

An Experimental Study on Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary*

UNE ÉTUDE EXPÉRIMENTALE SUR LE TRANSFERT DE CONNOTATION CULTURELLE DE VOCABULAIRE

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Abstract: Based on transfer theory and Kellerman's psychotypology markedness theory, this study was focused on the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary of the Chinese EFL learners. 216 subjects of English and non-English majors from three Chinese universities participated in a series of test in the study. Based on the scores of the test, this study yielded into two important findings. First, whole-group analysis showed that there existed transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary among the Chinese EFL learners and the cultural awareness of the learners are positively correlative with their language capability. Second, the between-group analysis indicated L2 capability was negatively correlative with the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary. The ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary of the high-ability learners was lower than that of the low-ability learners. Furthermore, individual differences, such as age, gender, learning style are also analyzed. The study provided several theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications to L2 learning, L2 vocabulary research and interculture study.

Key words: Vocabulary; Cultural connotation; Transfer

Resumé: Basé sur la théorie de transfert et la théorie de fait d'être marqué psychotypologie de Kellerman, cette étude a été concentrée sur le transfert de connotation culturelle de vocabulaire des apprenants de EFL chinois. 216 sujets, certains sont spécialisés en anglais venant de trois universités chinoises ont participé à une série de test dans l'étude. Basé sur le grand nombre du test, cette étude a rapporté deux découvertes importantes. D'abord, l'analyse de groupe entier a montré qu'il existe le transfert de connotation culturelle de vocabulaire parmi les apprenants de EFL chinois et

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la conscience culturelle des apprenants est positivement corrélatif avec leur capacité de langue. Deuxièmement, l'analyse entre-groupe a indiqué que la capacité L2 était négativement corrélative avec la proportion de transfert de connotation culturelle de vocabulaire. La proportion de transfert de connotation culturelle de vocabulaire des apprenants très doués était inférieure que celui des apprenants qui ont peu de capacité. En outre, des différences individuelles, comme l'âge, le genre, le style d'apprendre sont aussi analysés. L'étude a fourni plusieurs implications théoriques, méthodologiques et pédagogiques à l'étude de L2, L2 la recherche de vocabulaire et l'étude d'interculture.

Mots-clés: Vocabulaire; Connotation culturelle; Transfert

1. INTRODUCTION

In L2 learning, L1 is a central factor affecting L2 learners' interlanguage development. Findings concerning the L1 transfer to L2 are very controversial and inconsistent. In recent years, there has been an agreement that language transfer is not only a common phenomenon in L2 learning but also involves cultural factors, such as thought patterns, cultural values, customs and habits. Language transfer is regarded not as a mechanical transference of first language structure, but as a cognitively complex mechanism involving many factors. It is important that some cultural factors be taken into the study of language transfer with the development of pragmatics and intercultural communication. And individual differences are also taken into consideration with the development of sociolinguistics.

In traditional English classroom teaching, learners and teachers spend quite a lot of time and energy on the enlargement of learners' vocabulary, but they rarely combine word learning with the cultural background of target language. Meanwhile, studies on transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary of the Chinese EFL learners are very limited and most of the previous study focused on the non-English major freshmen, in which individual differences, such as age, gender, learning style etc. were not sufficiently considered. In this thesis, the focus will be put on the shortages. Based on the study on the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary, some suggestions and implications are put forward.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Cultural Transfer and Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary

In 1989, Odlin summarized all the studies about the transfer in second language acquisition and gave a precise definition of transfer as follows: Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired(1989:27).

According to Odlin's definition on language transfer, cultural transfer possibly refers to the cultural influence resulting from similarity and differences between the target culture and the culture that has been previously acquired.

In 2000, Dai and Zhang categorize cultural transfer into two layers: the surface-transfer and deep-structure transfer(2000:3).

Surface-structure transfer occurs at the superficial level. As for cultural meanings of vocabulary, the Russian linguists stated the vocabulary can be divided into 5 categories: vacant words, words with strong cultural connotation, idioms, proverbs and polite formulas. The categories exist in all languages. Native speakers grasp them unconsciously within the particularly cultural settings. L2 learners, however, are subject to understand and output L2 based on their own cultural background due to the lack of intercultural cultivation. Thus surface-structure transfer occurs.

Deep-surface transfer always occurs at the unconscious level. It is closely related to the perception, attitude, beliefs and values of a culture and is considered as one of the most influential barrier in L2 learning.

