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PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES AND THEIR APPLICATION IN THE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM AT QINGHUA UNIVERSITY

By

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PREFACE

I would like to express my gratitude to those who have been instrumental in helping me complete this work. First of all, I would like to thank my adviser, Dr. O. Bruce Southard, for his enduring sense of humor and for the assistance he has given me. I would also like to thank Dr. Ravi Sheorey whose exhuberance is inspiring and whose resources plentiful. I also wish to thank Dr. Paul Lin who helped foster in me a love for China and things Chinese.

I want to give special thanks to my Chinese colleagues whom I deeply miss. I look forward to the day when we will again be struggling together to fit thirty-six hours' work into a twenty-four hour day. I will always have fond memories of Stephanie Ford and Linda Stark on their first day in China. The many experiences and long hours spent in discussion gave me insight into things I would not have seen only with my eyes.

I thank my family for supporting me and for the encouragement I always felt from my grandmother, in particular. And finally, I give to Gabriel my deepest appreciation for his encouragement, his pragmatism, and for his great understanding.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign language in China is a growing phenomenon that attracts the attention of those interested in this country, in her growing associations with the West, in the political movements that have affected educational programs, and in the reforms and innovations that have been taking place since the normalization of relations with the United States in 1978. On Thursday, December 28, 1978, The Washington Post announced the arrival in the United States of the first scholars from the People's Republic of China who were sent to pursue advanced studies in the areas of science and technology. By 1980, the Institute of International Education reported that 2,770 students from China were enrolled in courses on campuses throughout the country. In the same year it was reported by Michael Weisakopf (1980) that approximately 6,000 students and scholars from China were studying in America. In addressing the members of a China symposium at the 1983 TESOL Convention, Thomas Scovel remarked that five years before, in 1978, there were ten scholars in America but that in 1983 there were as many as 10,000. Their numbers increase each year as China struggles to equip herself with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the goals for modernization by the year 2000.

Since the official end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, new government policies have been put into place regarding the upgrading of education in China, the return of status to teachers, and renewed emphasis

on academic excellence. A very positive product of these changes is that the EFL discipline has been greatly affected and continues to grow in influence and importance throughout the country. A liberalization of policies concerning language teaching has allowed greater access to information and brought about academic exchanges with western countries. China continues to hire scores of experts from abroad who, through their work with government-sponsored agencies, universities, and training institutes, meet a variety of language needs.

Foreign experts and instructors engaged in English teaching in China deal with certain circumstances typical of those found in Third World countries. However, historical and political trends have left China with situations unique only to her. Universities, training institutes, companies, and industries also face unique situations which are a product of individual policies and conditions set forth by their leaders. It is in view of China's unique situations and the individual problems and possibilities found in various institutions that I present this thesis.

Purpose of Study

This study surveys current practices in EFL teaching in China and promotes the adoption of a set of proficiency guidelines by the Foreign Languages Department of Qinghua University. The primary sources for satisfying this purpose are found in (1) recent literature in the area of language teaching and English teaching in China, and (2) personal experience working in the English Section of the Foreign Languages Department of Qinghua University in 1983-1984.

Rationale

It is expected that the suggestions offered in this study will provide a meaningful and pragmatic solution to the problems concerning student evaluation and course design in the EFL program at Qinghua University. They will also provide foreign instructors bounds within which to plan courses and methods for adapting to specific situations. Implications for broader use of such guidelines will be discussed.

Limitations

This study is limited to describing recent conditions in EFL teaching situations, but through presenting a historical perspective sheds light on the enormous effects political climate has had and continues to have on education as regards maintaining status quo and implementing reforms. The study also limits itself to addressing the particular problems of one tertiary institution while reflecting generalities.

Background

The first section of this chapter presents an overview of the Chinese educational system, from the enormous impact of the Confucian tradition through the influences from Russia to the present day, revealing a complex system that has undergone many changes both politically and philosophically. An attempt to explain the political decisions that have shaped education in China since 1978 has been made.

Confucian Tradition. Education has been part of China's history since the time of Confucius, 551-479 B.C. (Kaplan, et al., 1980). The identity of man, according to Confucian thought, is determined by his relationship

to others in the societal sphere. Each person had his or her own role which was defined according to five key role relationships. Through adherence to these roles, good government and harmonious society could be achieved. Since government was thought of as a moral force, an emperor was to rule by the example of his outstanding conduct. A centralized form of government was created by the Chinese in which bureaucratic rule was carried out by men of superior education. Pye (1984:42) points out that "the absolute importance of education was stressed. The corollary was that educated men were superior to the uneducated, and therefore that rulers and governors should be educated."

Neo-Confucianism led to a recognition of sacred texts such as the Four Books and the Five Classics which became the basis of all education and of the infamous examination system. The Four Books consisted of The Analects (Confucius' sayings); Great Learning (containing works on Confucian logic); Doctrine of the Mean (stressing the Confucian and Chinese ideal of harmony); and Mencius (the work of Confucius' disciple). The contents of the Five Classics include the Book of Changes (dealing with divination and the forces of destiny); Book of History; Book of Poetry; Book of Rites (including instructions on ceremonial behavior down to the handling of a bow and arrow); and Spring and Autumn Annals (dealing with the state of affairs at the time and the conduct of officials, among other things). As can be seen, Chinese civilization was highly sophisticated and enlightened from a very early period. In addition to the above mentioned, Pye informs us that eight other classics and thousands of volumes of encyclopedias helped make up the mass of literature available to the elite literate. Under Emperor Qianlong (1736-1795) the Si Ku Quan Shu was compiled which contained reproductions or excerpts from all books of the time including an annotated bibliography

which included more titles than had been published in the whole of the Western world at that time. The following excerpt from China: An Introduction (1979:50) puts into perspective the immense task undertaken by scholars seeking to join the ranks of the civil service:

> Confucian scholarship produced a rich and demanding intellectual tradition. Men had to spend years exploring its different reaches, and it was not supported by anything resembling a formal educational system or such religious institutions as monasteries. The individual, with the help of a tutor, had to work his way through the classics, memorizing long passages and striving to interpret obscure meanings. Since the language of the classics was not the same as the spoken tongue, this endeavor was much like engaging in scholarship in a foreign language.
>
> Study of the classics provided a shared experience for that thin layer of men who held Chinese civilization together. Regardless of where they came from in the empire, or their native accent or dialect, they could all speak to each other in the official's language, which was the scholar's language. They used the same metaphors and aphorisms and could use the same allusions in making their points to each other.

The 'eight-legged essay' was an outcome of this stultification of knowledge: all subjects were best dealt with in eight points; each idea required a balancing opposite; and sentences should alternate between

a length of four to six characters (Pye, 1984). Penmanship, in this case, calligraphy, was equally as important as the form of the essay.

The examination system lasted in China until 1905 when China's intellectuals began debating over the fundamental values of pragmatic knowledge filtering in from the West. The debate continued as reforms were slowly made in reaction to the growing modern technical advances outside China's shores.

19th Century Western Influences. Britain's defeat of China in the first Opium War (1839-42) initiated a period of foreign intervention in China with the establishment of permanent embassies in Beijing and economic contact with foreigners. These happenings also led to contacts with cultural institutions in the West. Prior to this time, China had remained virtually closed to the outside world in all areas but that of highly restricted trade carried on by lowly merchants. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, Protestant and Catholic missions had set up schools in China and certain few officials were beginning to see a need for educational reform to bridge the gap with the West that the Industrial Revolution, among other things, had brought about. The need for modern ships and armaments had increased by China's defeat in the Opium War. Though little came out of movements in the late 1800's to strengthen China through the implementation of reforms, some schools were set up based on models from the West.

Reforms Under the Republic. The Republic was born in 1912 bringing with it an end to imperial rule and the institution of a new educational system borrowed from Japan. A few years later on May 4, 1919, students from Beijing University led a demonstration against Japan and its inclination to procure Chinese lands and make demands on the government. A former student of John Dewey known as China's leading philosopher, Hu Shih supported

the students in their demands for pragmatic and utilitarian education. He also promoted 'pai hua', the vernacular based on spoken Mandarin, as an appropriate literary style to help alleviate class distinctions, increase literacy, and aid in China's modernization (Alitto, 1968). In 1922, the Nationalist government suggested a new comprehensive plan which showed significant influences from the U.S.

During the 1920's and 1930's groups were established to study the works of Marx and to set up educational goals for 'soviet' areas in southern China. A major campaign against illiteracy took place as well as the establishment of a Lenin School for young children, schools for teenagers and women, and higher institutions of learning. In rural areas schooling was structured to meet the needs and time limits of the peasants. In Communist educational institutions, students and instructors devoted twenty-five percent of their time to productive labor. Curricula stressed practical training in the form of short, intensive courses. "Self-study, free discussion, and criticism of teaching methods were encouraged, while methods that relied on memorization and 'dead-book learning' (Mao's term) were rejected." (Kaplan, et al., 1980:220). Experimentation and innovation was prevalent in the 1940's and continued in post-1949 reforms. Practical application and flexible adaptations of the formal conditions of schooling to the "real-life situation" were sought into the 1970's.

Reorganization 1949-1952. In 1949, the future of educational reform became a major topic of discussion. In 1951, Premier Zhou Enlai announced a systematic plan for educational reform to be based on five levels: 1) pre-school education (ages 3-7); 2) primary schooling (children aged 7-12), and adults and uneducated youth; 3) middle schooling (six-year schools for 12-year-olds, "short course" schools for workers and peasants); sparetime

schools, and vocational middle schools including teacher-training divisions; 4) higher education (specialized and technical colleges and universities); 5) institutions providing "revolutionary political training" for cadres (Kaplan, et al., 1980).

The Ministry of Education put out lists of texts authorized for use in primary and secondary schools. A caution against purely pragmatic or empirical teachings that showed no respect for theory went out to those involved in higher education. All courses and teaching methods had to adhere to these guidelines and be approved by the ministry. Literacy was strongly promoted and enrollment in primary schools may have doubled in this short period.

Soviet Influences 1953-1957. After the establishment of China's first Five Year Plan (1953-1957), the National People's Congress adopted a constitution into which was inserted a clause declaring undying friendship with the Soviet Union. Soviet technicians and advisors came to China in droves while Chinese students travelled to Russia to study. Chinese schools were inspected by Soviet teams who offered advice for revising curriculum and teaching methods. Translation of thousands of Russian texts and teaching guides took place as the major foreign language in schools switched from English. Wang (1972:7) points to the fact that "planned development, closely coordinating educational materials with practical demands, along with the overall implementation of spare-time labor and farmer schools" were characteristics of the Soviet educational system. Natural sciences made up the curriculum core, and comprehensive technical education was stressed at primary and secondary levels in order to help realize the goals of major industrialization.

