A COMPARISON OF EXPERIENCES AND PREFERENCES REGARDING CLASSROOM

AND TUTORING FFEEDBACK AMONG CHINESE AND SAUDI LEARNERS OF

ENGLISH

by

XINRAN WANG

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Major Professor
Dr. Earl Brown

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Abstract

This report studies ESL tutoring feedback to Chinese and Saudi students. The objective is to research the reasons of feedback differences and similarities, which include previous and current English learning styles, habits, purposes for receiving tutoring, and evaluations of tutors. Faced with L2 learners who come from different cultural backgrounds, it is helpful for instructors and tutors to know L2 students' previous English learning experiences in their home countries so that instructors and tutors can adjust teaching or tutoring for each student. In addition, students who speak the same L1 have common problems of English learning due to their L1. In this way, ESL tutors not only tutor English skills, but also promote cultural awareness. Meanwhile, knowing students' cultural background is necessary to give tutoring for each L2 learner. The present study aims to explore L2 learners' feedback from previous and current English learning experiences and will help L2 instructors and tutors to know some basic knowledge about two different language groups.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

According to U.S. News on Nov 17, 2014, the U.S. enrolled a record-breaking number of international students during the 2013-2014 school year, welcoming 886,052 undergraduate and graduate students to colleges and universities throughout the country. Students from China and Saudi Arabia drove the nearly 8 percent growth in international college students in the U.S. The first obstacle for these international students is English skills, because most international students have to pass an English proficiency test, such as the TOEFL or the IELTS in order to receive admission at universities. Otherwise, they must study English skills and target language cultural background in the English program until they pass the tests. Hence, many universities and colleges establish special English programs to help these international students to learn English knowledge and skills in order to prepare for college courses. In this way, English learning is necessary for second language learners. Differently from the English as Second Language (ESL) classroom learning, ESL tutoring is a one-on-one model to offer the professional English assistance for all international students who need to practice English after class. ESL tutors not only tutor language skills, but also promote cultural awareness.

The English Language Program's (ELP) at Kansas State University primary purpose is to provide English instruction to students who are qualified to begin university work but do not meet English proficiency standards for the university. The program also offers English instruction to international students who choose to come for language training only or as a study abroad experience. From general statistics on student enrollment of ELP, most second language learners are Chinese or Saudi students. Faced with the different culture groups, sometimes it is not possible to apply the same teaching strategy for all of them in the same classroom or during a tutoring session. For ESL instructors and tutors, it is beneficial to learn Chinese and Saudi

cultural backgrounds and their respective language-learning situation, before teaching in the multicultural classroom and one-on-one tutoring. Faced with second language (L2) learners who come from different cultural backgrounds, it is helpful for instructors and tutors to know L2 students' previous English learning experiences in their home countries so that instructors and tutors can adjust teaching or tutoring skills based on each student's level of proficiency in English as well as cultural background. It can be challenging for instructors and tutors to apply different teaching strategies for students with various cultural backgrounds. With these differences among students in mind, the present study aims to explore L2 learners' experiences and preferences concerning feedback from both previous as well as current English learning experiences. An additional goal of this paper is to help L2 instructors and tutors to gain some basic knowledge about two different language groups in order to adjust teaching or tutoring strategies.

From the experience of the researcher working as an English tutor in the Testing and Tutoring Center of ELP at Kansas State University, instructors and tutors may ask themselves common questions like "Why do Chinese students and Saudi students have different English learning styles in the classrooms and tutoring center? ", "Why do Chinese students and Saudi students have different learning expectations for themselves? ", "Why do Chinese students and Saudi students have the different impressions of tutoring and tutors?" Based on students' previous English learning experiences in their home countries, tutors get to know their learning habits and styles so that they can keep students' strengths and improve their weaknesses during tutoring sessions. In addition, tutors will get feedback from different L2 learners after each session, which is helpful for them to prepare the next session and it also helps them to understand L2 learners' learning thoughts and abilities.

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Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Students usually do not improve second language skills without feedback. It is the same with instructors and tutors and they apply to improve teaching or tutoring skills based on students' feedback. Additionally, English teachers and tutors should consider students' background and culture when they give students feedback. As we know, international students have different previous English learning experiences and learning habits. This literature review contains studies about L2 students' feedback from classrooms or tutoring, L2 performance of students from different cultural backgrounds, learning habits and L2 feedback from Chinese and Saudi students.

Amara (2014) mentions that most research studies have focused on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF) types on writing accuracy, and have ignored the role of learners' perceptions and beliefs of written corrective feedback. As such he explores ESL students' perceptions of teacher written corrective feedback using a Think Aloud Protocol (TAP) as the research method. The participants were 15 ESL learners who all came from Arabic-speaking nations. During the process, the researchers asked questions related to written feedback from their own writing assignments. The researchers collected comments from participants, which showed participants' perceptions and opinions about writing feedback. A majority of participants preferred to get feedback from instructors and liked to make progress in English learning. For example, one participant appreciated the teacher comments, saying: "It is good thing here. I like this idea of giving comments like this one. That means she read my point…. because when I saw this one [teacher comment] I thought she [the teacher] became more interested in my point or in my sentence." From this student's comment, we see that some students want to be corrected by their teachers in order to improve their linguistic abilities, especially in English writing. Students hope teachers agree with their writing points, which is

important to them. Good comments or feedback bring students encouragement and confidence so that they have high motivation to learn their second language.

On the other hand, some participants were disappointed that the teacher did not provide feedback or comments next to errors or about their writing in general. For instance, one of participants was disappointed that the teacher did not provide any comments next to feedback signs. She wondered "Why he didn't mention what's the wrong in both circles?" Another participant was also disappointed with the absence of comments. In fact, he wanted the teacher to tell him exactly why his sentence was wrong, saying "Give me a comment…. tell me exactly what did you understand and I will explain to you" (Amara, 2014, p. 48). Most of L2 students are not satisfied with absence of comments in their writing assignment, because they want to improve their second language. What's more, they are willing to accept comments from instructors and tutors in order to correct mistakes and avoid them in the next writing assignment. Additionally, for some L2 students, accepting feedback is also a way of showing respect. L2 learners pay attention to finishing essays and they like to accept different kinds of comments from other readers. In this way, whether in an ESL classroom or in an ESL tutoring session, students deserve to get feedback from instructors or tutors and L2 teachers should take this responsibility to help students to promote target language to the next level.