As for the definition of cultural connotation of vocabulary, Geoffrey Leech(1987) suggests seven kinds of meanings, and five of them are brought under the associative meanings as follows: (See Table 1):

Table 1: The Associative Meaning of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary

Connotative meaning	What is communicated by virtue of what language refers to
Social meaning	What is communicated of the social circumstances of language use
Affective meaning	What is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/ writer
Reflected meaning	What is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression
Collective meaning	What is communicated through association with words which tend to occur in the environment of another word

(Adapted from Hu Zhuanglin 2001: 159)

In this paper, cultural connotation is used to refer to all the five associative meanings as well as other extended meanings connected with culture.

Contrastive Analysis Approach to Cultural Transfer

Lado was the first person to conduct the study of cultural comparison. He argues that there are three cases which would lead to cultural transfer: when the form has different meanings in two cultures; when the same meaning in two cultures is related to different forms; when a pattern that has the same form and the same meaning shows different distribution. Lado mentioned cultural transfer as early as language transfer, however, he and other linguistics did little research in this field (Zhang, 2006).

In recent years, contrastive analysis is becoming popular in pragmatics with the development of psycholinguistics and cultural contrast. Thus this paper will adopt the contrastive analysis to compare the similarities and differences between English and Chinese words on both surface-structure and deep-structure levels.

Kellerman's Psychotypological Markedness Theory

Kellerman refers to the perception of the L2 and the distance from the L1 as "psychotypology". Kellerman (in Gass and Selinker, 1993) argued that there are constraints on language which go well beyond mere similarity and dissimilarity of the two languages in question. These constraints ultimately involve the learner as a very active participant in the learning process, on who makes "decision" about what can and cannot be transferred. Kellerman suggests two interacting factors which are involved in language transfer. One is the learner's perception of the nature of the L2 and the other is the degree of markedness of the L1 structure.

According to Kellerman, there are parts of one's language which native speakers consider irregular, infrequent or semantically opaque. These items are marked and are less transferable than frequent and regular forms. The former are language-specific while the latter are language-neutral. Language-specific elements are those which a learner views as unique to his/her language, whereas language-neutral elements are those which the learner believes to be common at least to the native and the target languages.

Contrastive Study on Cultural Connotations of English and Chinese Words

Contrastive Study on Surface-structure Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary

Zheng Yanchang (Zhou Guohui, 2002), a Chinese professor holds that semantic disparity between English and Chinese words can be classified into four categories: (1) words that have no counterparts in other languages; (2) words that superficially refer to same things as their counterparts in other languages but actually not; (3) words that have more than one counterparts in other languages; (4) words that have same or similar denotative meanings but quite different connotative meanings with their counterparts in other languages.

In this paper, in order to make the comparison more easily manipulated, the words are divided into three categories for comparison: overlapping words--words that have same denotative meanings and somewhat similar cultural connotations with their counterparts in another language, vacant words-- words in one language that do not have counterparts in another language, and semantically dislocating words refer to those that have the same denotations but different connotations in different languages.

Contrastive Study on Deep-structure Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary

Surface-structure transfer is caused by such deep-structure factors as perception, religion, environment, history and so on.

According to Gamble(1996:77), "Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data in a way that enables us to make sense of our world.". Nanda (1994: 349) gives the definition of religion: Religion "deals with the nature of life and death, the creation of the universe, the origin of society and groups within the society, the relationship of individuals and groups to one another, and the relation of humankind to nature". Nature refers to the air, water, land, geography, and all the other situations that influence the way in which people live, speak, and behave. History as a world view penetrates on people's perception, behavior, and thus is reflected in the languages.

Deep-structure transfer always occurs at the unconscious level, which poses great difficulties in L2 learning. Thus, not only the superficial difference between L1 and L2 but also the underlying deep-structure factors should be included.

Predictability

The predictability of this kind of words can be analyzed from three aspects:

- 1) The words that constitute the basic vocabulary are always perceived by learners as less language- or cultural-specific, thus are prone to be transferred.
- 2) The words that carry more cultural features are less prone to be transferred
- 3) The words that directly reflect the values or beliefs are also prone to be transferred, because they belong to deep-structure layer and deep-rooted into learners' mind.