Great Leap, Readjustment, and Socialist Movement 1958-1965. In 1958, people's communes were established in rural areas according to Marxist ideology. Concurrently, the Great Leap Forward movement involved large numbers of people in expanding production. In education, the slogan "walking on two legs," or combining theory with practice, referred to

> the direct interaction of educational institutions with productive labor and the establishment of self-supported schools by factories and commune units. The workers and peasants who set up these schools were encouraged to integrate student's classroom work with the production tasks at hand. In July, 1958 - only eight months into the Great Leap - the Peking Review reported that secondary schools and higher institutions had together established 151,608 small industrial enterprises and 10,319 farms. (Kaplan, et al., 1980:221).

A new type of agricultural middle school combined one-half day of farming with one-half day of work-related technical studies. Perhaps the greatest effect of the movement, however, was that more than eighty percent of all school age children were enrolled in primary schools.

By the end of 1960, more than ninety percent of rural part-time schools begun only two years earlier had been eliminated because of a lack of trained staff and proper coordination. The 'Red and Expert' slogan referring to an intellectual or scholar's ideological stance and expertise in his field was the theme for the times, and it was argued that anyone who was diligent in his studies and who contributed to socialist construction ought to be somewhat freed from the burden of political activities and

allowed time for research.

As the Soviets began pulling back scientists and technicians when relations with China soured in 1960, curriculum experiments to reverse the ensuing shortage of experts were carried out. Student productive labor time was reduced and courses were condensed and streamlined with the overall effect of producing shorter but better courses.

The year 1962 saw better economic conditions in China; thus the socialist rule of education within society became the focus of another movement. Mao, with his thoughts focused on class oppression and struggle, decreed that the proletariat should be educated and the 1963-64 movement became a "rectification" campaign aimed at class conflicts. Students were transferred to the countryside and, by 1964, intellectuals were to be revolutionized and turned into laborers. However, Liu Shaoqi and followers felt a strong need to train a special group of managers, civil servants, and technicians to bring about industrialization and advocated a two-track educational system whereby those not trained in advanced studies would become industrial and agricultural trainees. Mao vehemently opposed this as well as the rigid examination system and hierarchy of teachers and administrators within the system. In 1965, he declared the return to the half-work, half-study approach of the Great Leap and the idea of promoting workers from local enterprises as capable teachers.

Cultural Revolution 1966-1969. A literary debate triggered the Cultural Revolution which dominated nearly every aspect of culture, politics, and education in China for the next decade. The initial focus of the struggle was on schools and universities:

> All schools were now to apply Mao's policy of "education

> serving proletarian politics and education being combined with productive labor." Thus, schools were directed to shorten their courses of study and transform their teaching methods and materials [once again]. Industrial and agricultural work as well as military affairs were to be made integral parts of school programs. In January, 1967 a variety of specific reforms were added, including the abolition of all systems of examinations for school entry (examinations were viewed as devices that worked to protect the advantages of the bourgeois classes); special emphasis on "Mao Ze Dong thought"; placing politics in command in the schools; and education of summer and winter vacation periods, these times to be applied to productive labor. [Mao's book of quotations] came into widespread use at this time. (Kaplan, et al., 1980:223).

Red Guards and other youth groups travelled around the country to abolish things of the past in favor of the new. Teachers, researchers and administrators were harshly criticized, some also beaten, and prevented from continuing their work.

In early 1967, although universities had been closed for six months, students were told to return, and middle and primary schools were being reopened. The People's Liberation Army moved in to give political and military training, to aid in reorganizing and carrying out the 'struggle-criticism-transformation' policy. Mao Ze Dong Thought Propaganda Teams, made up mainly of workers, were assigned to manage these schools. Universities, science and research centers, and publishing houses among other institutions were thus directed by "worker-peasant-soldier" teams.

In rural areas, schools previously under state jurisdiction were turned over to commune production brigades. Intellectuals were sent to the countryside to work and study.

Recent Reforms. By 1969, most schools other than universities had been reopened with dramatic change in curriculum. Subjects to be taught were political theory and practice, language, mathematics, military training and physical education, and industrial and agricultural production. In 1970, universities gradually began to reopen. There were no academic entrance exams and middle school graduates could be admitted only if they had done two to three years of work or military experience. For older workers and peasants, requirements for prior schooling were eliminated. Political recommendations from work units were the candidates' most powerful tool for being admitted to a university. The early 1970's saw concern over academic standards in higher education, but the 1975 Qinghua University questioning of the 'open-door' admissions policy was attacked the following year.

In 1976 the "gang of four" was identified and in late 1977 criticized for distorting Mao's educational goals by oppressing intellectuals and preventing improvements in the quality of education. College entrance exams were re-introduced, post-graduate courses were restored, international academic exchanges were instituted, standardized textbooks were compiled by the Ministry of Education, and larger apportionments of state money were given out for science and education.

At the National Science Conference in March 1978, Deng Xiao-Ping denounced the "gang of four" and the evil effects it had on Chinese society and advocated a new push towards the mastery of science and technology to realize the goal of the Four Modernizations. Scovel presents a translation

of the Ministry of Education's four-point outline "Program for National Education from 1978-1985" which, in brief, states that 1) the revolution in education must serve the proletariat and speed up the training of laborers in a socialist manner, 2) education must develop in regards to the needs and possibilities of the nation's economy, 3) in modernizing teaching media, content and materials should meet the demands of developing science and technology, and 4) the quality of education must be raised (Scovel, 1982). Thus, priority was given to law schools, the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students increased, entrance examinations were reinstated, teacher status was raised, periodic examinations were to be given to teachers to determine their professional status, and the granting of academic titles was revised based on merit.

CHAPTER II

ADOPTION OF PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

Throughout the fifteen months living in China, I examined the amazements and frustrations surrounding the teaching of English in tertiary level institutions. In the Chinese context, the task of teaching is not an easy one. Firstly, the large numbers of students who, from the elementary level are required to learn English, far outnumber qualified teachers. In many areas, materials that EFL experts would consider "appropriate" are scarce. A lack of time and hardware prevents sufficient production of "home-grown" or supplementary materials in many situations. The inaccessibility of foreign texts and the reluctance of Chinese administrators to use borrowed texts that might contain language or situations which are inappropriate for the Chinese student brings the problem around full-circle.

These circumstances are representative of some aspects of the EFL teaching phenomenon in China still prevalent today. Although much progress has been made toward providing guidelines for institutions to follow in the writing of their own materials and attempts have been made to provide a national curriculum with standardized texts, such ideas have not yet been brought to fruition.

It can be said that most institutions share certain similarities; however, each has its own strengths, weaknesses, and historical idiosyncratic tendencies. The first part of this chapter is devoted to

describing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in China. A brief look at EFL from a historical perspective through the post-Cultural Revolution reforms sheds light on the close link between tradition, politics, and language teaching. This is followed by a focus on the methodologies used in language teaching in China and highlights typical aspects of curriculum and classroom practices.

Following a general look at EFL in China is a section which highlights the specific English teaching situation at Qinghua University. The general atmosphere of the English Section will be discussed along with the faculty and student population, facilities, and courses taught. The next section presents the rationale supporting the adoption of a set of proficiency guidelines for use within the language department as a means to describe a student's language proficiency in terms of five skills, if approved by Chinese administrators. It will also be shown that such guidelines can be used for curriculum development. The final section of this chapter shows how such guidelines can be adapted and implemented for use.

English as a Foreign Language in China

While there has been much information published on English teaching in the People's Republic of China in the recent past, the majority of information printed has been limited to reports by individuals on personal experiences, generalities as to what to expect when accepting a position in China, information on what textbooks are available in some areas, general philosophical and methodological traditions found in most educational institutions, and cautions about the vagueness of responsibilities and the unpredictable academic climate. Readers have been informed of and reminded about the "atrocities" of the Cultural Revolution and the effects

it has continued to show in areas of education and life in general. "Flexibility" is the catchword used by all who give advice to potential "China adventurers." There have been countless testimonies as to "the way it is" yet few answers to the myriad of questions posed by foreign experts, foreign instructors, and those such as the "See China and die" brigade (Maley, 1983:100). Although many answers are beyond reach, Janene Scovel (1982), in her doctoral dissertation on English foreign language programs in China, has attempted to relate the forces for stability and change concerning curriculum since the 1949 Liberation. Her comprehensive work based on experience as a foreign expert in Tianjin, China, will serve as a major source in discussing EFL programs in China, teaching methodologies used, and curriculum planning.

English has been taught in China for over a century. Missionaries influenced English teaching; however, the first English language institute was said to have been set up for the training of diplomats and interpreters in 1862 in Beijing. Examinations requiring the translation of diplomatic documents from Chinese to English and vice versa were given every three years in order to maintain standards (Wang-kun, 1981). This method of examination carried over past 1949 and was part of a curriculum that supported the traditional grammar-translation method of instruction.

Educational reforms were announced by the Communists in 1950 that were aimed at reorganizing and reconstructing the tertiary level in response to the dire need for highly trained persons. Thus, comprehensive universities, multi-subject polytechnic universities emphasizing science and technology, and single-subject institutes emerged.

As mentioned before, Soviet specialists began arriving in China in 1952 to plan and reform all aspects of education which included designing

courses and writing texts. EFL programs were replaced by Russian language programs. Chinese language teachers were sent to Russia to learn the language while Russian foreign experts took up residence in Chinese institutes.

After the disastrous Great Leap Forward from 1958-1959, liberalization gained precedence. Late 1960 saw a return to "normal" as EFL programs based on conventional lines started up again. Expertise gained importance and academic excellence was emphasized. Students were to use their knowledge and skills to the good of China, thus displaying their "redness." Teachers were guaranteed five-sixths of their time for teaching and research, the rest going for political study and meetings. Students were required to spend only one month at physical labor, were given two months of vacation, and studied nine months out of the year.

Compulsory EFL programs were part of tertiary curricula but, since there was little contact with English speaking nations, teaching materials were not updated. Literary works from Shakespeare and other old classics were used to teach English. Reading from texts, explicating grammar points, and making sentences with vocabulary indicate that the grammar-translation method was still in use.

