chen, 2015). These materials have been used for a very long time. While these texts were revised three times, contain up-to-date content, and contain vocabulary that follows the college English teaching reform, they contain various shortcomings. University Experience English emphasizes the development of listening and speaking skills, but some words are too uncommon for daily use, but New Horizon College English Reading and Writing Course and New College English lack listening training (Shi & Chen, 2015).
Tyler and Hlebowitsh (2013) mention that the teaching materials should be subject to authoritative outline drawn from the material and should be formulated in accordance with the education goals to consider the learners themselves, student's life outside the school, the views of academic experts, philosophy, and the learner's psychological development.

In addition, Zhou (2012) believes that the preparation of college English textbooks should include the following conditions: First, the preparation of teaching materials should be based on students' acquisition of language, and fully reflect the learning characteristics and learning needs of students of different ages and different language levels. The textbooks should follow the cognitive process from simple to complex learning content. Second, they should develop students' autonomous learning ability and create conditions for lifelong learning. College English teaching materials not only impacts language, but also expands students’ thinking, and broadens their horizons. Material selection should be authentic and accurate and follow the trend of the times and the latest economic and social development in the world. While cultivating students' language ability, infiltrates the materials that cultivate students' innovative general ability. Material selection should cultivate students' excellent moral character and strengthen traditional culture.

Richards (2001) argued that the value of English textbooks is reflected in their use in different contexts. The positive effects of textbooks mainly include that teaching materials that reflect the syllabus and establish curriculum structure; promote standardization of education; ensure teaching quality; provide diversified teaching resources; provide an effective language model and understandable language input; save teachers’ time and promote the professional development of teachers; offer visual appeal. Meanwhile, the negative effects of textbooks include containing non-real language; avoiding controversial topics (textbooks reflect an idealized world outlook, which may not be able to express the true point of view); for the international market, not being reflective of the overall needs of students; and higher pricing of teaching materials.
English language curriculum in America English language learning program. The English language curriculum for Chinese students studying abroad at University A in the United States their goal on their website: “The English language learning program will prepare you to continue your education and professional development at University A or elsewhere. Through language instruction, intercultural experiences, and academic support, the program provides you with the foundation for successful academic careers and full participation in a global society”. In terms of language instruction and learning, the English Language Learning Program seems to promote both English learning, as well as English acquisition. The following are stated goals for student learning through their work at the program, by skill:

Writing. Students in the English Language Learning Program learn academic style writing of multi-paragraph essays and summaries. Advanced level learners learn how to write research papers.

Reading. Academic reading skills at the appropriate level are addressed at all levels.

Listening. Practice is provided by in-class audio and video as well as opportunities in the computer lab. High intermediate and advanced classes practice academic lecture listening and note-taking in preparation for university work.

Speaking. Classes allow for formal and informal, individual and small group speaking tasks, and speaking opportunities are integrated into all levels.

Grammar. Every level study all the major areas of grammar, and advanced grammar classes focus on editing.

Cultural awareness. A component of all classes so that students know how to be successful in a U.S. academic environment.

All English Language Learning Program students can participate in informal conversation groups with American students after class and can visit university classes and attend campus lectures.

American English language learning program English language teachers. For English Language
Learning Program at University A, including the program director, there are 3 teachers. Their ages range from 43 to 65. Everyone has a master's degree and has taught English learners for over 20 years.

**American English language learning program for instructional methods.** For English Language Learning Program at University A, integrated skills approach with the communicative model is used for English language teaching.

**American English language learning program instructional materials.** The English Language Learning Program at University A in the U.S. for example, uses a very flexible and evaluative method. Textbooks have been chosen for each semester. Many come with CDs, videos, or online components. They are reviewed periodically. Teachers are free to use anything that works for them in the classroom.

Another critical component of instruction is the use of assessments to document student learning outcomes, as well as to document informative ways, where an instruction might need to change in order to help students more effectively learn the content and skills that are necessary. The following section describes the use of assessment in English language learning contexts and the ways in which formal, standardized assessments of English drive the curricular and instructional goals of English language teaching in China.

**English Language Assessment**

Assessment refers to “the action or an instance of making a judgment about something” ("Definition of assessment," n.d.) and “the process of planning, gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data for decision making” (Gottlieb, 2016, p. 25). Typically, language tests are created to measure students’ skills and fluency across different contexts for functional purposes: “Language functions are ways in which we use language or communicate for social and academic purpose, often to carry out an action… language functions can be descriptive of academic proficiency” (Gottlieb, 2016, p. 20). As a measure of learning outcomes, the English test has an impact on all aspects of teaching and learning process, such as teaching attitude, learning motivation,
attitude, teaching and learning content, methods, teaching materials, and auxiliary materials preparation (Cheng, 2006).

According to Gottlieb (2016), “assessment must be inclusive of all learners, otherwise, the results will not be valid indicators of what the students can actually do. It would be unfortunate to make an inappropriate decision that carried high-stakes consequences.”, Given this, the assessment design needs to meet the following criteria. (Gottlieb, 2016, p. 20):

1. The characteristics of the students’ population, including linguistic and cultural variability;
2. Multiple pathways for students to reach their goals;
3. The complexity of language so that it does not mask the students’ academic achievement;
4. The languages of instruction;
5. Visual, graphics, interactive, and linguistic supports;
6. Potential linguistic, cultural, gender, and socioeconomic bias;
7. Ways in which students and teachers can receive and use feedback on content and language;
8. Features such as the use of color, font size, appropriateness of illustrations for specific cultural groups and time on task.

These general guidelines form the basis of effective assessment practices in relation to English academic and social language learning and acquisition. In the previous sections of this chapter, various curricular and instructional methods of English language education in China were presented. It is important to note, however, that much of the instruction in China, in terms of content, is driven by what is measured on formal, standardized tests of English language proficiency that Chinese students are required to take and pass. In order to better understand the focus of language teaching in China, the following are descriptions of these

---

4 High-stakes refers to “A test with results that have consequences for students, teachers, schools, or districts.” (Gottlieb, 2016, p. 25)
tests and the language skills that are measured.

The guiding ideology of examination reform is to make the examination produce positive guidance to college English teaching while maintaining the scientific objectivity and fairness. That is “through the reform, to guide teachers and students to correctly handle the relationship between teaching and examination (p. 1)” The goal of examination reform is to “measure the comprehensive English ability of college students in China more accurately, especially the ability of listening and speaking of English, in order to reflect the requirement of social reform and opening up to our college students' English comprehensive application ability.” (全国大学英语四、六级考试改革方案, 2016, p. 5)

**College English test 4 (CET4) & college English test 6 (CET6).** CET4 and CET6 are standard tests for Chinese college English teaching. These tests are the only standard tests for measuring college students' English proficiency. Some Chinese schools require students to pass these exams in order to graduate. According to Wang (2008), more than half of the colleges in China (53.7%) linked CET4 certificates with the diploma, and most colleges in China (81.9%) linked CET4 certificates with the degree certificate. Since most schools link CET certificates to student diplomas or degree certificates, teachers and students place much attention on their exam results and not necessarily on the learning process. Table 5 outlines the language skills and requirements of these two tests.

**Table 5: CET4 and CET6** (全国大学英语四、六级考试改革方案, 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CET4 (The total score: 750)</th>
<th>CET6 (The total score: 750)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>According to the picture or chart write an essay Not less than 120 words Time: 30 minutes</td>
<td>According to the picture or chart write an essay Not less than 150 words Time: 30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>News 7%</td>
<td>Vocabulary understanding 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conversation 8%</td>
<td>Long article 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essay 20%</td>
<td>Intensive reading 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speech speed 120 to 140 words per minute. Each listening play once. 3 news articles (450 to 500 words) 2 conversations (240 to 280 words per conversation) 3 essays (220 to 240 words per essay) Time: 25 minutes</td>
<td>Time: 40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conversatio n 8%</td>
<td>Vocabulary understanding 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essay 7%</td>
<td>Long article 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lecture 20%</td>
<td>Intensive reading 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speech speed 140 to 160 words per minute. Each listening play once. 2 conversations (280 to 320 words per conversation) 2 essays (240 to 260 words per essays) 3 lectures (around 1200 words) Time: 30 minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ma (2006) pointed out that the design of the CET4 and CET6 is not reasonable. This exam does not highlight the ability of language use. This test separates listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which does not reflect the ability to use the language in a comprehensive manner. In addition, as a language test, speaking is not a required skill section in the test, which seems to contradict a purpose of language assessment.

**Test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL).** One of the most well-known English as a foreign language test is the TOEFL, “The TOEFL test is the most widely respected English-language test in the world, recognized by more than 10,000 colleges, universities and agencies in more than 130 countries, including Australia, Canada, the U.K., and the United States.” ("TOEFL: Home," n.d.) This test is delivered online, is
developed and scored by ETS (Educational Testing Service) and is an important test for students to apply to study in an English-speaking country. The TOEFL test measures student’s ability to use and understand English (listening, speaking, reading and writing) at the university level ("TOEFL: Home," n.d.).

Table 6: The TOEFL Test ("TOEFL iBT: Understand Scores," n.d.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (The total score: 120)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading: Read 3 or 4 passages (700 words) from academic texts and answer single choice questions.” (ETS, n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 60 to 80 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening: Listen to lectures, classroom discussions and conversations, then answer single choice questions.” (ETS, n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 60 to 90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing: Write essay responses based on reading and listening tasks; support an opinion in writing.” (ETS, n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking: Express an opinion on a familiar topic; speak based on reading and listening tasks.” (ETS, n.d.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: 20 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Chen (2006), TOEFL attaches immense importance to grammar, detail, and overall understanding of written passages. The difficulty of TOEFL reading is close to the reading level of American university textbooks. Since the curriculum of American universities emphasizes and fosters the ability of students to learn independently in line with its cultural values, having a unique opinion after reading is a criterion for testing independent learning and implied success at American universities. Moreover, in the TOEFL test, listening, reading, speaking and writing are integrated into every part of the exam (Chen 2006). For example, in the writing exam, candidates need to complete the collection of listening information and read the information in the article to complete the writing. In this way, the TOEFL fully examines the candidates' comprehensive English ability.

International English language testing system (IELTS). The IELTS test focuses on whether
candidates can quickly locate much information and filter out useful information. This meets the practical application of English use in daily life. Unlike the CET4 and CET6, which strives for standard English speaking, IELTS includes a background murmur, as well as various accents and dialects, in an effort to fully simulate real-life scenarios and to test the candidate's ability to eliminate interference and extract information (Hu & Liu, 2014). The IELTS test, “This test measures the language proficiency of people who want to study or work where English is used as a language of communication. It uses a nine-band scale to clearly identify levels of proficiency, from non-user (band score 1) through to expert (band score 9)” ("IELTS Introduction Learn all about the IELTS test," n.d.).

Table 7: The IELTS Test ("IELTS Test Format," n.d.)

| International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (The total score: 9) |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| **Listening**                  | **3**            | “There are four sections with ten questions each. The questions are designed so that the answers appear in the order they are heard in the audio. The first two sections deal with situations set in everyday social contexts. In Section 1, there is a conversation between two speakers (for example, a conversation about travel arrangements), and in Section 2, there is a monologue in (for example, a speech about local facilities). The final two sections deal with situations set in educational and training contexts. In Section 3, there is a conversation between two main speakers (for example, two university students in discussion, perhaps guided by a tutor), and in Section 4, there is a monologue on an academic subject. The recordings are heard only once. They include a range of accents, including British, Australian, New Zealand, American and Canadian. Number of questions: 40 Task types: A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following: multiple choice, matching, plan/map/diagram labelling, form/note/table/flow-chart/summary completion, sentence completion. Answering: Test takers write their answers on the question paper as they listen and at the end of the test are given 10 minutes to transfer their answers to an answer sheet. Care should be taken when writing answers on the answer sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalized.” (IELTS, n.d.) Time:40 minutes |
| **Reading**                    | **3**            | “Three reading passages (1500 words each) with a variety of questions using a number of task types. Number of questions: 40 |

45
| Task types: A variety of question types are used, chosen from the following; multiple choice, identifying information, identifying the writer’s views/claims, matching information, matching headings, matching features, matching sentence endings, sentence completion, summary completion, note completion, table completion, flow-chart completion, diagram label completion and short-answer questions. Sources: Texts are taken from books, journals, magazines and newspapers, and have been written for a non-specialist audience. All the topics are of general interest. They deal with issues which are interesting, recognizably appropriate and accessible to test takers entering undergraduate or postgraduate courses or seeking professional registration. The passages may be written in a variety of styles, for example narrative, descriptive or discursive/argumentative. At least one text contains detailed logical argument. Texts may contain non-verbal materials such as diagrams, graphs or illustrations. If texts contain technical terms a simple glossary is provided. Answering: Test takers are required to transfer their answers to an answer sheet during the time allowed for the test. No extra time is allowed for transfer. Care should be taken when writing answers on the answer sheet as poor spelling and grammar are penalized.” (IELTS, n.d.) | **Writing** | 3 | “There are two Writing tasks, and BOTH must be completed. Task types: In Task 1, test takers are asked to describe some visual information (graph/table/chart/diagram) in their own words. They need to write 150 words in about 20 minutes. In Task 2, they respond to a point of view or argument or problem. They need to write 250 words in about 40 minutes. Answering: Answers must be given on the answer sheet and must be written in full. Notes or bullet points are not acceptable as answers. Test takers may write on the question paper, but this cannot be taken from the examination room and will not be seen by the examiner.” (IELTS, n.d.) | **Time:** 60 minutes | **IELTS does not pay much attention to grammar but focuses more on examining candidates' practical use of the English language and on their functional communication skills used in English-speaking countries** | **Speaking** | 3 | “The Speaking test consists of an oral interview between the test takers' and an examiner. All Speaking tests are recorded. Part 1: The examiner will ask candidates general questions about themselves and a range of familiar topics, such as home, family, work, studies and interests. This part lasts between four and five minutes. Part 2: Candidates will be given a card which asks them to talk about a particular topic. Candidates will have one minute to prepare before speaking for up to two minutes. The examiner will then ask one or two questions on the same topic. Part 3: Candidates will be asked further questions about the topic in Part 2. These will give them the opportunity to discuss more abstract ideas and issues. This part of the test lasts between four and five minutes.” (IELTS, n.d.) | **Time:** 11 to 14 minutes |
**International test of English proficiency (iTEP).** This test measures the English skills of non-native English speakers ("Home - iTEP," n.d.).

Table 8: The iTEP Test (Academic) ("iTEP academic brochure," n.d.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Test of English Proficiency (iTEP) (Academic) (The total score: 6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These four standardized tests represented above form the primary assessment methods for English teaching and learning in China. The strengths and challenges of each are represented by the varied goals of the tests, the rigor of the assessment of each skill level, and the test’s application to actual functional language skills needed to communicate for social and academic purposes in English. For most Chinese English learners, their focus is on studying for and passing the required tests, yet for English learners, the shortcomings in the assessment methods will be misleading. For high-stakes testing candidates, passing has important benefits but it does not fully represent the English learners’ English language proficiency.

Summary

Chinese English learning resources are still very limited, and far from meeting the actual needs of employers and organizations in a globally focused and connected world. China's traditional education model occupies the main body of college English teaching in China. In China, English teaching emphasizes the translation of English language skills. The teaching content focuses on learning vocabulary and grammar, which leads to a lack of basic skills of English listening and speaking language communication training; in other words, Krashen (1982) would assert that this model focuses mainly on “learning” rather than “acquisition”. Students are accustomed to rote learning and do not participate in interactive activities that would allow oral language proficiency in English (Gu, 2013). Although many students have achieved high scores on CET4 and CET6 tests, many of them think that their English can only be used in examinations and not in functional ways in daily life (Yang, 2008).