Other participants seemed to ask for more advanced type of comments that include writing performance, argument, and organization (Amara, 2014, p. 49). They were higher-level students and they had few mistakes on vocabulary and sentences structure. In this situation, L2 teachers need to give advanced feedback based on students' English level. In fact, it is a challenge to give perfect feedback for each student. According Amara (2014), English writing contains several aspects, such as vocabulary, grammar, organization and content. Teachers or tutors can consider

each aspect of students' writing assignment and give feedback, which will be much clearer for students to correct their mistakes.

In a multicultural teaching or tutoring setting, ESL teachers and tutors need to be prepared to face minority students. How to engage international students in the ESL teaching is also important to cultivate students' learning interests. According to Harris and Silva (1993), ESL students have a diversity of concerns that can only be dealt with in a one-to-one setting where the focus of attention is on that particular student and his or her questions, concerns, cultural presuppositions, writing processes, language learning experiences, and conceptions of what writing in English is all about (p. 525). Researchers focus on writing tutoring due to the fact that most students ask for writing help, which is the same situation in tutoring center in K-State's ELP. Hence, tutors need to work on students' essays or grammar rules. Tutors should be encouraged to let their students know that errors are a natural part of language learning and that most readers will be interested primarily in what writers have to say (Harris & Silva, 1993, p. 526).

Tutors do not see themselves as "instructors" who "tell" things. Yet ESL student cannot easily come to some of the realizations that native speakers can as a result of tutorial questioning and collaboration. In terms of the tutor's role, there may have to be adjustments in their pedagogical orientation. Tutors who work with ESL students may have to be "tellers" to some extent because they will probably need to provide cultural, rhetorical, and/or linguistic information which native speakers intuitively possess and which ESL students do not have, but need to have to complete their writing assignments effectively (Harris & Silva, 1993, p. 533). Therefore, the way of tutoring and how to give appropriate feedback for ESL learners become very important during tutoring sessions.

According to Turgut (2006), a teacher applied various activities based on social constructional theory, such as group discussion and peer learning in the classroom to improve students' language skills and target language culture. From the results or this research study, "participants' cultural backgrounds, and participants' experiences adjusting to the student-centered language learning environments are salient for English language learning and the participants' experiences of student-centered language learning contributed to their English language learning" (Turgut, 2006, p. 152). Participants shared their writing with not only teachers, but also peers in the classroom. They gave feedback to each other and learned from each other. After that, they started to check the clarity of their writing from the audience's perspective. Assistance through dialogue prompted further revisions and self-revisions after the sessions, indicating that peer learning was conductive to self-regulated behavior (Villamil & de Guerrero, 1998). Participants benefited from discussions because they made discoveries about themselves as individuals and as learners (Gambrell &Almasi, 1996). It is important for both tutors and students to give each other feedback.

It is better for instructors and tutors of ELP at K-State to know both Chinese and Saudi students' common English learning obstacles and habits before teaching or tutoring. Snively (1999) points out that Chinese L2 learners have obstacles writing English prose due to different cultural backgrounds and effects of their first language: Mandarin Chinese. The researchers figured out two issues during the research: one was essential role of writing feedback and explicit teaching; the other was the influence on the learning process of rhetorical habits. The participants were Chinese graduate students. The researchers applied a personal approach to look in depth at Chinese students' learning experiences. The participants wrote introductions and conclusions about specific topics and analyzed their writing samples, and then the researchers

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interviewed the students with language learning questions as well as to explore the relationship between their cultural background and foreign language learning.

The results of Snively (1999) showed that Chinese students exhibited writing problems due to the influence of Chinese writing styles, which are different from English writing. The influence of L1 challenges them to transfer the way of thinking, vocabulary, and writing strictures in English when they write in English. To be specific, the introduction session of their essays did not show clear problems for Chinese participants. Their clear understanding of the Chinese and English traditions gave them a basis for absorbing refinements from U.S. teachers, friends, and classmates (Snively, 1999, p. 154). By the time of Snively (1999)'s research study, most participants had developed their academic writing habits. They realized that an introduction in English writing should be clear and brief and writers need to list their own points in this section, which was different from Chinese writing. Most Chinese writers prefer to give their opinions in the middle or in the end of essays rather than list all of points in the introduction. In addition, Chinese students like to use very strong statements to begin the article because of the effect of socialisms education. Hence, very strong statements related to history or whole society can draw readers' attention, but Chinese students do not realize that their writing contexts cannot support strong statements most of time. Consequently, they need to be more brief in their introductions.

In the conclusion part of participants' essays in Snively's research, only a few of them have clear train of thought to give conclusion in American way while the other participants apply Chinese way. As a result of Chinese students' English learning experience in China, their English teachers do not emphasize the importance of conclusion, accordingly, some of participants just applied one or two sentences to make a conclusion, or left out the conclusion. Most of the participants did not know how to conclude the essay in English and they listed

another strong statement again in this section. The biggest weakness of their writing is quotation and reference. Chinese students did not learn how to quote the statement from the articles or online resources. Meanwhile, Chinese teachers encourage students to learn from others' writing styles. So Chinese students like to copy quotations without any references. From the interviews of participants, some of them did not think it was necessary to give reference if the original writer is not that famous or it is an anonymous writer. Chinese L2 learners always have similar problems in English writing, such as introduction, conclusion and quotation. English instructors or tutors may need to come up with a general way to guide Chinese students. So L2 teachers and tutors can work on writing feedback in these aspects for Chinese students and help them to improve English writing techniques.