The Cultural Revolution brought back renewed focus on "redness" (Communist ideology). According to Scovel (1982:12),

> reforms changed every aspect of higher level education. EFL students were part of the Red Guard that challenged teachers, took over classrooms and universities, and persecuted many considered "too expert." EFL teachers were sent to the countryside to do physical labor or to undergo ideological re-training. Every class began with

(Rice, 1982; Maley, 1983; Scovel, 1982). Scovel's survey of Chinese teachers' methodologies and feelings for the purpose of teaching and/or language learning reveal that these teachers feel that methods like Gattegno's Silent Way and Curran's Community Language Learning "are too foreign to work in the PRC" (Scovel 1982:109). At present there is, however, a small group of adherents to the audio-lingual method (Scovel, 1982; Cowan et al., 1979). According to Scovel, even though new methods are being discussed at conferences, teachers continue along conservative lines and would rather add fresh techniques to grammar-translation than accept something altogether new. Foreign experts interviewed by Scovel expressed a belief that "the role model system and 'hero worship' concept" explain the common phenomenon of institutions emulating such schools as the Beijing or Shanghai Foreign Languages Institutes.

Accuracy seems to be an obsession with most Chinese teachers (Allen and Spada, 1981; Zhang, 1982). J. Scovel (1983) discovered that in those schools where communicative competence is receiving attention, students are improving in oral English yet falling behind in grammatical accuracy. This concerns supporters of the grammar-translation method. Allen and Spada (1981) learned while teaching in China that many Chinese believed that gaining language skills was less important than gaining literary knowledge. They also expressed the feeling that only a few foreign experts who express sensitivity to differences in learning and teaching styles have had any success in introducing new methods. Richard Light with three other members of a Fulbright Program went to China in the spring of 1981. They experimented with the Silent Way, Community Language Learning, and two other "eclectic" methods as well as offered classes in linguistics and American culture (Light, 1980). In reporting the participants' interest in these

non-traditional approaches, Light maintained that there were no converts. The Georgetown/UN Development Project in Beijing and the UCLA-China Exchange Program in Guangzhou have experienced similar "failure" and have doubts as to whether their programs will continue after their foreign experts leave China. One Chinese teacher in Scovel's (1982:116) survey stated: "Once Foreign Experts leave, both Chinese students and teachers tend to return to their old ways of doing things." Most important in the move towards change is the political factor. Party members may have received less education and, by definition, their decisions are not always academic and "there is no real incentive to change" (Scovel 1982:118). Thus, the status quo is maintained in these cases.

As regards classroom atmosphere, most classes are still teacher-centered; an authoritarian figure feeds passive students all the information they need. Students read aloud, memorize, and parse sentences. They are quiet and respectful and do not speak unless spoken to (Cowan, et al., 1979; Zhuang, 1984). Nonetheless, those who have had exposure to foreign instructors and methods are more questioning and outspoken and hate to waste time.

Qinghua University: A Case Study

This section is based on my experience teaching English at Qinghua University in Beijing, People's Republic of China, during the 1983-1984 academic year. At that time there were six American instructors on a campus that housed 40,000 people, 10,000 of whom were Chinese students.

Qinghua University, a "key" university, is considered China's largest. It was founded in 1911 with reparations from the Boxer Rebellion as a preparatory school for undergraduates who would study in American colleges

and universities. As National Qinghua University from 1928 to 1948, it included a Liberal Arts, Law and Political Science, Science, Engineering, and Agriculture College.

The product of the nationwide academic reorganization in 1952 brought about the renaming of the school to Qinghua University and transformed it into a polytechnic institute. To date, the university consists of approximately 18 departments offering 43 specialties. It also maintains a nuclear energy facility along with other research centers and laboratories. In the 9 factories found on campus, "pilot projects are run by the university to enhance professional training and scientific research" (Qinghua University, 1981:n.p.).

Like many Chinese institutions of higher education, Qinghua is nearly self-sufficient. It has its own food shops, book and supply shops, fruit and vegetable markets as well as land on which to raise crops. Several cafeterias and small canteens serve the thousands of students, faculty, and staff members who frequent them.

All students are housed on campus; in addition, teachers whose homes are in the city are provided beds in dormitories. Qinghua is also home to approximately 50 foreign students from countries such as North Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Pakistan, Nepal, and several African nations. Up to the present, these foreign students along with foreign instructors are housed together in a separate dormitory. The foreign teacher delegation (Qinghua as yet receives no money from the Ministry of Education to pay "foreign experts" to teach English) was made up of: an engineer, a literature major, a history/economics major, a journalist, a TESL graduate, and myself, completing work for a Master's in TESL.

Duties. Prior to my arrival in China I had been informed of my "probable"

duties. They included teaching English to graduate students who were studying in scientific and technological fields. There was a possibility of my working with teachers also, but my time would likely be spent teaching reading and perhaps composition to graduate non-English majors. However, after my initial interview with the department leader and our conversation as to my previous work with young students in several areas, my duties were changed. I was to work with the first year English majors teaching "oral English." My duties also included meeting with two groups of teachers to allow them to "use their English" and become accustomed to an American accent. I was informed that I might be called upon to do infrequent editing or assist in other ways. As is often the case with foreigners, I became an "answer person." I was stopped in the halls on the way to and from class, after class by teachers I did not know, in the post office, on the street, and riding my bicycle by people who wanted answers to a myriad of questions regarding English. Others just wanted to practice their self-taught skills.

Atmosphere. The atmosphere in the English Department was business-like and somewhat tense. In most circumstances there was a pervasive feeling that if one spent 36 hours a day working it would not be enough. However, most faculty members were dedicated and hard working.

I spent little time with teachers whom I did not meet in class. For all intents and purposes, I saw them only when they had a grammar question to ask. There was no lounge where teachers could get together to drink tea or chat. Thus, most teachers had contact only with their teaching group members and leaders.

Few of the administrators spoke English and none of the office assistants did (although some were teaching themselves). To my initial surprise there was not an English word to be found on the language lab walls or the

library or the reading room doors. Chinese was definitely the lingua franca in the department. Students, however, were in charge of the English wall posters which displayed copies of the China Daily in English and the magazine China Reconstructs, along with student written compositions, poems, and campus news items.

Facilities. The university library contains 1,900,000 volumes and receives 3,000 Chinese and foreign journals (Qinghua University, 1981). However, as seems to be the case in many universities (Miller, 1984), students have much difficulty borrowing books and are not allowed in the stacks to browse. A library card is something of a treasure even for foreign instructors; it is valuable but practically useless.

The two small libraries in the English department are open only to instructors. A World Bank loan and contributions from foreign friends helps stock the shelves. I observed that grammar books were often used and teachers sought out new reading materials to use in their lessons. However, there seemed to be no time for browsing through linguistic texts or recent books on methodology and teaching techniques.

The language laboratory was equipped with state-of-the-art hardware. There was a small sound-proof room used for making recordings. The department had a library of tapes, but they were unavailable for use as they were not sorted or labeled in English.

Instructors. Five full-time instructors made up the English major teaching group the first semester; four were included in the group second semester. All but one of the Chinese had been abroad: one had done a Master's with extensive work in reading, one had a certificate in ESL, and one had been an interpreter. The fourth member left China in the spring to study abroad. This group was unique in its small size and in the fact that

all its members had or would study abroad for varying lengths of time. Like all teaching groups in Chinese universities, it met regularly to discuss students' progress and plan class-related activities such as those done with speaking partners — each student was paired with another and instructed to meet with his/her partner outside of class to practice speaking.

I also worked with two other groups of teachers who had previously been instructors of Russian. They taught English to science/technology majors. Their speaking proficiency was relatively limited and most were initially reluctant to speak, not wanting to display what they considered poor skills. Time was against these middle-aged individuals because their class loads were full and they claimed to barely have sufficient time for teaching preparation. They also used little English in their classes which were taught using the grammar-translation method. Since time was so precious and work for them consuming, they had no time to devote to study or practice.

Students. The students in our group were divided equally into nine women and nine men. The women were all from Beijing and were generally one to two years older than the men. Except for one from Beijing, all the men came from two provinces in central China. The younger men were shy and reserved, more so than the women. At one time or another all the students, even the girls, complained of homesickness. They had to make the typical adjustments of disciplining themselves in a new routine, learning how to study efficiently, and getting along with others in close quarters. In addition, getting used to an animated foreigner and learning to speak aloud in class, work in small groups, and take tests were difficult adjustments to make.

Classes. The freshman students were required to complete the following courses their first year: Chinese History, Chinese Composition, Physical

Training, Intensive Reading, Extensive Reading, and Oral English. Because the class was rather large, I divided it up into two sections second semester which met once weekly for oral English. I also offered a required listening class which stressed the integration of skills.

My freshman students were initially quite inhibited in class. They spoke only if spoken to and then responded briefly. It took me some time to determine the relative proficiency of each student. Logically, the students from the city had had more exposure to different forms of English and had slightly more experience speaking. All students, however, reported that their spoken use of English was strictly limited, and they reflected the typical Chinese attitude of not wanting to make mistakes, especially in front of a foreign instructor. Eventually the students began to take chances and discovered that I was not in the least horrified at their attempts but was in fact encouraging them to speak despite the occurrence of mistakes. By year's end, the students with the help of several teachers, had written and performed their own play in English for their peers in the university and at the first meeting of the new English Club. This organization was established to provide guest speakers for all students interested in English, a forum within which students could perform for fellow students, and a vehicle for informing them of activities relating to their shared interest. Our students were somewhat envied because they would spend four or five years learning English whereas other students could hope for only two to three years' limited study in the language. To my amusement, it was also considered a bonus to be able to learn "American English."

I continued working with the advanced group of teachers second semester. They were highly motivated to improve their language skills and some were interested in new techniques and in incorporating conversation into their

grammatical lessons. They had recently heard complaints from students who wanted to learn to "use" English rather than just be able to read it. In that vein, I began taping materials for use in future listening classes along with making television tapes to be used on the closed-circuit system for teaching purposes. A large student population is served by the traditional grammar lessons shown on television screens in classrooms. The teaching group that I worked with, however, used quite innovative materials and methods for improving their students' listening skills.

Working with these seasoned instructors perhaps had the greatest impact of all on me as I came to understand their situation. Their duties included teaching classes six to eight hours per week. This seems to be a normal load; however, for most instructors the time spent in teaching group meetings and the time devoted to research and planning for lessons — searching out related reading materials, writing new exercises, and understanding every single word (in and out of context) along with all grammar points — left no time for anything but required departmental meetings. Aside from this, it was reported that 63 percent of the faculty at Qinghua are middle-aged but carry 85 percent of the teaching load and supervise 89 percent of the research (Smith, 1982). Before each new lesson, teaching groups met to discuss what was accomplished by the two or three individuals in charge of researching that lesson. Everything was discussed in detail and all group members could confidently meet classes having prepared identical lectures in which they would teach what had been researched. This laborious process precluded their own studies. It is also a strong factor which helps maintain the status quo in regards to what is taught in English classes and how it is taught.