In explaining the cultural transfer, Kasper also presents two other factors that may influence the possible transfer, which are learner's language proficiency and intercultural awareness. In the paper, an experimental study is conducted to testify how the factors influence transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary. According to Wang's research(1998), there is significant difference between English-major students and non-English major students in the learning of language vocabulary, so major is also an important factor that may influence the transfer. Furthermore, there is overwhelming evidence that "language transfer is indeed a real and central phenomenon that must be considered in any full account of the second language acquisition process"(Gass & Selinker 1993: 7). Therefore, it is of great significance to probe into the possible variables of the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary. According to Ellis(1994), second language learners vary on a number of dimensions to do with personality, learning style,

age etc. And Fillmore (1979 cited from Ellis 1994) also points out, individual differences are seen as an all-important factor in second language acquisition. As a result, the factors that may affect transfer, such as age, learning style, personality of the learners, are also taken into consideration.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Subjects

A total of 216 Chinese first-year English major students and non-English major students from three Chinese universities are chosen at random as the subjects in this study. They are freshmen, not receiving any special instruction on the cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries.

Research Questions

The present study is intended to answer the following questions:

- 1) Does transfer occur in cultural connotation of vocabulary?
- 2) Do the predictions made in previous chapter by the researcher correspond to the experimental results?
- 3) What is the relationship between learners' intercultural awareness and their language proficiency?
- 4) What is the relationship between the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and learners' intercultural awareness?
- 5) Does transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary occur more frequently to learners with low language proficiency than to those with high language proficiency?
- 6) To what extent do learners' individual differences affect transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary?

Instruments

The instruments consist of three parts: transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary test; a sociocultural test; English and Chinese test scores in university entrance examination and some information about social factors(see Appendix).

Transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary test: Yu Liming (2004: 117) proposes two forms that transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary takes: hypothesized similarities and literal translation. The former occurs because learners unconsciously think that the denotative meaning and the connotative meaning of L2 are the same with L1. While, the latter occurs when learners produce or understand the L2 words according to the superficial meaning of the words. According to Yu's classification, the first part of the instruments consists of two sections: 1) three questions with each one corresponding to one category. Learners are asked to write down no less than 20 words about their feelings towards the words; 2) Nine multiple-choice questions. Learners are asked to choose the more accurate translation that they think for the Chinese word in the question. The purpose of the test is to know if the transfer exists in cultural connotation of vocabulary, and if the transfer corresponds to the prediction, and the relationship between learners' intercultural awareness and their language proficiency.

Sociocultural test: This test is adapted from the article "the Analysis of a Sociocultural test" written by Chinese educator Wang Zhenya (adapted from Hu, 2007) which is divided into two parts. The first part includes 20 questions that describe nonverbal behaviors in intercultural interaction. The second part also covers 20 questions that are products of verbal behaviors in intercultural interaction. The Sociocultural test is the one about the general culture that can be measured as the standard of learner's intercultural awareness. The purpose of this part is to test if learners' intercultural awareness correlates with the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary, and if learners' intercultural awareness correlates with their language proficiency.

English and Chinese test scores in university entrance examination: The subjects are fresh students with only half year's study in university, so the English and Chinese test scores in university entrance examination are used as the standard of learners' language proficiency. The information of social factors,

such as gender, age, learning style, major, personality are also required to be given. The purpose of the scores is to test if the learners' language proficiency correlates with the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary, and if learners' language proficiency correlates with their intercultural awareness. The information of social factors are required to test to what extent learners' individual differences affect transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary.

Procedure

The first three tasks are undertaken within an hour and a half. The subjects are not told the objectives of the study. Other factors of the subjects, such as gender, age, learning style, major, personality are also taken into consideration.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Does transfer occur in cultural connotation of vocabulary? (See Tables 2& 3)

Table 2: The Result of the Corresponding to the Category

Category	English View		Chinese View		Balanced View	
	Subject Number	Percentage (%)	Subject Number	Percentage (%)	Subject Number	Percentage (%)
mother	216	100%	216	100%	0	0
Dutch Uncle	54	21%	0	0	0	0
individualism	11	5%	52	24%	153	71%

Table 3: The Despondences of the Nine Multiple-Choice Questions

Item	Transfer		Non-transfer	
	Subject Number	Percentage (%)	Subject Number	Percentage (%)
1	58	27%	158	73%
2	9	4%	207	91%
3	103	48%	113	52%
4	67	31%	149	69%
5	6	3%	210	97%
6	18	8%	198	92%
7	46	21%	170	79%
8	46	21%	170	79%
9	106	49%	110	51%

Table2 and Table 3 tell us that transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary does exist. Learners either use their L1 knowledge to deem the English connotation of the words or literally translate the Chinese words into English. For example, in the understanding the word “mother”, 100% learners think the connotation of the word from their L1 knowledge. As for the word “individualism”, 24% of the learners deem the connotation of the word from their L1 knowledge. They think individualism is related to being selfish, being self-centered and the word has derogative connotations. One learner writes:

Individualism is opposite to collectivism. It refers to people who are selfish and only care about themselves. We don't like that kind of people. We should try our best to help others.

