Read from Local to Global: A Culture-based Reading Material

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ABSTRACT

Chinese language has risen to become the world popular language among the foreign language learners. According to the recent data, 516 Confucius Institutes and 1076 Confucius Classroom established all over the world, with more than 100 million foreign students enrolled, especially 48 Confucius Institutes are distributing in 33 Africa countries, to provide the scope for people to learn Chinese language and culture. This paper is based on the previous experts' call that teaching language in 21st century needs to be involved with cultural awareness in concerning both regional and global societies, in order to enhance learners' the fifth skill of the language learning. This paper aims to use the local culture to facilitate a reading content to promote students' Chinese communication skills. The use of local culture contents is one of the effective ways to stimulate students' motivation in language class. Under the guidance of *Chinese Language Proficiency Scales for Speakers of Other Language* and *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education*, 12 units of Ethiopian cultures, landscapes, beliefs, customs, arts and festivals that were incorporated in the reading materials are identified. The demonstration samples of the model units will be shown so as to culturally value reading materials to any other Chinese language learners. This new orchestrated material will undoubtedly can encourage learners to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and to share these insights in Chinese to any others as well as more effectively in learning a global language. Moreover, this material also can enlighten an idea to apply to some other reading contexts for Africa countries.

INTRODUCTION

As China's economy and exchanges with the world have seen rapid growth, there has also been a sharp increase in the world's demands for Chinese learning. Chinese language has risen to become the world popular language among the foreign language learners. According to the recent data, 511 Confucius Institutes and 1073 Confucius Classroom established all over the world, with more than 100 million foreign students enrolled, especially 48 Confucius Institutes are distributing in 33 Africa countries, to provide the scope for people to learn Chinese language and culture (Hanban News, 2018 January, 25). 70 countries, including South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania, Madagascar, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Kenyan, announced a plan to introduce Chinese language into national educational curricula, in order to promote more Chinese language and culture programs to learners (CCTV News, 2015 September, 26). China has over 5000 years of history and resplendent cultures. Learning Chinese language needs to learn its splendid oriental culture. Randal Holme (2003: 20) asserted that "knowledge of a culture presupposes a competence which is essential to the grasp of language's true meaning. Thus, learning a language should be completed by a sustained and ethnographically structured encounter with the language's culture." Dema Oxana and Aleine J. M (2012) claimed that provided more cultural actives in classroom to promote students cultural and intercultural understandings. Josiah G.H. (2014) suggested that cultural instruction should include both target language and local perspectives. In doing so, developing Chinese language learners' communicative abilities need to effectively interact in inter-cultural exchanges.

CULTURAL VALUES IN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Teaching culture plays a vital role in language classroom. There are a lot of researches on this topic and also they have shown that culture is known as fundamental part of the second language learning process. Dema Oxana and Aleine J. M (2012) said " culture learning is as instructional objective equally as important as communication" and also pointed out that culture and language are linked together. Tang (1999) and Brown (2007) shared the same idea that culture is an inseparable part of the language and it in fact embedded in the language itself. Shulman (2009:v) reported that "cultures are dynamic. They undergo growth, development, and change, which makes an analysis of cultural behavior and values challenging. Also there is a great diversity of values, beliefs, and traditions within anyone culture". Different languages have different reflections of assumptions, beliefs and values. Teaching culture not only contributes to understanding better in target language, intercultural communication, and international understanding, but also brings some spinoffs that are conducive to L2 language instruction. Randal Holme (2003:18) clearly claimed five views of culture, which are *communicative view, classical-curriculum view, instrumental or culture-free-language view, deconstructionist view, competence view*, in order to expound the importance of culture values on language teaching, and also said,

> *"Knowledge of a culture presupposes a competence which is essential to the grasp of language's true meaning. Thus, learning a language should be completed by a sustained and ethnographically structured encounter with the language's culture."*

\Kitao and Kenji (1982) reported that culture values in language classroom could make language more alive and real, in order to attracted students to learn the target language better and strongly motived them to continue to learn that foreign language. Kramsch (1993) claimed that culture is known as a fifth skill for foreign language learners that improve students holistic communication skills. Kitao (2000) and sharing reference to lots of scholars lists some of the benefits of teaching culture as follows:

> *"Studying culture gives students a reason to study the target language as well as rendering the study of L2 meaningful (Stainer, 1971).*
>
> *From the perspective of learners, one of the major problems in language teaching is to conceive of the native speakers of target language as real person. Although grammar books gives so called genuine examples from real life, without background knowledge those real situations may be considered fictive by the learners. In addition providing access into cultural aspect of language, learning culture would help learners relate the abstract sounds and forms of a language to real people and places (Chastain, 1971)."*

Besides, cultural awareness of foreign language students should concern both native and target societies. Bilal Genc and Erdogan Bada (2005) discovered that a culture class involved both native and target societies could enhance students' language skills and raise their culture awareness. A positive result from Fredricks (2007) previous experiment research pointed that her Tajik students much more active when they learn L2 by using material familiar with their own culture. Andy Kirkpatrick (2007:3) stressed that the cultures of the language learners should be embedded in the curriculum as English learners worldwide learn English to communicate with other non-native speakers. Kantatip Sinhaneti and Warinthron Kanchendecha (2012:168) echoed the same idea when reporting, "it is important to include learners' culture in any language teaching practice. Exclusion of local culture will lead to ineffective teaching and may have negative influence on language learning." Brown (2007) claimed that,

> *" Whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of culture customs, values, and way of thinking, feeling and acting."*

BENEFITS OF USING CULTURE-BASED MATERIALS

It has been proved by many researchers that using local culture-based material in language teaching classroom is a great advantage to both students and teachers. It is a positive way to use of local culture texts in teaching foreign language class and it will make the students motivated because local culture contents involve the topics which the students are familiar with. Also they can encourage learners to gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and to share these insights in Chinese. As the political motto said that " thinking globally, act locally", in language pedagogy words can be explained as "global thinking, local teaching." (Kramsch and Sullivan, 1996) In the same line, Widdowson (1994) stated that "the consequences for English language teaching: instead of a pedagogy of the authentic which ' privileges native-speaker use' and imposes its norms at the global level, he suggests its norms at the global level, he suggests a pedagogy of the appropriate, which revises the authentic and adapts it to local conditions. " Therefore using the local culture-based materials can make learner easier in learning the contents because they are familiar with those topics and have previous background knowledge about them. Sandra Mckay (2002:90) clearly claimed that we should offer the content to students could both learn more local culture and explain those culture elements in target language. Miftah Royani (2013) shared that " teaching reading text using local culture texts is effective. Local culture is the culture where the students live. It means that the students are common with the culture. If the students learn the text based on the local culture, of course the students will be engaged in it." Moreover, providing local-culture contents in foreign language class can also easier motivate the learner to explore their knowledge more and be more enthusiastic in class. As Miftah Royani (2013) said that it would be easier to process the class, especially the reading class, by using the texts what learners were familiar with, and the students showed much more interested in discussing the topics closer to learner's life. A positive results from Kantatip Sinhanenti and Kanchendecha's experiment research, which were responded by students' opinion, showed as follows: (2012:P 175) They showed a highly satisfaction towards the idea of learning English through Thai culture as well as the books related to ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nation) culture, and it was necessary to them to learn other ASEAN countries culture in order to prepare themselves for the establishment of the ASEAN community in 2015.

As for the teachers, using the cultural materials that are closer to their lives can bring them more confidence in what they will be teaching and they have already the content schema already in their mind. In other words, the teachers can easy to motivate the students in lessons, activities and tasks from the local culture-based contents. Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) asserted that "appropriate pedagogy must also be a pedagogy of appropriation. The English language will enable students of English to do business with native and non-native speaker of English in the global world market and for that they need to master the grammar and vocabulary of standard English. But they also need to retain control of its use. (p. 211)" Chinese language is going to be a global language. Chinese government today promotes the use of Chinese as an international language, where Chinese is going to be used for a wide variety of cross-cultural communicative purposes. Yet in developing an appropriate pedagogy, educators also need to consider how Chinese is embedded in local contents. As Sandra (2002 : p90) claimed that " the teacher could exploit the material by asking individual students to describe what specific aspects of their culture mean to them as a way of demonstrating the variance that exists within one culture and promoting a view of culture as difference. The teacher could also use material relating to the source culture in ways that encourage students to consider how they would explain elements of their own culture to others".