Rationale for Guideline Use

Alan Maley, previous administrator for the British Council in Beijing, China, served as a resource person for foreigners and as a liason-of-sorts between foreign experts and instructors and their Chinese counterparts. He offered workshops in TEFL for foreigners and Chinese and observed the relationships and situations foreign teachers found themselves in. Among the most pressing problems he noted was the role foreigners play in ill-defined projects. He felt that better cooperation between parties involved would help break down barriers, reduce feelings of isolation, and promote understanding (Maley, 1983).

An example of the situation faced by many foreign experts and instructors caught up in ill-defined projects is presented by Donna Rice. Serving as Director-in-Residence of the Beijing Municipal University System/State University of New York at Buffalo English Language Training Center, she arrived in China with carefully designed syllabi based on the limited information provided by the Chinese for a seven-month program which included emphasis on teacher training and ESP. When initial negotiations with her Chinese counterparts revealed that most of the syllabi and several of the texts selected for use would be inappropriate, some quick changes had to be made:

> After a few days and many attempts to adjust the curriculum, it was quite apparent that the logical solution to the problem was to throw out the carefully planned curriculum and to proceed with a completely different format. In other words, what had been anticipated to be a well-planned, highly-structured, fairly sophisticated program became,

> for the most part, 'bare bones teaching' (Rice 1982:7).

Cowan, et al. (1979) mention in their survey of English teaching in China that vaguely defined conditions of employment and the ambiguous nature of responsibilities hamper foreigners in their efforts to teach effectively. Bishop (1981) reports that the goal articulated by university administrators for classes taught by foreign experts in Harbin, China, was to "raise the level of English" of students involved. In response to the frustrations caused by such vague statements, Maley suggests that if "pedagogical" objectives were better defined by the Chinese host institutions, and if professional decisions were made by those professionally qualified to do so, some of the pedagogical problems would begin to disappear" (1983:102). He continues:

> My, no doubt highly personal view, is that, if 'friends' are preferred to 'experts,' if academic title is preferred to proven field experience, if the role of the foreign teacher is not thought through, and if programme objectives are not properly planned, then the result is waste - waste of state money on salaries for teachers who take half a year to find out what their job is and how to do it, waste of student energy on teachers who do not deserve the effort, waste of expertise being under-used, and waste of goodwill between the teacher, the learner, and the institution (Maley 1983:100-1).

As if to substantiate the claim made by many foreign experts and

instructors that information on goals and curricula is "classified" and unobtainable, the English Language and Literature Division of the British Council in London reported that "plans, objectives, syllabuses, etc., are all neibu (internal). That is they are, effectively, state secrets, not to be revealed to foreigners" (1983:11). Such may be the case. In light of the strong influence politics has on education and in consideration of dialectic philosophy (red versus expert, the need for foreign expertise versus the need to preserve Chinese/Socialist values, political versus socio-economic expediency), the secrecy of such policies can be understood.

However, it is also quite conceivable that such policies have in fact not been completely determined or are still in flux as the many variables affecting language learning are brought to light through contact with foreigners and through research (Zhang, 1982; British Council, 1983; Zhu, 1983; Wu, 1983; Scovel, T., 1983; Li, 1984). It is also possible that if universities are free to decide on course content and texts, at least in the final two years of a student's curriculum (British Council, 1983; Zhu, 1983), these universities are looking to their foreign faculty members for advice and suggestions as to what objectives should be met, what courses should be offered, and how these courses should or could be taught. Thus, the role of the foreigner becomes that of team-member; this allows him to take an active part in helping determine curriculum standards as they apply to the specific Chinese situation.

Those instructors who have been trained in EFL can cope within a situation where well-articulated goals are lacking. They can draw up their own course objectives and make use of their knowledge and experience

in the field. They will less likely be "tied to the book" and more able to adapt the learning situation to fit student needs. Nonetheless, they run the risk of articulating goals that overlap areas to be covered in other classes and of focusing attention in areas their Chinese counterparts feel to be unimportant. Although some may argue that in the Chinese setting foreign experts can "get away with anything," touching on politically sensitive areas, being overdemanding and inflexible, or dogmatically stating personal opinion as to what changes must take place is foolhardy. Acting without taking into full account the priorities and limitations of the system within which they function assures that those foreign experts will not be invited to prolong their stays.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the inexperienced foreign teacher whose plight is often serious. Thrown into an unfamiliar atmosphere with few, if any, guidelines to follow, no real knowledge as to students' proficiency levels, and no support system, this instructor is indeed a "foreigner" seemingly doomed to ineffective isolation. This dilemna of the foreign teacher coupled with the lack of well-articulated goals is representative of many EFL programs in China. In addition, a reluctance on the part of Chinese administrators to reveal to foreign personnel the full curriculum for a four or five year course results in the conducting of isolated classes which are not closely integrated with other parts of the curriculum. The high turnover rate for foreign instructors also lends to this lack of articulation and ensures a certain amount of redundancy in teaching.

Whether or not it is known from "day one" of the tertiary level EFL program what kind of future employment students will have upon graduation, it is certain that they will need a strong foundation in a variety of

language skills. Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and translation are the major skills most Chinese programs hope to develop in students (Bing, 1981; Zhuang, 1984). However, some language institutes are recognizing the need to develop in their students more than just grammatical accuracy and are beginning to adopt the notion of communicative competence as central to the needs of these students (Zhang 1982; Bing, 1981; Li, 1984; Zhang and Yang, 1983). Higgs and Clifford (1982:60), regarding the debate as to the language proficiency of students, write that . . .

> the question that needs to be asked is not merely "Was the student able to communicate?" but "What was he able to communicate, and how well?" The what requires consideration of both the topic or context of the communication and of the language function that must be performed in that context. The how well entails judgments of linguistic accuracy and cultural authenticity. In restating the crucial evaluation questions in this way, we identify the three coexisting and interrelated hierarchies of judgmental criteria relating to the general categories of language function, content and accuracy, all of which must be under the control of a competent communicator.

Li Xiaoju is director of the Communicative English for Chinese Learners (CECL) project at Guangzhou Foreign Languages Institute. In 1979 in conjunction with two Canadian teachers, he began developing a set of EFL materials for tertiary level English majors that would

"make a break with accepted EFL practice" (Li 1979:2). He set three conditions that should be met before an activity could be labelled "communicative." First was the need to incorporate real situations and roles (i.e. those that students would meet after graduation - interpreting, translating). The second condition involves the realization that need, purpose, and substance promote communication in real life. He explains:

> We take care not to make students ask such questions as 'Is this a pen?' when everybody can see it is a pen, or to ask each other 'What is your name?' when they already know each other's names. For reading or listening, we wouldn't give our students the story of Lei Feng [a well-known soldier who performed good deeds in China], which every school child in China knows by heart. Nor would we give them a set of pictures and make them say or write: 'This is Li Ming. He is going to school. Now he meets his friend Zhang Hua,' and pretend that our students are 'doing very well' in spoken or written English. We don't think this <u>is</u> spoken or written English, because spoken or written English means communicating something through the spoken or written mode of English, and here the students are not communicating anything (1984:3).

Li also points to a common habit among Chinese language students that foreigners often encounter:

> the young interpreter may startle his or her foreign guest every now and then with lumps of memorized language that are completely out of place: the young Chinese postgraduate in a discussion with foreign collegues may spin out a prefabricated speech, oblivious to what others are talking about (1984:3).

Along a similar line, Wood commented in a TESOL Newsletter "Letter to the Editor" that "Chinese students are concerned with elegant expressions; they avidly collect phrases, not recognizing which are trite. They often mistake convolutions for elegance in grammar, but have trouble really learning how best to utilize phrases or clauses" (1982:11). Problems not only exist in speech but also in other areas. Cullingford describes the major problem of her students' writing as "copiousness." Lengthy, verbose passages of sentimental essays made use of "old-fashioned, pompous, self-conscious" vocabulary which she deduced to be "one effect of a long-term diet of Dickens" (1983:33). From these examples it can be seen that student needs in the realm of communicative competence are not being met in the traditional classroom setting.

Li's third condition involving the communicativity of an exchange is that of freedom coupled with unpredictability - the freedom to choose between a number of possible responses to input and the unpredictability thereof. If students are always given one 'correct' interpretation before being allowed the freedom to interpret on their own, if unpredictability is removed from a text, or if vocabulary or structural items are reduced to a list or two, this manipulation limits the students' skills and insight into the language.

The CECL program makes use of the global features of authentic language in its classes, grades itself according to control of tasks, attempts to provide students with sufficient exposure to English via various media, presupposes that students take the central role in learning, and recognizes language learning as an active development process.

Other programs in China which have published their adoption of communicative competence as the major indication of proficiency in English include the Shanghai Foreign Language Institute (Zhang, 1982) and the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute (Bing, 1981). Zhuang (1981) reports that structure-situational, communicative, and functional-notional approaches are being introduced in several Chinese institutions.

As results of these experimental programs become available they will be disseminated throughout the country via various English language sources: journals and newsletters now in circulation, conferences on English teaching, texts published by designated institutions on such things as notional-functional approaches and structural-situational principles, and the newly established CAELE - Chinese Association for English Language Education (Lieberman, 1984). It can be expected that more attention will be paid to language teaching techniques and to the expansion of student proficiency from purely linguistic skills to a combination of skills aimed at making the student communicatively competent.

This broadening of focus calls for strategies for determining the new competence, arranging syllabi, and evaluating student proficiency. It has been seen that the quest for the "right way" to teach a language - for "the best" methodology - has failed. At present, the amassed knowledge on communication, second language learner strategies, the relationship between what is taught and what is learned, as well as many other variables, does not

present a complete picture of the process. Alice Omaggio (1984:330) suggests that focus should be turned towards "identifying some 'organizing principle' by which various other methods, approaches, materials, and curricula might begin to make collective sense."

Judith Liskin-Gasparro (1984) describes a set of guidelines that Omaggio feels could provide the aforementioned organizing principle. Developed in response to recommendations made by the 1979 President's Commissionon Foreign Language and International Studies, the guidelines are a direct result of work done by a sub-branch of the U.S. Department of Education. This set of proficiency-oriented guidelines was published in 1982 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Based on the observation of second language learners' progress in the three areas of function, content, and accuracy, the guidelines were developed empirically. Taking from the Foreign Service Institute's "functional trisection", the guidelines provide descriptions about linguistic functions a learner is able to express, content that he can discuss, and the degree of accuracy with which he communicates. These components are included at each level in the FSI rating scale (see Appendix C). In the guidelines these aspects are intertwined so that they present generic as well as language-specific descriptions of proficiency. To date, however, the language-specific descriptions have been written only for Spanish, French, and German.