Compared with Chinese students, Saudi students have different previous English learning experiences. Alrashidi and Phan (2015) gave an overview of the education system in Saudi Arabia, including history, administration and current educational situation. English is the only foreign language taught in schools in Saudi Arabia, the same with China. The English textbooks contain all four skills of English, but the lack of English learning facilities and trained teachers cause Saudi second language learners to not use English well in both academic and living aspects. The government stated that the objectives of teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia are the different levels of English learning, from basic English knowledge learning to cultural background. It is obvious that the government has the long-term goal of English language education. English education is also applied in the higher education in Saudi Arabia and some of English instructors come from abroad and trained very well.

Abdulaziz (2003) illustrated how Saudi students learn English and what are the writing difficulties for them. All participants had similar educational backgrounds and English levels, so

the research focused on some main points, including differences between Arabic and English, English learning attitude, L1 cultural background, English learning strategies and awareness. Almost all of Saudi students thought that writing is an important skill but it is hard to improve in English writing because of a lack of enough guidance. According to Abdulaziz (2003), writing was not emphasized in their schools. Rather, grammar drills and mechanics were the focus and writing was used as a tool to enhance grammar and mechanics. This was reflected in the participants' beliefs about their linguistic writing difficulties, where spelling, vocabulary and grammar were considered the most difficult aspect of writing (p. 233). Meanwhile, they also disliked the assigned topics, and they expressed their tendency to write about personal and social topics (p. 233). From the participants' point of view, writing is not a common practice in Saudi Arabia. Good writing must be in Classical Arabic, which requires perfect grammar and specific vocabulary; because Arabic is viewed as a sacred language, it must be treated with the utmost respect. However, since the students' skills with this language are not well developed, they tend to avoid writing in their first language. Another possible reason that made the students avoid writing activities is the fact that writing is not a common practice in Saudi Arabia and is rarely used for social communication. Saudi culture may contribute to the participants' writing difficulties, as the culture does not feature rich opportunities to engage in writing activities (Abdulaziz, 2003, p. 236). Therefore, the most common difficulties in English writing are vocabulary and grammar in writing. Because of this, Saudi participants hope to receive effective feedback in writing to help them improve. It is a challenge for L2 learners to write in English in Saudi Arabia, because they need to change the order of writing from right to left to left to right and they have obstacles to write complete English sentences because of the influence of the first language.

The previous research studied writing feedback from instructors and how feedback affected learners' English learning. What's more, students from different cultural background have different learning styles and cultural awareness. For example, Chinese and Saudi ESL students have different English learning experiences in their own countries and they are influenced by their cultural backgrounds.

Chapter 3 - Research Questions

The challenges for international students to learn English contain different aspects, such as traditional English teaching method, lack of encouragement of teachers and practice in the real life. With the results and arguments of the previous studies cited above, this paper seeks to address the following three research questions, which are related to similarities and differences of English learning styles, previous English learning experiences, feedback from ESL tutors and their English learning obstacles.

3.1 What are the similarities and differences of English educational background and English learning experiences between Chinese and Saudi English language learners due to their different cultural backgrounds?

3.2 What are their expectations for feedback from ESL tutors? What are the differences of reflections when Chinese and Saudi English language learners get feedback from ESL tutoring?

3.3 What are students' preferences in both cultures relating to the correction of a grammar error in ESL writing tutoring?

Chapter 4 - Methodology

4.1 Online Survey

This study applied a questionnaire as the methodology. Thirty-two students filled questionnaires after tutoring (17 Saudi students and 15 Chinese students) and they also could leave comments for tutors. These participants are all from K-State's ELP and they are intermediate (150-152 ELP level) learners of English who asked for tutoring before. The researcher created questions for the survey based on the three research questions above. Most of the questions are on a scale from never (1 point) to always (5 points) and students can choose the level of frequency of English learning experiences and tutoring evaluations. Moreover, four questions about tutor evaluation are based on the evaluation form of Testing and Tutoring Center in ELP. The survey was administered as a Google Doc form.. In the result section, some mean numbers of survey questions will be listed and the mean is simply a global view of the group. Students have different ideas to answer each question, but the mean figure will be reported in this study.

4.2 Personal Tutoring Experience

As a tutor in the English Language Program at Kansas State University, I have already tutored for one semester. From my personal experience in the tutoring center, most second language learners are from China and Saudi Arabia, and their English learning habits and background knowledge play an important role in learning English in the U.S. During tutoring, Chinese students and Saudi students perform in opposite ways and their feedback from tutoring is also different. Compared with Chinese students, Saudi students are more active and positive to learn in the tutoring and most of them know what they want to learn. That is to say, Saudi students come with their learning goals and they prepare questions and they want to figure out

the answers. Chinese students are less talkative than Saudi students, and therefore the tutor needs to ask them questions and help them to figure out the their questions.

The different behaviors of both Saudi and Chinese students are likely due to the educational situations in their home countries. In Chinese English learning classroom, a teacher-centered classroom is very common and teachers have a lot of power in the class. Students need to obey teachers' order in the classroom and their learning mission is to listen to the teachers rather than ask any questions during the class time. In addition, Chinese English teachers emphasize reading and writing skills more than listening and speaking skills in the classroom due to the manner of English assessment in China. Therefore, based on this language educational situation, students become more passive in English learning. On the contrary, Saudi students practice all English skills besides grammar when they learn English in their home country. They are willing to share their thoughts in English in the classroom so that most them are good at English listening and speaking.

Chinese students are satisfied with tutoring most of the time and they do not have extra questions about feedback and evaluation. In contrast, Saudi students have different questions about evaluation form and they ask questions all the time, regardless of whether the question is related to English learning or not. They have curiosity in English learning and they would like to communicate with tutors as much as possible in order to practice English listening and speaking.