In the multiple-choice questions, learners also use their L1 knowledge to guide their choice. 48% of the learners choose “as light as feather” as the correct answer to “輕如鴻毛” instead of “very light”. 49% of the learners choose the “four dragons of Asia” to “亞洲四小龍” instead of “four tigers of Asia”.

Do all these predictions made in previous chapter by the researcher correspond to the experimental results?

In chapter 2, predictions of the possible transfer of the three categories of words are proposed. The results can be compared after the experimental study. (See Figure 1)

As for overlapping words, Figure 1 shows that the similarities do not always lead to positive transfer to overlapping words. The reason may be that the phrases are considered less cultural-specific; therefore the learners are reliable to use their L1 as the guide in choosing the questions.

As for vacant words, they do pose great difficulties to the learners. Based on the results of Figure 1, we can see the total transfer ratio of the vacant words is the lower (42%) than that of overlapping words (79%) and that of semantically dislocating words (91%). The results correspond to the prediction. The vacant words are least prone to be transferred because they are heavily cultural loaded and possibly be considered more marked.

As for semantically dislocating words, the results from Question 7 to Question 9 show that some of the words are prone to be transferred while others are not easily transferred. Figure 1 shows that the total transfer ratio(91%) of the words in this categories is higher than that of the overlapping words(79%), which means that semantic dislocating words are perceived less cultural-specific and more prone to be transferred.

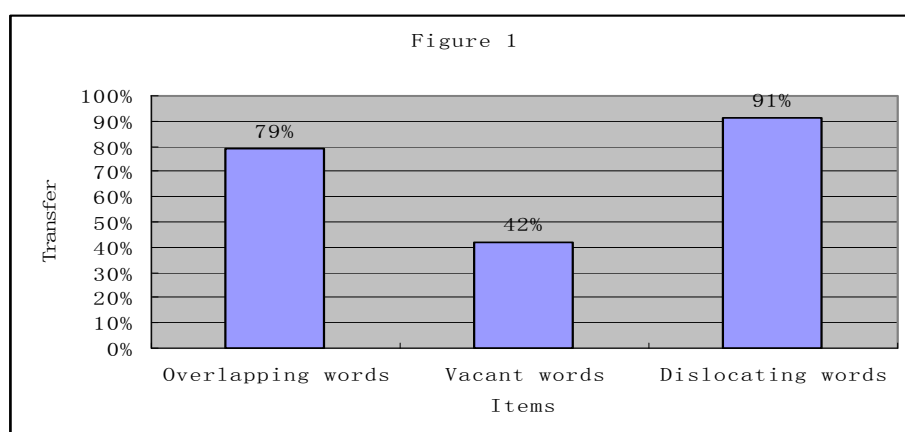


Figure 1: Predictions of the Possible Transfer of the Three Categories

Based on the above analysis, we can see the results correspond to the prediction. Overlapping words that constitute the basic vocabulary perceived by learners as less language-or cultural-specific are more prone to be transferred, compared with the vacant words, and semantic dislocating words that directly reflect the values or believes are also prone to be transferred. Vacant words that carry more cultural features are less prone to be transferred.

What is the relationship between learners' intercultural awareness and their language proficiency?

The scores in the sociocultural test reflect learners' intercultural awareness, while the scores in university entrance examination reflect learners' language proficiency. Since the total score in these two exams are different (the sociocultural test is 100 and the university entrance examination is 150), we will compare the pass ratio (the pass score in sociocultural test is 60 and that in university entrance examination is 90) and excellence ratio (the excellence score in sociocultural test is 80 and that in university entrance examination is 120) to see if learners' intercultural awareness corresponds to learners' language proficiency. The result is listed in Table 4:

Table 4: The Relationship Between Learners' Intercultural Awareness and Their Language Proficiency

Tests	Pass Ratio		Excellence Ratio	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sociocultural Test	149	69%	3	1%
University Entrance Examination (English)	213	99%	90	42%
University Entrance Examination (Chinese)	216	100%	18	8%

Table 4 tells us that the pass ratio and excellence ratio in the university entrance examination are much higher than that in the sociocultural test. That is to say generally learners' language proficiency is higher than learners' intercultural awareness. This means the development of learners' linguistic knowledge and cultural knowledge is unbalanced. This is easy to explain since in language teaching both teachers and learners lay more emphasis on linguistic elements while neglect cultural learning.