An important study conducted several years ago by John Carroll (1967) to measure the proficiency of U.S. college and university language majors revealed that the average rating was a 2 or 2+ as measured on the FSI oral proficiency scale or Advanced/Advanced Plus on the ACTFL/ETS scale. State Department work done with language majors corroborated this rating

except in cases where students had extended overseas experience (Higgs and Clifford, 1982). Although there is at present no supporting evidence, it may be hypothesized that Chinese students of EFL also achieve ratings of 2(+) or lower on completion of a four-year language program. These cases representing fossilized language or what is commonly known as "the terminal 2" bring to light the reality that a push toward communication in the field of language teaching is quite necessary.

Analysis of the factors that contribute to global language proficiency was undertaken by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) in 1978. Through investigation of the relative contribution of subskills -- vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, sociolinguistics -- a hypothesized model was constructed on the assumption that the contribution of the subskills would not be constant throughout the proficiency levels. Level 1 tasks were thought to demand a large vocabulary but little fluency while at Level 5 all skills were deemed essential. In order to prove or disprove the hypothesis, fifty teachers of seventeen foreign languages in the CIA Language School rated the importance of each subskill at each level in conjunction with all other subskills. The ratings were converted into percentages and graphed (see Appendix D). A look at percentages for Level 3 proficiency shows that grammar skills were seen as most important at this level followed by vocabulary, sociolinguistics, fluency, and pronunciation, respectively. Thus, if it is the purpose of a language program to produce speakers of at least Level 3 — those of "professional working proficiency" (Liskin-Gasparro:25), the curriculum should concentrate on subskills according to their relative importance at that level.

Omaggio (1983) claims that because the ACTFL guidelines for proficiency describe real language production, they will be useful in designing language

programs. The guidelines present descriptions of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture (Appendix E). Since they "outline typical grammatical features mastered, functional tasks performed, and contexts and situations handled with reasonable facitity at each level of competence described, "the progressive nature of these descriptions makes them a viable tool for organizing instruction:"

> Knowing what competencies lie at the next level will help us sequence materials to conform to natural developmental patterns in adult second language learners and prepare them for making progress. The descriptions will also allow us to keep in mind the ultimate goal(s) learners hope to achieve. Our instructional materials, as well as the design of our courses, should be influenced by those ultimate goals (Omaggio:331-2).

In view of the fact that the ACTFL guidelines are based on developing, as terminal behavior in students, communicative competence or communicative proficiency (Guntermann and Phillips, 1982), it is proposed that the Foreign Languages Department of Qinghua University adopt a similar set of guidelines for organizing course syllabi and for specifically determining student language proficiency. Traditionally, student proficiency has been determined in terms of linguistic accuracy measured through the use of discrete-point tests. There is as yet no standard for determining oral language proficiency, and listening comprehension is judged according to the amount of detail students can gather from listening to taped material. The strength of Chinese English language programs perhaps is found in the teaching of reading. Emphasis on intensive and extensive reading and the

incorporation of many types of exercises which test comprehension and inference are inherent in the methodology in use today. Authenticity and appropriateness of materials, however, can be improved greatly by using materials which elicit the terminal behavior specified in the guidelines mentioned. Although the measure of writing ability can be considered subjective even with the use of standard measurements, guidelines which determine what styles students should be able to use, the sophistication of content and level of accuracy, as well as ability to cater to different audiences are quite appropriate. There are various methods by which to incorporate culture capsules into a language program. However, specifying traits related to the cultures of English-speaking countries in the form of guidelines can ensure that information on the important cultural traits which are unavailable to most Chinese are included in a communicative syllabus for English language students.

The guidelines to be written by Qinghua with the help of foreign instructors should reflect program objectives for English language majors. A standard by which any instructor could draw up course objectives which would, by nature, complement program goals and determine proficiency, is highly desirable.

Defining course objectives in large part relates directly to students' needs. It was previously-mentioned that students' language abilities vary widely due in part to the fact that materials and expertise vary in different regions of the country. Thus, in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese students coming into the freshman level English courses, some sort of diagnostic test must be administered. Using the guidelines as a basis, a test can be produced which measures the linguistic and communicative skills of the students; the results will

then be used in defining course objectives.

Courses based on such proficiency guidelines would call for an active role to be played by the students rather than a passive one as in the traditional setting. Thus, teachers should avail their students of ample opportunities to use language in authentic contexts. Allowing students to express their own meanings when they have reached the appropriate stage will help to eliminate the use of memorization that continues far beyond elementary levels in Chinese EFL classes. The intermediate proficiency level requires that learners be able to create with the language. Therefore, flexibility and fluency are enhanced through the teaching of paraphrasing and divergent-production skills. The use of small groups and paired activities, although not traditional features of the Chinese classroom, is called for. Imagination is an important part of the creative process and should not be squelched.

The dearth of authentic materials dictates that a blend of authentic and instructional materials be used in courses but that authentic language appear in both. The range of tasks or functions that are necessary for interaction with target language speakers will have been determined by course objectives. Therefore, materials must reflect the sequencing of these functions.

Linguistic accuracy should recieve attention from the beginning of a program. Recent research studies that support this notion show that 1) lexical and grammatical errors do the most to obstruct communication with native speakers (Chastain, 1980; Delisle, 1982; Guntermann, 1978), and 2) research done by the CIA Language School found the "terminal 2" phenomenon to be a result of non-remediable fossilization of lexical and grammatical structures (Higgs and Clifford, 1982). Attention to linguistic

accuracy does not, therefore, preclude communicativity but enhances it. This notion is not unfamiliar to my Chinese colleagues and serves to support their stress on accuracy.

Another obvious reason to make use of proficiency guidelines for constructing syllabi involves inexperienced foreign teachers. Many of these individuals come to China without any teaching experience, much less experience teaching English. Placing teachers in situations in which course objectives, if they exist, are vague and general, leaves them ill-prepared to conduct classes. However, using standardized diagnostic tests which determine students' abilities in the areas portrayed by the guidelines as crucial to meeting students' communicative needs provides a base on which to create a syllabus. Because they will be standardized, these tools can be used by all new teachers (whose average turnover rate at Qinghua is once per year).

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND APPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study has been to examine English foreign language teaching practices in China at present and to present the argument which supports the adoption of guidelines for determining language proficiency among EFL students at Qinghua University and for designing course syllabi. A review of literature written by foreign experts and instructors who have worked in China has focused on the general condition of EFL programs to date as well as on the migration of a few key schools away from traditional classroom practices. The nature of the teacher-centered classroom, student and teacher roles, grammar-translation and audio-lingual methodologies in practice today have been discussed. The role of foreign experts in shedding light on new methodologies and practices has been highlighted as has the limited success to which their efforts can be applied.

It has also been of concern to discuss the role politics has in the administration of tertiary schools in China. The responsibilities schools have in carrying out high level directives and the slow and cautious pace at which changes are made were shown to contribute to the stability of the status quo. Reforms in policy regarding education, EFL in particular, have received mention. Innovations that have also taken place in experiments with elective courses for students and in the granting of degrees by institutions was briefly discussed.

Assimilation of Western "know-how" to expedite modernization in

China is taking place. Westerners have been invited to China to teach a myriad of subjects, especially English, while thousands of Chinese go abroad to study. Textbooks reflect a switch from Marxist materials to those incorporating Western cultural themes. Foreign publications and films are being allowed to circulate within China today. These innovations reflect the constructive aspects of change taking place in EFL teaching in China.

A thorough examination of frustrations and amazements experienced by faculty members and students in China led to the formulation of suggestions for adopting guidelines for determining student proficiencies. The adoption of a set of guidelines similar to those published by the ACTFL would provide a means to describe a student's language proficiency in terms of five skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture. Another important contribution of such guidelines in the teaching of EFL is made to foreigners who have never had practice teaching and have no experience in teaching English. These guidelines provide a framework within which to begin deciding what must be taught to achieve the desired outcome. Perhaps knowing what specific skills their students should display at the end of a semester or year will give instructors incentive and direction.

Application in Other Areas

The ACTFL proficiency guidelines were originally designed to determine students' language abilities. However, there are broader implications for the use of such guidelines in language settings. At Qinghua University there are several other possible applications.

EST Courses. In 1980, there were 1,144,000 students enrolled in Chinese institutions of higher learning (Cowan and McLean, 1984). Many

of these students are enrolled in science and technology courses. They all receive two years' English training, generally purported to teach scientific and technical English. Yet there are no standards; students are taught how to read materials in their field and are tested on their ability to determine grammatical forms and properly translate. The adaptation of proficiency guidelines to fit the teaching of EST would be quite useful. Specific guidelines could be written to reflect desired outcomes for these students.

Teacher Proficiency and Training. Teacher proficiency levels vary from person to person and institution to institution. It has been reported that most foreign experts and their Chinese colleagues disagree on the definition of teacher training. While there have been reforms to upgrade the professional quality of teachers, most institutions still consider the development of language skills as the goal of these programs. Perhaps teacher training can be considered the weakest link in the effort to modernize language programs. However, proficiency guidelines could be adapted to fit the teacher training situation. If salary increases are contingent on teachers raising their proficiencies, perhaps they would welcome a standardized method for evaluation. Those in the position of training these teachers could use such guidelines as a framework for course preparation.

Scholars Studying Abroad. Determining which scholars will go abroad to study seems to be arbitrary and random in most cases (Bishop, 1981). This process has continually perplexed foreign experts and instructors. Many institutions train "potential" travellers but lack a systematic method for identifying those whose language ability is sufficient for such journeys. Assuredly, political factors affect the sending of scholars abroad, yet all

who are chosen to go should have a chance to receive proper preparation. Proficiency guidelines certainly have a place in determining what aspects of language learning and methodology receive priority in programs for scholars and can thus help determine who is best qualified to leave the country. At the least they should provide a framework around which a course can be drawn up to meet the needs for going abroad.

Middle School Student Proficiency. A final category in which proficiency guidelines could ultimately be put into place is that of "attached middle schools." Major universities and language institutes have attached to them a middle school where the children of employees attend classes. English is taught on the secondary level throughout China but lacks sufficient materials and numbers of qualified instructors. The adaptation of guidelines in those schools which had strong English programs could raise the level of student proficiency through the design of efficient and useful courses. In time, all students graduating from such middle schools would display similar proficiencies which would help eliminate redundancy in tertiary level teaching.