A review of the literature has indicated that there is a gap between the U. S. and China in English teaching, English learning, and English assessments. As a result, many adult English language learners encounter difficulties in learning English as their second language. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate Chinese learners’ perspectives of the differences between English language education, experiences, and
outcomes in China and the U.S. Consequently, research questions for this dissertation are as follows:

- **What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?**

- **What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?**

- **What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?**
CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

This chapter presents a detailed description of the research methodology, data collection, and analysis for this proposed study. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, the overall goal of this study is to describe English learning and English education in China and the United States in an in-depth manner through the perspectives of the adult Chinese English language learners, and Chinese and American English teachers.

The purpose of this proposed phenomenological, qualitative case study is to uncover participants’ perspectives on the strengths and challenges of English language education in China and at University A in the United States in relation to culturally-informed curricula, teaching methods and assessments that effectively meet language learning and acquisition needs by considering the English language learning of second language learners among adults in China and the U. S.

The research questions guiding this study are:

- What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?

- What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?

- What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?

Research Type

Qualitative research methods will be used in this study, including document/curricular analysis, in-class observations, and face-to-face interviews. According to Creswell (2013), triangulation of data includes
a combination of more than one research strategy in a single investigation to assure completeness of findings or to confirm findings. This chapter will describe the perspective of the research, the role of the researcher, proposed methods of data collection and analysis, and assurances of trustworthiness of the findings through a variety of methods undertaken by the researcher.

**Perspective of the Research**

As the goal of this study is to find out the challenges for English as second language teaching and learning and provide constructive advice for establishing effective teaching and learning programs, a qualitative, phenomenological case study is proposed (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenological case study is selected because the framework of a case study situates the findings in a natural context and allows the researcher to collect and analyze data with depth within those contexts and to uncover solutions (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

**Context of the Study**

This proposed study focuses on adult Chinese students with or without study abroad (English speaking countries) experiences, and English educators who are native or non-native English speakers working with Chinese English language learners. Participants and documents from both China and the United States will provide information relative to the research questions.

**English language instruction in universities in China.** All colleges and universities have the same college English curriculum system, which is provided by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and based on curriculum requirements and the college English teaching objectives with integration of the compulsory courses such as comprehensive English, language skills, language application, language and culture, and professional English in addition to elective courses in order to ensure that students at different
levels of English ability be fully trained and improved. College English is the only compulsory course for all college level students (Hu, 2014). At University Z (China) for example, non-English major undergraduate students complete a total of 16 credits (4 credits a course), over 4 semesters to meet the English requirements for graduation.

Table 9: Chinese English Curriculum Setting (Nanfang Daily, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Class size (average)</th>
<th>Teacher-student ratio</th>
<th>Course &amp; Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>80 students</td>
<td>1 teacher: 400 students</td>
<td>Lecture: English Writing and Reading (2 hours/week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Media learning task (self-learning): English Speaking and Listening (2 hours/week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No English courses for non-English major undergraduate students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International students in University A of United States. University A is a private, liberal arts university that is known for its study abroad programs. In its 2016 Open Doors report, the program of International Education ranked University A No. 1 in the nation for the percentage of undergraduate students participating in study abroad experiences at a master's level college or university (Burns, 2017). In 2018, there were 73 international students from 15 different countries studying at University A, half of whom are students from China.

University A has several partner schools in China. In 2018, 18 new Chinese students come to study at University A from the partner schools.
As noted in the figure, students from many countries come to University A for study abroad experiences in the United States. Of the total number of international students at University A, over half are Chinese. As far as Chinese international students are concerned, their majors are mainly in the fields of Actuarial Science, Mathematics, Biology, Fine Art, Media & Communication, Education, and Master of Business Administration (MBA). Their academic English language needs, then, are often related to these majors.

Table 11: University A Chinese International Students’ Major.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English Language Learning Program</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 95</td>
<td>Actuarial Science</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 97</td>
<td></td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English language learning program at University A in the United States. The purpose of the English Language Learning Program at University A is to help adult English language learners to continue their education and professional development. Through language instruction, intercultural experiences, and academic support, the language program seeks to provide English language learners with the foundation for successful academic careers and full participation in a global society.

Table 12: English Language Learning Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Placement (iTEP Test) (total score 6)</th>
<th>Courses (90 minutes per class)</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95 Beginning I</td>
<td>0 to 0.9</td>
<td>Grammar Reading and Writing (combined)</td>
<td>Regular courses: Monday to Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96 Beginning II</td>
<td>1 to 1.9</td>
<td>Reading and Writing (combined)</td>
<td>Conversation/Pronunciation: Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97 Intermediate I</td>
<td>2 to 2.6</td>
<td>Listening and Speaking (combined)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98 Intermediate II</td>
<td>2.7 to 3.2</td>
<td>Academic Reading and Writing (combined)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99 Intermediate III</td>
<td>3.3 to 3.9</td>
<td>Advanced Academic Writing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 Advanced</td>
<td>4.0 to 4.4</td>
<td>Advanced Academic Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average size of classes in the English Language Learning Program at University A is approximately 6-8 students, which allows teachers to provide individual attention to support student success. The program handbook for English Language Learning Program’s website notes that “students can take local trips to [the region’s] Center City and the surrounding areas, and they can participate in the Conversation Partners program, which pairs English Language Learning Program students with native speakers of English.
for conversation practice”. In addition, the English Language Learning Program provides an integrated skills approach with a communicative model for English language learners and employs 3 teachers who each have master's degrees and over 20 years English language teaching experience.

**Participant Selection**

Since this proposed study will focus on adult Chinese English language learners, individuals who are invited to participate in this research include high school graduates (18 years old or above), college students, and college educators.

The participant selection will be based on the criteria described below:

**University students.** College students with more than 10 years of English learning experience and have participated in national college entrance exams (including English) will be invited to participate. Approximately 5 college students who are currently in China, and approximately 5 students in China and/or the US who are Chinese and who are, or have, studied abroad in an English-speaking country will be invited to participate.

**English educators/teachers.** College teachers with at least 10 years of English as second language teaching experience or who have participated in related students' English assessment or English course development and curriculum and content-area course taught in English, with valuable insight about teaching Chinese international students will be invited to participate. Approximately 8 Chinese English language teachers in China, and 15 educators in University A will be invited to participate. 11 (out of 15) teacher participants work at the Computer Science and Mathematics Program at University A with 29 (out of 40) current students enrolled in the program. 4 (out of 15) teacher participants teach in the English Language Learning Program at University A.

For the purposes of this proposed study, both Chinese and American English teachers (non-native
and native English speaking) in China and the U.S., as well as postsecondary Chinese students and Chinese international students, will be invited to participate due to their experiences and perspectives informing the questions guiding this study. As stated earlier, the selection of these participants will be considered only if they have experienced English teaching and/or learning process or working with adult English language learners for more than 10 years.

To invite and obtain written consent for participation, the researcher will contact each potential participant using her professional email account through their university-affiliated contact information. In this initial contact the researcher will describe the study and invite each participant to contact her if they would be willing to participate and/or if they have additional questions about the study. Once the potential participants respond to the researcher indicating their desire to participate, the researcher will email each a copy of the consent form and ask participants to sign and return the form via email and keep a copy for their records. For confidentiality purposes, the researcher will print the signed consent forms and give them to the supervising faculty member of the project to keep in a locked filing cabinet in her secure office. The researcher will then delete the emails with signed consent forms to further ensure confidentiality.

Role of the Researcher

The author is an international student with over 20 years of English learning experience (she started learning English as required course in elementary school). She wants to do more research and study English language learning so that she can connect her experiences with a better way to teach English language learners. The researcher also learned English grammar and reading when she first came to study abroad at University A’s English Language Learning Program in 2015. Her goal in conducting this proposed study is to seek to understand other Chinese students’ experiences and perspectives on learning English through the lenses of Chinese English language education programs as well as through participation at University A’s English
Language Learning Program in the United States. It is hoped that in gathering these perspectives, the pedagogical benefits and challenges of both programs for adult Chinese students will provide insight into ways that assist students in developing effective and functional language skills so that they can fully participate in English language communicative contexts with English speaking peers.

**Data Collection & Data Analysis**

In this study, the author will obtain data through document analysis, observations, and interviews. By collecting data across these three sources, in relation to the research questions guiding this study, validity of the findings through triangulation of sources will be strengthened.

**Document analysis.** The researcher will ask all of the participating teachers to share access to all of their curricular documents that describe and provide lessons related to all English language teaching they conduct at the university level. The researcher will make copies of all documents provided. Examples of relevant documents include lesson plans, textbooks, curricular guides, activity materials, etc. These documents will be given a numerical code for analysis purposes and will be analyzed for themes related to pedagogical, national, and culturally based terms, as appropriate. For example, the terms “assessment,” “instruction,” and “culture” will be divided into emerging sub-categories as they relate to cultural influences, specific instructional goals, outcomes, language skill, etc. Any instructor or program-related information that may compromise confidentiality will be blackened from the documents after copying. Documents in Chinese will be coded and, as appropriate, portions translated into English for inclusion in the final dissertation.

**Student and educator/teacher interviews.** All invited participants meeting inclusion criteria (see above) will be asked to participate in an individual interview with the researcher. Through interviews, the author hopes to learn about the challenges and successes of the pedagogy that have shaped their English language teaching and learning. At the same time, the author will be able to listen to their voices and opinions.
more intuitively and glean the most effective data for this research. All the participants will be divided into either a student group or a teacher group. Each individual interview will take approximately 45 minutes through face-to-face or chatting software (WeChat, QQ, or etc.). All the interview audios will be recorded using computer audio recording programs with permission from the interviewees. Although the researcher may be communicating with participants via audio-visual means, only audio from the discussion will be recorded.

Since the interviewees may be Chinese students and teachers, the interview may use Chinese for better communication. The interview documents and content will be transcribed in Chinese and translated into English as appropriate in their inclusion in the final dissertation. This includes interview notes, interview transcripts, typed interview content (translated), and highlighted interview notes. All personally identifying information will be replaced with a pseudonym, and all transcripts will be stored on the researcher’s password-protected, personal laptop. Any document containing lists of identifying information and corresponding pseudonyms will be stored on the same computer, in a separate file from the transcripts and any other data collected in the investigation, for confidentiality purposes. In addition, to ensure the confidentiality and safety of participants, before the interview, interviewees will be told that the interview is to be recorded, participants do not have to answer any questions they don’t feel comfortable answering, interviewees’ participation is voluntary, and they may stop participating at any time if they choose.

During the interview, the author will obtain background information about the interviewee and length of time and context spent learning English; their views on current teaching materials and curriculum; descriptions of students' learning experiences both in China and if applicable, at University A in the US; perspectives on the role of and their experiences with standardized tests of English proficiency; benefits and challenges experienced during learning and instruction; and, their thoughts on the type of English language instruction and assessment that would be most effective in ensuring academic and functional language use in
English as a goal and an outcome (see Appendix B for sample interview questions). Teaching and learning challenges, cultural influences on learning, the impact of a high stakes learning environment, and suggestions for English learning and teaching will be highlighted and extracted for analysis and comparison of differences between China and the United States.

As the interview takes place, the researcher will continually check with the participant to ensure that the interviewer is understanding the interviewee’s perspective with fidelity (member checking), in order to ensure credibility/validity of the findings. The interview data will be coded and themes identified in relation to the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

**Class observations. In-class observations in university A’s English language learning program.**

Observations will take place in University A’s English Language Learning Program for English reading, grammar, speaking, listening, and writing classes. The observations of English language classes and collection of documents such as class activity materials and students’ work and teacher’s notes will occur over the courses of a month. In addition, the researcher will document observations of the classroom’s environment and any other information related to teaching and learning in that setting in a field journal. Each observation will take approximately 120 minutes. During the 2018 fall semester, the English Language Learning Program only offered level 96 (high beginner) and level 100 (advantaged) courses for international English language learners. In spring 2019, the researcher will observe English Language Learning Program level 100 (advantaged) and level 96 (low intermediate) classes twice per week (total classes will be 16)

**In-class observations in university A’s actuarial science program.** Observations will take place in University A’s Actuarial Science program for a full month of instruction. The researcher will note in a field journal of the students’ cultures of learning and in class behaviors. The researcher will document observations of the classroom’s environment and information related to learning in that setting. Each observation will take approximately 180 minutes. The researcher will observe Actuarial Science program’ class twice per week
Class observations in university B’s English language courses in Beijing. Observations will take place in University B’s English reading, grammar, speaking, listening, and writing classes. The observations of English language learning and teaching will occur for a month of instruction and documentation of class activity materials, and hopefully students’ work and teacher’s notes. In addition, the researcher will document in a field journal observation of the classroom’s environment and any other information related to teaching and learning in that setting. Each observation will take approximately 120 minutes. The researcher will observe English language classes 8 times. Since the author is not able to do in-class observations in China, the 8 classes will be recorded by the university English instructor with the permission of University B.

The in-class observations and recorded class observations will inform the researcher’s understanding of Chinese students’ second language learning behavior, strategies, and emerging English proficiency. The researcher will not participate in the class and but rather remain a non-participant observer in a discreet part of the classroom. The researcher will try her best to avoid disturbing the instructor's courses and student interactions. In order to ensure the confidentiality and safety of participants as well as the integrity of the observation. Also, the researcher will use pseudonyms to further ensure the confidentiality of participants during each observation. The observation questions guiding the research questions and proposed investigation are as follows:

- How does a teacher design the course and simultaneously accommodate for students' learning needs?
- How does a teacher make the connection with students’ first language, or how does teacher help students whose first language is not English to understand the context in an English teaching environment?
- Does this course help students improve their English? How are language outcomes measured?
- How do Chinese students act?
- How do Chinese students perform in the classroom?
- What is the interaction between teachers and students?
- What is the enthusiasm of students?
- How often are assignments completed? What are the results of classroom tests?
- How do teachers motivate students to learn? Do some students have a negative learning attitude?

Table 13: Triangulation Matrix (Documents, Interviews, Observations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research questions</th>
<th>Data source</th>
<th>Data source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(college students and high school graduates)</td>
<td>(college teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?</td>
<td>Chinese students with or without study abroad experiences (international students) - Interviews, Observations, document analysis</td>
<td>Chinese English teachers American English Language Learning Program teachers - Interviews, Observations, document analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?</td>
<td>Chinese students with or without study abroad experiences (international students) - Interviews</td>
<td>Chinese English teachers American English Language Learning Program teachers - Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?</td>
<td>Chinese students with or without study abroad experiences - Interviews, observations, document analysis</td>
<td>Chinese English teachers American English Language Learning Program teachers - Interviews, observations, document analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Issues of Validity/ Reliability & Trustworthiness Criteria & Inference Quality

In addition to the triangulation of data sources described above, the researcher is committed to
following trustworthiness and credibility guidelines established in the qualitative research traditions (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). These include an Audit trail/clarifying researcher’s bias, member checking, reflexive journaling, and peer debriefing.

The researcher will keep a list of the times, days, and amount of time she spends contacting participants for different phases of the research (e.g., invitation to participate, consent, project activities, member checking, etc.). This will ensure an audit trail of activities should anyone outside of the research context question her contacts and appropriate documentation of consent from the participants (Creswell, 2013). In addition, as described above, the researcher will participate in member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) to confirm her understandings of the participants’ perspectives during each interview, with a focus on establishing trustworthiness/reliability of the data and findings. Also, if, after the individual interview, the researcher has questions about anything mentioned during the interview, she may contact the participant either via personal email or via other social media platforms to confirm her understanding and/or request additional clarification.