What is the relationship between the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and learners' intercultural awareness?

In this part, the subjects are divided into three groups according to their scores in sociocultural test. The first 30% of the students who get higher scores belong to group SH (high scores in Sociocultural test), and the last 30% of the students whose scores are relatively lower belong to group SL (low scores in Sociocultural test). The percentage of persons who literally translate the words into English within each group is calculated as the percentage of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary. The results are listed in Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7. And Table 8 shows the Pearson Correlation of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and learners' intercultural awareness.

Table 5: The Despondences to the Questions(1-3)

Item	SH		SL	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Question 1	11	17%	22	33%
Question 2	0	0%	0	0%
Question 3	27	42%	43	67%
Total/Average	38	15%	65	33%

Table 6: The Despondences to the Questions(4-6)

Item	SH		SL	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Question 4	16	25%	22	33%
Question 5	0	0%	5	8%
Question 6	5	8%	11	17%
Total/Average	21	11%	37	19%

Table 7: The Despondences to the Questions(7-9)

Item	SH		SL	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Question 7	16	25%	11	16%
Question 8	16	25%	22	33%
Question 9	43	67%	43	67%
Total/Average	75	39%	76	39%

Table 8: The Pearson Correlation of Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary and Learners' Intercultural Awareness

	Intercultural Awareness
Pearson Correlation(Transfer)	-.29
Sig.(1-tailed) (p)	.01**

The above four tables show that the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary is closely related to the learners' intercultural awareness. The students who have high intercultural awareness make less transfer. For overlapping words, the students in group SH are better aware of the distance between English and Chinese, thus they try not to translate the Chinese into English literally. In the first two categories, students in group SH do much better than learners in group SL. For the third category, the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary of the two groups is the same which suggests that the words of this category are perceived less cultural-specific, and thus more prone to be transferred. Therefore it is of great difficulty for the learners to grasp the exact meanings of the words. In general, all the results demonstrate that the higher intercultural awareness the learners have, the less transfer they are prone to make. The significant difference between transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and learners' intercultural awareness ($p=.01$) indicates the necessity of cultivating the learners' intercultural awareness.

Does transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary occur more frequently to learners with low language proficiency than to those with high language proficiency?(See Figure 2)

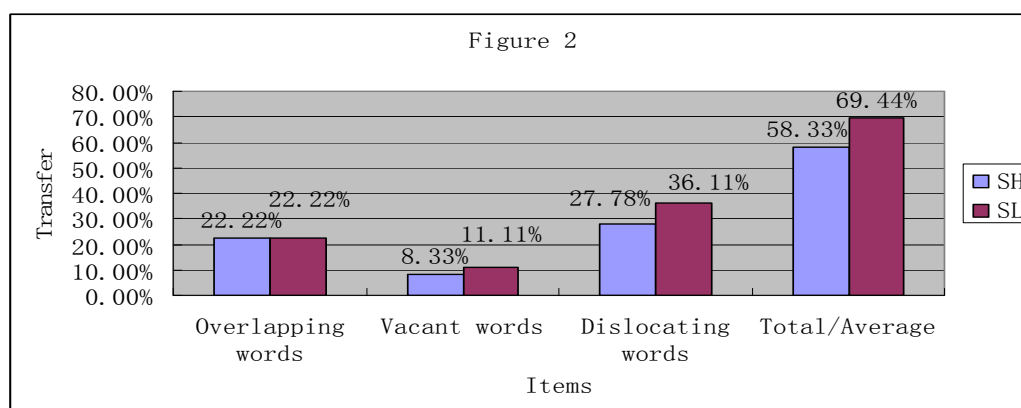


Figure 2: The Relationship Between the Ratio of Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary and Learners' Intercultural Awareness

In this part, the subjects are also divided into three groups according to their scores in the University Entrance Examination. Just as the relationship between the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and learners' intercultural awareness, the results indicate the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary also is closely related to the learners' language proficiency. Learners with higher language proficiency depend less on their Chinese knowledge in English learning; thus, are less prone to transfer their Chinese knowledge (58.33% vs. 69.44%).

