

English literature in global contexts Arabic, Indian and Chinese literary readings

C.A. DeCoursey

American University of Science and Technology
Alfred Naccashe Avenue, PO Box 166452 Beirut, Lebanon

Shilpagauri Ganpule

RamKrishna More College Akurdi, Pune, India

Graziella Harb

American University of Science and Technology
Nazih Bizri Boulevard Sidon, Lebanon

Denise Atallah

American University of Science and Technology
Nazih Bizri Boulevard Sidon, Lebanon

Mona Zaatari

American University of Science and Technology
Nazih Bizri Boulevard Sidon, Lebanon

Mariam Bakri

American University of Science and Technology
Nazih Bizri Boulevard Sidon, Lebanon

Abstract

English-language literature holds a privileged place in global education. It is a central component of preparing second-language students, who expect to participate in the global knowledge economy, and who currently experience a global identity. Reading English-language literature is now part of the global student experience. This study uses Hofstede's Values Survey Module data, and Appraisal analysis, to explore the responses of Lebanese, Indian and Chinese second-language students to an English-language poem. Participants wrote a personal response to an English translation of Tao's "Returning to Live in the Country". Responses were aggregated into corpuses, for analysis, first comparing response rates to Hofstede's cultural dimensions scores for the national profile, and second for their subjective emotions, judgments and appreciations. Results indicate that readers mainly use local cultural values in responding to English-language literature. Participant groups diverged from their national profile in evaluating city and country life. Lebanese participants were more patriotic than the national profile. Indian participants were more focused on philosophic rewards than the national profile. Hong Kong participants' criticisms of the English translation of the Chinese poem selected suggest their collectivism, and the role of literature in helping second-language students place themselves into global contexts.

Keywords: language teaching and learning, English language, literature, cultural dimensions, Appraisal analysis.

INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language, with nearly 2 billion non-native users worldwide (Graddol, 2007). Globalisation has redefined identities, with people participating in transnational trends, and blending local and international elements (Banks, 2001). The English language no longer belongs to any specific geography or people (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2011). As a shared language, it is constantly re-shaped by global users (Crystal, 2000). University students worldwide see English as a ticket-of-entry into the global knowledge economy (Block & Cameron, 2002). Their global outlook and second-language education means they experience transnational identities (Levitt, 2001). Reading English literature is an element of this identity (Walther, 2009). Non-native readers of English literature now greatly outnumber native-speakers (Kachru & Smith, 2008). This will rework received interpretations of literature, which was until recently the preserve of native-speaker professionals (DeCoursey, 2012). The English literature read in L2 classrooms includes works written by non-native authors in English, and translations of world literature into English (Bruthiaux, 2010). Reading these L2 readers, and exploring their interpretations of literary texts, provides a window into the L2 construction of English literary meaning, in its new global contexts (DeCoursey & Ganpule, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

English literature is used in second-language (L2) classrooms worldwide (Paran, 2008). It motivates L2 learners to acquire vocabulary and grammar (Kramersch, 2004) and introduces new patterns of sense, syntax and collocation (Simpson, 1997). The authentic language of literary texts naturalises discourse structures better than the simplified texts prepared for L2 textbooks (Hanauer, 2001). These texts model the lexical, registerial, and stylistic complexities of the target language (Carter 2007). Plot and character development utilise a range of tense structures (Donato & Brooks, 2004). For these reasons, literature elicits extensive L2 interactions between learners (Meskill & Ranglova, 2000), effectively laying down target structures (Weist, 2004). Because it engages learners' subjective experiences (Boyd & Maloof, 2000), literature promotes discussion (Mantero, 2002), scaffolds extensive reading (Kim, 2004), and integrates the four skills (Yang, 2002), sensitising readers to shades of meaning (Badran, 2007), and modelling critical and creative thinking, and intercultural sensitivity (Kroskrity, 2000). The meaning of literary texts is indeterminate, as readers individually construct the sense of a text in the act of reading (Green, 2004). Individual readers, conditioned by their own contexts, use their native cultural commitments to attribute meaning (Ilieva, 1997). The encounter with literary words and phrases activates personal memories and previous textual interpretations (Carter & McRae, 1996). In processing literary texts, readers integrate local and global meanings (Gerrig & Rapp, 2004). The past decade has seen a resurgence of scholarship into the use of literature in L2 teaching (Scott & Huntington, 2007).