Two additional methods for ensuring trustworthiness of the data collected are researcher reflexive journaling and peer debriefing. The researcher will keep a private, ongoing journal of her thoughts related to the data that is emerging, in relation to any codes, themes, connections with literature, and connections to the research questions. This will provide a record of her thoughts throughout the research process, thereby documenting her decision-making processes in relation to the data and supporting the validity and credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2013). In addition, the researcher will meet periodically with a Chinese, doctoral-level peer who is also studying abroad in the US and is familiar with her research, as well as her dissertation committee members to discuss emerging themes related to the data and to ensure that the researcher’s own perspective is being bracketed (Creswell, 2013), or set aside, to focus on the perspectives of the participants and the document and observation analyses.
Timeline

- Chapter I, II, and III: March 2018 to October 2018
- Chapter IV and V: March to April 2019.
CHAPTER IV

Findings

The overall goal of this study was to describe English learning and English education in China and the United States in an in-depth manner through the perspectives of the adult Chinese English language learners, and Chinese and American English teachers. The purpose of this proposed phenomenological, qualitative case study was to discover and analyze the current status and challenges of English education and learning through the current perspectives and behaviors of Chinese adult English learners and English language educators, as well as the experience of relevant educators. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews, document review, and classroom observations for English learners and English educators (English language teachers and/or using English as the main language for teaching). Through the analysis of the data, to understand the status quo and challenges in the English education environment and the views and attitudes of the participants, combined with the English learners in academic and daily English use, issues and challenges provide educators with advice so they could effectively support English learners.

In this chapter, the researcher will look for the answers to research questions by analyzing the collected data. The research questions guiding this study are:

- What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?

- What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?

- What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?
Description of the Sample

This proposed study included adult Chinese English language learners, all aged 18 or older, college students, and college educators. The participants in this research were from both Beijing, China and the U. S. The data was collected from January to February 2019.

For the purposes of this study, some of the participants were from University A in the United States, a liberal arts pioneer in international education with around 3,700 current students, 3,000 study abroad participants, and more than 26,000 alumni. The researcher obtained general information and demographic profiles of Chinese international students from the International Affairs Office of University A. The information included the students’ major, current elective courses, and English language learning. The majority of the Chinese international students at University A were in undergraduate level Computer Science and Mathematics programs. This information provided direct guidance for the selection of participants in the study. Some of the participants were from some universities in Beijing, top 50 ranked in China, with at least around 26,300 current students; and English Educational Institution A in Beijing with around 300 current students.

Teacher participants. China. Seven teacher participants were selected by the researcher through the introduction by one English language educator in China. The researcher did not know the other 6 participants before. Five out of 7 agreed to participate in the study and were interviewed by the researcher. Only one of the participants agreed to record the class teaching for class observations. Four classes, 45 minutes per class, were recorded and sent to the researcher.

Table 14: Chinese Teacher Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher A</td>
<td>college English teacher, mainly teaching English as second language for Chinese and international graduate and doctoral students, she has over 30 years of experience in English teaching. She is the author of 8 published books that related to English language teaching. The researcher observed 3 hours in her class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher B</td>
<td>college English teacher, mainly teaching English as second language for Chinese undergraduate and graduate students, she has over 20 years of experience in English teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher C</td>
<td>curriculum director of English Educational Institution, mainly teaching English as second language for Chinese college students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65
language for Chinese students with overseas study and pass the English examination purposes, he has over 10 years of experience in English teaching.

Teacher D: college English teacher, mainly teaching English as second language for Chinese undergraduate students, she has over 20 years of experience in English teaching.

Teacher E: college English teacher, mainly teaching English as second language for Chinese undergraduate students, she has over 15 years of experience in English teaching.

The U.S. Fifteen teacher participants were selected by the researcher by obtaining general information and demographic profiles of Chinese international students from the International Affairs Office of University A. The researcher only knows 2 (out of 15) participants before since she has studied at the English Language Learning Program at University A for 2 semesters. Eleven (out of 15) teacher participants were working at Computer Science and Mathematics Program at University A with 29 (out of 40) current students enrolled in the program. Four (out of 15) teacher participants were working at the English Language Learning Program at University A. Eight out of 15 agreed to participate in the study and were interviewed by the researcher. Six of them agreed to let researcher to observe the class. Eighteen classes, 25 hours total, were observed by the researcher.

Table 15: American Teacher Participants.

| Teacher F | a college mathematics professor, he has over 8 years of content-area course taught in English to Chinese international students. He is currently the Co-Director of the joint program between University A and the University in China. In his class, there are 19 students and 16 of them are Chinese international students. |
| Teacher G | a college mathematics professor, he has over 8 years of content-area course taught in English to Chinese international students. In his class, there are 18 students and 10 of them are Chinese international students. The researcher observed 6 hours in his class. |
| Teacher H | a college mathematics professor, he has over 30 years of teaching experiences. His first language is Mandarin (Chinese). |
| Teacher I | a college mathematics professor, she has over 5 years of teaching experiences. Her first language is Mandarin (Chinese). In her class, there are 19 students and 17 of them are Chinese international students. The researcher observed 2 hours in her class. |
| Teacher J | a college computer science professor, she has over 15 years of teaching experiences. Her first language is Mandarin (Chinese). In her class, there are 24 students and 5 of them are Chinese international students. The researcher observed 2 hours in her class. |
| Teacher K | a college mathematics professor, she has over 2 years of content-area course taught in English to Chinese international students. In her class, there are 10 students and 1 of them is Chinese international students. The researcher observed 2 hours in her class. |
Teacher L | a college mathematics professor, she has over 3 years of content-area course taught in English to Chinese international students. In her class, there are 16 students and 8 of them are Chinese international students. The researcher observed 7 hours in her class.

Teacher M | an English language teacher at English Language Learning Program, she has over 7 year of teaching experience of English as second language to English language learners. In her class, there are 3 students and 1 of them is Chinese international students. The researcher observed 6 hours in her class.

**Student participants, China.** Six student participants were selected by one of the teacher participants and introduced to the researcher. The researcher did not know the participants before. Four out of 6 agreed to participate in the study and were interviewed by the researcher.

Table 16: Chinese Student Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student A</td>
<td>studying at a university in Beijing, he is a graduate student in chemistry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student B</td>
<td>studying at a university in Beijing, she is a senior in chemistry. She is from a province in China, that do not have listening test in the college entrance examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>studying at a university in Beijing, she is a junior in chemistry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>studying at a university in Germany, she went abroad for further study through a cooperation program. She is a doctoral student in chemistry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The U.S.** Three student participants were selected by the researcher in the mathematics major class at University A that was observed for this research. Two out of 10 student participants were selected in a junior mathematics major class, while 1 was selected in a senior mathematics major class. Based on the classroom observations and the validity of the research, the students with most interaction with the professor during the class were selected for the interview. One student participant was selected because he was the only student who was enrolled in an English Language Learning Program at University A for three semesters and had the longest learning experience at English Language Learning Program of all Chinese international students.

Table 17: Chinese International Student Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student E</td>
<td>studying at the University A, he is a senior student in mathematics. He came to University A through a cooperation program. He studied at English Language Learning Program at University A for two semesters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>studying at the University A, he is a junior student in mathematics. He came to University A through a cooperation program. He studied at English Language Learning Program at University A for two months.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Student G | studying at the University A, he is a graduate student in MBA. He came to University A through a cooperation program. He studied at English Language Learning Program at University A for
The Methodological Approach

In order to discover and analyze the current situation and challenges faced by Chinese students in English learning, the student participants who have more than 10 years of English learning experience and have each participated in national college entrance exams (including English), and teachers who have at least 10 years of English as second language teaching experience or content-area course taught in English to Chinese international students were invited to participate in this study. Meanwhile, the researcher translated the transcription into English and was member checked by another colleague in the doctoral cohort who is familiar with both Chinese and English language.

Interview. Based on the different groups targeted by the interview, the researcher created two types of interview questions for the group of teacher participants and the student participants to collect information about their English learning experiences, thoughts and opinions. There are two types of interview questions for the student participant group. The first one was designed for Chinese students, while the second one was designed for Chinese international students with studying abroad experiences.

The interview questions for the teacher participant group is divided into three types. The first one was designed for Computer Science and Mathematics teachers to collect perceptions about Chinese international students’ English language proficiency, class performance, and their suggestions for learning English as second language. The second and third one was designed for American English language teachers and Chinese English teachers to collect information about their English teaching methods, challenges and suggestions for Chinese students.

The purpose of the two different types of interview questions was to collect relevant information
about their own personal feelings and experiences from the perspective of students and teachers in order to explore the current experiences and status, and the challenges and obstacles that are faced during the practical application of academic content and language, as well as their suggestions on teaching and learning English as second language.

To ensure the highest quality for the interviews and minimize misunderstanding or confusion caused by participants’ language proficiency, the interviews were conducted in the first language of the participant. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher into a Microsoft Word document. The summary of the interview was emailed to each participant, to confirm the understanding of participants’ perspectives.

Class Observation. With the consent of the participants, the researcher observed the classes of some of the participants. The researcher created three types of observation protocol based on three different observed targets. The first one was created for observing the content-area course taught in English to Chinese international students, to collect information about the Chinese international students' ability to use language in an English environment, and the challenges and obstacles in teaching students whose first language is not English. The second and third one were created for observing the English language classes in China for the purpose of English language education to collect data about the English teaching methods, teaching goal, teaching content, and class performance of English language learners (Chinese students and Chinese international students).

The purpose of the three different types of observation protocols was to collect relevant information about English teaching in the actual classroom and the use of language skills in the English teaching environment in order to explore the current status, and the challenges and obstacles that are faced during the practical application of academic and language.

Document Review. Since the one of the teacher participants from the English Language Learning
Program, who has the access to the curriculum documents and other related files about the English Language Learning Program refused to participate in this study, the researcher was restricted on access to data for document review.

**Presentation of Data and Results of Analysis**

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in English teaching and learning, the researcher conducted a two-month data collection through interviews and classroom observations. All interviews were conducted in the native language of the participants. In order to ensure the quality of the data collection and to create a friendly and comfortable environment for the participants to share their opinions, the researcher spoke directly in Mandarin Chinese, then translate into English. For the classroom observation, the researcher did not participate in the classroom activities, and informed the students of the purpose of observation in advance, in order to achieve the maximum non-interference and influence the original teaching plan and atmosphere of the classroom.

In this section, the researcher will dig deeper into the situations, challenges, and problems in English language learning and teaching by analyzing interviews, classroom observations, and some documents (syllabus) that were collected from participants.

**Teaching English as the Second Language**

**Teaching objectives.** From the perspective of teaching objectives, the goal of English teaching in China and the United States was relatively consistent. Both considered practical one of the teaching goals which emphasized importance in both daily use and academics.

- Question: What is your teaching goal?
Answer: I hope that students can have an international perspective and learn to accommodate a variety of cultures. The culture of each country must be understood, because in the future it will become an international talent and communicate with people from different countries and countries. The more students understand the culture of each country, the higher the degree of respect. When communicating in the future, there are fewer barriers for them to communicate with people with different background. Secondly, I hope that my students should have self-confidence and dare to communicate with other people of different cultures. (Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.)

The participant's point of view was that students should learn English from a cultural perspective and understanding and accepting new cultures could be very effective in helping students learn the language.

Answer: College English should be designed to allow college students to adapt to university studies and prepare for in-depth research in the future. Use English to assist his studies and adapt to higher education. (Teacher D: Chinese College English teacher.)

In addition, some participants also believed that English learning at the university/adult level should be combined with academic learning. The purpose of learning English is to help students gain more academic involvement. One of the participants from University A indicated that the goal of English teaching is to help students adapt to the American university classroom.

Answer: One of the goals at the English Language Learning Program is to prepare the students to do well academically in a regular University. So, if they go through the program here, and
they passed level 100 which is the advanced level. Then they should be able to move next to
a regular University classroom and integrate into a classroom full of other Americans. (Teacher
M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program)

**Teaching content.** Under the premise of ensuring full interaction with students, (there are three
Chinese students in teacher M's class), the teaching objectives of the teachers could be expanded to a
comprehensive extent, and the students could improve in grammar, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

- This class gives them the opportunity to discuss a lot of different things. I think that if they
  learn how to speak correctly and pronounce things correctly. Then they're more likely to spell
  them correctly and write them correctly in their writing. Even though the focus of my class is
  not oral communication. I think it's important that students practice all four language skills as
  much as possible. So that's why I allow them to have discussions, and also help them with
  their pronunciation, and their listening as well. (Teacher M: English language teacher at
  University A's English Language Learning Program)

**Grammar.** Some college teachers did not emphasize grammar in the teaching process. They generally
thought that grammar was a skill that needs to be mastered in high school. College English should pay attention
to higher level language understanding.

- Question: How did you help students improve their grammar?
  
  [您是如何帮助学生提高语法的？]

- Answer: No, I feel that the grammar of Chinese students is better than that of American and
  British students. (Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.)

  [不强调，我觉得中国学生的语法比美国，英国学生的都好。] (Teacher A: Chinese College
  English teacher.)

- Answer: Currently at the university level, we are not focus on that. For the grammar errors in
  the writing, we only help students indicate the basic errors. (Teacher D: Chinese College
No, because at the university level, our default student grammar should be well enough. So, most of them will analyze the article, such as the structure of the article, the key content, and the purpose of the article. Grammar and vocabulary are rarely involved. Unless the students ask questions or special difficulties, grammar will never be the focus of teaching.

(Teacher E: Chinese College English teacher.)

However, some English teachers believed that grammar was the basis for learning English. Grammar could not be ignored during the teaching process. They believed that continuous repetition of practice grammar could help students understood and remembered.

- Answer: It will be emphasized. And their proportions are not the same. For students with low English language proficiency, grammar will be emphasized a lot. While the students with better English language proficiency, it will be emphasized less. It depends. However, it will definitely be emphasized because this involves the language differences between Chinese and English. This has led many students to ignore these issues during their use. Only by constantly emphasizing can help students to remember. (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

(Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

Answer: I do. Because this is a reading and writing class. So, the basis of writing is
understanding grammar. While they're talking to me, I still correct their grammar because I just feel that if they continue making the same mistakes though it'll be ingrained. It'll be so much harder for them to correct those mistakes in the higher levels. So, if they make a mistake in subject verb agreement and speaking in writing. I will correct them right away and I expect them to repeat after me and then to correct in their writing as well. I'm trying to prevent them from forming bad habits and making new bad habits. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program)

Listening. Chinese teachers generally used some videos as the teaching material for listening in order to help students practice listening in and out of class.

- Question: How did you help students improve their listening skills?
  
  [您是如何帮助学生提高听力的？]

- Answer: I will let the students listen a lot after class, watch some interesting videos. I will also show some videos during class. (Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher)
  
  [我会让学生在课后大量的听, 通过看一些有意思的视频, 然后我上课也会给学生看一些视频。] (Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher)

At the same time, for improve listening skills, some teachers assigned listening tasks to students to help students achieve good score in the listening test.

- Answer: I will let students do two different listening exercises. The first is to let students do dictation exercises. I will let the students write down everything that they listened. This is mainly to train their recognition of spelling, and some changes in sound. The second is to train students' ability to summarize and retell, so that after hearing a part of the content, they can accurately summarize the general idea. (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)
  
  [听力方面的话，我会让学生去做听力练习。第一种就是让学生做听写练习。就是让学生把听到的内容一字不漏的完全记录下来。这主要是训练他们的拼写，连读，弱读和音
**Speaking.** The teacher practiced speaking in the classroom by telling the students how to answer questions and corrected the pronunciation of the students. However, since Chinese students paid too much attention to the pronunciation and correctness of their answers, few students actively interacted with teachers. Also, since teachers and students had a common first language, students were more inclined to communicate with teachers in Chinese.

- **Question:** How did you help students improve their speaking skills?

  [您是如何帮助学生提高口语的？]

- **Answer:** In the process of oral teaching, there will be some problems, that is, students are not willing to say, because they are worry about their language pronunciation. Since TOEFL and IELTS will involve speaking test, we will give them some core words in the answers, including lexical meaning and pronunciation training. Then, the students will do some exercises such as conjunctions, let them summarize the ideas first, have a slightly clear idea, and then organize the language and let them say a few more times in order to remember. In addition, we will give students some standard audio, let the students train first, record and listen to what their pronunciation is, and then compare the standard audio to see how they need to be improved to achieve higher scores. (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

  [我会去和他做一些对话的练习。在口语教学的过程中会遇到一些问题，就是孩子很多时候不敢说，然后担心自己的语言表达，发音。因为托福和雅思都会涉及到一些问答性的问题，我们会给他们补充一些答案当中的核心词汇，包括词汇意思，发音的训练。然后就学生做一些连词成句这样的练习，让他们先把 ideas 总结一下，有一个稍微清晰的思路，然后他来组织语言，让他们多说几次。另外，我们会给学生一些标准的音频，让学生自己先训练，录音听自己的发音到底有哪些问题，然后比对老师发的音频，看看需要如何改进以达到更高的分数标准] (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

**Reading.** Chinese English teachers generally explained how to get answers for each type of question...
that appear in the exam to students. In daily teaching, teachers rarely gave students a lot of reading material.