To what extent do learners' individual differences affect transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary?(See Table 9)

Table 9: The Correlation of Learners' Individual Differences and Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary

	Gender	Age	Personality	Learning Style
Pearson Correlation (Transfer)	-.15	.15	.10	-.00
Sig.(1-tailed)(p)	.11	.12	.22	.50

The result of the analysis of Table 9 shows that gender and learning style are related to cultural transfer negatively. There exists negative correlation between gender, learning style and connotation's transfer,

while age and personality have a positive relation with transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary. This is because older learners will more often be aware of the existence of target language. With such an awareness, older learners may try to use only what they believe to be structures of the target language(eg., Fantini 1985).

Other findings

In the present study, the differences between the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and gender, the differences between the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and majors(English major & Non-English major), the differences between the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and personality(introvert & extrovert), the differences between the ratio of transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary and learning style(memorial & analytical) are also analyzed. The results are listed in Table 10, Table 11, Table 12 and Table 13 and Table 14 shows us the Pearson Correlation of transfer and Chinese proficiency.

The figures of Table 10 suggest that male students are more prone to transfer than the female students. It possibly means that female students are more sensitive to the cultural differences between the English and Chinese languages. The results of Table 11 show that English majors transfer less than non-English majors. It may be owing to the fact that English major students are guided more possibly to the intercultural learning by the teachers or textbooks and class size has an obvious potential to influence acquisition no matter what native and target languages are involved(Odlin 2001: 129). According to Odlin(2001), textbooks and other materials that present analogies between the native and target languages may promote or inhibit some kinds of transfer. Introvert students are less prone to transfer than the extrovert students. The possible reason may be that the extrovert students are more or less oriented to high tolerance of ambiguity on the differences between English and Chinese languages or the norms of traditional classroom behavior in Chinese schools often encourage the development of introvert behavior. Odlin points out the personality that any learner seems to have maybe as much reflection of socio-linguistic norms in the native-language speech community as it is of an individual self. Table 13 shows that there is almost no difference between different learning styles.

The statistics of Table 14 show that Chinese proficiency is one of the important factors that influence the transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary. There is negative relationship between them. The reason may be that learners with low proficiency have a limited vocabulary size in Chinese, which will not result in a good command of words in the English language. The study of L1 helps learners learn L2 lexicon faster (Sandra 1997). The more words a learner learn in the first language, the better his/her lexical knowledge is in the native language. New words in the second language must be connected to students' previous knowledge and experiences in both L1 and L2. When learning a new English word, the students always contextualized it by attaching it to words and concepts they already have in the first language. Otherwise, the word will likely have little meaning to them(Shawna 2000). Thus the learners with higher Chinese proficiency are less prone to transfer, which indicates that while the learners learn the English language, the Chinese language learning should not be neglected.

Table 10: The Differences between the Ratio of Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary and Gender

Transfer	Male		Female	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total	276	28%	240	22%

Table 11: The Differences between the Ratio of Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary and Majors

Transfer	English Majors		Non-English Majors	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total	216	22%	280	29%

Table 12: The Differences between the Ratio of Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary and Personality

Transfer	Introvert		Extrovert	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total	198	21%	212	22%

Table 13: The Differences between the Ratio of Transfer of Cultural Connotation of Vocabulary and Learning Style

Transfer	Memorial		Analytical	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total	233	24%	236	24%

Table 14: The Pearson Correlation of Transfer and Chinese Proficiency

	Chinese Proficiency
Pearson Correlation (Transfer)	-.02
Sig.(1-tailed) (p)	.45

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the analysis of the results, we can draw the following conclusions and put forward some implications:

Conclusions

1) Semantic dislocating words perceived more language- or cultural-specific are prone to be transferred. Overlapping words that constitute the basic vocabulary perceived by learners as less language-or cultural-specific are more prone to be transferred, compared with the vacant words. And vacant words that carry more cultural features are less prone to be transferred.

2) Learners' intercultural awareness does not match learners' language proficiency. Transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary occurs more frequently to learners with low intercultural awareness than to those who have relatively high intercultural awareness.

3) Transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary occurs more frequently to learners with lower language proficiency than to those with high language proficiency.