Chapter 5 - Results

After collecting data, the researcher applied the R statistic software to get the mean number of each question. The results show three aspects of English learning comparison between Chinese and Saudi students, which include (1) previous and (2) current English learning experiences, and (3) tutoring feedback. The differences and similarities of two language groups will be demonstrated in this section with figures.

5.1 English Learning Experience in Home Country

Six questions about English learning experiences in home country contain different aspects of English learning. These six questions ask about English teaching and tutoring practices, the classroom and tutoring styles and students' attitude about correcting mistakes.

The first question is the nationalities of participants, either China or Saudi Arabia. Question 2 is "In your home country, tutors or classroom teachers openly tell students that they are wrong", which is the scale question from "never" one point to "always" five points. Most of the students from the two language groups believe that their tutors and classroom teachers often point out their mistakes openly. The mean among the Chinese students is 3.7 and mean among the Saudi students is 3.5. Hence, more Chinese students have this experience when they are in the English classroom or tutoring in their home country. Question 3 is "Do you like the way the English tutors or instructors correct your mistakes in you home country? " which is also a scale question. The average figure of Chinese students is 3.9 while the figure of Saudi students is 4.1. This can be seen and better understood in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1. In your home country, tutors or classroom teachers openly tell students that they are wrong.
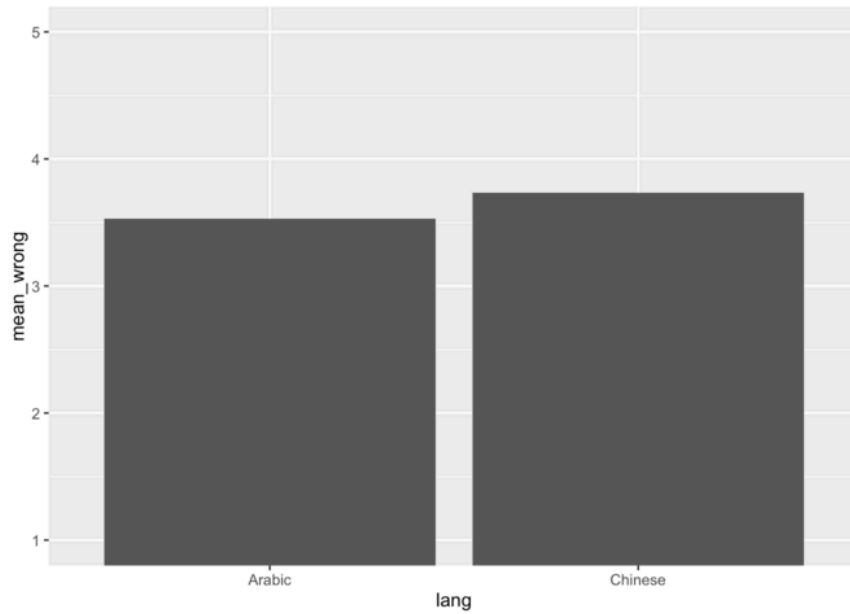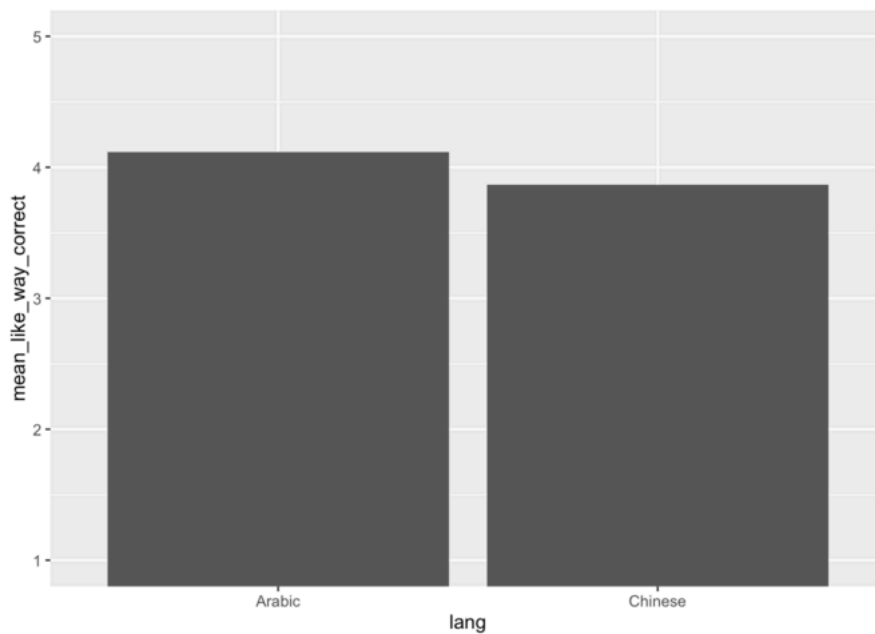

Figure 2. Do you like the way the English tutors or instructors correct your mistakes in you home country?

Question 4 is " Do you practice English listening and speaking more than reading and writing in the classroom or during a tutoring session in your home country?" The majority of students in

both language groups think they never or seldom practice listening and speaking more than

reading and writing. The mean number of listening and speaking practice among Saudi students

is 2.5 and the average number is only 1.9 among Chinese students. This can be seen and better

understood in Figures 3 below.