- Question: How did you help students improve their reading skills?
  
  [您是如何帮助学生提高阅读的？]

- Answer: The training of reading is mainly divided into two parts. One part is reading the article. Mainly related to intensive reading and extensive reading. Intensive reading will involve some grammar and vocabulary supplements. Extensive reading involves the main information of each sentence, the summary of the main information of each paragraph, or the summary of the main information of the article. Another one is the method of solving the problem of different types of questions in the test. The topic is the sub-question type, and the problem-solving method for different question types. Because some questions involve positioning, some involve logical connections, and some involve summarization. Different questions have different ways of thinking and will be supplemented according to the type of questions.

(Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

[阅读的训练主要分成两个部分。一个部分是读文章。主要是涉及到精读和泛读。精读的话就会涉及到一些语法和词汇的补充，泛读的话就涉及到对与每个句子主要信息，每个段落主要信息的概括，或者文章主要信息的概括。一个是一些题目的具体解题的方法。针对不同的题型的解题方法。因为有的题目涉及到定位，有的涉及到逻辑联系，有的涉及到总结概括。不同的题目有不同的思维方式，会根据题型进行补充。] (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

Some students responded that they lacked reading ability. Before studying abroad, they did not think reading would be a problem. Students feel the lack of more reading practice has contributed to challenge they have communicating in English.

- Question: Which part of English do you think is the most challenging for you?
  
  [你觉得英语学习哪个部分对你来说最具挑战？]

- Answer: Reading. I am not very capable of reading. I have not read much in English in China. After studying abroad, reading suddenly increased. I felt very bitter at the time. American teachers will find some articles, I can't understand, I need to spend a lot of time. (Student G:
Graduate international student at University A)

[阅读。我阅读的能力不太强。我在国内本来阅读量就不大。出国之后我的阅读量突然增大, 我当时觉得很苦难。国外的老师会找一些文章，我很不能理解，我需要花费很多时间。] (Student G: Graduate international student at University A)

During the interview, the researcher learned that some universities in Beijing began to reform English teaching, and the biggest reform was the increase in reading. Similarly, English teachers in the United States also added extra readings in their courses for students which showed the importance of reading.

- Answer: Our goal is to allow students to have output, which means we need a lot of input. So, our class content contains a lot of reading. Each unit has three articles, with around 3,000 words. There are also a lot of audio documents downloaded from TED, BBC that are added as additional material. (Teacher D: Chinese College English teacher.)

[我们最终的目的是让学生能有输出, 因此需要有大量的输入。所以我们的课内容包含了大量的阅读。每个单元都有三篇, 每篇都有一千字到三千字不等。同时有很多从 TED, BBC 上下载的音频文献。] (Teacher D: Chinese College English teacher.)

- Answer: The reading materials we have online. The textbook has an online resource. So, there are extra readings, extra vocabulary practice, pronunciation. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

Writing. In the teaching of writing, teachers in both the United States and China emphasized that the improvement of writing needs to be gradual. Especially, the American English teacher told the students a framework for writing, thus helping students to write clearly and logically.

- Question: How did you help students improve their writing skills?

[您是如何帮助学生提高写作的？]

- Answer: Our training of students' writing is a gradual process because the goal is to write a thesis. So, the first level of the main task is to ask students to write summary. The second level

5 TED Conferences LLC [Technology, Entertainment, Design], a media organization that posts talks online for free distribution under the slogan "ideas worth spreading."

6 The British Broadcasting Corporation, a British public service broadcaster.
is to summary and compare the main points of 3 or 5 articles. The third level is to ask students to write small professional articles. The fourth level is to write a research report or thesis.

(Teacher D: Chinese College English teacher.)

[我们对学生的写作的训练是一个循序渐进的过程,因为最终目标是写论文。所以第一级主要任务是要求学生会写summary。第二级是要求学生读一定量的相同话题的文章，然后提炼出相同的观点。第三阶段是要求学生能够写一些小的专业文章。到了第四级就是能够写出研究报告，实验报告这样的论文。](Teacher D: Chinese College English teacher.)

- Answer: I taught them this acronym called MILES, which is the main idea, linking information, example, and a summary sentence. I think they have about two or three writing topics for each unit. I would give them an assignment they do it for homework. In class, we have individually personalized editing, so they would sit here with me while the other students are working on something else. I go over their ideas, I go over their spelling, I proofread and edit while they're here with me. I make them correct several times. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

Due to the examination-oriented teaching in China, some Chinese English teachers suggested students remember the templates for writing. Especially under the influence of the CET4 and CET6 examinations, the teachers' teaching goals were mostly to help students improve their performance, thus neglecting learning English for academic purpose.

- I usually tell them the template of writing and let them recite the key sentence patterns.

(Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.)

[我一般是把写作的范文，模板告诉他们，让他们背诵关键的句型](Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.)

- We are now bonded by the CET 4 and CET6 exams, and for writing, teachers will teach based on the writing requirements of the CET 4 and CET6. It is like the Eight-legged Essay⁷, students

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⁷ A style of essay that exam-takers wrote in order to pass the imperial examinations during the Ming and Qing
During the interview, an American teacher was very serious about the fact that examination-oriented method of teaching method of learning is not feasible. During teaching, she also faced such challenges with Chinese students.

- I think also what I've learned from teaching at a university in China, is that the students were taught certain phrases and certain expressions. They're taught almost to memorize a template for writing. Well, writing is not like that. They need to be able to think on their own and use the language that they know to express themselves on their own and not just memorize certain phrases. Because I was grading maybe 30 essays and I would say about 3/4 of those essays had the same phrase in the beginning. I crossed them all out and I said you have to change that. I think the teachers in China need to stop telling students to memorize certain things. I understand why because they're teaching for the test. But if they're truly trying to get the students to write better or to speak better, they have to make it more, they have to base it on reality. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

**Teaching methods.** The teaching methods of Chinese teachers are mainly lecturing, and they rarely interacted with students, which leaded to a boring atmosphere during teaching.

- Question: Do you think English lessons are boring?
  
  [你是否认为英语课枯燥？]
- Answer: Yes. The teacher talks all the time and ignores whether the students are listening or not. Although there are still many students who pay attention, teachers usually just read the power point or the text book. I think that there is actually some content that does not help us, but the teacher is teaching according to the book. (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

[当然。老师只管自己讲课，不理会学生是否听课。尽管听课的学生还是有很多的，但是老师一般就是按照 PPT 念，或者就是照着书讲。根本不管这个书的题材的实用性。我认为其实有一部分内容对我们没有什么帮助，但是老师就是照着书讲，然后也不会有自己创新的地方。](Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

- Question: How do you think about your college English teacher?

[你怎么评价你的大学英语老师呢？]

- Answer: it depends, but most of them is teaching according to the text, and there is no innovation, they never interact with students, and never try to make students active during the class. (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

[有好有坏，但是他基本上是照本宣科的那种讲法，然后也不会创新，不会和学生互动，不会调节学生课堂的氛围。] (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

However, the teachers gave different answers, and they thought that they interacted with students very frequently during the teaching process.

- Question: Do you interact with students during teaching?

[您在课堂中和学生的互动多吗？]

- Answer: Yes. I will let the students read the text and answer the questions. I basically interact with them all the time. In this case, they will concentrate, otherwise students will not listen carefully. It is necessary to keep giving students tasks and keep them doing so that they will not be distracted and will not miss anything that I taught in the class. （Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.）

[非常多。我会让学生朗读课文，回答问题。我基本上时时刻刻都在和他们互动。这样的话他们才会集中注意力，不然学生就不会认真听课。要不停的给学生任务，不停的让
Surprisingly, this was different from the researcher’s assumptions and the feedback from the participants from the U.S. During the class observation, Chinese students and Chinese English teachers do not engaged with each other. Although the researchers found that the teacher encouraged the students to answer questions in the classroom, it was mainly task-based teaching method. Teachers assigned tasks and the students completed them. However, this is completely different from the American classroom, where teachers interact, and students are very frequent participants. Most teachers will discuss problems with students and try to solve problems in a student's way of thinking. The difference in the reply given by participants may stem from a bias in the understanding of “interaction”, which made most Chinese teachers were satisfied with the students' classroom performance.

- Question: How do you think about the participation and enthusiasm of your Chinese and foreign students in the classroom?

[您的中国学生和外国学生，他们在课堂的参与度，和积极性方面有什么区别吗？]

- Answer: They are all positive and active, but it depends on students’ personality and cultural characteristics. African students are generally more outgoing, so they are very fond of asking questions in class. Then their spoken pronunciation, I think it is generally better, probably because it is their official language. While Asian students, especially in Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, generally appear to be quieter than African students, to be silent, and to interact with teachers in class. But I think Asian students write deeper and philosophical than African students. （Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.）

[都比较积极，但是和性格，文化特性方面是有很大的关系的。非洲人性格一般都比较外向，所以他们在课堂上就非常爱问问题。然后他们的口语发音，我认为普遍比较好，可能是因为那是他们的官方语言。亚洲学生，特别是中亚，东亚，东南亚的，普遍显得比非洲的学生要安静，要沉默上课也不和老师互动。但是亚洲学生的论文，我觉得亚洲学生写的深度，哲理性比非洲学生更强一些。] （Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.）
- Questions: Do you think that the students in your class engaged with you in your classroom activities?

[你是否认为您班上的学生积极参与了您的课堂活动呢？]

- Answer: Most Chinese students are not active at all compared to foreign students. However, I think it is okay. Freshmen’s students have not yet been transformed, and they are caused by high school teaching models. There are some students, no matter how you motivate them, they are still very passive. About 70% of the students in the class are very active. （Teacher E: Chinese College English teacher.）

[大多数中国学生，和国外的学生比的话，根本不活跃。但是，我觉得还行。大一的学生他们的思维还没有被转变过来，就高中的教学模式所导致的。有一部分学生，不管你怎样去激励他们，他们还是很被动。班上 70%左右的学生是很主动的。（Teacher E: Chinese College English teacher.）]

At the same time, students hoped that teachers tried to add some meaningful content to increase students' interest in learning.

- Question: What kind of activities do you expect in the college English class to make you feel not boring?

[你期望在大学英语课堂中什么样的活动丰富一点，会使你觉得这个课堂好一些呢？]

- Answer: I think if the teacher asks the students to watch some American dramas or introduce the experiences of studying abroad. If students are interested in learning, the level of English will naturally increase. Most of the teacher's speak Chinese during the class, so I think if the teacher speaks English more during the class it may be better to help students improve their English proficiency. (Student B: Senior Chinese student in Beijing.)

[我认为如果老师让学生看一些美剧，或者介绍一下出国留学的经历。如果让学生有兴趣，英语水平自然也就提高了。老师大部分课堂时间是中文教学，所以我觉得可能说英语的时间长一些，可能会对英语的提高能力会更好一些。] (Student B: Senior Chinese student in Beijing.)

Teaching materials. Most Chinese English teachers believed that the content of English textbooks was unreasonable, because the difficulty level of reading of universities and high schools was too large, which
led to great challenges for students' learning. In addition, because the updating of teaching materials did not match the Curriculum Reform since 2016, it had brought great obstacles to English teaching and learning.

- Question: Do you think that the arrangement of college English learning goals and difficulty is reasonable?

[您认为大学英语学习目标和难度的安排是否合理？]

- Answer: It is unreasonable. I feel that these textbooks do not have a very obvious process of gradual improvement in terms of difficulty. I think that in the beginning, students are struggling with the connection between freshman and high school. And after our curriculum was changed to three semesters (before is 4 semesters), the language department required us to start teaching from the second volume instead of the first. I think this is a bad decision. In addition, for the college entrance examination, the examination paper is different in provinces. Some provinces do not have listening test, so those students have never practiced listening that their listening skill is very low. While, other provinces where include listening test will make students listening skills much better. In my class, this gap becomes obvious which poses a big challenge to my teaching. (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

[不合理。我觉得这些教科书在难度方面没有一个非常明显的逐步改进过程。我觉得刚开始，学生大一和高中的衔接，学生是有点吃力的。在我们的课程改为三个学期（之前是4个学期）之后，语言部门要求我们从第二卷而不是第一卷开始教学。我认为这是一个糟糕的决定。另外，对于高考，各省的试卷不同。有些省份没有听力测试，所以那些学生从未练习听过他们的听力技巧很低。而其他省份包括听力测试将使学生的听力技巧更好。在我的课堂上，这个差距变得非常明显，这对我的教学提出了很大的挑战。] (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

Moreover, both Chinese English teachers and students believed that the English textbooks was not practical. They focused too much on the test skills.

- Question: What do you think about the English textbooks you use in college?

[你怎么看待你们大学英语上课使用的英语教材呢]

- Answer: I don't think it's very useful. Maybe some of the texts are professional news reports
or excerpts from some novels. I feel the daily use of language is different from the content I learned in the textbooks. And in terms of vocabulary, I think a lot of words are unfamiliar, not the words that are often used for communication. (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

[我觉得都不是很日常，可能大学英语一些课文的话都是专业新闻报告或者是一些小说里面节选。我觉得和日常使用的英语差距很大。而且词汇方面，我觉得很多单词都很生僻，不是经常会使用到的词汇。] (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

- Answer: Graduate level English textbooks are similar to doctoral level. The only use of this textbook is that it will have some guidance on your writing. But in fact, I feel that it is not particularly helpful to improve English learning. (Student D: Doctoral international student in German.)

[研究生英语教材跟博士学的内容差不多。这个教材仅有的一点用途就是它会有对你写作文有些指导。但实际上我觉得对英语学习提高不是特别有帮助。] (Student D: Doctoral international student in German.)

Meanwhile, the teacher pointed out the root of the problem was that the frequency of updating the teaching materials was very low, which made the students' learning of content unable to meet the actual application.

- Question: How often is the textbook update?

[教材更新的频率是怎样的？]

- Answer: The update frequency is very low. Our school English department has written a textbook and then published it. This process is very difficult and takes a long time. This textbook has been used for about 5 years. And I do not think it goanna replace recently. Therefore, the academic readings contained in the textbook are a bit backward. However, the purpose of this textbook was not to keep up-to-date, because we want to let students have some understanding of their academic field. After all, we are English teachers, and it is English language class, understanding the professional terminology, the basic content, and the way the
research journal is written is our goal. (Teacher E: Chinese College English teacher.)

In addition, the limitations of teachers' power, such as choosing teaching materials and the arrangement of teaching content, led to the inability of teaching content to keep up with the changes of the times that met students’ needs.

- Question: Who make the decision to choose the textbook?

[谁决定选择教科书？]

- Answer: It is required in the department. It is not the teacher's decision to decide which textbook to use, because all teachers use the same textbook and the same teaching progress. [系里要求的。根据系里面讨论的结构, 决定使用什么教材, 不是老师决定的, 因为所有的老师使用的都是同样的教材, 同样的进度。] (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

- Answer: The teacher has no power to decide whether to change the teaching materials. We will conduct a unified examination. But the teacher can choose the additional materials. [老师是没有权力决定是否更换教材的，我们会进行统一的考试的。补充材料的话，老师是可以自己选择的。] (Teacher E: Chinese College English teacher.)

- Answer: The director decides. What we try to do is that we try not to use the same textbook in within the same year. For the fall semester we’ll have a set of text books, and then for the spring semester we'll have a different set of text books. so that if a student has to repeat a level, the student is not using the same text book. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

- Question: Do you think that English teaching at the university meets the needs for students to
take some international English exams?