The most important aspect of the ACTFL guidelines is that they stress communicative competence. Any course based on these or similar guidelines naturally includes "communication" in its framework, strategies, and outcomes. The push toward communication in foreign language teaching today is important for many reasons. Business and commerce require the exchange of goods between countries; educational exchanges involve ideas, principles, and people in an international sphere; medicine, politics, and industry all involve exchanges of information through the language medium. And all of this requires communication.

In the historical past, China determined its own destiny. From the

time of emperors such as Kangxi and Qian Long when China was the most sophisticated country in the world to the beginning of the end of dynastic reign, China had contact with other parts of the world strictly on a limited basis: China helped the economies and markets of other countries by engaging in restricted trade. There were no diplomatic or cultural exchanges, and the rest of the world was thought to benefit from China's generosity. Being self-sufficient in every way China had no need of other countries. However, times have changed. No longer can countries independently exist. China is now dependent on the West for trade and economic productivity. It must have Western technology and expertise to compete in the world market and to continue to raise its standard of living. Communication is an essential ingredient in the promotion of friendship and in the continuation of educational and cultural exchange. By training her students, scholars, and certain administrators to communicate effectively, China will continue to open doors to a brighter and more successful future.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

1978 FOUR-YEAR CURRICULA

COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES

REQUIRED COURSES	CLASS HOURS
1. Political Situations Study	288
2. Chinese Communist History	72
3. Philosophy	72
4. Political Economics	72
5. Physical Training	144
6. Chinese Composition	108
7. General Introduction to the U.K. and the U.S.A.	72
8. Selective Reading of British and American Literature	180
9. English Grammar	36
10. Second Foreign Language	216
11. Basic English	1584
Intensive Reading	
Extensive Reading	
Listening Comprehension	
Spoken English	
Newspaper Reading	
Composition	
Translation	

ELECTIVE COURSES (288-720)

Language Majors
1. English Phonetics
2. English Morphology
3. Basic Theories of the English Language
4. History of the English Language
5. Applied Linguistics (including TESOL)
6. General Linguistics
7. Topics of the English Language
8. Scientific English

Literature Majors
1. General History of China
2. General Introduction to History
3. History of Chinese Literature
4. History of European (or World) Literature
5. History of Western Literary Criticism
6. Marxist Theories on Literature
7. Topics on British and American Literature

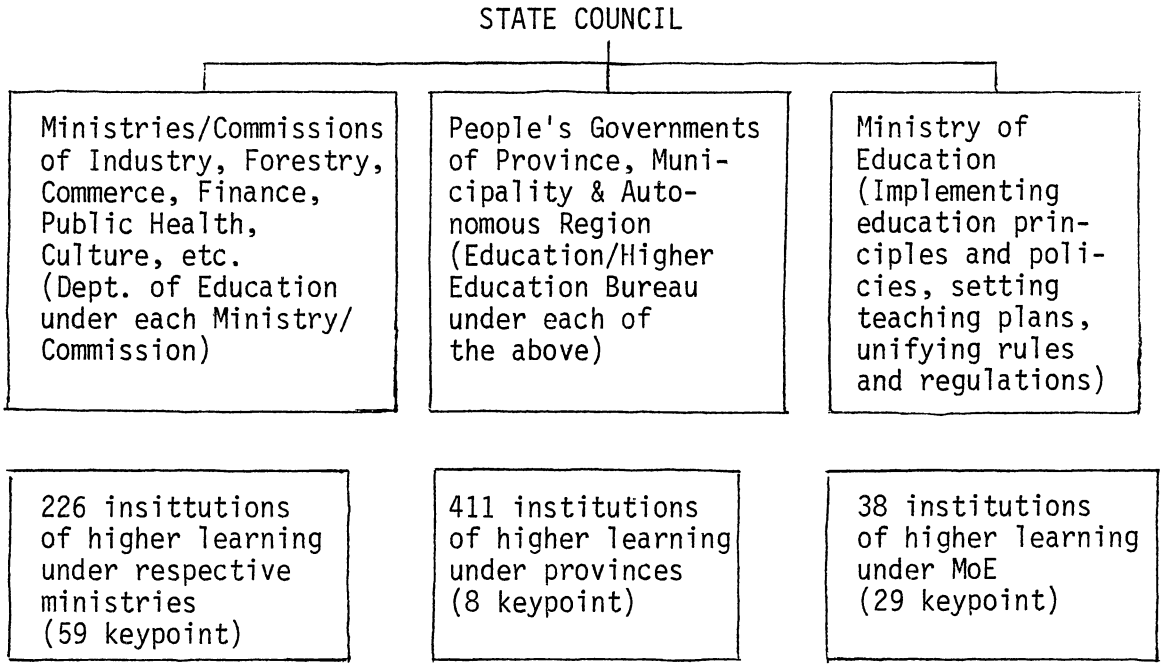
Physical Labor and Military Training are required for 8 weeks over the four-year period.

Source: Scovel, Janene. 1982. Curriculum stability and change: English foreign language programs in modern China. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh.

APPENDIX B

SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT OF INSTITUTIONS

OF HIGHER LEARNING IN CHINA



675 Institutions of Higher Learning
in total (96 keypoint)

Source: The Chinese Education Association for International Exchanges. 1984. In International handbook of education systems, volume III, Robert Cowen and Martin Mc Lean (Eds.). New York: John Wiley and Sons.

APPENDIX C

FUNCTIONAL TRISECTION OF ORAL PROFICIENCY LEVELS

FUNCTIONS	CONTENT	ACCURACY	
Task accomplished. Attitudes expressed. Tone conveyed.	Topics,subject areas,activities and jobs addressed.	Acceptability,quality,and accuracy of message conveyed	*
Functions equivalent to an Educated Native Speaker (ENS).	All subjects.	Performance equivalent to an ENS.	5
Able to tailor language to fit audience,counsel,persuade, negotiate,represent a point of view,and interpret for dignitaries.	All topics normally pertinent to professional needs.	Nearly equivalent to an ENS. Speech is extensive,precise, appropriate to every occasion with only occasional errors.	4
Can converse in formal and informal situations,resolve problem situations,deal with unfamiliar topics,provide explanations,describe in opinions,and hypothesize.	Practical,social,professional, and abstract topics,particular interests,and special fields of competence.	Errors never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker (NS).Only sporadic errors in basic structures.	3
Able to fully participate in casual conversations,can express facts,give instructions. describe,report on,and	Concrete topics such as own background,family,and interests,work,travel,and current events.	Understandable to an NS not used to dealing with foreigners;sometimes miscommunicates.	2

provide narration about current,past,and future activities.			
Can create with the language, ask and answer questions, participate in short conversations.	Everyday survival topics and courtesy requirements.	Intelligible to an NS used to dealing with foreigners.	1
No functional ability.	None.	Unintelligible.	0

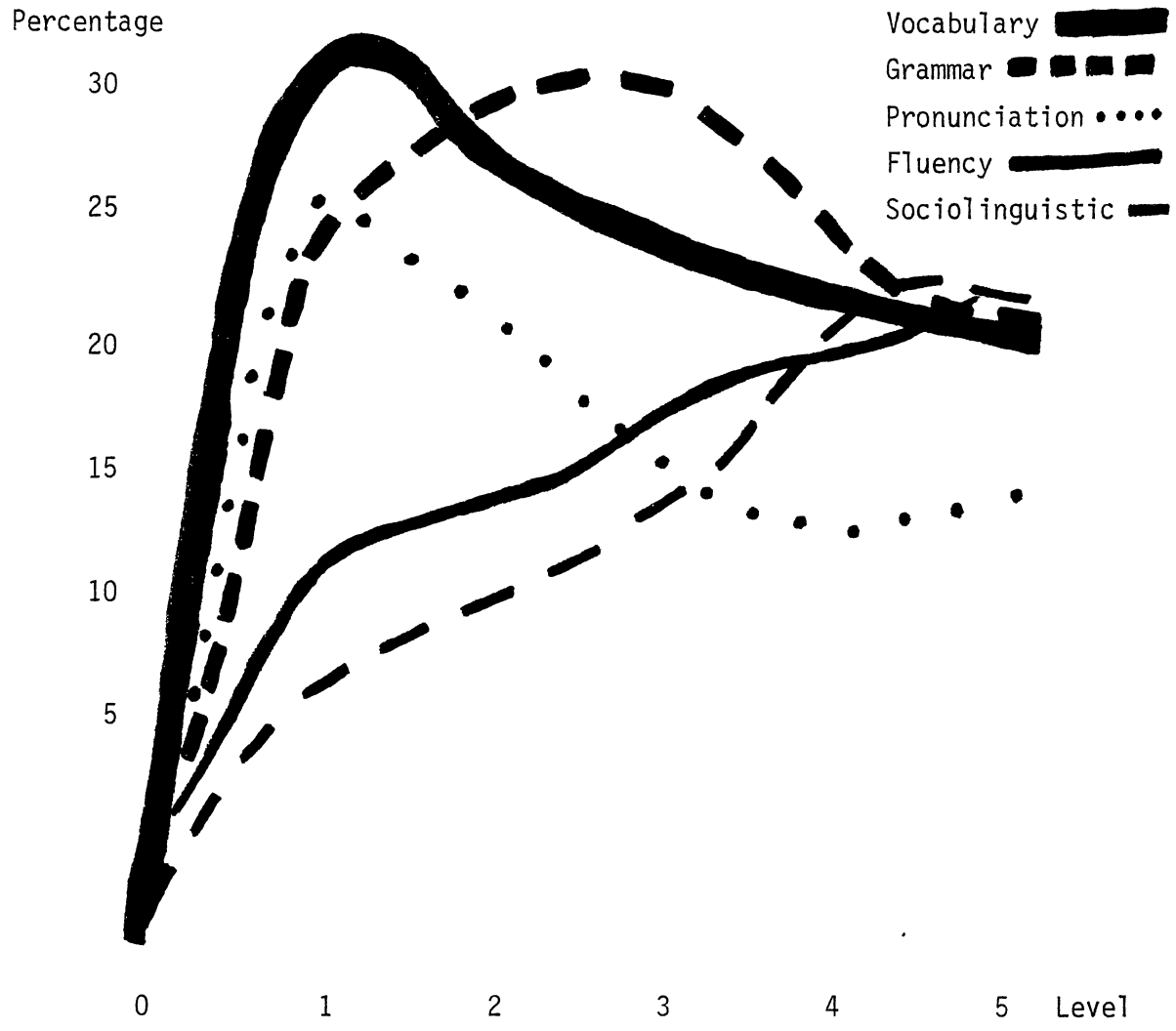
*Foreign Service Institute Speaking Level

Source: Higgs, Theodore V., and Ray Clifford. 1982. The push toward communication. In Curriculum, competence, and the foreign language teacher, Theodore V. Higgs (Ed.), 63. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Company.