In addition, it may give local teacher many difficulties in teaching culture contents what they have never been lived through, especially the oriental Chinese cultures. Not many local

teachers have experiences in living in China or learning through the Chinese education system. It is even harder for them to understand the Chinese culture elements. On a pedagogical level, culture plays an important role in the choice of content that is included in teaching materials. As Cortazzi and Jin (1999) distinguish three types of cultural information that can be used in language textbooks and materials, which are target culture materials, source culture materials that draw on the learners' own culture as content, international target culture materials (cited on Sandra L. McKay, 2004). Similarity, Miftah Royani pointed (2013) "Local culture texts can be implemented in any level of study. Teacher only needs to give the students a text which contains of a local culture. It will not change the genre or the type of the text because local culture which is inserted in the text." McKay, S. L also said (2002: p92) "when both the students and the teacher come from a culture not represented in the text, as could occur in both contexts, that is with a teacher from the source culture and with an expatriate teacher, many of the same problems could occur. Students may be uninterested or puzzled by the information in the text, and the teachers may not have access to additional information needed to explain some of the cultural references. This may result in no one in the class being able to comment on the culture presented; hence the degree of understanding both teachers and students can gain about the culture presented in the text will be limited ".

Further more, Zheng Tongtao, Fang Huanhai and Zhang Han (2009) clearly reported at "2009 international conference on country-special Chinese language textbooks " as follows (translate for Chinese):

"Nowadays, the Chinese learning materials can not fulfill the students' needs, especially the advanced learners who want to learn more Chinese and use it to talk about their own culture. It is indeed to establish the country-special learning materials based on the students perspectives, in the other words, should change the 'teacher centered' to the "students centered." (Li Hongyin)

"Language and culture are closely related and are best acquired together. The interrelatedness of language and culture, that is to say, one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. We need to add cultural elements when designing teaching materials."(Cao Ruitai)

"It is too hard to compile a effective country-special contents for Chinese language learners. Not only because the native teachers do not familiar with the local culture, society and their mother tongue, but also the local Chinese teachers' language proficiency is not able to write a book."(Li Xuemei)

"We must make a deep research on teaching environment, the relationship between learners' mother tongue and culture, the motivation and purposes of the learners before we start to write a content with local culture values."(Liu Lening)

Most importantly, this is a great preparation for the countries, which have been involved the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road agenda, and they need to share their culture to Chinese people as well as to each others. Sandra Mckay shared (2002: 91)

" source culture texts can also be used in contexts where the students come from the source culture but the teacher is from another culture. In such a situation, the teacher, if not familiar with some of the cultural topics, can become an interested listener, creating an ideal context for establishing a sphere of inter-culturality. "

SELECTING CULTURE-THEMED READING MATERIALS

Based on the previous studies and Chinese culture-based reading contents, especially under the guidance of *Chinese Language Proficiency Scales for Speakers of Other Language* and *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education*, the author chose about 12 important or interesting areas of culture or life in the Ethiopia. They are shown as follows: 1). Ethiopia Painting 2). Ethiopian New Year 3). Wedding Ceremony in Ethiopia 4). Architectures in Ethiopia 5). Ethiopian dresses 6). Traditional Food in Ethiopia 7). Funeral Customs and Dresses 8). Education in Ethiopia 9). The Regions in Ethiopia 10). Ethiopian Coffee 11). Landscapes in Ethiopia 12). Fossils in Ethiopia.

As the mentioned earlier, learning about another culture is one of the core objectives in the foreign language classroom. *Chinese Language Proficiency Scales for Speakers of Other Language* includes sections on both cultural competence and linguistic performance and delineates how well students should perform in Chinese linguistic and cultural domains as a result of foreign language instruction. In the context, the proficiency of reading comprehension in Chinese is divided into 5 Bands, which comprises comprehending the correspondence in a social interaction, comprehending instructive and explanatory texts, and comprehending various kinds of informative texts. This selected material will follow the Band 4- Band 5's guidance: "Able to read description or narrative short texts on familiar and real-life topics written in simple language, and able to read and understand abstract, conceptual or technical texts… " (International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education, 2006: p14-18). Cultural awareness is one of the parts in *International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education,* which incorporates cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, cross-cultural awareness and global awareness, classified into five stages as well. Based on the Stage 4- 5: "1) foster the foundations of critical thinking to learn and understand Chinese culture and local culture 2) examine commonalities and differences between Chinese culture and their own culture 3) learn about other cultures and increase global perspectives via learning Chinese language 4) understand Chinese culture and the local culture and their respective origins 5) build strong global citizenship…"(International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education, 2008: p25-29)
 We wrote and selected materials through the research papers, journals, magazines, and websites in Ethiopia and aboard. As Kitao and Kenji (1982) reviewed that "collecting materials is very important, because the materials convey culture information well and we teach most of the culture information through the main text. "