This study analyses the subjective and culturally conditioned responses of L2 speakers to an English-language poem. To explore the contributions of each to literary interpretation, responses were taken from Arabic, Indian and Chinese student readers. The three participant groups represent major world languages, organising cultural identities over a wide geographic area (Ruggles & Silverman, 2009). All three retain a valued heritage form of their language, alongside a diversity of local phonological variants which remain vital in daily and workplace communication (Benmamoun, Montrul, & Polinsky 2013; Pulleyblank, 2011). These three cultures are thus appropriate to use in exploring the next generation of contributors to the global knowledge economy, and new global meanings of English literature. Research questions addressed in this study include: how do Arabic-speaking, Marathi-speaking and Chinese-

speaking English L2 university students interpret English-language literature? What place do cultural values play when they construct the meaning of a literary text? What place does subjectivity play in this process? What does this show us about these members of the global economy?

METHOD

Participants included 118 Arabic-speakers from Beirut, Lebanon, 100 Marathi-speakers from Pune, India, and 97 Cantonese-speakers from Hong Kong. All were 17-23 year-old tertiary students whose L2 proficiency had gained them entrance to an English language tertiary institution. Drawn from across the science, social science, business and humanities faculties, all were enrolled in an undergraduate course which used English literature to teach L2 skills. The text selected for the study was "Returning to Live in the Country," by 3rd-4th century Chinese poet Tao, considered the greatest poet of the Six Dynasties period, and widely anthologised in English-language literature textbooks (Minford & Lau, 2000). As Tao used a simple style, the English translation offers L2 students a text which is easy to understand. In 20 lines, the narrator explains how he left an unhappy city life after thirty years, returning to his native village, where he enjoys a serene country lifestyle. The poem includes ideational content likely to elicit both subjective sentiment and expression of cultural values, including (a) the individual in relation to collectives such as family, village and city; (b) reward for work in its tangible, material sense, and also in terms of personal satisfaction; and (c) emotional responses to the city and country as places and experiences. The poem invites readers to consider these, by evaluating the narrator's life and choices.

The task given to L2 students in the three locations was carefully structured (Connor-Greene, 2000). Teachers in the three locations announced that poetry elicited various opinions and this diversity was acceptable. They were careful not to provide background or historical information, instead asking open-ended questions such as "what do you think this poem is about?" and "How d you personally respond to it?" When handling student questions, teachers elicited group ideas rather than providing answers. They withheld their own opinions, and did not paraphrase or reformulate any language or content from the poem, keeping participants focused on forming their own opinions. Participants were allowed to look up unknown vocabulary. After an in-class discussion of about 15 minutes, participants wrote a personal response of about 100 words. Personal responses elicit more subjective content than the more widespread written tertiary genres such as essays (MacArthur, Graham & Fitzgerald, 2008).

Two analytic tools were used to explore the role of culture and of subjectivity in the L2 interpretation of literature. These were cultural dimensions, and appraisal analysis. Hofstede's (1991) Values Survey Model (VSM) provides data for five cultural dimensions based on psychometric data from international questionnaires (Hofstede, 2002). The longest-established research paradigm for investigating cultural values, VSM data is constantly updated, repeatedly challenged and reproduced, with multiple meta-analyses undertaken (Søndergaard, 2012). VSM furnishes values for Lebanese, Indian, & Hong Kong culture (Table 1)

Table 1. VSM values for Lebanese, Indian and Hong Kong cultures

VSM VALUE	ARABIC(LEBANON)	INDIAN	CHINESE (HONG KONG)
long-term orientation	68	61	96
power-distance	75	77	68
task orientation	65	56	57
uncertainty avoidance	50	40	29
individualism	40	48	25

Note. VSM values, from Spector, Cooper & Sparks, 2000, and <http://geert-hofstede.com/lebanon.html>