Figure 3. Do you practice English listening and speaking more than reading and writing in the classroom or during a tutoring session in your home country?
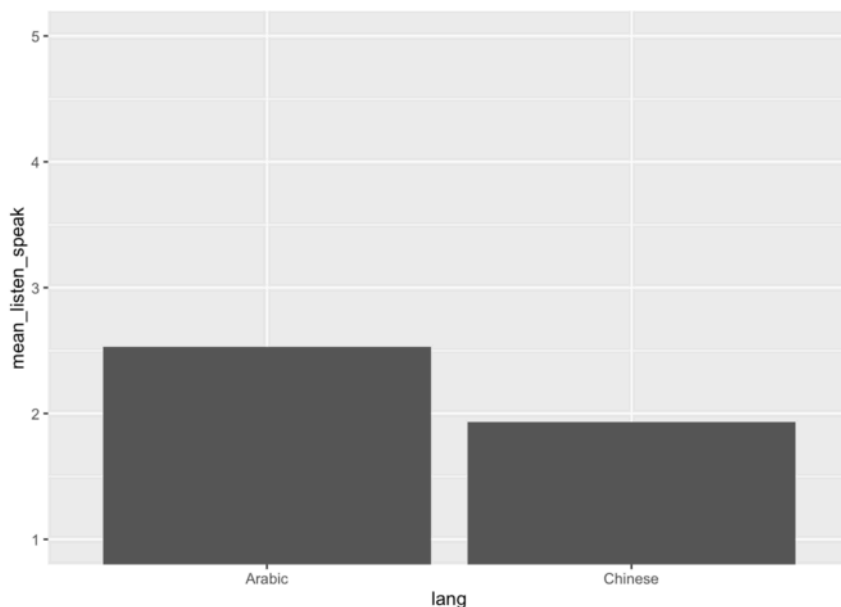
Question 5 asks whether students ask questions in the classroom or during a tutoring session

in their home country. According to data, 25% of students always ask questions while 34.4% of

them never or seldom ask questions in the classroom or tutoring session. Concerning the

differences among the two language groups, the mean value of asking questions is 3.4 among

Chinese students while the mean value among Saudi students is 3.0. Question 6 is about which

aspect of English is focused on in English language classes. The percentage of participants of

this question is that 73% of Chinese students and 59% of Saudi students think English grammar

is the main aspect in the class of their home country. Only 4 of Saudi students and 2 Chinese

students think teachers focus on reading and writing in the class. Just 2 Saudi students and 2

Chinese students believe listening and speaking is the main aspect in English class. Only 1 Saudi student chose culture of English speaking- country, but none of Chinese students choose target language culture in English class. This can be seen and better understood in Figures 4 below.

Figure 4. While all of the following are likely taught in English language classes in your home country, which aspect of English seems to be the focus?
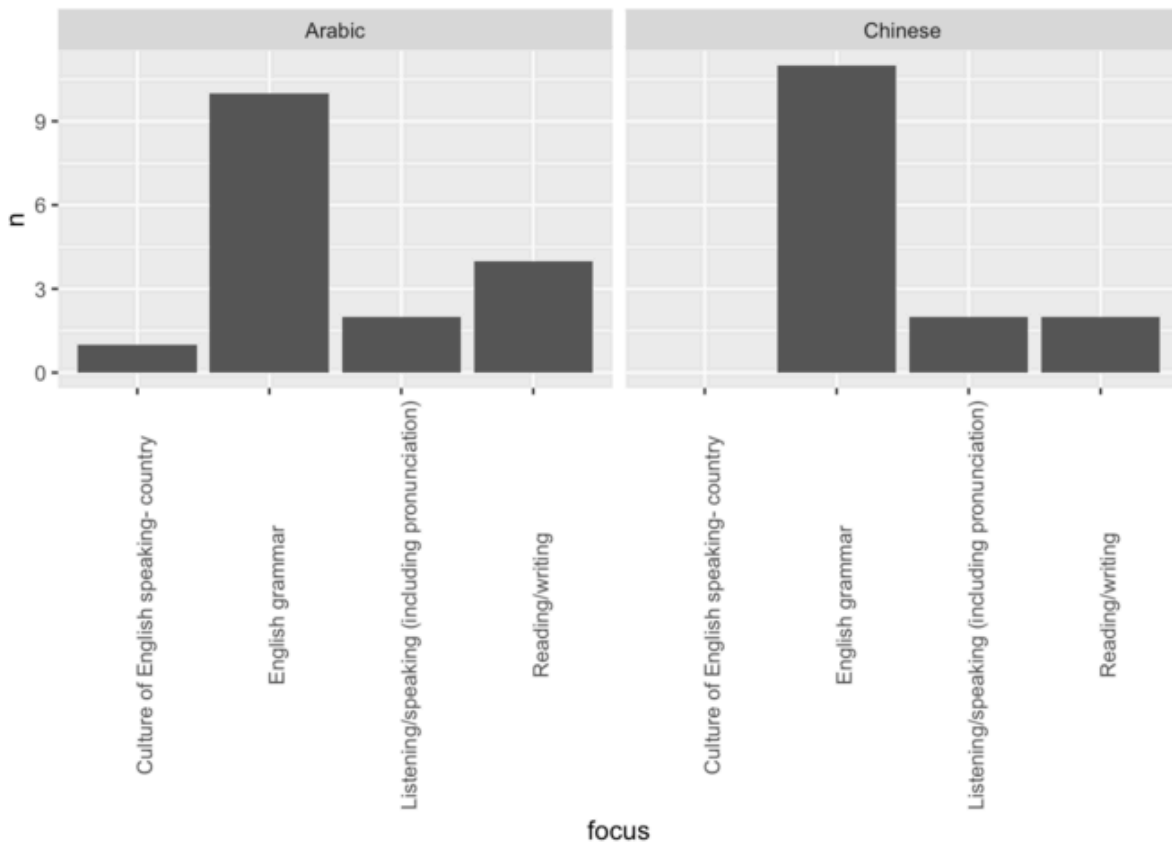
Question 7 asks whether English classrooms are student-centered in their home country. 10 students of two language groups think they never can speak more than the instructors in English classrooms and only 2 students believe that their English classrooms are student-centered. The mean value of Saudi group is 2.4 and the mean value of Chinese group is 2.2. That is to say, more than half of the students do not think they can speak more than instructors in English class.

5.2 Current English Learning Experience in ESL Tutoring

Three questions on the questionnaire are related to students' current English learning experiences in the tutoring center of English Language Program at K-State. From these two questions, students give the most common reason to come to tutoring center. Additionally, students report the most common difficulties in English writing and how they prefer tutors to correct their mistakes.