4) Learners' individual differences such as age, gender, learning style and personality affect transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary.

According to the above conclusions, we can see transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary between English and Chinese is at least influenced by four factors. They are the perceived markedness of L1 by L2 learners, L2 learners' language proficiency (including Chinese proficiency and English proficiency), the L2 learners' intercultural awareness and individual learner differences. Therefore, in the learning of L2 words, the important thing is to handle these four factors correctly. When emphasizing the differences between the Chinese and English, the similarities should not be ignored either: when developing the learners' English proficiency, learners' intercultural awareness and Chinese learning should also be strengthened.

Implications

Upon the empirical study, the implications are put forward as follows:

1) Chinese and English culture can both be used as strategies or resources in English learning and intercultural communication. Although Chinese and English are quite different languages which belong to different typological families, yet they still have certain similarities that would facilitate learning. Besides the positive role played by Chinese when there are similarities between Chinese and English, Chinese and

Chinese culture can also be used as strategies or resources in English learning and intercultural communication.

2) Similarities and differences between Chinese and English should both be paid attention to in English learning. In the previous studies, differences between Chinese and English are always the focus. Therefore, the role of Chinese is regarded as mainly negative. Actually, with the development of learners' English knowledge and intercultural awareness, Chinese and Chinese culture can be properly used as a resource to facilitate English learning.

3) Intercultural awareness is a very important factor that influences transfer of cultural connotation of vocabulary. Therefore, it is essential to help the Chinese College students develop their intercultural awareness in the English learning and intercultural communication.

4) Learning English means more than merely mastering the pronunciation, words and grammar. It also means learning the ways in which their language reflects the ideas, customs, and behavior of their society, learning to understand their "language of the mind". Learning a language, in fact, is inseparable from learning its culture. Therefore, in English learning, more emphasis should be put on cultural learning.

5) Teachers should be aware of and cope with individual differences in language learning. While teaching vocabulary, the teacher should take individual learner differences into consideration fully, such as diversity of learner's characteristics, age, gender, learning style of the students, to adapt his/her teaching.

Like any other types of research, this study could be improved in conceptual, methodological and other aspects.

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APPENDIX

Part One

1) Answering Questions: there are three questions in this part. Each question has an English word. Please write at least 20 words about your understanding of the word.

- a. mother
- b. Dutch Uncle
- c. individualism

2) Multiple-choice Question: Please choose one answer that you think is more accurate for the Chinese word in question.

- 1. 桃腮 : A. peachy cheeks B. pink complexion (膚色)
- 2. 折桂 : A. gain one's laurel (桂樹) B. gain Number One
- 3. 輕如鴻毛 : A. as light as feather B. very light
- 4. 班門弄斧 : A. to show off one's ax in front of Master Luban
B. to offer to teach fish how to swim
- 5. 梁祝 : A. Liang and Zhu B. the Butterfly Lovers
- 6. 鴛鴦 : A. Chinese duck and drake B. lovebirds
- 7. 紅茶 : A. red tea B. black tea
- 8. 休息室 : A. restroom B. lounge
- 9. 亞洲四小龍 : A. four dragons of Asia B. four tigers of Asia

Part Two

1) Directions: There are 20 questions in this part. Each question has a part underlined which describes a non-verbal behavior in intercultural interaction. Read each question and decide whether the underlined part is appropriate or inappropriate. If it is appropriate, write an "A", or, if it is inappropriate, write an "I" on the "answer sheet".

- 1. If you are a man in the English speaking countries, and a lady comes into the room, you must rise to your feet.
- 2. If you want to go and see one of your American or English friends, you can do it after lunch.