The three cultures have been extensively researched. Lebanese culture places a high value on long-term orientation, meaning persistence, a focus on future status, and delayed gratification, as well as power-distance, or acceptance of inequality, hierarchy and duty (Kuehn & Al-Busaidi, 2002). It is more collectivist than individualist, valuing family, employment, and religious community, and relying on obligation, group loyalty and nurturing behaviours. (Twati, 2007). Lebanese culture frames individual effort as an aspect of personal relationships, encompassing effort and assertiveness, resultant rewards, and gender roles (Robertson, Al-Khatib & Al-Habib, 2002). Success is attributed to interpersonal relationships, unlike western cultures which attribute success to task mastery and self-reliance (Abdalla, 1997). Effort is viewed as foundational to virtue, reflecting religious beliefs (Ali, 1992). Lebanese culture is equivocal about uncertainty avoidance, meaning tolerance of ambiguity and expression of emotion and insistence on social codes to script behaviour (Alotaibi, 2001). Indians similarly value long-term orientation highly, understanding it as affective reciprocity, co-operation, endurance, and obedience (Walumbwah & Lawler, 2003). At work, conformism and obligation are valued over hard work or persistence (Chhokar, 2003). Personal relationships are governed by mutual deference and compromise (Sinha & Kanungo, 1997). Social relations are governed hierarchically (Panda & Gupta, 2004). Hong Kong culture places much the highest value on long-term orientation, but less on power-distance. All three cultures place a moderately strong value on task orientation, with Lebanese culture scoring highest for this value. Where Lebanese culture is equivocal about uncertainty avoidance, Indian and Hong Kong cultures place lower values on this value. All three place a low value on individualism. Hong Kong, treated separately from mainland Chinese culture due to its colonial history, is highly collectivist, stressing cooperation over independence, focusing on achieving lasting over immediate gains via persistence, via self-discipline, politeness and loyalty (Cheng, 2002). Family is the most significant Chinese collectivity, organising individuals' obligations, including performance at work (Shi, 2006). Persistence is viewed as the source of individual and collective success (Zhang & Harwood, 2004). Hong Kong people view social harmony as important, and based in social hierarchy (Yeung, 2000). By comparison, Indian values are collectivist also, with family being the most important group (Migliore, 2011). But this is organised around the eldest male, who is credited with members' social, educational and work attainments (Sinha, Vohra, Singhal, Sinha, & Ushashree, 2002).

The VSM data offers scores for cultural values in Lebanese, Indian and Hong Kong culture, which may be applied to participant statements about literary texts. However, VSM research has been criticised for its inability to capture subjectivity, particularly emotion (Herkenhoff, 2010). For this reason, Appraisal analysis was also used. Appraisal analysis is derived from Systemic Functional Linguistics. When individuals express a personal opinion, they select specific words from among the available options (Martin, 1995). Their lexicogrammar may be sorted into three semantic regions which together comprise the Attitude System: affect, judgment and appreciation, as in Figure 1 on next page.

Affect underlies the other two systems, which reword emotion as statements about affairs outside the self, either as adjudications about other people and their actions, or opinions about objects, events and processes (Martin & White, 2005). Attitudes may be positive or negative (for example, "I like the village in the poem" and "I hate city life so much too"). They may be directly inscribed ("I think the village life is the best life") or indirectly invoked ("The trees and the nature match the quietness of the man") (Bednarek, 2006).