The rest of survey questions focus on students' current English learning in the United States with English environment. Question 8 is about the most common reasons that students go to the tutoring center. More than 80% of students want to practice and improve their English skills while 16% of students come for English tutoring because of instructors' requests. Approximately 13% of students come to get help due to friends' recommendation. Around 83% of students want to learn English skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing during the tutoring session. Approximately 35% of them want to learn English knowledge and only about 14% of them prefer to learn target language culture.

Furthermore, there are two questions about mistakes in English learning. The first one asks the reason why students think English writing is difficult. 31.3% of Saudi and Chinese students think grammar mistakes make writing difficult and only 6.3% of them think grammar mistakes are not the main element in English writing difficulty. Among them, the average number of importance of grammar in writing for Saudi students is 3.5 while the number for Chinese students is 3.9. Hence, both groups of students treat grammar mistakes as the largest obstacle in English writing, but more Chinese students pay attention to grammar mistakes than do Saudi students.

The next question deals with the way in which tutors correct their grammar mistakes. 47% of the two groups of students prefer that tutors correct them immediately when they make a grammar mistake and 9.4% of them hope tutors never correct them immediately. Importantly, the mean figure of "correct immediately" for each group is almost the same, 3.82 for Saudi students and 3.87 for Chinese students.

5.3 Evaluation of English Tutors

Four questions (from question 10 to question 13) are related to evaluation of tutors in the tutoring center. After tutoring, students need to fill an evaluation form to give some comments for tutors. It is interesting to see the differences between Chinese and Saudi students.

All survey questions are on a scale, from one to five points. One means "never" and five means "always". According to question 10, 68.8% of all participants think tutors always listen to them and try to understand their questions and 18.8% of them think tutors often listen to them. The mean number among Saudi students is 4.4 while the mean number of Chinese students is 4.7. From question 11, 65.6% of participants of both language groups think that tutors always know and understand the subject matter and 28.1% of them believe that tutors often know and understand the subject matter. The mean value of Saudi students is 4.4 while the mean value of Chinese students is 4.7.

From question 12, 62.5% of all participants think tutors always solve their questions and give them feedback and 21.9% of them think that tutors often can solve their questions. Only one student thinks tutors never solve their English questions. The mean value of Saudi students is 4.1 while the figure of Chinese students is 4.8. Question 13 is about respect. 78.1% of all participants believe that tutors always respect them and their culture and 12.5% of them think tutors often respect them and their culture. The mean number of respect of Saudi students is 4.6 and the

number for Chinese students is 4.8. If students come for English tutoring, they need to answer three questions after learning in a tutoring session.

Question 16 is "Do you think tutoring is helpful?" 68.8% of the participants of two language groups think tutoring is very helpful and 25% of them think tutoring helps their English learning. The mean number of "helpful" is 4.7 and 4.4 for Saudi students and Chinese students respectively. Question 17 is "Do you like the tutoring atmosphere?" The mean figure of "atmosphere" is 4.4 and 4.8 for Saudi students and Chinese students respectively. 15 Saudi students would recommend to their friends to learn English in tutoring center and 11 Chinese students want to introduce tutoring to their friends. In all, Chinese students are more satisfied with English tutors than Saudi students. This can be seen and better understood in Figure 7 below.

Figure 5. Do you think tutoring is helpful?
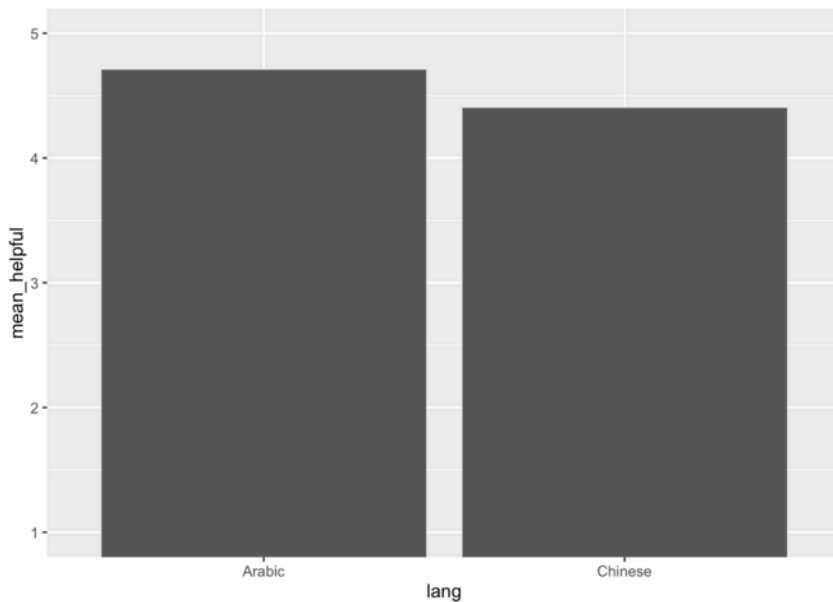
Chapter 6 - Discussion

6.1 Similarities and Differences of Previous English Experience

The first survey question asked whether English teachers or tutors openly tell them when they make mistakes. The majority of both Chinese and Saudi students have same thoughts that their English teachers or tutors really openly tell them when they make mistakes. However more Chinese students have this thought more frequently than Saudi students. Both language groups prefer that English teachers or tutors correct their mistakes in front of other people. Compared with Saudi students, fewer Chinese students like being openly corrected, likely due to the importance of saving face in Chinese culture. According to the blog THE CULT OF "FACE", the writer and translator Lin Yutang (1895 –1976) even went so far as to say, "face cannot be translated or defined." He did however characterized it as "abstract and intangible, it is yet the most delicate standard by which Chinese social intercourse is regulated." The idea of "face" exists among Chinese society, so every class or each Chinese student is affected by this particular cultural aspect. For instance, L2 students feel shamed when teachers correct their mistakes openly in front of the other students in English classroom rather than in a one-on-one tutoring, because students want to save "face" in front of classmates.