Culture learning is divided into three goals, which are Products, Practices and Perspectives（Dema and Aleidine, 2012）. In order to achieve these objectives, this reading material is designed under the following guidelines (patterns):
1) Chose the specific culture topics
2) Gather and re-write the materials into the reading text
3) Design pre-reading activities (presentation)
4) Design a set of reading activities to enhance students reading skills (practice)
5) Attract students in doing different communicative tasks (production)
6) Supply more extensive activities (Kantatip, 2015)

SAMPLES OF MATERIALS
Sample Unit: Ethiopian Coffee
1. Warming up (pre-reading)
Pair work: Look at the advertisement of the Coffee Shop and work with your partners
1) Discuss what are the differences between these coffee and what are their Chinese names?

2) How many steps for the Coffee Ceremony? What are those? Please name them in Chinese.

2. Reading Café 1 (Except only)

①埃塞俄比亚是咖啡的*发源地*。埃塞尔比亚是世界上最早种植咖啡和*保持*最古老咖啡文化的国家。至今通常仍然都是小*规模*家庭种植，并*沿袭*着非常传统古老的咖啡种植*工艺*和方法，是那些*崇尚*自然人士的最好选择。

②6 世纪时，埃塞尔比亚的人们就开始把咖啡及*香料*一起*咀嚼*了，最常见的是去*狩猎*的人用腊肉把咖啡裹起来当作最好的干粮，这样既可以吃饱又有精神享受。所以咀嚼咖啡作为埃塞尔比亚一个传统*流传*了下来。

③在 10 世纪，埃塞俄比亚的*游牧*山民开始认识到咖啡的*刺激*作用，但他们直接把咖啡连皮吃，咖啡*成熟*时像红*樱桃*，他们就直接吃，并没有喝<u>它</u>作为饮料。伊斯兰教苏菲派的*神秘*香客把咖啡*蔓延*整个*中东*地区，又从中东蔓延到欧洲，然后继续蔓延，包括印度尼西亚和美国④13 世纪*中叶*，埃塞俄比亚已经在使用平底锅作为咖啡*熔制*的工具，领导咖啡文化的发展。

⑤到今天，咖啡仍然是埃塞俄比亚的国家*战略物资*，也是埃塞俄比亚重要的*出口*农产品

1) Vocabulary. Read the text and try to guess the meaning of the words. Chose the best explanation for each word.

① 发源地　　　　　　A 按照旧例办事
② 保持　　　　　　　B（事业、机构、工程等）所具有的格局、
　　　　　　　　　　　　形式或范围
③ 规模　　　　　　　C 维持原状，使不消失或减弱
④ 沿袭　　　　　　　D 借指事物发端、起源的所在
……

2) Use the correct form of the work in A to complete the following sentences.
① 亚迪斯正在大_____ 地修建高楼大厦。
② 中国许多地区还_____ 着古老的耕种方式。
③ 黄河是中国文化的_____ 。
　……

3) Understand the text. Read the text and answer the following question:
① 下面哪个选项不属于埃塞咖啡的种植方式：
A. 小规模的家庭种植　B. 大规模的机械化种植
C. 沿袭传统的种植方法　D. 保持传统工艺

② 6 世纪的埃塞，狩猎人有什么习惯？
A. 喝煮好的咖啡　　　　B. 腊肉裹咖啡当干粮
C. 喜欢打猎　　　　D. 咀嚼咖啡

③ 第三段，划线的"它"值得是什么？
A. 红樱桃　B. 游牧山民　C. 饮料　D. 咖啡

④ Write True, False or Not Given for each statement.
A. 埃塞是世界上最早种植咖啡的国家。
B. 埃塞人都喜欢咀嚼咖啡。
C. 伊斯兰教教徒将咖啡带到了中东。
D. 美国人喜欢喝埃塞咖啡。

