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AN INVESTIGATION ON THE DESIGN OF ENGLISH CURRICULUMS IN THE MAJOR OF TEACHING CHINESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

It is a fact that more and more people in the world are beginning to learn Chinese. Meanwhile, for these students majoring in teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCAFL) in China, having a good mastery of English is also very important. Under such circumstance, this paper investigated the design of English curriculums in the major of teaching Chinese as a foreign language in China. The English course designs in 59 famous universities in China were collected and analyzed. Through the survey, it is known that most universities have good English curriculum designs while some others need to improve their course design. In general, English basic listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities are covered in the curriculum while Basic English and English Intensive Reading these two courses have a higher proportion compared with other courses. In a word, a general understanding of the English curriculum in TCAFL major in China is shown in this paper.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the “Chinese learning fever” is spreading very quickly around the world (Zhou, 1989) with the vigorous development of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCAFL) major in many universities in China. “The mastery of one or two foreign languages” is an essential part of the teaching goals of TCAFL majors. Luo (2005) claimed that English classes have a high proportion of all the courses for these TCAFL major students, usually more than half of the whole courses learning time. Thus, it is easy to observe that foreign language courses, especially English

courses attach a great importance to TCAFL majors. Under such circumstances, how to design the English curriculum for TCAFL majors is a hot issue worthy of discussion.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Through the internet, this paper mainly collected data of English curriculum design of TCAFL major in these 211¹ and 985² universities in China. The data was summarized and analyzed according to the locality of these universities (Northeast China, North China, East China, Central China, South China, Northwest China, and Southwest China).

3. RESULTS

All the data collected in these 59 universities were summarized in Table 1.

Table-1. English curriculum designs of TCAFL major in these universities

Locality	Universities	English curriculum designs of TCAFL major
Northeast China	Heilongjiang University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main English courses include: English intensive reading, English Chinese translation, English writing, English listening and speaking.
	Jilin University	No TCAFL major
	Yanbian University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. No English courses. Students are supposed to have a good mastery of Chinese, Korean and Japanese these three languages.
	Northeast Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main English courses are: English intensive reading, English listening and speaking, practical English writing, English translation, extensive reading, grammar comparison between English and Korean, and economic English.
	Jilin Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main English courses are: English intensive reading (four semesters), English listening and speaking (four semesters), English writing and translation (1 semester), English literature, Western culture etiquette, grammar, and English newspaper

1: 211 universities is a project of National Key Universities and colleges initiated in 1995 by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, with the intent of raising the research standards of high-level universities and cultivating strategies for socio-economic development. During the first phase of the project, from 1996 to 2000, approximately US\$2.2 billion was distributed. From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_211

2: Project 985 is a project that was first announced by CPC General secretary and Chinese President Jiang Zemin at the 100th anniversary of Peking University on May 4, 1998 to promote the development and reputation of the Chinese higher education system and eponymous after the date of the announcement, May 1998, or 98/5, according to the Chinese date format. The project involves both national and local governments allocating large amounts of funding to certain universities in order to build new research centers, improve facilities, hold international conferences, attract world-renowned faculty and visiting scholars, and help Chinese faculty attend conferences abroad. From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_985

		reading.
North China	Beijing Language and Culture University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. TCAFL in Beijing Language and Culture University is first set up by the Ministry of Education in China. The main English courses are: English intensive reading, English listening, English speaking, English writing, and English translation.
	Beijing Foreign Studies University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main English courses are: basic English, English writing, English and Chinese translation.
	Minzu University of China	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Literature and Journalism. The main courses are English pronunciation, English grammar, listening, reading, writing, translation etc.
	Capital Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main English courses are: basic English, English writing, English and Chinese translation, English listening, English speaking and English intensive reading.
	Inner Mongolia Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main English courses are: English intensive reading, English listening and speaking, Practical English writing, English translation, communicative English. Business English and Travel English are optional courses.
	Peking University	No TCAFL major currently.
	TsingHua University	No TCAFL major currently.
	NanKai University	TCAFL is affiliated to College of Chinese Language and Culture. No Chinese students for TCAFL major.
	Tianjin Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature.
	Hebei University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature.
Hebei Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature.	
Central China	Wuhan University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are English communicative training, English translation and English writing.
	Huazhong University of Science & Technology	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: basic English, intermediate level listening and speaking, English reading, writing, speaking, translation etc. http://humanity.hust.edu.cn/bksjy02/360.jhtml
	Huazhong Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: basic English, English reading, writing, speaking, translation etc.
	Hunan Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: basic English, English writing and translation.
	Zhengzhou University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main course is College English for freshmen and sophomores.
	Henan Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: college English, English newspaper reading, English speaking etc.
	East China	AnHui University