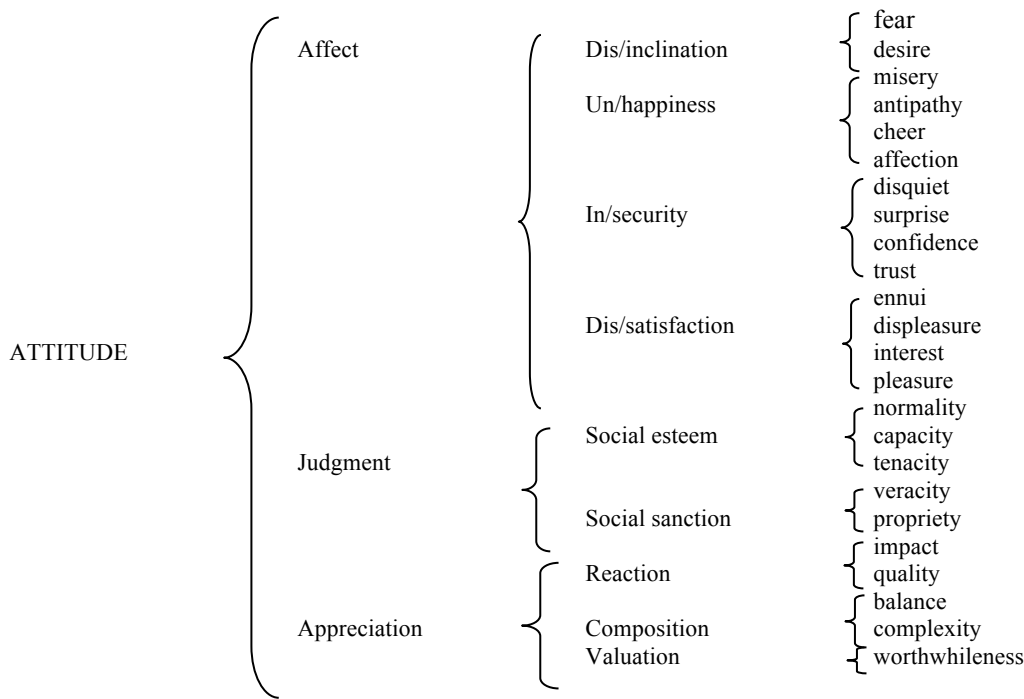


Figure 1. The Attitude System

The Attitude system is “not arbitrarily posited” (Bednarek, 2009, 150). “Appraisal theories of emotions have gained widespread acceptance in the field of emotion research” (Kuppens, Van Mechelen et al., 2007, 689). The Appraisal system gains validity from its increasing convergence with psycholinguistic models of subjectivity (Oatley, Keltner & Jenkins, 2006). Attitude data is now routinely analysed using computational tools (Argamon, Bloom, Esuil & Sebastiani, 2007). When used to analyse aggregated textual data, the Attitude system network offers analytic detail and definition, at the level of the word and phrase (Halliday, 1994). Automated text concordancing is a routine analytic technique within computational linguistics, and an efficient means of analysing linguistic data (Polanyi & Zaenen, 2006). It applies sorting logics and concordancing within hierarchical classes, in order to identify patterns and regularities within the data (Scherer, Schoor & Johnstone, 2001). This method is “robust, result[ing] in good cross-domain performance, and can be easily enhanced with multiple sources of knowledge” (Taboada, Brooke, Tofiloski, Voll & Stede, 2011, 36). The software CorpusTool was used for this study (CT) (O’Donnell, 2008).

Two iterations of data analysis were undertaken. First, content analysis of the three participant response corpuses was undertaken to identify cultural values (Weber, 1985). Hofstede’s five dimensions furnished an a priori coding frame along with constituent units (Hofstede, 2001). Frequency scores were obtained by defining individual reflections as the unit of analysis, with meaning taken at the level of the clause (Carley, 1990). Coders in Hong Kong and Lebanon independently analysed the three corpuses, obtaining content-unit frequencies. Inter-coder reliability was calculated using Cohen’s κ , including percent-overall (p-o) and free-margin (f-m) (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2004). Second, the three participant corpuses were analysed for attitude. Tagging was undertaken by two trained taggers in Hong Kong and Lebanon. Both had 250+ hours experience and tertiary graduate training in this area, and completed a 2-hour norming session by Skype in which example texts were analysed and compared. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using Cohen’s κ , p-o and f-m (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2002).

RESULTS

The task elicited a Lebanese corpus of 18 218 words in 1068 sentences, an Indian corpus of 10 849 words in 788 sentences, and a Hong Kong corpus of 12 339 words in 841 sentences. Inter-rater reliability and Inter-coder reliability were determined. In both cases, these indicated robust agreement which cannot be attributed to chance, as in Table 2.

Table 2. Inter-coder reliability for content analysis, and inter-rater reliability for Appraisal analysis, for the three corpuses

	Lebanese	Indian	Hong Kong
inter-coder			
p-o	.857	.920	.914
f-m	.833	.896	.889
inter-rater			
p-o	.881	.871	.902
f-m	.843	.825	.878

Content analysis of the three participant corpuses allows us to see areas where scores for cultural dimensions responding to the poem diverge from scoring comprising national profiles. Total realisations in the dataset indicate the relative importance participant groups gave to each of the cultural dimensions. This can be compared to the VSM national scores, as in Table 3.

Table 3. Lebanese, Indian and Hong Kong participants' cultural dimensions unit frequencies

CULTURAL DIMENSION	CONTENT UNITS	LEBANESE	%	INDIAN	%	HONG KONG	%
long term orientation	persistence	77	169	45	162	112	219
	future status	52	=20.53%	93	=20.15	91	=23.78%
	delayed gratification	30		24		16	
power distance	inequality	38	120	121	163	8	158
	hierarchy	33	=14.58%	37	=20.27	137	=17.16%
	duty	49		5		13	
individualism	obligation	27	127	4	77	38	123
	loyalty	34	=15.43%	52	=9.58	79	=13.34%
	nurture	66		21		6	
task orientation	assertiveness	52	148	28	166	45	252
	reward	81	=17.98%	115	=20.65	186	=27.36%
	gender roles	15		23		21	
uncertainty avoidance	ambiguity	101	259	61	236	23	169
	emotion	136	=31.47%	133	=29.35	52	=18.40%
	social structures	22		42		94	
		823		804		921	