3. If you are invited to dinner by one of your English-speaking friends, you may bring the hostess some fruit as a present.
4. If you are a college student or a graduate student and meet during the break in an academic conference (學術會議) an American professor who is a friend of your supervisor's (導師), you can go over and have talk with him as long as the break permits.
5. If you have a question to ask your foreign teacher of English you may say good-bye to him and leave immediately after you have got the answer and expressed your gratitude.
6. If when you study at college in an English speaking country you feel ill and therefore cannot attend the class, you'd better go and see the doctor and ask him to write for you a certificate(證明) for sick leave.
7. Mary came to Zhang Mei's birthday party and brought her a present wrapped in a nice box. Zhang Mei unwrapped the box in Mary's presence and praised the present.
8. When you have a conversation with your English teacher who is a native speaker of English, you mustn't have a prolonged(長時間地) eye contact with him.
9. If you study as a graduate student in the U.S.A., you should always try to avoid telephoning your American classmates at sometime late than 11 p.m. unless there is an emergency.
10. Dr. Smith, over 60, invited Li Bing to his birthday party. Li Bing brought him a china god of longevity(長壽) as a present.
11. Many English houses are known only by a name. If you have difficulty in finding such a house, you may try asking the local shopkeepers.
12. At a dinner you can begin to eat when the hostess picks up her own spoon or fork.
13. You don't need to tip(給小費) the girl who shows you to your seat in cinema or theatre in the U. K. .
14. In the English speaking countries you usually first introduce a man to a woman, not the other way round.
15. When you give your hostess the flowers you have brought her, you should remove the wrapping paper first.
16. In England you should remember that drugs may not be available without a doctor's prescription.
17. It is more polite to type the letters of invitation or acknowledgement (感谢信) than to write them with a pen.
18. If you are a male and introduced to an English speaking lady, you do not take the initiative in shaking hands unless she holds out her hand first.
19. When you feel ill and want to go and see a doctor, it is a good idea to make an appointment before you go.
20. You think that John is a strange American because he takes cold bath and drinks boiled water.

2) Directions: There are 20 questions in this part. Each question has a part underlined which is the product of verbal behavior. Read each question and decide whether the underlined part is appropriate or inappropriate. If it is appropriate, write an "A", or, if it is inappropriate, write an "I" on the "answer sheet".

1. Li Xiaolan works as a secretary in an American company. One day she worked very late. Her boss said to her, "Thanks a lot. That's a great help." Li replied, "It's my pleasure."
2. On his way to the school cinema, Li Hong saw Professor Jones walking to the cinema, too. Li said, "You're going to see the film, aren't you?"
3. On a cold winter day Wang Ping met Professor Briner on his way to the library. Wang said to him, "It's rather cold. You'd better wear more clothes."
4. Betty is a foreign student in China. She met Feng Mei and said to her, "I was told that you won the 100-meter race this morning. Congratulations." Feng replied, "Just lucky."

5. Mrs. Brown, in her late forties, came to lecture, wearing a new dress. One of her students said to her, "You look nice and younger wearing this dress."
6. Xu Cheng happened to meet Jones at the bank when Jones was drawing money. Xu said jokingly to him, "You're really a millionaire."
7. Wang Lin called at one of his foreign friends' house. He was really impressed by the beautiful curtains made by his friend's wife. He said to her, "Well. I didn't expect you could make such pretty curtains."
8. Li Ming had something to tell Mr. Smith, the head of the department, so he went to his office, entered it and said to him, "Can I have a word with you. Mr. Smith?"
9. Dr. Jones, your supervisor, telephoned to invite you to have dinner with his family. You replied, "Thank you. All right. I'll try to come."
10. In New York Chen Ming called a taxi and said to the driver, "Could you mind taking me to the airport?"
11. When you are eating with an English friend, you wish him, "Good appetite!"
12. If you do not quite understand a native speaker of English and therefore want him to repeat an utterance(說話), you say, "I beg your pardon, please."
13. When you break a plate in one of your friends' house, you say, "I'm awfully sorry, but I seem to have broken a plate."
14. The best answer to the invitation "You really must come and see us one of these days." May be "Thank you very much. I love meeting English people."
15. When you want to compliment(讚揚) your young English Friend's new coat, you can say, "I like your new coat."
16. If you want to borrow a typewriter from your English friend, you say, "Is there any chance of borrowing your typewriter?"
17. The appropriate answer to the question "Who's that crossing the street?" is "She's Mary."
18. If a native speaker of English says to you "That's a very nice coat you're wearing.", you can answer it by saying, "Do you really like it?"
19. Mrs. Godwin was about the same age as Li Ming's grandmother, so intimately Li called her "Grandma".
20. Jack, a foreign student in China, called at your house and asked if you minded him smoking. If you hate the smell of tobacco, you may say, "Would you mind if I said no?"

Part Three

Personal Information:

Grade_____, Major_____

Sex: Male_____, Female_____

Age_____

Your English Score in University Entrance Examination_____

Your Chinese Score in University Entrance Examination_____

5. Your Learning Style: Memorial Style(), Analytical Style()

6. Your Personality: Introvert(), Extrovert()