APPENDIX D

ILR RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION

MODEL



Source: Higgs, Theodore V., and Ray Clifford. 1982. The push toward communication. In Curriculum, competence, and the foreign language teacher, Theodore V. Higgs (Ed.), 71. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Company.

APPENDIX E

THE ACTFL PROVISIONAL

PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES

Provisional Generic Descriptions - Speaking

Novice-Low Unable to function in the spoken language. Oral production is limited to occasional isolated words. Essentially no communicative ability.

Novice-Mid Able to operate only in a very limited capacity within very predictable areas of need. Vocabulary limited to that necessary to express simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae. Syntax is fragmented, inflections and word endings frequently omitted, confused or distorted and the majority of utterances consist of isolated words or short formulae. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and are marked by frequent long pauses and repetition of an interlocutor's words. Pronunciation is frequently unintelligible and is strongly influenced by first language. Can be understood only with difficulty, even by persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with nonnative speakers or in interactions where the context strongly supports the utterance.

Novice-High Able to satisfy immediate needs using learned utterances. Can ask questions or make statements with reasonable accruacy only where this involves short memorized utterances or formulae. There is no real autonomy of expression, although there may be some emerging signs of spontaneity and flexibility. There is a slight increase in utterance length but frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words still occur. Most utterances are telegraphic and word endings are often omitted, confused, or distorted. Vocabulary is limited to areas of immediate survival needs. Can differentiate most phonemes when produced in isolation but when they are combined in words or groups of words, errors are frequent and, even with repetition, may severely inhibit communication even with persons used to dealing with such learners. Little development in stress and intonation is evident.

Intermediate-Low Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can ask and answer simple question, initiate and respond to simple statements, and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations. When asked to do so, is able to formulate some questions with limited constructions and much inaccuracy. Almost

every utterance contains fractured syntax and other grammatical errors. Vocabulary inadequate to express anything but the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language occurs in articulation, stress, and intonation. Misunderstandings frequently arise from limited vocabulary and grammar and erroneous phonology but, with repetition, can generally be understood by native speakers in regular contact with foreigners attempting to speak their language. Little precision in information conveyed owing to tentative state of grammatical development and little or no use of modifiers.

Intermediate-Mid Able to satisfy some survival needs and limited social demands. Shows some spontaneity in language production but fluency is very uneven. Can initiate and sustain a general conversation but has little understanding of the social conventions of conversation. Developing flexibility in a range of circumstances beyond immediate survival needs. Limited vocabulary range necessitates much hesitation and circumlocution. The commoner tense forms occur but errors are frequent in formation and selection. Can use most question forms. While some word order is established, errors still occur in more complex patterns. Cannot sustain coherent structures in longer utterances or unfamiliar situations. Ability to describe and give precise information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features such as pronouns and verb inflections, but many are unreliable, especially if less immediate in reference. Extended discourse is largely a series of short, discrete utterances. Articulation is comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners, and can combine most phonemes with reasonable comprehensibility, but still has difficulty in producing certain sounds, in certain positions, or in certain combinations, and speech will usually be labored. Still has to repeat utterances frequently to be understood by the general public. Able to produce some narration in either past or future.

Advanced Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. Can handle with confidence but not with facility most social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, as well as work, family, and autobiographical information; can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties. Has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions; elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.

Advanced Plus Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Generally strong in either grammar or vaocabulary, but not in both. Weaknesses or unevenness in one of the foregoing or in pronunciation result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as plurals, articles, prepositions, and negatives to more complex structures such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Normally controls general vocabulary with some groping for everyday vocabulary still evident.

Often show remarkable fluency and ease of speech, but under tension or pressure language may break down.

Superior Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics. Can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease. Vocabulary is broad enough that speaker rarely gropes for a word; accent may be obviously foreign; control of grammar good; errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

Provisional Generic Descriptions - Listening

Novice-Low No practical understanding of the spoken language. Understanding limited to occasional isolated words, such as cognates, borrowed words, and high-frequency social conventions. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.

Novice-Mid Sufficient comprehension to understand some memorized words within predictable areas of need. Vocabulary for comprehension limited to simple elementary needs and basic courtesy formulae. Utterances understood rarely exceed more than two or three words at a time and ability to understand is characterized by long pauses for assimilation and by repeated requests on the listener's part for repetition and/or a slower rate of speech. Confuses words that sound similar.

Novice-High Sufficient comprehension to understand a number of memorized utterances in areas of immediate need. Comprehends slightly longer utterances in situations when the context aids understanding, such as at the table, in a restaurant/store, in a train/bus. Phrases recognized have for the most part been memorized. Comprehends vocabulary common to daily needs. Comprehends simple questions/ statements about family members, age, address, weather, time, daily activities, and interests. Misunderstandings arise from failure to perceive critical sounds or endings. Understands even standard speech with difficulty but gets some main ideas. Often requires repetition and/or a slowed rate of speed for comprehension, even when listening to persons such as teachers who are used to speaking with nonnatives.

Intermediate-Low Sufficient comprehension to understand utterances about basic survival needs, minimum courtesy, and travel requirements. In areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, can understand nonmemorized material, such as simple questions and answers, statements, and face-to-face conversations in the standard language. Comprehension areas include basic needs: meals, lodging, transportation, time, simple instructions (e.g., route directions), and routine commmands (e.g., from customs officials, police). Understands main ideas. Misunderstandings frequently arise from lack of vocabulary or faulty processing of syntactic information often caused by strong interference from the native language or by imperfect and partial acquisition of the target grammar.

Intermediate-Mid Sufficient comprehension to understand simple conversations about some survival needs and some limited social conventions. Vocabulary permits understanding of topics beyond basic survival needs such as personal history and leisure-time activities. Evidence of understanding basic constructions, for example, subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, evidence that some inflection is understood.

Intermediate-High Sufficient comprehension to understand simple conversations about some survival needs and some limited social conventions. Increasingly able to understand topics beyond immediate survival needs. Shows spontaneity in understanding, but speed and consistency of understanding uneven. Limited vocabulary range necessitates repetition for understanding. Understands commoner tense forms and some word order patterns, including most question forms, but miscommunication still occurs with more complex patterns. Can get the gist of conversations, but cannot sustain comprehension in longer utterances or in unfamiliar situations. Understanding of descriptions and detailed information is limited. Aware of basic cohesive features such as pronouns and verb inflections, but many are unreliably understood, especially if other material intervenes. Understanding is largely limited to a series of short, discrete utterances. Still has to ask for utterances to be repeated. Some ability to understand the facts.

Advanced Sufficient comprehension to understand conversations about routine social conventions and limited school or work requirements. Able to understand face-to-face speech in the standard language, delivered at a normal rate with some repetition and rewording by a native speaker not used to dealing with foreigners. Understands everyday topics, common personal and family news, well-known current events, and routine mattersinvolving school or work; descriptions and narration about current, past and furture events; and essential points of discussion or speech at an elementary level on topics in special fields of interest.

Advanced Plus Sufficient comprehension to understand conversations about routine social conventions, conversations on school or work requirements, and discussions on concrete topics related to particular interests and special fields of competence. Often shows remarkable ability and ease of understanding, but comprehension may break down under tension or pressure, including unfavorable listening conditions. Candidate may display weakness or deficiency due to inadequate vocabulary base or less than secure knowledge of grammar and syntax. Normally understands general vocabulary with some hesitant understanding of everyday vocabulary still evident. Can sometimes detect emotional overtones. Some ability to understand between the lines, i.e., to make inferences.

Superior Sufficient comprehension to understand the essentials of all speech in standard dialects, including technical discussions within a special field. Has sufficient understanding of face-to-face speech, delivered with normal clarity and speed in standard

language on general topics and areas of special interest; understands hypothesizing and supported opinions. Has broad enough vocabulary that rarely has to ask for paraphrasing or explanation. Can follow accurately the essentials of conversations between educated native speakers, reasonably clear telephone calls, radio broadcasts, standard news items, oral reports, some oral technical reports, and public addresses on nontechnical subjects. May not understand native speakers if they speak very quickly or use some slang or unfamiliar dialect. Can often detect emotional overtones. Can understand "between the lines" (i.e., make inferences).

Provisional Generic Descriptions - Reading

Novice-Low Sufficient understanding of the written language to interpret highly contextualized words or cognates within predictable areas. Vocabulary for comprehension limited to simple elementary needs such as names, addresses, dates, street signs, building names, short informative signs (e.g., no smoking, entrance/exit), and formulate vocabulary requesting same. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase and comprehension requires successive rereading and checking.

Novice-High Sufficient comprehension of the written language to interpret set expressions in areas of immediate need. Can recognize all the letters in the printed version of an alphabetic system and high-frequency elements of a syllabary or a character system. Where vocabulary has been mastered, can read for instruction and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases, or expressions such as some items on menus, schedules, timetables, maps, and signs indicating hours of operation, social codes, and traffic regulations. This material is read only for essential information. Detail is overlooked or misunderstood.

Intermediate-Low Sufficient comprehension to understand in printed form simple discourse for informative or social purposes. In response to perceived needs, can read for information material such as announcements of public events, popular advertising, notes containing biographical information or narration of events, and straightforward newspaper headlines and story titles. Can guess at unfamiliar vocabulary if highly contextualized. Relies primarily on adverbs as time indicators. Has some difficulty with the cohesive factors in discourse, such as matching pronouns with referents. May have to read material several times before understanding.

Intermediate-High Sufficient comprehension to understand a simple paragraph for personal communication, information, or recreational purposes. Can read with understanding social notes, letters, and invitations; can locate and derive main ideas of the introductory/summary paragraphs from high interest or familiar news or other informational sources; can read in pleasure specially prepared, or some uncomplicated authentic prose, such as fictional

narratives or cultural information. Shows spontaneity in reading by ability to guess at meaning from context. Understands common time indicators and can interpret some cohesive factors such as objective pronouns and simple clause connectors. Begins to relate sentences in the discourse to advance meaning but cannot sustain understanding of longer discourse on unfamiliar topics. Misinterpretation still occurs with more complex patterns.

Advanced Sufficient comprehension to read simple authentic printed material or edited textual material within a familiar context. Can read uncomplicated but authentic prose on familiar subjects containing description and narration such as news items describing frequently occurring events, simple biographic information, social notices, and standard business letters. Can read edited texts such as prose fiction and contemporary culture. The prose is predominantly in familiar sentence patterns. Can follow essential points of written discussion at level of main ideas and some supporting ones with topics in a field of interest or where background exists. Some misunderstandings. Able to read the facts but cannot draw inferences.