Lebanese responses were consonant with the national VSM data in realising strong long-term orientation (“That poem meant to me to never give up in our life and to fight for what we love and never lose hope”). They were moderately lower than the national data would predict for power-distance (“Maybe he’s obligated to stay there for work or other life problems that he is facing and making him stay”) and task orientation (“This poem really inspired me to stay in the place that makes me comfortable despite all circumstances and don't run after money only”). They were moderately higher for individualism. For example, some participants read the poem as a rejection of collective obligation (“people should do what they want and what they feel them happy”, “you live your life only once and you don’t have the chance to repeat the things you did that if you didn’t do them”). Many more realised a positive view of collectivism (“his village has become a part of him, he was born and raised in his village, his whole family is in that village so he spend most of his life they’re that’s why he is attached to it, “This poem made me think how precious is each one’s village and that we should not be carelessly about moving because we will regret”). This related more to country and family than to work as collectivities (“This poem meant to me more that any poem I have ever read before, since my family

originally comes from a village in South Lebanon”, “you feel how one should be related to his country and family”). Connections between extended family and village are particularly salient in Lebanon, where villages have historically extended their population and territories through marriage (Hourani & Sensenig-Dabbous 2012). Data from these participants diverged from the national VSM data, in realising strong rather than equivocal uncertainty avoidance, especially tolerance for ambiguity and expression of emotion. Realisations tended to realise uncertainty avoidance together with long-term orientation (“When you want to do something then do it for that thing you did will make you feel alive and make you live for a purpose, follow your dreams”), or task-orientation (“This poem is a symbol of insistence to achieve your goals, and never lose hope even in very bad situations”).

Indian responses for long-term orientation were consonant with the VSM national profile in viewing the narrator’s decision to return to his village positively (“I think the poet’s decision is appropriate. The village life is better as compared to the city life”, “It is the smart and correct decision of his part to return to the country house by leaving the illusionary world”). Frequent realisations of task-orientation (reward) suggest this is an important issue to Indian undergraduates, though it scores low in the national profile. While frequently-realised, many realisations of the “tremendous stress and strain” of working in the city were negative (“the thirteen years’ stay in the city taught the poet a lesson- the lesson of the life time! He realized that money was not everything!”). Indian participants understood a peaceful life surrounded by nature as a highly desirable reward (“The poet returned to his country house to live a pure, tension free and happy life”, “To get happiness, to get calmness, the poet decides to go back to his country house...He regains his peace of mind in the company of nature.”) This result cannot be modelled by VSM, which defines reward in material and organisational terms (Fischer & Smith, 2003). It is an unusual result among tertiary students, known to be ambitious (Richardson, Abraham & Bond, 2012). Indian responses conformed to the national profile for individualism, in that this was rarely realised, though the poem’s focus on the narrator’s experiences offered many opportunities. Indian responses differed from the national profile, in that their comments were low rather than high power-distance, especially in accepting inequality (“The house of the village ...was not a modern house with all the comforts. But still it had the touch of love, satisfaction and peace”, “In the village there was nothing as compared to the city- the luxuries etc., but still he felt the calmness”). Finally, frequent realisation of emotion runs counter to the national profile for uncertainty-avoidance (“in the city there was everything available. Whatever he wanted he could get in the city. But despite everything he felt the loneliness which always shuddered him internally”, “ He felt a strange feeling of loneliness in the city. The thirteen years’ stay could not form a bond of intimacy between the poet and the city. The bond of estrangement developed”).

Hong Kong participants valued long-term orientation less than the national profile. Many reviewed persistence positively, criticising moving to the country (“To live in the city reflects the real in the working world. We must put our time to hard work, even the thirteen years. It is to support the other generation”, “Some people dream of going to the beautiful village. In fact, living the country is too difficult, due to the dirty and poor situation. Everybody live in the city now.”) Where Indian participants accepted country dust (“He liked the dust also”), Hong Kong participants rejected it (“The hot and dusty are too unpleasant in the country”). Hong Kong comments fit the national profile for power-distance, especially hierarchy, but viewed social mobility as attainable (“ As time goes by, people want the success and comfortable life. Life should be something with enjoyment”, “Nowadays people do not want simple life. They want their life to be filled up by the social status and wealth”). They placed a low value on individualism, consonant with the national profile, except for loyalty (63=64.95% participants