Another similarity between Chinese and Saudi English language learners is that more than half of students in each language group ask questions in the classrooms or tutoring session. There is another similarity of English teaching styles in both countries: the English classroom is teacher-centered and students have few opportunities to speak English. That is to say, English teachers have total control in the class and students have less freedom to speak English. What's more, on average both groups of students learn reading and writing much more than speaking and listening. However, Saudi students reported having learned speaking and listening more than

Chinese students. Based on the researcher's observations, Saudi students are more talkative than Chinese students and they are willing to practice English speaking in the classroom or in a tutoring session, even in their spare time. So Saudi students definitely have more opportunities to speak English in the classroom than Chinese students before coming to the U.S..

In addition, English grammar is the main focus in English learning classrooms or tutoring sessions in both countries. However, Saudi students learn much more reading and writing than Chinese students as well. Except for reading and writing, a few Saudi students also learn culture of English-speaking countries while none of the Chinese students have this learning experience in China. It seems that English classrooms in China or tutoring sessions only focus on grammar and students will have grammar tests frequently without practice in the other skills. In this way, Chinese students are good at grammar and English writing compared with Saudi students. They know the basic rules of English grammar and they can write complete sentences, which is based on their previous English learning experiences in China. Based on researcher's experience of English learning in China, instructors only teach grammar rules rather than speaking or listening in English so that researcher has very strong knowledge of English grammar.

Even though grammar is the main aspect in English classrooms or tutoring sessions in Saudi Arabia as well, students learn every aspect of English, including speaking and listening, reading and writing and culture. That is to say, English class and tutoring in Saudi Arabia comprehensively contain all of English skills and knowledge while Chinese English classroom or tutoring session only pay much attention to grammar learning. In this way, most of Saudi students are good at speaking and listening, and they like to ask questions from L2 teachers or tutors, not only taking the input from tutors. However, Chinese students are good at reading that grammar and they still think grammar plays an essential role in English learning and grammar is

the most difficult obstacle in writing. Additionally, the lack of listening and speaking practice in their previous learning experience, Chinese students prefer to listen to teachers or tutors rather than ask questions frequently.

6.2 Expectations and Different Manifestations of English Learning

Since tutoring center of ELP was established, a lot of Saudi students and Chinese students come for English help. The most common reason for students to come to the tutoring center is that they want to practice and improve their English skills. The small number of students come to tutoring center because of instructors' requests and some students are recommended by their friends. A large number of students want to learn and practice English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) during the tutoring session. None of them want to learn English knowledge in tutoring session. Only few of them want to learn some cultural knowledge of America and approximately 35% of them have other ideas. In English Language Program, students have three coordinate tests and one final test in each semester, so it is necessary to practice each skill in order to pass the tests and go to the college-level classes. Therefore, most students have motivation to come to tutoring center with their own questions; obviously, they want to spend extra time to practice English. After tutoring session, students from two language groups all think tutoring is helpful and they like the tutoring atmosphere. Besides, they want to recommend their friends to come and get English help. They all think tutors understand their questions and try to help them solve the problems. Moreover, tutors can explain questions well and give students feedback. However, it is interesting that Chinese students are more satisfied with tutoring session and tutors than Saudi students based on the results of each evaluation question. One of the possible reasons is that the personal identity of researcher influences participants' results from survey. To be specific, the researcher of this study is native speaker of Chinese and

sometimes tutors Chinese students in their first language, especially for grammar knowledge in order to make sure students have a thorough understanding of their questions. The researcher only talks in English to Saudi students and knowledge points may not be explained very well. In addition, some Chinese students are willing to give good comments about tutors maybe simply because the researcher is Chinese as well and she asked them to do the online survey for the present study.

Based on researcher's personal tutoring experience in tutoring center for three semesters, Saudi students are highly motivated to learn English and want to improve English in the short period. Some of them even ask for extra homework or exercises after tutoring session and they would like to come to learn English regularly. Compared with Saudi students, Chinese students have less motivation and most of them are forced by their English instructors to come for tutoring. Because they are behind their classmates, instructors want them to practice more after class. In this case, they do not have questions to ask tutors nor do they bring worksheets or homework from class. In other words, some Chinese students do not care about what they learn in the ELP class or tutoring center. The only reason is to finish the tasks from instructors and they never ask for extra exercises from their tutors. So English learning attitudes from these two language groups are opposite, most Saudi students are positive learners while most of Chinese students are negative learners.

During tutoring sessions, Saudi students have high expectations for tutors and they think that teachers or tutors have to explain each question very well. Otherwise, they are not satisfied with the tutors and they leave comments that criticize tutors as well. As we know, it is hard to explain some English grammar rules, such as infinitive and gerunds, but Saudi students want to learn the rule about each grammar point so that they can easily memorize them. However, some

collocations in English do not have same regular pattern and L2 learners have to memorize rather than apply a formula. Additionally, they hesitate at the answers from tutors if they are not familiar with the points, so they will question tutors frequently. On the contrary, Chinese students never question tutors and they just listen to tutors and keep silent all the time except when they do not understand the explanation, they ask tutors to repeat rather than doubt tutors. Additionally, Chinese students may want to save their own or tutor's "face" in this situation. Therefore, from data, Chinese students are more satisfied with tutors than Saudi students based on the feedback after tutoring sessions.

The reason of different behaviors between two different language groups is that they have different expectations of learning English. To be specific, Saudi students have high requirements for themselves and they want to improve English as quickly as they can, moreover, they all pursue high grades in the exams rather than the length of learning process. Compared with Saudi students, Chinese students do not have high motivation of learning English and they just follow the instructors' or tutors' steps to learn without any questions. Additionally, the economic background of the two groups of students also plays the role in their different expectations and feedback. Almost all of the Saudi students have a government scholarship to study in U.S. and the Saudi government requests a specific time period of learning English in ELP, otherwise government will not support scholarship for them in future the regular college classes. With the high pressure of finance, it is easy to understand the Saudi students' expectation of English learning. However, all of Chinese students pay tuition fee by themselves and their family support them to live and study here. In this way, Chinese students do not have pressure to study English in ELP so that some of them repeat the same level class for several times. They spend average two years or more in English Language Program, and then they can go to the college class.