Advanced Plus Sufficient comprehension to understand most factual information in non-technical prose as well as some discussions on concrete topics related to special interests. Able to read for information and description, to follow sequence of events, and to react to that information. Is able to separate main ideas from lesser ones, and uses that division to advance understanding. Can locate and interpret main ideas and detail in material written for the general public. Will begin to guess sensibly at new words by using linguistic context and prior knowledge. May react personally to material but does not yet detect subjective attitudes, values, or judgments in the writing.

Superior Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence reports and technical material in a field of interest at a normal rate of speed (at least 220 wpm). Readers can gain new knowledge from material on familiar topics in areas of a general nature. Can interpret hypotheses, supported opinions, and conjectures. Can also read short stories, novels, and other recreational literature accessible to the genreal public. Reading ability is not subject-matter dependent. Has broad enough general vocabulary that successful guessing resolves problems with complex structures and low-frequency idioms. Misreading is rare. Almost always produces correct interpretation. Able to read between the lines. May be unable to appreciate nuance or stylistics.

Provisional Generic Descriptions - Writing

Novice-Low No functional ability in writing the foreign language.

Novice-Mid No practical communicative writing skills. Able to copy isolated words or short phrases. Able to transcribe previously

studied words or phrases.

Novice-High Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material. Can supply information when requested on forms such as hotel registrations and travel documents. Can write names, numbers, dates, one's own nationality, addresses, and other simple biographic information, as well as learned vocabulary, short phrases, and simple lists. Can write all the symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic system or 50 of the most common characters. Can write simple memorized material with frequent misspellings and inaccuracies.

Intermediate-Low Has sufficient control of the writing system to meet limited practical needs. Can write short messages, such as simple questions or notes, postcards, phone messages, and the like within the scope of limited language experience. Can take simple notes on material dealing with very familiar topics, although memory span is extremely limited. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences. Vocabulary is inadequate to express anything but elementary needs. Writing tends to be a loosely organized collection of sentence fragments on a very familiar topic. Makes continual errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but writing can be read and understood by a native speaker used to dealing with foreigners. Able to produce appropriately some fundamental sociolinguistic distinctions in formal and familiar style, such as appropriate subject pronouns, titles of address, and basic social formulae.

Intermediate-Mid Sufficient control of writing system to meet some survival needs and some limited social demands. Able to compose short paragraphs or take simple notes on very familiar topics grounded in personal experience. Can discuss likes and dislikes, daily routine, everyday events, and the like. Can express past time, using content words and time expressions, or with sporadically accurate verbs. Evidence of good control of basic constructions and inflections such as subject-verb agreement, noun-adjective agreement, and straightforward syntactic constructions in present or future time, though errors occasionally occur. May make frequent errors, however, when venturing beyond current level of linguistic competence. When resorting to a dictionary, is often unable to identify appropriate vocabulary, or uses dictionary entry in uninflected form.

Intermediate-High Sufficient control of writing system to meet most survival needs and limited social demands. Can take notes in some detail on familiar topics, and respond to personal questions using elementary vocabulary and common structures. Can write simple letters, brief synopses and paraphrases, summaries of biographical data and work experience, and short compositions on familiar topics. Can create sentences and short paragraphs relating to most survival needs (food, lodging, transportation, immediate surroundings, and situations) and limited social

demands. Can relate personal history, discuss topics such as daily life, preferences, and other familiar material. Can express fairly accurately present and future time. Can produce some past verb forms, but not always accurately or with correct usage. Shows good control of elementary vocabulary and some control of basic syntactic patterns but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts. Dictionary usage may still yield incorrect vocabulary of forms, although can use a dictionary to advantage to express simple ideas. Generally cannot use basic cohesive elements of discourse to advantage such as relative constructions, subject pronouns, connectors, etc. Writing, though faulty, is comprehensible to native speakers used to dealing with foreigners.

Advanced Able to write routine correspondence and simple discourse of at least several paragraphs on familiar topics. Can write simple social correspondence, take notes, and write cohesive summaries, resumes, and short narratives and descriptions on factual topics. Able to write about everyday topics using both description and narration. Has sufficient writing vocabulary to express himself/herself simply with some circumlocution. Can write about a very limited number of current events or daily situations and express personal preferences and observations in some detail, using basic structures. Still makes common errors in spelling and punctuation, but shows some control of the most common formats and punctuation conventions. Good control of the morphology of the language (in inflected languages) and of the most frequently used syntactic structures. Elementary constructions are usually handled quite accurately, and writing is understandable to a native speaker not used to reading the writing of foreigners. Uses a limited number of cohesive devices such as pronouns and repeated words with good accuracy. Able to join sentences in limited discourse, but has difficulty and makes frequent errors in producing complex sentences. Paragraphs are reasonably unified and coherent.

Advanced Plus Shows ability to write about most common topics with some precision and in some detail. Can write faily detailed resumes and summaries and take quite accurate notes. Can write most social and informal business correspondence. Can describe and narrate personal experiences and explain simply points of view in prose discourse. Can write about concrete topics relating to particular interests and special fields of competence. Normally controls general vocabulary with some circumlocution. Often shows remarkable fluency and ease of expression, but under time constraints and pressure, language may be inaccurate and/or incomprehensible. Generally strong in either grammar or vocabulary, but not in both. Weaknesses and unevenness in one of the foregoing or in spelling result in occasional miscommunication. Areas of weakness range from simple constructions such as plurals, articles, prepositions, and negatives to more complex structures such as tense usage, passive constructions, word order, and relative clauses. Some misuse of vocabulary still evident. Shows a limited ability to use circumlocution. Uses dictionary to advantage to supply unknown words. Writing is understandable to native speakers not used to reading material written by nonnatives, though

the style is still obviously still foreign.

Superior Able to use the written language effectively in most formal and informal exchanges on practical, social, and professional topics. Can write most types of correspondence, such as memos and social and business letters short research papers, and statements of position in areas of special interest or in special fields. Can express hypotheses, conjectures, and present arguments or points of view accurately and effectively. Can write about areas of special interest and handle topics in special fields, in addition to most common topics. Good control of a full range of structures, spelling, and a wide general vocabulary allow the writer to convey his/her message accurately, though style may be foreign. Can use complex and compound sentence structures to express ideas clearly and coherently. Uses dictionary with a high degree of accruacy to supply specialized vocabulary. Errors, though sometimes made when using more complex structures, are occasional, and rarely disturb the native speaker. Sproadic errors when using basic structures. Although sensitive to differences in formal and informal style, still cannot tailor writing precisely and accurately to a variety of audiences or styles.

Provisional Generic Descriptions - Culture

Novice Limited interaction. Behaves with considerateness. Is resourceful in nonverbal communication, but is unreliable in interpretation of non-verbal cues. Is limited in language, as indicated under the listening and speaking skills. Lacks generally the knowledge of culture patterns requisite for survival situations.

Intermediate Survival competence. Can deal with familiar survival situations and interact with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Uses behavior acquired for the purpose of greeting and leave-taking, expressing wants, asking directions, buying food, using transportation, tipping. Comprehends the response. Makes errors as the result of misunderstanding; miscommunicates, and misapplies assumptions about the culture.

Advanced Limited social competence. Handles routine social situations successfully with a culture bearer accustomed to foreigners. Shows comprehension of common rules of etiquette, taboos, and sensitivities, though home culture predominates. Can make polite requests, accept and refuse invitations, offer and receive gifts, apologize, make introductions, telephone, purchase and bargain, do routine banking. Can discuss a few aspects of the home and the foreign country, such as general current events and policies, as well as a field of personal interest. Does not offend the culture bearer, but some important misunderstandings and miscommunications occur in interaction with one unaccustomed to foreigners. Is not competent to take part in a formal meeting or in a group situation where several persons are speaking informally at the same time.

Superior Working social and professional competence. Can participate in almost all social situations and those within one vocation. Handles unfamiliar types of situations with ease and sensitivity, including some involving common taboos, or other emotionally charged subjects. Comprehends most nonverbal responses. Laughs at some culture-related humor. In productive skills, neither culture predominates; nevertheless, makes appropriate use of cultural references and expressions. Generally distinguishes between a formal and informal register. Discusses abstract ideas relating the foreign to the native culture. Is generally limited, however, in handling abstractions. Minor inaccuracies occur in perception of meaning and in the expression of the intended representation but do not result in serious misunderstanding, even by a culture bearer unaccustomed to foreigners.

Near-Native Competence Full social and professional competence. Fits behavior to audience, and the culture of the target language dominates almost entirely. Has internalized the concept that culture is relative and is always on the lookout to do the appropriate thing. Can counsel, persuade, negotiate, represent a point of view, interpret for dignitaries, describe and compare features of the two cultures. In such comparisons, can dicuss geography, history, institutions, customs and behavior patterns, current events, and national policies. Perceives almost all unverbalized responses, and recognizes almost all allusions, including historical and literary commonplaces. Laughs at most culture-related humor. Controls formal and informal registers of behavior. Is inferior to the culture bearer only in background information related to the culture such as childhood experiences, detailed regional geography, and past events of significance.

Native Competence Examinee is indistinguishable from a person brought up and educated in the culture.

Source: ACTFL Materials Center, 385 Warburton, Hasting-on-Hudson, New York 10706

VITA

Melissa Stephenson

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: PROFICIENCY GUIDELINES AND THEIR APPLICATION IN THE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM AT QINGHUA UNIVERSITY

Major Field: English

Biographical Information:

Personal Data: Born October 1, 1957, in Enid, Oklahoma, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.L. Stephenson, Jr.

Education: Graduated from Enid High School, Enid, Oklahoma, in May, 1975; received Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Oklahoma State University in 1980; enrolled in Master's program in English (TESL) at Oklahoma State University in the fall, 1980; completed a ten-week intensive Chinese language program at Monterey Institute of International Studies in the summer, 1981; attended a six-week intensive Chinese language program at Beijing Languages Institute, Beijing, PRC, in the summer, 1983; completed coursework for the Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1985.

Professional Experience: Was a Conversation Leader/Listening Lab Assistant, English Language Institute, 1979-1980; graduate teaching assistant, Department of English, Oklahoma State University, 1980-1981; ESL Instructor, English Section, Foreign Languages Department, Qinghua University, Beijing, PRC, 1983-1984. She belongs to the following professional organizations: TESOL, OKTESOL, ACTFL.