[您是否认为大学的英语教学满足学生参加一些国际英语考试的要求？]

- Answer. I do not think so, only good students can be, but most students still can't. Most of my students (who want to go abroad or need to take an international exam) are enrolled in some English program outside the school.

[不能满足，仅能有比较优秀的学生可以，但是大部分学生还是不行的。我的大部分学生（想要出国，或者需要参加国际考试的）都报了校外的辅导班。] (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

**Problems caused by excessive classroom size.** Since the Chinese classrooms held a large number of students, teachers cannot give individual attention to each. This was also a key factor in the classroom where teachers could not interact with each student.

- I think in China. It's that would be very difficult because in China especially in high school, as I've learned there are so many students in one class and so in order for an English teacher in China to teach effectively. That teacher has to go almost against the custom of teaching in China where the teachers are lecturing, the students are just sitting there taking notes. But we know that that is not the most effective way of teaching language. that's it's better and it's more engaging I think for students to work in different groups, for them to get real language input meaning maybe not from the teachers but from TV shows, or song lyrics. Real language input to help them with their pronunciation, to help them understand the cultural context of why we would say certain things. The teachers just cannot lecture and that's very difficult because the teacher has so many students. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

- We have 8 units per semester, each with a writing task. We will arrange for the students to complete, but if you do not grade it, the students will not practice at all. Due to the large
number of classes (about 50 people in each class), we can only grade 2 or 3 essays a semester.

(Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

[我们每个学期会完成 8 个单元，每个单元都有写作任务。我们会布置让学生去完成，但是只要你没有要求上交，学生根本就不会练习的。由于班级人数太多（50 人左右），这就导致我们一学期只能收 2 到 3 篇作文。] (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher)

At the same time, due to limited class time, it was impossible for teachers to have time to interact with each student after completing the teaching plan for each class. Just 90 minutes of English study a week could not help students improve their English language proficiency in meaningful ways.

- I will let students do presentations during the class, but since the limited time, they are basically teamwork. It is impossible to have a student to do a presentation by oneself, usually a group of about 5 people. Every student will do a presentation each semester.

[我会让学生在课堂中做 presentation，但是因为时间有限，基本都是小组合作。不能满足一个学生做一个 presentation，一般都是 5 人左右一个小组。每个学生都会做一次 presentation。] (Teacher E: Chinese College English teacher)

Meanwhile, in the American classroom, since the class size was small, the teacher could pay attention on each student, which made students’ learning efficiency higher.

- They are very good. I don't have any students who's not doing the work or who's not paying attention in class. it's such a small class that they can't. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

Comparing the average of 50 students in Chinese classes, American teachers gave a relatively reasonable class size for teaching English more efficient.

- I've taught classes as biggest with 16 students. In a writing class, in an advanced writing class 16 is a lot. Because that's a lot of grading in terms of essays, especially if they're writing research papers. I naturally like to teach a class of about ten to twelve students because then
you can have pair work, you can have group work, you can have individual work. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

Learning English as a Second Language

Most participants believed that a good English language environment was very helpful for learning English. An immersive English learning environment pushed learners to use and practice English as much as they could, which was an efficient learning method.

- **Question:** How to improve English language proficiency?
- **Answer:** Let yourself be more integrated into the locales. If you have the opportunity, go to some activities like summer school, communicate with foreigners, integrate into English language environment, that can improve the English proficiency very quickly. Of course, if you don't have such an opportunity, you still need to add more input. You can go through a lot of listening, reading exercises to increase your input. (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

[更多的让自己去融入语言环境。如果是有机会的话，去参加一些 summer school 之类的活动，去和外国人沟通，交流，融入这个语言环境当中。可以很快的提高英语水平。当然，如果没有这样的机会的话，还是要让自己增加更多的输入。可以去通过大量的听力，阅读的练习增加我们的输入。] (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

- **Answer:** I feel that I have to learn about American culture, whether it is watching American drama, listening to news, or reading some foreign books or documents. (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

[我觉得要自己主动去了解一些美国文化，不管是看美剧，或者是听新闻，或者是看一些外文的书或者文献也好。] (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)
- Answer: Talk to people in the school as much as you can. Find an American roommate, find more opportunities to talk with native speakers. Don't be afraid, the more you talk, the better your English will be. (Student E: Senior Chinese international student at University A.)

[多多交流，多跟学校里的人说话，最好能住在学校里，找个美国舍友。不要怕尴尬，越聊就会发现自己英语越好。] (Student E: Senior Chinese international student at University A.)

- I think the main thing is to send out the message that they really need to take more advantage of the opportunity to communicate with Americans of all sorts. The main thing I would do is to, #1 encourage them to participate more in class, and #2 to take advantage of every opportunity to make one of their missions. Not just to study in America and pass exams or prepare for graduate school. But to take very seriously the opportunity to become good in English. (Teacher G: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

- That they have to immerse themselves in I guess the American culture or spend time with people who don't speak Chinese. It's not just for Chinese students, it's for anybody learning. The more time you spend using your native language, the last time you have to practice the target language. Yes. I understand that after a full day of being immersed in an English language classroom that they might just need a break and it's very stressful not being able to express themselves clearly, fluently, and quickly. When they get home, they just want to be able to actually the way they normally do. And sometimes it's very difficult because as a second language learner they might feel that because they can't express themselves well in English. They might feel a little uneducated or even stupid even though they're not. But they might feel that way and so, to raise their self-esteem, or to gain confidence again. They might want to speak in Chinese as soon as the class ends. That's understandable but they should not spend too much time outside of class doing that because if you change their perspective and
say well, I'm here to learn English what's the fastest way for me to do that then it is to be immersed in English. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A's English Language Learning Program.)

Talking about immersing in the English environment, studying abroad is a good opportunity. Both teachers and students believe that learning English in an English-speaking country is very helpful for improving English.

- There is no doubt that Chinese English teachers speak Chinese during the class. I think the language learning environment is very important, and the more frequencies you use, the better your English will be. (Student E: Senior Chinese international student at University A.)

[毫无疑问中国的英语老师使用中文教学。我觉得语言的学习环境是很重要的，使用的频率越多越好。] (Student E: Senior Chinese international student at University A.)

- For daily English, I feel that the English class in the United States is more helpful, but for the test skills, Chinese class will be better. (Student E: Senior Chinese international student at University A.)

[对于美国生活而言，我觉得这边英语课对我的帮助更大一些，但是就一些应试技巧可能还是国内稍微好一点。] (Student E: Senior Chinese international student at University A.)

- The teaching methods and contents of China are rigid. Teachers will teach based on the standard test. But the classroom in the United States is different. Teachers will teach you everything. If it is not used in exams, it will be used in daily. Your English is improved every day. The score is not the goal of teaching and learning. It's just to test your level and see how much you master. So, English Language Learning Program is a comprehensive improvement of your ability, not simply letting you pass the examination. (Student H: Junior Chinese international student at University A.)

[中国的教学方式和内容比较死板，教的东西比较应试化。一些他认为没有用的，考试考不到的他就不给你讲。但是美国的课堂不一样，他觉得所有的东西都是有用的，考试用不到，生活中会用到。在潜移默化中，你提高了英语水平，考试并不是目的，只是]
- In addition to attending classes, students are also assigned a variety of activities. Being able to reach a variety of different people and cultures stimulate learning motivation. (Teacher H: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

Student H: Junior Chinese international student at University A.)

I hope that students can develop a habit of reading. Also, don't always look for the meanings of each vocabulary in the dictionary during the reading. Chinese is our mother tongue. We don't know many words, but you know what the meanings. Because you can guess the meanings from the context. Not only improving their English, but also letting them know about the world. (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

Some teachers suggested that students could increase their reading. They believed that if students tried to understand the main ideas of the readings and read as much as they can instead of focusing on the vocabulary in the readings, it would help them improve English more efficient.

Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.

However, time spent using English was also a factor that affects English learning. Both American and Chinese teachers and students mentioned that the length of English study was far from reaching the expected goal. The teacher believed that extracurricular English practice was very important, and students should not only learn English during class but in social settings.

Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.
How many hours do students use for learning English in the class? Maybe six hours a day. So, the majority of their day is spent outside of the language classroom. I think that depending on whether they hang out with or they spend more time with Americans or English speakers versus Chinese speakers. I think that it has more of an impact on how well or how quickly they can improve their English. (Teacher M: English language teacher at University A’s English Language Learning Program.)

The motivation of students to learn English was also a factor in determining whether students actively learn English in extracurricular time. Moreover, the teacher believed that students' motivation for learning was the key to successful and efficient English learning. Only students who realized the necessity of English learning could actively learn English to achieve effective learning.

Some students think that English does not make much sense for their future planning, and they may not pay much attention to English learning. However, some students may plan to study abroad, reading foreign literature, so their initiative will be higher. (Teacher D: Chinese College English teacher.)

Some students think that English does not make much sense for their future planning, and they may not pay much attention to English learning. However, some students may plan to study abroad, reading foreign literature, so their initiative will be higher. (Teacher D: Chinese College English teacher.)

If you can do some English translation, you can quickly improve your English. Because the ability to translate is more comprehensive. It forces you to learn things (academic vocabulary, academic field) you don't know since you have to translate it into Chinese. (Student A: Graduate Chinese student in Beijing.)

If you can do some English translation, you can quickly improve your English. Because the ability to translate is more comprehensive. It forces you to learn things (academic vocabulary, academic field) you don't know since you have to translate it into Chinese. (Student A: Graduate Chinese student in Beijing.)
I once opened an elective course in English literature. Since it was elective course, students were coming for the credits, so they don’t listen at all in class. In order for the students to complete the reading task, I will tell them have a test according to the readings. Otherwise, students will not spend time on reading. But I was not satisfied with the final result, so I canceled that course. (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

The readings are very long and are basically topics that are not familiar to everyone. We will ask students to do research and then discuss during class. But many students did not prepare before the class. (Teacher E: Chinese College English teacher.)

Students pay too much attention to the scores. They are not willing to spend time on reading. They are trying to improve their English level by constantly doing the exercises. This is a misleading, it should be through a lot of reading, the language is a process of slowly infiltrating, so that it will be better. (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

English Language Assessment

Due to the examination-oriented education, students, teachers and parents valued test scores. This means that the fundamental purpose of learning English language was to get a high score, rather than master
a communication skill. Therefore, the purpose of students taking the exam was only to achieve high scores, and they did not pay attention to the accumulation of daily language skills. CET4 and CET6 were standard tests for Chinese college teaching. These tests were the only standard tests for measuring college students' English proficiency. Most of the students believed that they did not need to be prepared. They did not think the content of this exam is related to college English learning.

- In fact, I did not make any preparations for the CET4 & CET6. I feel that the exam is not very close to our textbooks. The vocabulary in the textbooks are basically not tested at the CET4 & CET6. The reason why I passed this exam is mainly based on what I learned in high school.

(Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

四、六级考试其实我都没有做任何的准备。我觉得考试和我们课本不是很衔接，课本用的词基本上四、六级都不会考。我之所以能通过这个考试，主要还是依靠高中所学习的。] (Student C: Junior Chinese student in Beijing.)

- IELTS's composition is not like the CET4 & CET6. With a few good sentences, a good phrase you can not get a high score. It is a process of memorization and dictation, without any thinking.

(Student D: Doctoral international student in German.)

雅思的作文不像四、六级考试那样,用几个好的句式,好的词组就是能得到高分。我觉得我们的写作特别没有思想,完全就是套句型。] (Student D: Doctoral international student in German.)

However, some teachers pointed out that although Chinese students' exam skills have help them get very good score, they are worrying about their practical use of English.

- Students may have passed the exam, but they will not be able to use it in practice. There are students who have an IELTS score that is not low, but the language level is not enough for them to participant in my class. The exam does not fully reflect the student's language level.

(Teacher H: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

学生也许考试过了，但是实际使用时就不行了。有存在学生的雅思考试分数不低，但是语言水平不过关的。考试并不能完全反映学生的语言水平。] (Teacher H: College professor of mathematics at University A.)
The teacher also pointed out the shortcomings of the CET4 and CET6. They generally believed that this exam cannot fully test the students' English proficiency.

- The CET4 & CET6 are now undergoing reform. But in general, my negative view on the CET4 & CET6 is still quite big. Every students' professional skills are different, but every student have passed a unified examination, which does not help students' academic English learning. English class offered by the university is around the contents of the CET4 & CET6, somehow interfere with the teacher's teaching because the CET4 & CET6 do not involve oral aspects.

(Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.)

Both students and teachers believed that the content of the CET4 and CET6 was very different from the international English exams such as TOEFL and IELTS. They did not think that the CET4 and CET6 included the cultural aspects of the language, because the CET4 and CET6 paid too much attention to grammar.

- The CET4 & CET6 are created by Chinese college teachers so they know how to teach students to pass the exam. While, TOEFL and IELTS include many things outside of China, like different cultures of English-speaking countries. Moreover, it is difficult for some Chinese students to answer these questions if they have a lack of understanding of the cultures and customs of other countries. (Teacher A: Chinese College English teacher.)

The contents of the College entrance examination, CET4 and CET6 and the IELTS and TOEFL exams were quite different, and the assessment focuses differently. Students and teachers generally believed that from
the perspective of the function of English, the CET4 and CET6 could not fully assess the students' English proficiency.

- About a quarter of the students in my class come from provinces that do not include listening in the test (College entrance examination). (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

[在我的班上有大概四分之一的学生来自不考听力的省份。] (Teacher B: Chinese College English teacher.)

- In some rural area in China, there is still Deaf-mute English teaching, and the pronunciation of teachers is not very good. Their teaching content is more focused on vocabulary and grammar. (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

[在中国一些偏远地方，还是哑巴式的英语教学，老师的发音都不标准。他们的教学内容更多是侧重于词汇的补充和语法的讲解。] (Teacher C: Curriculum director of English Educational Institution in China.)

On the contrary, the IELTS and TOEFL test could more fully demonstrate the students' English proficiency. Some students studying abroad said that the IELTS and TOEFL tests helped them to learn about cultures of different countries, and they are also very helpful in studying abroad.

- The TOEFL test is more comprehensive. In the process of preparing for the exam, I found that merely memorizing words and understanding grammar is not enough. In the reading test, I also need to analyze the logic, which is very difficult. If there is no understanding of the cultural background, I don't think I can pass the exam. (Student B: Senior Chinese student in Beijing.)

[托福考的更全面一些。在准备考试的过程中，我发现仅仅背诵单词和理解语法是不够的。在阅读过程中，我还需要分析逻辑，这一点很难。如果对一些的文背景的了解，我不认为我能通过考试。] (Student B: Senior Chinese student in Beijing.)

The Influence of Culture on English Practice

As far as learning attitude is concerned, among Chinese college students, the ratio of in-class and out-class participation grades to total scores is small (40%), so most Chinese students did not pay much attention
to their in-class and out-class participation grades. Most parents, students, and teachers paid more attention to the final results. While, in the United States, the ratio of the in-class and out-class participation grades of most courses will be greater than the final. Teachers paid more attention to the class performance and assignments of students.

However, due to this cultural difference, the performance of many Chinese students in the American classroom could not satisfy the teachers. As a result, some teachers could not know whether the Chinese students mastered and understood the content during the class, which increased the risk of teacher's misjudgment of the students. Some America teachers responded they were dissatisfied with the students' attitude and behaviors towards learning.

- I have rarely had problems with student attitudes. Well, occasionally. Mostly, the kids came prepared for class. There was one kid who came unprepared every day and he'd sit there for 10 minutes before the class started and do the problems. These problems are hard. You can't do them in 10 minutes. It would take an average student one hour and a half to do them. Most (but not all) Chinese students in this program come to class prepared. (Teacher F: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

- Some students have problems with their attitudes and have a bad habit of going to college in China. Some students in China have relaxed because they went to college, and their attitude towards learning is not correct. However, it is not acceptable in the United States. Usually the scores account for a large proportion for class participation. Even if your final exam is very good, the class performance is not good, you will not get a good overall score. A lot of Chinese students don't pay much attention to this. (Teacher H: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

Both the problem of learning attitude and the performance of Chinese students in the classroom...
concerned teachers. Due to cultural differences, Chinese students were very quiet in the classroom and hardly interacted and asked questions with teachers. Even after class, there was very little interaction with the teacher.