in 113=13.44% sentences). Frequently realisations about traditional Chinese culture emphasised collectivity (“This is the poem by the recognized Chinese poet from two thousand years. He is the special person in our history”, “Tao is the known Chinese poet who does not have common feeling. He lived in the ancient time, when they can write by far the best poems”). Many (54=55.67% in 86=10.23% sentences) reviewed the translated version of the poem negatively. (“He can reveal the deep emotion of the classical era. The English translation seems strange. It cannot reveal the meaning in a subtle way”, “The poet is Tao. His original writing is simple and perfect. But the translation uses the inferior words”). Where Indian readers focused on the voice and experience of the poet (96% in 241=30.58% sentences), Hong Kong participants emphasised task-orientation especially reward much more than the national profile (“The village house means a lot to him as this is his property. He fly back to it with a strong intention like the bird”, “The fields and the rooms are his most valuable possessions”). Where Indian participants viewed the narrator’s country home as large and wealthy (“he had a big house of ten rooms”), Hong Kong participants read it as indicating poverty (“The poem mainly focus on the poor farming environment. There are only few spaces for him. But he is happy because it is the simple life in the old Chinese times”). Hong Kong participants’ strong value on uncertainty-avoidance differed from the national profile, especially via social codes (“The poet feels like caught in a trap. We rarely see this in the modern times. We can actively improve ourselves in order to be the winner in our society”, “We can feel the ancient affection of visiting the village which is shown in this poem. The poet must go home to the village, because his family expecting him. Nowadays, we miss the ancient ways”).

Attitude data for the three participant populations offers greater detail and definition. The Lebanese corpus contained 966 realisations of attitude, 764=79.09% positive and 202=20.91% negative. The Indian corpus contained 813 realisations of attitude, 662=81.43% positive, and 151=18.57% negative. Attitudinal density was 74.94 per 1000 words. The Hong Kong corpus contained 815 realisations of attitude, 458=56.20% positive, and 357=43.80% negative. Attitudinal density was 63.38 per 1000 words. In all three corpuses, the majority of realisations clustered in 8 categories, as in Table 4.

Polarity was clearly positive in the Lebanese and Indian, but more equally distributed in the Hong Kong corpus. All but one frequently-realised categories in the Indian data were positive. Polarity in the Chinese corpus was more negative, perhaps reflecting the cultural preference to offer hedged and mixed adjudications together (Cheng, 2000; Wei and Lei 2011). Many negative Appreciations of reaction-quality, Judgments of social esteem-capacity and – normality, and Appreciations of value-worth focused on the quality of translation of Tao’s poem into English, and the poet’s decision to live in the country.

The Lebanese corpus had the most frequently-realised categories in affect, where the Hong Kong corpus had the least. The Indian corpus showed a nearly equal distribution across systems, sets and categories, where the Hong Kong corpus was concentrated in Appreciations. All three corpuses included frequent positive realisations of Appreciations-reaction (quality), mainly focused on the natural beauties of the village. All included frequent positive Appreciations-valuation (worth), mainly focused on the return to one’s original village (Lebanese) or family (Chinese). In the Indian corpus, realisations of valuation-worth reflected the strong cultural value placed on philosophy (Sinha & Kumar, 2004) (“Just like the lotus flower, though the poet lived in the crowded, polluted and dirty city for thirteen years; he never lost his purity of mind, his goodness. The lotus flower grows in the mud and then is

offered to God in the temple. Likewise the poet stayed in the mud of the city, but came back to the country, a temple and a place of purity”).