AnHui University	Normal	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: basic English, English writing and translation, advanced English, and advanced English listening etc.
Jimei University		TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: integrated English, English listening and speaking etc.
Xiamen University		No TCAFL major currently.
Fuzhou University		No TCAFL major currently.
Fujian University	Normal	TCAFL is affiliated to College of Overseas Education.
Nanjing University		TCAFL is affiliated to College of Overseas Education.
Nanjing University	Normal	TCAFL is affiliated to International College for Chinese Studies. The main courses are English writing, speaking etc.
Soochow University		TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: college English, English listening and speaking, and English writing.
Nanchang University		No TCAFL major currently.
Jiangxi University	Normal	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature.
Shandong University		No introduction of TCAFL major yet.
Shandong Normal University		TCAFL is affiliated to School of International Exchange. The main courses are College English, English intensive reading, listening, writing, speaking, newspaper reading, translation etc.
Ocean University of China		TCAFL is affiliated to College of Liberal Arts, Journalism and Communication. No Chinese students for TCAFL major.
Shanghai International Studies University		TCAFL is affiliated to School of International Education. The main courses are basic English, English reading, writing, grammar, listening and speaking, advanced English etc.
Shanghai Normal University		TCAFL is affiliated to International College of China Studies.
Fudan University		No TCAFL major currently.
East China Normal University	China	TCAFL is affiliated to International College of China Studies.
Shanghai University		TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: English listening and speaking, English reading and writing.
Zhejiang University	Jiang	TCAFL is affiliated to College of International Culture and Communication.
Zhejiang Normal University	Jiang	TCAFL is affiliated to College of International Education.
South China	Sun Yat-sen University	TCAFL is affiliated to College of Translation. The main courses are: Integrated English, English extensive reading, English

		writing, English listening and speaking etc.
	South China Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to College of International Culture. No Chinese students for the major TCAFL.
	Guangxi University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: college English, integrated English, English writing, English translation etc.
	Guangxi Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. English listening and speaking is the key course of this major.
	Hainan University	TCAFL is affiliated to College of Humanities and Communication. The main courses are: Integrated English, English speaking, listening, writing, translation etc.
	Hainan Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: basic English, English listening and speaking, English writing, advanced English etc.
Northwest China,	Northwest University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: English speaking, English listening, English extensive reading, English writing, and English translation.
	Xi'an International Studies University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature.
	Shaanxi Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: English speaking, listening, writing, reading etc.
	Northwest Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Literature & History. The main courses are: English speaking, listening, writing, translation etc.
	Xinjiang University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Language. Most courses are about Russian language with only one English optional course: practical English.
Southwest China	Guizhou Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: basic English, English writing, translation, listening, speaking, grammar etc.
	Sichuan University	TCAFL is affiliated to College of Literature & Journalism. The main courses are: English listening and speaking, English intensive reading, English writing, English literature etc.
	Tibet University	No TCAFL major currently.
	Yunnan University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. The main courses are: English speaking, writing, cross-culture communication etc.
	Yunnan Normal University	TCAFL is affiliated to School of Internet Chinese Studies. The main courses are English listening and speaking, communicative English. (More Southeast Asian language courses)

4. DISCUSSIONS

According to the statistics³, there were 226 universities in China which had set up the major TCAFL by 2009. By the year 2011, there were 285 universities⁴ that had set up the major TCAFL

³ <http://www.chineselinks.cn/major.html>

⁴ <http://www.yuloo.com/gk/news/1104/586384.shtml>

for undergraduate students. Therefore, so far, there are about 300 universities in China which have TCAFL in China. This survey, as mentioned before, covered the English curriculum design of 59 universities, which are mostly 211 and 985 universities in China. Through the survey, some features could be shown as follows:

1) TCAFL majors in most universities are affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. Some others are affiliated to International School of Chinese Studies or School of International Exchanges or School of International Education. TCAFL in Sun Yat-sen University is affiliated to College of Translation. Up to the date of survey, there are still some universities such as Ocean University of China and Nankai University with TCAFL majors only for international students. Some other universities such as Shandong University, Fudan University and Peking University have only TCAFL major for Master's degree instead of undergraduate.

2) Most TCAFL majors basically inevitably have the English courses; however, there are still some exceptions. For example, in Xinjiang University, TCAFL is in Russian foreign language department, therefore, there is almost no English course, with only one optional "Practical English" course. In Yanbian University, TCAFL is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature.