- Some of them are very quiet, and not even quieter than the ones that you see in class. I'm teaching capstone now. among the students I'm teaching, there are two students that I never taught earlier. And two both very very nice and very very intelligent but they are so quiet. that even though I only meet in a group of three so there's only three of us that I really have to reach out to and try to get them to say something. But when they say something it's usually correct. In terms of English proficiency. I don't think there's a problem. In terms of shyness and that there's something that we're still working on. (Teacher G: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

- Some of them have never seen me for my office hours, and inside a class tend to be very quiet. You're right that the level of interaction varies. For most of them, especially in the class that you saw, I would say if I took away. If there are ten students, I would say I have frequent communication with one-third, moderate communication with another third, and very little with another third. And of that third only two of the students I think are in real jeopardy. (Teacher G: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

- I think that Chinese students are misunderstanding about what we expect. They feel that they must know the correct answer before they can speak. (Teacher J: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

[我认为中国学生有一个误区就是，觉得自己必须要知道正确的答案才可以发言。讲话很谨慎。] (Teacher J: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

Meanwhile, some teachers expressed understanding, but they still hoped that students could increase their interaction with teachers. Some teachers will encourage students to interact after class, but due to Chinese cultural factors, the results are not very satisfactory because in Chinese traditional culture, communicating
with teachers after class means that students have serious problems, and there are cultural and linguistic barriers between Chinese and American teachers.

- I would like them to be more active in class, and an active means more participatory that I would like. I want them to know that take chances more. I think maybe I know in China from what I learned that there's a big tradition of saving face. I think that students might be hesitant to take a chance because they don't want to embarrass themselves as if that would make them lose face. I want them to know that I don't care if they give occasional wrong answers. I'd rather have them participate to give a wrong answer and then learn the right answer. So, I just like them to be braver in class with the participation. (Teacher G: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

- They are not coming to see me for classwork. I put up a sign-up sheet and no one signed up for it. I've given two little quizzes. I told them if they do not do well, they have to come to see me. Mostly they don’t. (Teacher F: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

However, the English level of the students also posed a great challenge to the teacher's teaching. Some teachers explained that students' English proficiency limited their learning in the classroom. Some students could not understand what the teacher talked about.

- I think it's difficult to learn a subject in a different language. You should know the language first before you try to learn a topic in non-language. I think if you're coming here to learn something. You need to have a good English base and where you learn on topic. (Teacher L: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

The teacher pointed out some problems found in the class. Some students' language proficiency did not meet the requirements for studying in a English classroom.
I had a couple of math problems on the board. And I said, “how many understand this problem?”

I can tell some of them do not understand me, but they do not tell me. There are a couple of them that I worried about their English. And I know what their English scores were, and I know how they were doing in the ELI program. (Teacher F: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

I think they need to definitely practice their English way more than they do to be successful in the future. I know for example that we've had wonderful students who have applied to graduate school and when the graduate schools interviewed them via Skype interview that they have not sometimes been accepted to the school. I think it's a shame because it's such a wonderful opportunity for them to speak English but there's a natural tendency of course for them to hang out by themselves just as the American students do. (Teacher G: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

One incredibly bright Chinese student that she's so bright that we just told her she is getting an award for being the best math student this year. and yet, when she took the GRE. She was only in the 20th percentile in English speaking. (Teacher G: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

Due to the limitations of the students' English proficiency, the teacher has taken some measures to help Chinese students better understand the content of the class.

Question: Will your teaching style differ when you have Chinese students?

Answer: Yes. I write down more. I try to speak slower. I'm trying to be aware of what they're understanding, what they're not. But that’s sometimes hard because they don't tell me.

(Teacher F: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

Answer: I purposely try to keep my teaching the same. I know that I tend to be very interactive
and even though many of the Chinese students are not used to that, apparently. I still really try to get them talking, and talking to each other, and talking to me. So, the answer is no. I teach the same. I do try to be more careful at what I write on the board because I realized that just in case some of them are having a hard time following everything I say. I will give them another resource. And then the other thing I do is I have one of the American students sending her notes, a picture of her notes that I post online so that the Chinese students or any student can access them if they want. (Teacher G: College professor of mathematics at University A.)

Summary

Learning English can be a long process. An immersive language learning environment could greatly improve the efficiency of learning, but an immersive language environment was very difficult for students who did not have any experience studying abroad. Through interviews of students, English teachers, and English-speaking teachers, and class-observation, the researcher divided the data into four areas for analysis: English teaching, English learning, assessments, and cultural of learning.

In the aspect of English teaching, Chinese and American English teachers had different teaching contents, but they all emphasized that learning efficiency could be improved by increasing communication with native English speakers and readings. In addition, due to the obsolete content of the textbooks, the separation from the practical application, and the limitation of the class size, the English learning effect of Chinese college students were not very efficient. However, due to the advantages of the language environment, American classes had made students' English learning efficient by frequent replacing the teaching materials and the control of class size.

For English learning, both teachers and students agreed that an immersive environment was very helpful for learning English. In particular, studying abroad was not only enriching students’ own experience,
but also improving the language skills. In addition, learners’ motivation was also a factor that affects English learning. The effect of actively learning English was much higher than that of passive learning.

In terms of assessment, teachers and students complained that the practicality of the CET4 and CET6 was not enough because there was a big gap between the content of the exam and the daily use. Some participants explained that their English level did not improve during the preparation of the CET4 and CET6 exams. A high score on the CET4 and CET6 did not mean that they could use English to communicate with English speakers or read and understand English literature. On the contrary, IELTS and TOEFL not only assessed the language ability of students but also added some language and culture aspects of English-speaking countries. Both the teacher and the student believed that the exam could be a good assessment of English and was very helpful for studying abroad in an English-speaking country.

In terms of culture, China’s teaching model has prevented students from interacting with teachers in the classroom, which led to cultural conflicts and incompatibility problems. At the same time, Chinese culture also posed a great challenge to American teachers.
CHAPTER V

Summary and Discussion

The overall goal of this study was to describe English language learning and English education in China and the United States in an in-depth manner through the perspectives of adult Chinese English language learners, and Chinese and American English teachers. The purpose of this proposed phenomenological, qualitative case study was to discover and analyze the current status and challenges of English language education and learning through the current perspectives and behaviors of Chinese adult English learners and English language educators, as well as futen relevant educators. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews, document review and classroom observations for English learners and English educators (English language teachers and/or using English as the main language for teaching).

The research questions guiding this proposed investigation are as follows:

- What are the differences between Chinese and U.S. English instruction, in terms of goals, processes, and outcomes?

- What are the English language learning and proficiency experiences and perspectives of adult Chinese learners? How might these experiences inform future English language instruction, learning, and assessment methods for adult Chinese learners in China and the United States?

- What impact do cultures of learning and English language proficiency assessments have on instructional goals and methods in China and the U.S.?

Research Type

Qualitative research methods were used in this study, including document/curricular analysis, in-class observations, and face-to-face interviews. According to Creswell (2013), triangulation of data included a combination of more than one research strategy in a single investigation in order to assure completeness of
findings or confirm findings.

This study is based on existing second language acquisition theory and literature research data. Using English educators (and/or content-area courses teach in English) and English learners as the research subjects, the researcher employs interviews, observations, and document reviews to gather data and investigate the current challenges faced by Chinese English learners during their studies at both Chinese and American universities, as well as the challenges faced by English language teachers and teachers that content-area instructors who teach in English. The status quo, challenges, influencing factors, and participants' suggestions were carefully investigated and analyzed.

Description of the Sample

The participants in this research were from both Beijing, China and the U. S. The data was collected from January to February 2019. Some of the participants were from University A in the United States, a private liberal arts institution that promotes in international education with around 3,700 current students, 3,000 study abroad participants, and more than 26,000 alumni. The researcher obtained general information and demographic profiles of Chinese international students from the International Affairs Office of University A. The information included the students’ major, current elective courses, and English language learning history. The majority of the Chinese international students at University A were in undergraduate level Computer Science and Mathematics programs. This information provided direct guidance for the selection of participants in the study and determined the participants in the study. While some of the participants were from some universities in Beijing, top 50 ranked in China, with at least around 26,300 current students; and English Educational Institution A in Beijing with around 300 current students.

Teacher participants. China. 7 teacher participants were selected by the researcher through an introduction by an English language educator in China. The researcher did not know the other 6 participants
before. 5 out of 7 agreed to participate in the study and were interviewed by the researcher. Only one of the participants agreed to record a live class for researcher observation. 4 classes, 45 minutes per class, were recorded and sent to the researcher.

The U.S. 15 teacher participants were selected by the researcher by obtaining general information and demographic profiles of Chinese international students from the International Affairs Office of University A. The researcher only knows 2 (out of 15) participants since she studied at the English Language Learning Program at University A for 2 semesters. 11 (out of 15) teacher participants were working at the Computer Science and Mathematics Program at University A with 29 (out of 40) current Chinese students enrolled in the program. 4 (out of 15) teacher participants were working at the English Language Learning Program at University A. 8 out of 15 agreed to participate in the study and were interviewed by the researcher. 6 of them agreed to let the researcher observe the class. 18 classes, 25 hours total, were observed by the researcher.

Student participants. China. 6 student participants were selected and introduced to the researcher by one of the teacher participants. The researcher did not know the participants before. 4 out of 6 agreed to participate in the study and were interviewed by the researcher.

The U.S. 3 student participants in the mathematics major class at University A were selected and observed by the researcher. 2 out of 10 student participants were selected in a junior mathematics major class, while 1 was selected in a senior mathematics major class. Based on the classroom observations and the validity of the research, the students most interactive with the professor during the class were selected for the interview. 1 student participant was selected because he was the only student who was enrolled in an English Language Learning Program at University A for three semesters which was the longest learning experience at the English Language Learning Program out of all Chinese international students.
Findings

Chinese English learners have challenges and difficulties during their study in the U.S classrooms and English language classrooms. After collecting data for a period of 2 months, the data was divided into four parts for in-depth analysis: English teaching, English learning, assessment, and culture of learning.

**English teaching.** Chinese and American English teachers had different teaching content, but they all emphasized that learning efficiency could be improved by increasing communication with native English speakers and readings. In addition, due to the obsolete content of the textbooks, little practical application, and the extent of class size, the English learning methods for Chinese college students were not very efficient. However, due to the advantages of the language environment, American classes had made students' English learning very efficient by frequently replacing the teaching materials and controlling class size.

**English learning.** Both teachers and students agreed that an immersive environment was very helpful for learning English. In particular, studying abroad was not only enriching students’ own experiences, but also improving language skills. In addition, learners’ motivation was also a factor that affects English learning. The effect of actively learning English was much higher than that of passive learning.

**Assessment.** Teachers and students complained that the practicality of the CET4 and CET6 was not enough, as reflected in the assessment and its disconnect from meaningful content. On the contrary, IELTS and TOEFL not only assessed the language ability of students but also added some language and culture aspects of English-speaking countries. Both the teacher and the student believed that the exam could be a good assessment of English and was very helpful for studying abroad in an English-speaking country.

**The culture of learning.** China’s teaching model has prevented students from interacting with teachers in the classroom, which has led to cultural conflicts and incompatibility problems. At the same time, this also posed a great challenge to American teachers.
Discussion

The analysis shows that the content and objectives of Chinese English teaching at the college level are very different from American English language programs.

In addition, interviews with participants reflect the disparities caused by cultural differences between Chinese and American English teaching methods in professional academic writing, speaking, reading, and listening, and the use of language by Chinese students in an English environment. The study also shows that there are serious shortages of teaching and environmental resources in the practical use of Chinese English teaching, which leads to problems such as insufficient motivation for learning and loss of interest in learning due to the inefficiency of English learning. In the United States, however, the function of English is a very important part of English learning. Chinese students change the purpose of English learning from test-taking to function ability of the language, which makes learning English more limited. Due to the advantage of the language environment in the U.S., the effectiveness of English learning increases as students are continuously exposed to English in their daily lives.

Many of the differences between Chinese and American English education culture are due to the influence of Confucian culture. China's teaching model is based on students' obedience to teachers, which means students cannot question teachers. In the American classroom, teachers are more expecting students to learn and explore independently. However, some Chinese international students do not engage with the teacher during the class. In the study, the researcher found that some Chinese international students' performances in the classroom could not meet the standards of studying independently and adapting to the American English classroom culture. This is reflected in the degree of interaction with the teachers in the classroom and the interviews with participants.

Based on the research data, this study explores the causes and solutions of the challenges and points out that Chinese students should increase their language using skills and cultural learning while immerse in
English. In particular, Chinese English learners who intend to go abroad should participate in the English language learning program in the English-speaking country before enrolling in academic study. It is necessary to adapt to foreign classrooms and improve English language skills in an efficient and practical manners.

At the same time, relevant English educational institutions and universities in China should improve the quality of English education and English assessments.

**Discussion of the Results in Relation to the Literature**

According to the literature review in Chapter II, there is a wide variety of research and data on English learning and teaching. While collating and referring to the opinions in the research and literature, the researcher found some connections with the findings.

**English teaching.** In English teaching, China attaches immense importance to formal English language instruction and most Chinese English teachers focus on English teaching as a skill. Most Chinese teachers’ goal and even students' goal for English learning is proficiency in using a foreign language in order to get a higher score in English tests, yet they ignore the importance of language within a culture, and fail for teach about English/U.S. culture, and the culture of other English-speaking countries. Due to China’s cultural background, its education model focuses on the instilling of knowledge, emphasizing the memorization of the content (Yang, 2014). Chinese teachers focus on the exam closely; they teach their students how to get the point on each question of the exam by practicing examination skills. This allows most students to appear to improve after a brief period of study (Li, 2016). As a result, the English assessment does not truly assess the students' English proficiency only test-taking skills. English proficiency has become one of the top obstacles for many Chinese international students studying in the United States. Due to China's exam-oriented education system and lack of necessary contextual knowledge and cultural background, there is not enough opportunity for Chinese students to practice English before coming to the United States.
Meanwhile, Hollins (2008) pointed out that teaching challenges include issues based on ideology, goals for schooling, and teaching ability. One of the goals of multicultural education is to ensure that teachers are prepared for different student populations. During the class observations and interviews, the researcher found that many American teachers (content-area courses taught in English) struggled about how to work with Chinese students in their classes. Also, although they generally believed that Chinese students' English language learning is still insufficient, teachers couldn't determine whether students could understand the content of the class because of the lack of classroom interactions. Although the teacher could get information about language proficiency of the student through the assignments, it is difficult for the teacher to understand the true level of the student due to regulatory issues. Furthermore, some Chinese students will seek help from each other only.

**English learning.** According to VanPatten and Williams (2015a),

“The crucial and most controversial part of the distinction [between acquisition and learning] is that these two knowledge stores—the acquired system and the learned system—can never interact; that is, knowledge that is learned may not be converted into acquired knowledge via some kind of practice and become available for spontaneous use…This is why learners may “know” rules; that is, they may be able to articulate them but may nevertheless be unable to use it in spontaneous production. Conversely, a learner may use a structure accurately and spontaneously yet be unable to verbalize the rule for its use” (p.25).

Chinese English learners generally believed that getting a high Chinese standard English test scores does not mean students have high English language proficiency. In the interviews, participants generally believed that examination-oriented English learning did not help improve their English proficiency. They believed that the English language problems faced by using daily English and studying abroad are still a big challenge for them. After having experienced over 15 years of English learning experience, most students still focused numerous obstacles until studying abroad.

Chinese students rarely pay attention to their own individualistic or personal characteristics (Liu, 2010). These attitudes are likely to make Chinese students ignore or reduce their initiative in developing and
cultivating their own participation in classroom lessons or in solving problems independently. Consequently, students' English learning efficiency will be directly affected. This teaching and learning model in China assists students to remember the main points in the content only by mechanically obeying the teacher's explanation. On the contrary, in the United States, if students do not think independently in the classroom, it is difficult to grasp what they are learning because American teachers will not directly tell the students the key points.