Table 4: Frequently-realised categories in the three corpuses

	RANK	POLARITY	SYSTEM	SET	CATEGORY	N	%	EXAMPLES
LEBANON								
	1	+	Appreciation	reaction	quality	156	16.15	beautiful, lovely, attractive
	2	+	Affect	un/happiness	affection	141	14.60	love, passion, like
	3	+	Appreciation	valuation	worth	112	11.59	worth, deep, old-school
	4	+	Affect	un/happiness	cheer	85	8.80	happy, happiness, joy, enjoy
	5	-	Affect	un/happiness	cheer	79	8.18	sad, depressed, regret, blues
	6	-	Affect	dis/inclination	desire	53	5.49	miss, homesick, yearning
	7	+	Judgment	social esteem	normality	48	4.97	special, normal, different
	8	+	Judgment	social sanction	veracity	24	2.48	true, truth, real, right
						698	72.26	
INDIA								
	1	+	Appreciation	valuation	worth	147	23.19	deep, original, the truth, helps
	2	+	Appreciation	reaction	quality	121	19.09	beautiful, lovely, appeal
	3	+	Affect	dis/satisfaction	pleasure	95	14.98	like, satisfy, satisfaction
	4	+	Affect	un/happiness	cheer	82	12.94	happy, happiness, enjoy
	5	+	Judgment	social esteem	normality	67	10.57	natural, special, normal
	6	+	Appreciation	reaction	impact	48	7.57	attract, remarkable, fascinating
	7	+	Judgment	social sanction	veracity	45	7.10	real, actual, honest, honestly
	8	-	Affect	dis/inclination	desire	29	4.57	want, desire, miss, yearn
						634	77.98	
HONG KONG								
	1	+	Judgment	social esteem	normality	123	15.73	lucky, fortunate, stable
	2	+	Appreciation	reaction	quality	87	11.13	classic, ancient, valuable
	3	-	Appreciation	reaction	quality	81	10.36	poor, mistaken, incorrect, flaw
	4	-	Judgment	social esteem	capacity	59	7.54	not able to, cannot, not know how
	5	+	Appreciation	valuation	worth	55	7.03	worth, profound, life's truth
	6	-	Judgment	social esteem	normality	49	6.27	unfortunate, strange, not normal
	7	-	Appreciation	valuation	worth	41	5.24	inaccurate, not well done, inferior
	8	-	Affect	un/happiness	cheer	33		not happy, unhappy, unhappiness
						528	64.78	

The Hong Kong corpus contained frequent negative realisations of worth, focused on the English translation of the Chinese text. All three corpuses included frequent positive realisations of Affect-un/happiness (cheer). For Lebanese and Indian participants, this focused on the poet's return to his village and natural surroundings, where Chinese participants asserted the positive qualities of cities as compared to the countryside. The Lebanese corpus included both frequent positive and frequent negative realisations in this category, the Indian corpus frequent positive, and the Hong Kong corpus frequent negative realisations. All three corpuses included frequently-realised Judgments-social esteem (normality), positive in the Lebanese and Indian but negative in the Hong Kong corpus. Some categories were frequently-realised only within one corpus: positive Affect-un/happiness (affection) in the Lebanese corpus focused on love of the countryside, positive Affect-dis/satisfaction (cheer) in the Indian corpus focused on the narrator's decision to leave the city that made him unhappy, and negative Judgments-social esteem (capacity) in the Hong Kong corpus, focused on the inability to translate the Chinese text effectively into English.

DISCUSSION

Distinctive features of the three corpuses, identified in the data through Appraisal and cultural dimensions analysis, are easier to appreciate in examples comments responding to major themes in the poem. One theme is place. The poem includes comments on the city, country, village and home, but the meanings of place are constructed differently in the three participant groups. The Lebanese corpus included frequent positive and some negative realisations of identity with birthplace (“This poem made me think how precious is each one's village and that we should not be carelessly about moving because we will regret”, “we cannot leave our land, our home, and memories in it”), emotional attachment (“This poem is very important because it made me think twice if I had to move from my village and home someday”), and nostalgia

("The author has the right to miss his country because in my opinion your country is your first mother"). Most fell within Appreciations of reaction (quality) and valuation (worth) and Affect-un/happiness (affection, cheer) considered within Appraisal analysis, and uncertainty avoidance (emotion), and a smaller number in task orientation (reward) and individualism (nurture) when analysed using VSM. This may reflect the diaspora resulting from the 2006 invasion by Israel:

I think the author travel to live in another country and forget everything here. He decides to come back because he knew that he can't forget his past wherever he goes. Finally, all people who are travelled for some reasons, one day they will come back to their country because our country is always the first and the last place where we live in.