E. 埃塞的咖啡不但是重要的战略物资，也是主要的出口产品。

⑤ Read the Text again and choose the best title for the text.
A. 埃塞的咖啡
B. 埃塞咖啡的历史
C. 埃塞咖啡的种植
D. 埃塞咖啡的出口

3. Reading Café 2
埃塞俄比亚有很多原始生态区，适合咖啡精细种植。不同区域生产具有不同特性的一些咖啡，使埃塞俄比亚咖啡更具吸引力，下面就是几种咖啡的代表。

LEKEMPTI 原料外观呈绿色，为黄豆粒大小偏大，它具有温和的果香的味道。LIMMU 原料外观呈绿色，为黄豆粒大小偏小。它有华丽的香昧、香气和辛辣味酒味。
……
1） Recognize the main idea. Match the text with a title
　A 埃塞人喜欢喝咖啡
　B 埃塞咖啡的种类
　C 埃塞咖啡具有吸引力
　D 埃塞咖啡的香味

4. Reading Café 3
(一)、埃塞俄比亚和中国咖啡相同之处
1.埃塞俄比亚和中国南方气候相近，为咖啡生长提供了良好环境。
2.埃塞俄比亚和中国都喜欢喝咖啡，尤其在重大节日或庆祝时刻。
3.埃塞俄比亚和中国都形成了自己的咖啡文化。

（二）、埃塞俄比亚和中国咖啡不同之处
1.埃塞俄比亚是咖啡的原产地，历史悠久，而中国咖啡是从外国引种的。埃塞俄比亚的咖啡品种多，产量大，质量好，在世界上比较著名。中国的咖啡种植面积小，品质一般。
2.埃塞俄比亚人每天要喝咖啡，中国人喝咖啡次数没有埃塞人多。
3. 埃塞俄比亚有独特的烹制咖啡的方法和仪式，比较古老和传统:而中国咖啡文化停留在商业带动层面，比较现代和时尚。

1) Scanning and skimming the text and fill in the blanks.

	埃塞咖啡	中国咖啡
相同点	1.气候好 2. 3.	
不同点	1.原产地	1.
	2.	2.喝咖啡次数不多
	3.	3.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION
Culture teaching is an essential part for language teaching, which provides students to experience pleasure from language learning. Culture offers several benefits to language classes, not only in developing linguistic knowledge, but also motivated, extend students' language proficiency. By using the local culture-based material, it can encourage learners to gain a

deeper understanding of their own culture and to share these insights in Chinese to any others as well as more effectively in learning a global language. Local culture material offers an "authentic" text involving the students' real life experiences, which make the learners are more interested with the contents. As Xinhua News (March 03, 2016) mentioned "As ties between China and Africa grow not only in trade but also in people-to-people exchanges, the interest in Chinese language learning has grown from among university students to teenagers in African countries. Teaching of Chinese language in secondary schools has been introduced to African countries including South Africa, Tanzania and Madagascar, and this trend is expected to further grow." According to the report named *Will Chinese be the next essential global development language?* (Jenny Lei Ravelo, 2015) clearly pointed " the results of a Devex survey, conducted in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development and Population Services International, suggest so. Two-thirds of over 1,000 respondents to our survey of skills development professionals would need in the next decade believe Chinese will be a much more important language than it is today. Many of them have had extensive experience in Africa, and a high percentage of them work in the social services sectors."

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Martitime Slik Road are designed to link Asia, Europe and Africa countries that were proposed by Chinese government in 2013. It will attract and support 500,000 students from Belt and Road countries to study in China in 2020. (Study in China, February 24, 2016). Such local culture-based material can serve as a springboard and lead the Chinese language education for a true international understanding in the 21st century. Kantatip (2015) claimed "the local culture values materials are align with the pedagogical approach in the framework of learning which is education for international understanding." To sum up, not only Ethiopia should design and produce culturally-themed teaching materials, but also each country in Africa should make its own version of cultural-based teaching contents for their Chinese language learners as well as especially AU member countries. It would benefit our learners to learn each other's culture through learning Chinese and enable students to be a global citizen.

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