Assessment. Ma (2006) pointed out that the design of the CET4 and CET6 is not reasonable. This exam does not highlight the ability of language use. This test separates listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which does not reflect the ability to use the language in a comprehensive manner. In addition, as a language test, speaking is not a required skill section in the test, which seems to contradict a purpose of language assessment. All the student participants in the interview passed the CET4 exam, and some students passed the CET6 exam. All participants indicated that in terms of exams, most people believed that high school English learning can meet the requirements of the exam. The English learning content of high school and college level is repeated, which does not help the improvement of English. Therefore, for these exams, participants indicated that they basically did not prepare for them. A small number of participants tried to do mock exams to prepare for these tests.

In addition, participants who took the CET4 and CET6 exams generally agreed that the CET4 and CET6 exams could not fully assess their English proficiency. The questions and readings in the exam are outdated, the writing mode is rigid, the listening materials are not in line with reality, and there is a big gap between the test content and the actual use of English.

However, according to Chen (2006), TOEFL and IELTS attach immense importance to grammar, detail, and comprehension. The difficulty of TOEFL and IELTS reading passages is close to the reading level of American university textbooks. Because the curriculum of American universities emphasizes and fosters the ability of students to learn independently, in line with its cultural values, having a unique opinion after
reading is a criterion for testing independent learning and implied success at American universities. Most of the student participants did not have access to the TOEFL test, since they came through partnership programs and that did not require TOEFL or IELTS. This also led to students not having access to normative English learning and assessment before studying abroad.

In addition, some participants, particularly students who have not studied abroad, think that the TOEFL test is very difficult, so they need to learn outside the class and prepare really hard to get a good score in the exam.

**Culture of learning.** According to Yu (2016), Chinese traditional culture does not promote the individual or pursuit of individuality. Most Chinese students prefer to integrate with the group. They are not willing to detach from the group because it will make them feel isolated. As a result, opinion and individual thinking in Chinese society are not prominent. Chinese students who grew up in a traditional Chinese culture are accustomed to limits in their educational environment and as a result might have difficulties publicizing their individualities or solving their problems independently. In classroom observations, the researcher found that Chinese students did not tend to interact with teachers in either American or Chinese classroom. Although they knew the answers, they were still reluctant to answer the question on their own initiative. In the Chinese classroom, the teacher is authoritative, and the students do not need to interact and ask questions with the teacher because students' questions in the classroom are sometimes considered as challenges to the teachers’ authority, or the students themselves think that asking questions during the classes are a humiliation. The differences in cultures between the United States and China has brought great challenges to Chinese English learners. As a communication tool, the language should emphasize the use and practice of language in teaching, not for examination purposes. In classroom observations and feedback from participants, the researcher also found that Chinese students and teachers had little interaction in the classroom. At the same time, it also shows that this issue has been disagreed by relevant researchers since the differences of culture, teachers are still
struggling with how to work Chinese students and help encourage them to interact in the class activities.

The theoretical framework of second language acquisition theories. Children have less inhibition, or feelings of embarrassment, about trying out and taking risks with language. Adults have much more inhibition, that is, they feel embarrassed making mistakes and don't want to seem as though they are less intelligent by native speakers. Therefore, adult English learners face greater psychological challenges during the learning process.

During the interviews, students generally reflected that there is a big gap between English and Chinese, such as the differences in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. These represent great challenges in learning English. The use of the second language will often push students out of their comfort zone, which makes students feel embarrassed when they make mistakes.

However, according to VanPatten and Williams (2015b), the SLA theories described a learner’s internal working memory or comprehension (what), or how the external learning context supports conversation and use of language between people, and ultimately, language learning outcomes. Since adult learners' learning motivation is more explicit, a learner’s internal working memory or comprehension ability is stronger than a child’s. This has a non-negligible help in the acquisition of a second language. If adult learners are able to immerse themselves in a second language environment, it is very helpful to improve and master English as the second language. In particular, learning English together with people of different language backgrounds will greatly reduce the psychological challenges of adults due to inhibition.

The implication of the Results for Practice

This qualitative study successfully discovers and analyzes the current situation and challenges faced by Chinese English learners through their views and behaviors, as well as teachers' perspectives and experiences.
In the data collection process, Chinese English learners have provided many useful and thoughtful suggestions for mathematics majors and English teachers at University A. Meanwhile, the faculty and staff of University A and the English teachers of Beijing universities also pointed out their expectations and suggestions for current and future Chinese English learners to help their English learning succeed.

As a result, the researcher created and summarized recommendations for educators of adult English students in China and the United States to effectively prepare and support Chinese students to overcome challenges in English learning and provide effective English learning suggestions for English learners.

**Suggestions for English language teachers and English language learning institutions.** English educators should provide English learners with functional English teaching as the main purpose. In particular, at the college level, the purpose of English teaching should be to be able to adapt to the English language requirements at the university level. Students must be able to read and understand the professional-related English literature in order to provide a rich content reserve for academic learning. In addition, the emphasis on language and culture should both be emphasized to help students better learn and understand the second language.

**Be aware of the purpose of language teaching.** English language learning should not only be used to pass the English test. English educators should define students' English language proficiency as a teaching goal by helping students improve their ability to speak, read, listen and write. The improvement of students’ overall English proficiency will help students achieve good results in the exam.

In the teaching process, educators should pay attention to language practice. The process of learning will be boring if the teacher focuses too much on inputting the teaching content. Interactions in the classroom is a great way to promote language. A language is a communication tool. Learning a language while using it is more efficient than only accepting input from teachers and textbooks.

**Teaching English skills in a balanced way.** Teachers should not separate listening, speaking, writing
and reading in the teaching process. For example, in an English class teacher should not speak a language other than English (listening), let students use English to communicate (speaking) during the class, and after reading the literature and textbooks allow them to express their own opinions (speaking and reading). After the class, students are able to complete a class reflection (writing). These processes also emphasize the learning of vocabulary and grammar. Researcher believe that the skills of English leaning are inseparable, and the classification of the course is to be more specific to the learning of certain English skills. However, in the teaching process, English ability needs to be improved in a balanced approach.

**Strict standard selection of textbooks.** Textbooks are an important criterion based on English teaching. The choice of teaching materials needs to be related to the needs of students, especially at the college level. The content of English textbooks should be related to the academic learning of the students in order to help students learn in their professional field.

In addition, the content of the textbooks should always be kept updated. Old content can be an incentive, which makes students lose their interests in English learning. Repeated material and the time to teach and learn is not only a matter of time, it does not help the improvement of students’ English proficiency.

**Increase extracurricular English learning opportunities.** Teachers should help students find extra-curricular English learning resources and provide students with access. authentic reading and professional academic articles are good resources for increasing English learning content. The use of English teaching can increase students’ interest in learning.

**Emphasis on the teaching of language culture.** The language teaching goal should not be just for mastering a language, because teaching the culture of language is very important. Students can better use and understand the language if they understand the culture. Learning obstacles due to cultural differences cannot be ignored in teaching processes.

**Targeted help based on the student’s English level.** According to the students' language proficiency,
can help students improve in a targeted way. Large class size or a large gap in the English proficiency level of students in the same class will increase the difficulty of teaching. Moreover, due to the gap in student proficiency level, students’ needs of language learning are different. It is impossible for teachers to provide support for students with different needs in the same class period. Grouping students according to proficiency level will improve students' learning efficiency and teacher's teaching effect.

**Provide support and help outside the class.** The study of the English language is a long process that requires students not only to learn in the classroom but also to accumulate practice after classes. Educators can provide students with after-school English learning guidance, such as English-speaking partners and writing centers. It can help students with specific needs to improve their English proficiency and learning efficiency.

Student's need for English language learning extends beyond the limited time in the classroom. Students who interact with their students outside of class can help to improve students' English skills.

**Reduce the emphasis on assessment results.** Test-oriented education misleads the true purpose of learning English. Teachers should not emphasize how to succeed in the exam during the teaching process. Students should be instructed on how to use English as a communication tool and skill. Although the teacher needs assessments to know whether the student has mastered the teaching content, the researcher hopes that the teacher can use the score as a reference and consider the performance of the student in the classroom.

In addition, in the teaching process, teachers should not emphasize how to get a good score in English exams. For example, in writing, teachers should not teach advanced level students to improve their writing by memorizing writing templates.

**Suggestions for Chinese English language learners.** In terms of language learning, Chinese English learners face great challenges due to various factors. In order to learn English better and more efficiently, Chinese students should be clear about their learning goals and understand and integrate into the culture of
English-speaking countries.

**Know your goals.** Language learners should know why they are learning English and what skills they need to master for their practical application purpose. The study of English at the college level should not be limited to improving vocabulary and grammar. Learning plan should be developed based on learners’ own needs of English function.

**Pay attention to the method of learning English.** The accumulation of knowledge in vocabulary and grammar should not be the focus of study at the college level. A large amount of exposure to English literature and resources will improve vocabulary and grammar focus through a large amount of exposure to relevant English literature and resources. At the college level, students should master the language through the application of language functions because this stage of English learning is to pave the way for the development in professional fields. Proficiency in English will help students to understand and exchange research results in their professional fields with different people in many countries.

**Have a positive and correct study attitude.** Learning English is not just about passing the exam, but more about mastering language skills. The improvement of language skills will also improve the scores in the exam. Daily use of English is more effective for exams than for memorizing templates and standard answers.

**Communicate with professors and classmates in English.** Immersion in the English language environment can greatly improve the efficiency of English learning. Increase your exposure to the English language and rich language content, such as taking part in English activities, communicating with native speakers, watching English social media and video resources. Stepping out of the Chinese community will provide more opportunities for practice and learning English in a functional way.

**Pay attention to the study of English language culture.** The culture of the English language can better help learners understand the second language. Language learning barriers due to cultural differences have made many students encounter difficulties in improving their English and even lose interest in learning.
Understanding the culture of language can be obtained from the literature, television shows, and daily communication. Learn English culture while improving English language proficiency.

**Looking for opportunities to practice English.** English learning in the classroom alone does not meet the needs of English learners because of limited time in class. In addition, teachers can hardly provide support and help to every student with different needs in the classroom. Therefore, students should not rely too much on the learning period and opportunities in the classroom, but try to enrich extracurricular learning content and build independent learning skills. Finding interesting content can also increase students’ motivation to learn.

**Build your own study plan.** The college-level study requires a reasonable arrangement of academic and English language learning. If students can arrange the time and content of learning, they can improve the efficiency of English learning.

This balance also helps students to connect with academic and English learning. While improving professional knowledge, improve the accumulation of English knowledge by reading English literature, watching professional lectures, communicating with professionals, or writing an academic report.

**Try to take an English immersion class before study abroad.** There is a big gap between the teaching model in China and the teaching model in English-speaking countries. Before studying abroad, students should experience the foreign classroom atmosphere and mode in the English language immersion class, immersion will be of great help to students' ability to adapt to study abroad.

The interaction between teachers and students during the class is a very important part of U.S. universities. Due to the cultural differences of Chinese students, it will take them a long time to adapt to different teaching modes in foreign classrooms. This kind of challenge is not only about language proficiency but also adapting to English-speaking countries’ cultures. Due to the solidification of the Chinese teaching model, there is no opportunity for students to experience foreign classes before study abroad. The necessary
participation in English immersion before academic learning can help students better adapt to learning in English-speaking countries.

**Suggestions for universities and educators in the U.S that work with Chinese international students.** With the growth of global education, university educators in the United States should provide support and resources for Chinese international students to help them adapt to American classrooms and improve their English in the United States to meet academic standards. American universities and educators need to better understand the cultural background and needs of Chinese students and provide help, support, and additional attention to students who face academic, linguistic, and cultural challenges.

**Academics preparation.** American university professors and managers should pay close attention to the academic performance of Chinese students. The academic level of some students is influenced by their language ability. Most Chinese students prefer to live and study in their own Chinese community and help each other with content learning and homework by using Chinese learning materials. Therefore, Chinese students' homework or test scores may not reflect their true academic levels. As educators, professors at American universities need to be sensitive and aware of the academic challenges faced by Chinese students and provide the necessary support and guide.

**Culture preparation.** Due to cultural differences, Chinese students will be quiet in the classroom and rarely interact with teachers. Although this is a teaching challenge due to cultural differences, this problem can be greatly improved by encouraging students and understanding the needs and culture of students. Hiring some experienced Chinese scholars can help teachers and Chinese students to communicate well enough for solving the communication barriers of Chinese students in classroom interaction, academic exchanges, and school life.

**Reach out to students.** Most Chinese students have an introverted personality. Due to cultural background, Chinese students rarely communicate with teachers after class. As educators and schools,
encouraging students to communicate with the professor on a regular basis can help build a good relationship of trust and help students in improving language skills and academics.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Although this study has deeply analyzed the current situation of English teaching and learning, there is still a need to conduct more in-depth research and study in this field. In order to optimize English teaching and learning methods, contents, and assessments in the global economy, more educators and learners can benefit from those studies.

A limitation of this study is lack of representation of other English language teaching institutions and all adult Chinese students of English due to the small sample size and lack of diversity of samples. So, in future research, the author hopes to expand the number of samples in order to collect more comprehensive English learning and teaching challenges in order to help meet the needs of a larger group of Chinese English language learners.

For future researchers, increasing the emphasis on sample diversity in the study of adult Chinese students learning English will have a deeper impact on English language learning and teaching. Because China's college entrance examination system is not uniform, some provinces do not have listening as part of the assessment, which leads to the imbalance of students' English proficiency. Therefore, in future research, the understanding of English learners’ background information and learning processes are necessary.

Second, this study cannot fully reflect the actual situation of Chinese adult English learners in the process of English learning due to the limited time of data collection. At the same time, it does not fully reflect the challenges faced by English teachers and learners. Therefore, the researcher hopes that relevant research in the future will extend the observation period of the sample and obtain more detailed data on English learning and teaching.
For future research, a long-term tracking of the sample group and focus on the process of students learning English should be considered. Comparing the content of the students' English learning, the difficulty of learning, and the learning result will have practical implications for English teaching and learning. The results of a long-term study may provide direct and effective advice for educators and guidance and support for Chinese English students who are facing difficulties learning English.

Third, this study has an insufficient sample selection for Chinese English classes, so the understanding of Chinese English classes cannot present authentic Chinese teaching status. Therefore, the student group that this research institute can help is English learners who aim to study abroad or Chinese students breaking away from the traditions of the Chinese education system. Although this study provides a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the American English class, many teaching methods and models cannot be used in Chinese classrooms due to differences in educational policies between the two countries. Therefore, the researcher hopes that future research will be able to more deeply analyses the problems, challenges, advantages, and disadvantages in Chinese English teaching classrooms. Thus, more contributions in might be made to the teaching, learning, and assessment of English in China.

For future research, the researcher believes that it is meaningful to consider the learning environment of learners and educators as one of the factors that influence learning outcomes. Especially in Chinese classrooms, teaching has been affected due to restrictions on teachers' power and rights. If combined with this aspect, analyzing the external and policy factors in the English learning challenge can provide English learners and educators with advice on effective learning and teaching.

Limitations

After collecting the data through interviews, classroom observations, and document review, the author wanted to understand the challenges for English language learning and teaching by in-depth analysis.
The author elaborated the background and actual situation of educators and students in order to more accurately propose effective English learning and teaching strategies. Despite this, there are still some limitations in this study.

First, the study is based on case studies from University A and Beijing universities (top 50 ranked in China). Due to the limited number of samples, it does not represent other English language teaching institutions and all Chinese adult English learners.

Second, as described in the sample description, the participant sampling of A University only draws students and teachers of the Computer Science and Mathematics program and the English Language Learning program. In addition, since the researcher is unable to collect data in Beijing, the data is mostly from the recommendations of some participants. In other words, the diversity of all participants in this study is limited.