The Indian corpus included frequent negative realisations of the qualities of the city ("city life is very filthy", "I don't like the crowded life of city where everyone is running after money", "In the city the pollution problem is very big"). The city and the country, realised far more frequently than the village or the poet's home, are framed as a universalised dualism ("Isn't it a true story of all of us? We all have taken away from our original blissful state of mind and thrown into the vale of dirty and filthy city life", "The poet is telling the truth of the 21st century where man is forgetting his purity of heart and is getting engaged with the glittering life of city. He forgets that all that glitters is not gold") in which the country is evaluated positively, the city negatively ("the poet tells us that country is the best place to live than that of the city", "I think the country life gives us healthy and pollution free atmosphere"). Most fell within Appreciations of reaction (quality) and valuation (worth), when using Appraisal analysis, when realising uncertainty avoidance, specifically tolerance of ambiguity and emotion ("In the city there is hardly any communication among people. The city life is very fast and furious. In the city you live in a cage. You don't have any friends. There are tall buildings, but there is no human bonding"). Both Lebanese and Indian participants realised extensive lexis associated with quietness (peace, peacefulness, quiet, calm, tranquillity, stillness and so on) for the countryside (for example, "He enjoys the silence and the eternal peace"). Lebanese participants connected peace with nostalgia ("He misses the atmosphere and peace of mind accompanied by homesickness", "It is the hometown for every man where there is peace"), the countryside with freedom ("He needs freedom and maybe nature is the only thing that can create freedom, "He sees that he can only find his freedom in the country"), and the city with imprisonment ("He describes the city as a prison", "I moved to the crowded city where I felt I am in a prison"). Indian participants focused more on the narrator's experience of the city, and the country ("He is dissatisfied and disturbed in the city", "There were many people in the city, but he was alone. There were a few people in the village, but he was not alone"). The Chinese corpus differed significantly in that most negative Appreciations-reaction (quality) and valuation (worth) and Judgments-social esteem (normality) focused on the countryside ("In my way of thinking, life in the country is not convenient, and does not give me chances", "Living in the village take so much time, and cannot equip me well for the future career"). When Hong Kong participants disputed the poet's view of the city as a prison, the polarity of those systems, sets and categories were reversed: ("I am glad to live in the city, where it could definitely help me do better," "In the contemporary world, the prison is for those having difficulty by making the illegal business, but the city is more exciting and fun").

CONCLUSION

This study has produced five conclusions. First, the data shows that L2 readers mainly reproduce local cultural values when constructing the meaning of L2 literary texts. Values

expressed agreed with the national profile in 1-2, and closely agreed in 1-2 of 5 dimensions. Second, areas of divergence in each participant group became apparent at the level of the content units. Lebanese participants were more collectivist, patriotic and tolerant of emotion than the national profile. Indian participants were more focused on rewards, but defined them philosophically rather than materially, than the national profile. Hong Kong participants' collectivism may reflect their recent history, including the 1997 Handover to China. The tolerance for uncertainty may be discernible in the recent student demonstrations. These divergences may reflect the age of participants. VSM data is collected from the managerial class. As today's students will take up management positions globally in the coming decades, the present study may forecast attitudes these L2 students are likely to take with them into the global economy, particularly in views of city and country, themes which remain globally significant. Third, this study demonstrates the utility of using non-survey prompts as complements to the standard survey, due to their ability to access subjective and emotional content.

Fourth, this study the need for research into authentic L2 reader responses. One limitation of this study is the lack of research into the relationship between ideational content and cultural views elicited. As there is no metric relating the VSM to reader response scores, a simple comparison of incidence has been used. Clearly the ideational content of the poem must impact reader responses. Given the global reach of literature in English, this should be a productive area of future research. Further studies could explore whether literary texts realising values consonant or discordant with national profiles support L2 learners' lexical and morpho-syntactic acquisition, elicit L2 production and critical thinking, and naturalise target discourse structures and stylistic complexities. The Hong Kong corpus highlights the role of literature as a door into both L2 cultural performance, and intercultural sensitivity. The translation foregrounded disjunctures between local and global readings. In the L2 classroom, this creates opportunities to explore the role of a lingua franca, in displacing, colonising and standardising, but also in representing a culture, and connecting it to others. Translations offer opportunities to explore how words interact with identities, histories and reception, helping L2 students place their own cultures within global contexts. This study may be viewed as one contribution to the required research (DeCoursey & Ganpule, 2014).

Finally, while the VSM data effectively predicts the attitudes realised in most cases, this study highlights how data collection shapes results. The VSM surveys, using forced-choice questions to construct population norms along five dichotomous scales, are widely used, yet the instrument cannot take in any element of subjectivity. This study has shown how effective Appraisal analysis is, for detailing specific areas of meaning, in the first instance through polarity, but also through the subcategories of the attitude system. It offers a useful qualitative instrument, to complement quantitative instruments such as the VSM.

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