Since Yanbian is near Korea, therefore, there is no English course. Students are supposed to have a good mastery of Chinese, Korean and Japanese these three languages. In Yunnan Normal University, TCAFL is affiliated to School of Internet Chinese Studies. The main courses are English listening and speaking, and communicative English. Since Yunnan Province is close to the South-East Asia, more Southeast Asian language courses, such as Vietnamese, Thai, and Burmese are compulsory courses for students. 3) For these universities which have TCAFL major and have English courses, the proportion of English courses is slightly different, but basically they all have English listening, speaking, reading and writing courses. Take Beijing Language and Culture University for example, this university is one of the earliest established universities in China with TCAFL major. In 1985, Beijing Language and Culture University began to accept undergraduate students of TCAFL major (Guo, 2008). The TCAFL major in this university is now in the leading position in China. There are three parts of the curriculum: Public Courses (including compulsory and optional), major courses (including compulsory and optional), and foreign languages (including compulsory and optional). The proportion of them is: Public compulsory courses 22.22% VS major courses compulsory 30.86% VS foreign languages compulsory 29.63%. This proportion shows the importance of foreign languages. In fact, English intensive reading, English listening, speaking, English newspaper reading, English extensive reading, writing all belong to the major compulsory courses.

English literature, the History of Western civilization, English translation, English symposia and Economic English all belong to the major optional courses. The table below is a schedule for undergraduate students of TCAFL major in Beijing Language and Culture University (This schedule is provided by a student in this university. It is clear that there is always a change in the curriculum, therefore the accuracy of this schedule is needed to be verified).

Table-2. A schedule for undergraduate students of TCAFL major in Beijing Language and Culture University

	Course Name	Academic hours/week	Notes
First Semester	English intensive reading	3 hours (1-18 weeks)	
	English listening,	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	
	Spoken English	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
Second Semester	English intensive reading	3 hours (1-18 weeks)	
	English listening,	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
	Spoken English	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
Third Semester	Spoken English	3 hours (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
	English intensive reading	3 hours (1-18 weeks)	
	English listening,	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	
	English extensive reading	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
	English writing	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
Fourth Semester	English intensive reading	3 hours (1-18 weeks)	
	English listening,	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	
	Spoken English	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
	English writing	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor
Fifth Semester	English translation	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	
	English Newspaper reading	1 hour (1-18 weeks)	Foreign professor

As can be seen from this curriculum, the TCAFL major in Beijing Language and Culture University focuses on the students' English listening, speaking, reading and writing ability. English intensive reading is the main course, followed by the spoken English, which is taught by the foreign language professors. Most English courses are in the second school year. TCAFL major needs students to have a good command of English in order to teach foreign students Chinese. Beijing Language and Culture University has a very clear goal to cultivate students of TCAFL major, that is, to cultivate Chinese teachers to teach foreign students and reserve talents for relevant majors such as masters or doctoral students. Another example is Shanghai International Studies University. In addition to the Basic English courses, many major courses such as second language acquisition, education, and language testing are all taught in English. It can simultaneously improve student's English proficiency. Some universities such as Inner Mongolia Normal University offer Business English, Travel English as the optional courses.

5. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

TCAFL is a new major established and developed with the "Chinese learning fever" around the world. As a newly-established major, there must be many points needed to be improved. Some universities, such as Beijing Language and Culture University have a quite well-designed curriculum for TCAFL. However, many universities have just set up this major. Therefore, there are many problems in the curriculum design and students' cultivation goals. In the process of collecting information, we have realized that in many universities, TCAFL major is affiliated to School of Chinese Language & Literature. Therefore, they have a comparatively good curriculum design for Chinese courses, such as Ancient Chinese, Modern Chinese, Chinese Linguistics etc. However, the corresponding English courses have a small proportion. In some universities, English courses are only learned for one or two semesters, which I think is far from enough. Take the students in University of Texas in San Antonio (UTSA) for example, I used to learn in this

university, therefore, I had the chance to know some American students in the Chinese classes. Compared to Chinese learning, they are more interested in the Chinese culture. Some of these students have a very low Chinese language proficiency. In this case, it is quite impossible to explain Chinese culture to them in Chinese. Instead, English is the tool to introduce Chinese culture to them. Moreover, as Chinese teachers to teach Chinese in English-speaking countries, it will be very difficult to live there if their English is not good enough. Therefore, in my opinion, as students in TCAFL majors, in addition to the theoretical skills such as language acquisition theory, Chinese teaching pedagogy, English proficiency and cross-cultural communication ability is also very important. Besides, I think TCAFL major is different from both Chinese major and English major. It has its own features which I think covers three aspects. Firstly, this major requires students to have a solid foundation of Chinese language and a deep understanding of Chinese culture. Secondly, this major also requires students to have a solid foundation of English language and the understanding of western culture. Thirdly, students in this major are supposed to have good basic skills of how to teach Chinese to foreigners. Not anyone who can speak Chinese well is able to become qualified Chinese teacher. TCAFL is a unique major with its own theoretical and pedagogical system. These are all students in this major need to learn. All in all, through this survey, we can have a general understanding of the English courses design of TCAFL major. Most universities have a good English curriculum design while some others need to improve their course design. In general, English basic listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities are covered in the curriculum while Basic English and English intensive reading these two courses have a higher proportion compared with other courses.

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