Third, due to the limited time of this research (the data collection period is only 2 months), this study cannot fully reflect the actual situation of Chinese adult English learners in the process of English learning. Meanwhile, this study cannot fully reflect the challenges that English teachers face in the teaching process.

Fourth, since the researcher are unable to conduct classroom observations for this study in Beijing, the classroom observations are recorded by the participants themselves. Therefore, for all external factors in the videos, such as whether students are disturbed in the class, whether the students actually express their usual class performances, and whether the teacher make extra preparations for recording the video so that there are gaps between the classroom content and the actual teaching in the video cannot be controlled. are unable to guarantee.

Fifth, college-level English teaching in China is mainly based on the national unified English teaching syllabus, and only a few colleges/universities make slight adjustments according to the school's own situation. Therefore, the feasibility of the results of the data analysis for this study may not be realized at this stage. It should combine with the macro levels of China, such as China's education policy and curriculum.
Conclusion

In this study, the researcher discovered and analyzed the current status and challenges of English learning and teaching through the views and behaviors of current adult Chinese English learners, as well as the experience of teachers and related educators.

According to the results of data collection and analysis, there are many differences in English teaching between China and the United States; Chinese English learners cannot master even after 15 years of English instruction, Chinese English learners find it difficult to master English learning. Based on these findings, the author obtained some valuable suggestions through in-depth interviews with participants. Thus, the reliability of the findings is indicated through the experience of the participants.

At the same time, the researcher also provides advice on English education and learning for the purpose of this research and to help more English learners and educators.

In addition, based on the limitations of this research, the researcher provides guidance for the investigation of related topics in the future since a more comprehensive approach to learning English may benefit both educators and students.
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Appendix A: Theories, Models, and Methods of Second Language Acquisition

Historically, a variety of methods of instruction in SLA have been based in behaviorist, cognitive, and humanistic theories of learning. Each theory of SLA presents similar ideas to varying degrees and in general and more specific ways. Other aspects of theories of SLA include explanations of the degree and ways of language learning and knowledge development through explicit, or implicit, instruction and learning. Each theory tends to have specific ideas related to their unique orientations toward language development. The following section describes these three theories of learning, and common English language instructional methods that align with each of the theories.

**Behaviorism**

Behaviorism as a theory of learning developed in the 1920s, and Watson (J.B. Watson) was its early representative. Watson studied the psychology of animals and human beings. He believed that there is a common factor in human and animal behavior, that is, stimulation and reaction. Psychology is in this view concerned only with how external stimuli determine certain reactions, or behaviors. In Watson's view, all complex behaviors of animals and human beings are acquired by learning under the influence of the environment, including language learning. He put forward the formula of behaviorist psychology: Stimulus to Response (S-R) (Watson, 1970).

Methods aligned with behaviorist theories emphasize learners' understanding and conscious control of language rules, which are phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. It is considered that language ability is an internalized language knowledge system, emphasizing the decisive influence of language rules on students’ language learning (Confucianism China & Qiu, 2015). It advocates the formation of correct language habits through a large number of imitations and exercises. The position of these methods is that mastering many linguistic facts, will lead, through analysis and induction, to language acquisition
One specific method aligned with the S-R theory is the Grammar–Translation Method. The grammar-translation method is the oldest teaching system in foreign language teaching. It advocates teaching foreign languages in the mother tongue, using translation as the basic means to emphasize the central position of grammar. The grammar-translation method focuses on cultivating students' reading ability, emphasizing reading original works and masterpieces. No attention is paid to learning spoken language (Tai, 2014).

According to Fan (2012), the grammar-translation method is mainly used to cultivate learners' reading ability. In the teaching process, the grammar is first analyzed, then the foreign language is translated into the first language, and the two languages are compared mechanically and literally translated sentence by sentence. In teaching practice, translation is both a purpose of teaching and a method of teaching. This method focuses on prioritizing cultivating students' reading and translation skills over the cultivation of oral language skills. The grammar-translation method is relatively simple and easy to implement. Before the mid-1980s in China, this pedagogy was widely used. However, the disadvantages of the grammar-translation method are also obvious. Although it exercises the students' reading and translation skills and grammar knowledge, it does not attach importance to the cultivation of listening and speaking ability, which results in a disconnect between pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and text reading teaching (Chen, 2014). Although the grammar-translation method has been criticized and questioned, it is still widely used in China.

Cognitive Psychology

Norm Chomsky () is one of the representatives of the theory of cognitive acquisition. Chomsky believes that any typically-developing child can acquire native language ability in a few years, an activity that cannot be explained by purely behaviorist principles. However, in addition, Chomsky posits that it is unlikely that children acquire their first language solely through induction, reasoning, and abstract generalizations
Given connections between brain development, language exposure, and language acquisition. Instead, he believes that human beings have a so-called Language Acquisition Device (LAD) or center for universal grammar (Universal Grammar, UG) that is centered in the brain (Bolhuis, Tattersall, Chomsky, & Berwick, 2014).

According to Bolhuis, Tattersall, Chomsky, and Berwick (2014), external environment and language input only activate the mechanism of language acquisition. The theory of cognitive acquisition emphasizes the internal factors of the human brain, rather than the external environment and language input. Scholars have different opinions on whether universal grammar plays a role in the process of second language acquisition. Two specific language teaching methods align with this theory: The Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method.

**Direct method.** The direct method is based on the idea that second language learning must imitate first language learning because it is a natural way for humans to learn any language. This is most directly aligned with Krashen’s language acquisition model. This method relies on the direct representation of experience as a linguistic structure rather than on the abstraction of grammatical rules and vocabulary such as imitation, translation and memory (Zhu, Qin, & Hu, 2017). The essence of the natural pedagogy is to make the classroom as close to the natural environment as possible to provide students with authentic intelligible language input. The idea of direct method believes that classrooms are for acquisition and need to provide enough comprehensible input. Learners can use the mother tongue and target language to answer questions. Teachers can only use the target language to claim that the characters produce speech to develop students' language skills (Yuan, 2006).

After the founding of New China (1949), the turbulent political and economic situation had a great negative impact on English teaching. Around the 1950s, direct method was promoted, but it was criticized at that time as a "bourgeois pedagogy" (Fan, 2012).
**Audio-lingual method.** The audio-lingual method was developed by the United States during the World War II, when the government realized that they needed more people who could fluently speak various languages. The audio-lingual method emphasizes listening and speaking, and it is believed that listening and speaking is the basis of all language activities. Language teachers should follow the order of listening and speaking first, writing and reading second. This teaching method places too much emphasis on sentence practices, ignoring the content and meaning of the language, and is not conducive to fostering the communicative ability to use the language creatively (Fan, 2012).

In the 1960s, Chinese elementary and middle schools began to advocate and promote the audio-lingual method (Zhu, Qin, & Hu, 2017).

**Humanism**

Humanistic approaches to language learning focus on cultivating students’ language and communicative abilities with an eye toward functionality and effective communication, emphasizing student-centeredness and the role of emotional factors in teaching (Hollins, 2015). Methods aligning with this approach include group language learning, communicative language teaching, and task-based language teaching, with a particular model, Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) uniting these methods in a comprehensive manner.

**Group language learning.** In the form of group discussion, students sit around in circles, teachers are outside the circle, students speak a sentence or a word in their mother tongue, teachers translate into the target language, students can repeat the target language, and propose new words in their mother tongue.

**Communicative language teaching.** Also known as the Communicative Approach, this method was formed in the 1970s based on Hymes' () communicative competence theory and Halliday's () functional language theory. It aims to cultivate learners' communicative competence in foreign language teaching.
Foreign language teaching activities must involve real communicative connotations, and the purpose of cultivating communicative competence through meaningful teaching content and activity tasks the communicative language teaching method can be summarized as the communicative principle, task principle, and meaning principle of the three teaching principles. (Yuan, 2006)

1. Communicative principle uses genuine communicative behavior to promote language learning.
2. Task principle means using language for meaningful activities that promote language learning.
3. Meaning principle uses language that is meaningful to learners to promote language learning.

In accordance with these principles, the communicative language teaching method allows students to participate in meaningful activities in real communication situations and complete certain learning tasks to achieve the goal of cultivating language communication skills.

The advantage of the communicative approach is that it starts with the learner’s specific needs and is student-centered. Also, these teaching methods are flexible and diverse, and has language learning practices such as scenario dialogues and simulation scenarios (Chen, 2014).

**Task-based language teaching approach.** Originating in the 1980s, task-based language is a language teaching method emphasizing "learning in practice". This method was introduced to China in the 1990s and is still in use today (Yuan, 2006).

This method organizes teaching in the form of tasks through classroom teaching, “in task-supported language teaching, merely use pedagogic tasks to carry an overt or covert linguistic syllabus of some kind or, in a few cases, to deliver a topical, situational, or content syllabus” (Long, 2014, p.14). Through the designing of tasks with different levels of difficulty, teachers guide students to master and improve their language skills while completing tasks. This method of teaching emphasizes the needs of students and enhances students’ motivation for learning (Zhu, Qin, & Hu, 2017).

**Specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE).** SDAIE refers to a teaching method
that teaches subject knowledge in a way that English learners can easily understand. The method, “Offers and excellent opportunity and a challenge for monolingual English speaking teachers to acquire the skills and strategies to impart effective instruction, English language development, and conceptual understanding for the growing number of ELLs in their classroom, especially if the parameters of SDAIE are significantly broadened to include the knowledge, skills, and disposition that have been traditionally a part of the course of study for bilingual and ESL teachers” (Cline, 2003, p.18). It can be an inspiring force because it can be validated and affirmed in existing successful practices, language and culture are respected in all classrooms, and emotional areas are integrated into the curriculum. This method considers ELLs social, emotional, linguistic and academic needs.

Chinese Pedagogies of Teaching English

For a long time, English teaching in China has mainly introduced teaching methods from the Western English teaching and related theories, and it has been insufficient in the research and development of its own English teaching method (Chen, 2014). Moreover, the pioneering work done by Chinese English scholars has often been ignored.

However, there are still a few scholars in China who are actively trying to use traditional Chinese education ideas and Chinese teaching concepts in teaching practice to form English teaching methods with Chinese characteristics. Many of these methods combine behaviorist, linguistic, and student-responsive pedagogies. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the distinctive English teaching methods of Chinese characteristics that have developed in China include: Zhang Sizhong's “十六字外语教学法 (16-character Foreign Language Teaching Method)”, Zhang Zhengdong's “立体化教学法 (Three-dimensional Teaching Method)”, Ma Cheng’s “三位一体教学法 (Trinity Teaching Method)” and Bao Tianren's “四位一体教学法 (The four-in-one teaching method)”.
Zhang Sizhong's “十六字外语教学法 (16-character Foreign Language Teaching Method)”. This method is based on the practice and reform of foreign language teaching in the past 30 years, exploring English Teaching Method with Chinese characteristics by Chinese special-grade teacher Zhang Sizhong (Chen, 2014). The 16 characters are “适当集中 (Properly focused), 反复循环 (Repeatedly), 阅读原著 (Read the original English texts), 因材施教 (teach in line with the student's ability)” (教育部师范教育司, 2006).

**Properly focused.** Refers to the time being divided into the leading concentration (The words and grammars are briefly taught first, giving students a rough impression.), random concentration (Thoroughly teach vocabulary, grammar and other linguistic phenomena), and comprehensive concentration (Summarizing and reviewing the vocabulary and grammar during the class) (Zhu, Qin, & Hu, 2017) (Zhang, 2006).

**Repeatedly.** Refers to using various memory and circulation methods to enhance memory (Zhu, Qin, & Hu, 2017). First, various memory methods, like step-by-step memory, vocabulary card memory, and structure memory are utilized.

The second step is to use a variety of circulation methods, that is, once or several times per cycle, to raise a layer of requirements to help students fully understand and remember the vocabulary and article; reverse cycle, reverse review, and consolidate.

**Read the original English texts.** Refers to reading the original book after class to supplement classroom teaching (Zhu, Qin, & Hu, 2017).

**Teach in line with the student's ability.** Refers to a detailed analysis of the psychology of diverse types of learners, giving corresponding instructional guidance, and combining classroom teaching with the actual situation of students. The goal is to meet the needs of students at different levels. On the one hand, the individual gap, a few outstanding students, are taught through the organization of foreign language interest groups to improve the level of foreign languages. At the same time, a small number of students with poor foundation will be provided with individual counseling or extracurricular counseling. On the other hand, to
account for group differences, students take the same class, but they are separated into two different groups according to their English language proficiency. The two group will be taught separately to distribute tasks reasonably in group activities. (Zhu, Qin, & Hu, 2017).

**Zhang Zhengdong's “立体化教学法 (Three-dimensional Teaching Method)”**. Through the stage teaching mode and classroom teaching mode, a variety of specific teaching modes are constructed. The goals is to develop self-learning ability, including spelling, writing ability and grammar knowledge understanding, focused on listening and reading. Students learn to be proficient in basic language skills, including daily conversations. Students acquire speech skills, including read articles and texts that they have learned during the class, remember vocabulary, and do daily writing training (Zhang, 2007).

**Ma Cheng's “三位一体教学法 (Trinity Teaching Method)”**. This consists of a straight-through rhythm English teaching method (STRET), the trinity teaching method of letters, phonemes and phonetic symbols (TTM-LPP), and the trinity teaching method of vocabulary, grammar, and reading (TTM-VGR). The STRET and the TTM-LPP advocate the use of Chinese teaching theory and the rules of Chinese acquisition to learn English letters, factors, and phonetic symbols. Focusing on the teaching of phoneme sounds, it should be followed by consonants to vowels, and difficult to easy. The TTM-VGR strive to achieve balanced and orderly teaching through vocabulary coding, early memory, savvy grammar, and reading through a vocabulary and grammar teaching medium. (Ma & Lan, 2011)

**Bao Tianren's “四位一体教学法 (The four-in-one teaching method)”**. Its distinctive features are knowledge-based, learning-centered, quality-oriented, and faculty-aimed. The teaching method was successively produced from the initial English review method in middle school and college entrance examination. This pedagogy follows the teaching principles of gradual and orderly, phase-focused, refined and concise, and five skills. The order of adjustment of the "five techniques" is reading, listening, writing, speaking, and translating. The method emphasizes the development of students' basic knowledge and basic
skills. The mastery of basic knowledge passes the test of basic skills, and the cultivation and formation of basic skills depend on the use of basic knowledge. (Zhang, 2017)
Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions

- Is there a communication difficulty in your teaching process? Please give an example.
- Does your student have a problem with not understanding math vocabulary? Function, formula, calculus
- Have you ever given up talking deeper into the content because of the language problem?
- Do you think your students need language support?
- Do you know the ELI of Arcadia? Because of the partner schools, students from Jiangsu will take language classes for 2 months before they enroll in this program, and after completing the course, they will take a language test. Do you think their level can meet the needs of your class? Can they understand you?
- Is the most active Chinese student in your class the students with highest English language proficiency or professional level?
- What is the academic level of Chinese students in the class?
- Do you think your students' learning attitude is positive?
- Do you think students are actively involved in your classroom activities? How do students participate?
- Will students deliberately avoid your problems and communicate with each other?
- Is there a student in your class who has almost zero communication with you?
- Are there any students in your class who use Chinese to communicate? What do you think of this?
- What kind of feedback do you expect students to give in your teaching that will satisfy you? Answer question? operation?
- Are you satisfied with the student's homework completion?
- If you are not satisfied, why do you think this is the case? Is this situation serious compared to American students?
- Do you take the exam frequently?
- Have you ever provided translation assistance to Chinese students in your exam?
- Are there differences between Chinese students' answer styles and American students? What?

- What do you want to see in their responses? Is the process of solving the problem, or the answer?

- What do you want Chinese students to pay more attention to during the answering process? English expression?

- What factors do you think will affect the learning of Chinese students? why?

- Are there Chinese students asking for help after class?

- How do you want Chinese students to improve their attitudes or behaviors so that they can succeed in your classroom?

- My research is to compare Chinese and American English teaching, and my goal is to find a more effective student's English proficiency advice. For my research, do you have any feedback and suggestions on my research topic?