6.3 Grammar in English Writing and Preferences of Grammar Correction in Tutoring

Most Saudi and Chinese students come to the tutoring center for English grammar and writing help. Some of them ask writing strategies, others ask tutors to correct mistakes in their essays. Around 50% of students think they cannot write a good essay because of English grammar and most of them prefer tutors to correct their grammar mistakes immediately. That is to say, English grammar is hard to learn for lower and intermediate level L2 students. They still struggle with grammar mistakes and sentence structures in their essays rather than content and organization. Moreover, most of them think the standard of a good essay should be without grammar mistakes, but they do not know how to use grammar correctly. They all hope tutors can correct their grammar mistakes immediately so that they will know their grammar weakness at once.

Chapter 7 - Pedagogical Implication

Feedback plays a significant role in L2 learning and teaching. Both students and teachers cannot improve language skills and teaching or tutoring strategies without feedback from each other. In order to give appropriate feedback for L2 learners, ESL teachers and tutors have to study and practice not only English teaching skills, but also knowledge of multicultural education in order to help international L2 learners. Even though it is hard to improve teaching or tutoring skills in cross-cultural settings, some methods can be used for L2 teachers. Initially, observation is necessary for each L2 teacher or tutor, who should observe L2 learners and find students' learning preferences and styles when they are teaching or tutoring, because different students have different attitudes, personalities, interests and habits of learning, etc. in the classroom or tutoring sessions. If L2 teachers or tutors can find students' learning strength and weakness, it is effective to give students useful feedback based on their own way of L2 learning.

A one-on-one interview is the suggestion for L2 teachers to explore more about individual student than observation. Some L2 learners may have learning difficulties and they never ask for help in the classroom, but they may want to tell instructors personally. From classroom observation, perhaps some of the instructors make assumptions about some L2 learners. But after a one-on-one interview, they will know students deeper and decrease the misunderstanding of students. All elements can help teachers or tutors to know students' L2 learning motivation and styles. Hence, they can give students appropriate feedback face to face or in students' assignments. From one-on-one interview, both teachers and students can know each other better and they can make a learning plan together. Meanwhile, it is the good opportunities for students to ask comments and feedback of their assignments from teachers so that they can improve next time.

Many students are wondering how teachers give a grade on their assignments or tests. In this way, rubrics can be the grade standard for students. In the beginning of the class, teachers can design the first draft rubric and negotiate with students. In other words, students also can add their own good and reasonable thoughts for rubric and both teachers and students will have clear standard to give feedback or comments, meanwhile, students can check the rubric in order to understand feedback from teachers.

Chapter 8 - Conclusion

This study has a limitation, which is the researcher's identity, an English tutor who is a native speaker of Chinese. During researcher's tutoring sessions, most Chinese students prefer to communicate with me in Chinese and ask questions. Meanwhile, some of the Chinese students do not understand native instructors' teaching in class so that they hope tutor can explain knowledge points in Chinese. Obviously, a close relationship between student and tutor is helpful for creating a comfortable atmosphere during tutoring. Therefore, Chinese students are more satisfied with tutoring than Saudi students based on the tutoring feedback from survey.

Cross-cultural backgrounds play an essential role in second language teaching. Based on this study, only two different language groups show important differences about their previous and current English learning styles, habits and tutoring feedback. Moreover, when L2 instructors and tutors are faced with a multicultural classroom, it is a challenge for them to apply various teaching or tutoring methods in order to adept to each language group of students. But L2 teachers or tutors still can figure out the most effective ways to teach students if they are familiar with students' cultural backgrounds.

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Appendix A - English Language Program Tutoring Feedback Questionnaire

1. What is your first language?

○ Chinese

○ Arabic

2. In your home country, tutors or classroom teachers openly tell students that they are wrong.

    1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

3. In your home country, do you like the way the English tutors or instructors correct your mistakes?

    1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

4. In your home country, do you practice English listening and speaking more than reading and writing in the classroom or during a tutoring session?

    1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

5. In your home country, do you ask questions in the English classroom or during a tutoring session?

    1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

6. While all of the following are likely taught in English language classes in your home country, which aspect of English seem to be focus?

○ Reading/writing

○ Listening/speaking (including pronunciation)

○ English grammar

○ Culture of English speaking- country

○ Other: _____

7. In your home country, English classrooms are student-centered, that is, students speak more than the instructor.

    1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

8. When you go to the tutoring center, what are the most common reasons that you go?

☐ I want to practice and improve my English skills.
☐ My teacher asks me to come for English help.
☐ My friend recommends me to come and get English help.
☐ Other: [_____]

9. What do you want to learn during the tutoring session?

☐ English knowledge
☐ English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing)
☐ Target language culture
☐ Other: [_____]

10. At the tutoring center, the tutor listens to me and tries to understand my questions.

     1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

11. At the tutoring center, the tutor knows and understands the subject matter.

     1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

12. At the tutoring center, the tutor solves my questions and gives me feedback.

     1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

13. At the tutoring center, the tutor respects me and my culture.

     1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

14. English writing is difficult for me, because I make many grammar mistakes.

     1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

15. When I make a grammar mistake, I prefer the tutor to correct me immediately.

     1 2 3 4 5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

16. Do you think tutoring is helpful?

      1   2   3   4   5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

17. Do you like the tutoring atmosphere?

      1   2   3   4   5

Never ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Always

18. Would you recommend to your friends that they go to the tutoring center?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

Comments

If you'd like to, write comments about the tutors and the tutoring center