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Comparison of Differences in TOEFL and TEM and Its Implications for Chinese Higher Education

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This whole work was carried out by the author ZY.

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ABSTRACT

In perspective of scoring criteria, topic settings, and testing emphases, this paper, by comparing the writing task of TOEFL and TEM-8, tried to analyze cultural differences reflected in those two exams, and to put forth some suggestions in English teaching of higher education in China. Based on the research, Chinese higher education on English should strike balance between linguistic foundation and comprehensive ability, autonomous learning and class teaching, and cultural competence and language competence.

Keywords: Comparison; TOEFL; TEM-8; writing task; English teaching; higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Research

Writing task as an important part of standardized language tests and a predominant tool to evaluate writing ability is being paid more attention to, particularly those of TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and TEM-8 (Test for English Major-Band 8). It has been playing an essential role in evaluating how well a learner uses a foreign language. Hence, many a sizable and standardized examinations have been trying to make writing task an

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authentic way to reflect examinees' ability in writing. How to make a writing task available and effective is long observed by scholars, yet there remains not as many theses on cultural differences related to the mentioned examinations as I expected to find. In this research, I'd like to analyze the writing part of two widely recognized and authorized examinations in English testing, namely, TOEFL and TEM-8, and to abstract cultural differences reflected from scoring criteria, topic settings and testing emphases.

1.2 The Aims of Research

Comment has it that plentiful Chinese students majoring in English are good in taking examinations but weak in using English in real life. What is worse, a wave of questions about the actual meaning of tests for English major emerges. Here in this research, I hope to analyze cultural differences reflected in the mentioned tests, which is beneficial for us to know more about American education system, learn more about our advantages and disadvantages, give some advice on how to improve our testing methods, and improve higher education in quality and practicality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Researches of TOEFL and TEM-8 by Chinese Scholars

With an increasing TOEFL craze across the whole nation, scholars have studied this examination with a range of purposes from theoretical acquisition to pragmatic uses. Their researches can be basically divided into several categories calculated by all the theses related to TOEFL released in the CNKI, the globally largest E-library, which are an introduction to TOEFL [1], guidances to pass TOEFL [2,3], comparison between TOEFL and other examinations [4], and theoretical studies related to TOEFL [5]. All in all, two categories can be summarized as guidances to pass an exam and implications in a certain field. Scholars interested in the respect of providing guidance to taking TOEFL have been going through every part of this exam, analyzing the possible factors that might cause difficulties and offering pragmatism suggestions, while some other researchers make endeavors to provide implications for some bigger pictures, for example, implication for reform in English teaching [6], for testing method of Chinese higher education [7] etc.

While studies on TEM-8 share similar categories, most of the theses are likely to spotlight guidances to pass an exam [8,9]. Of course, there are other theses about an introduction to TEM-8 [10], theoretical studies related to TEM-8 question types [11]. Since TEM-8 enjoys a relatively high degree of recognition in English teaching, Chinese students majored in English are trained to pass this examination during the four-year schooling in their colleges. Theories on how to improve students' possibility to succeed in TEM-8 are abundant, so are the pre-exam and in-exam techniques.

2.2 Researches of TOEFL and TEM-8 by Foreign Scholars

Foreign researches on TOEFL and TEM-8 are much less as compared with those by Chinese scholars. For TOEFL, the online theses are mostly the introduction or Lawrence J. Strieker, Gita Z. Wilder, attitudes [12] and theoretical studies related to some parts of the exam [13,14]. For the Chinese TEM-8, it is hard to find the relevant papers on the Internet, which is explainable that foreign learners do not need to take such examination only authorized in China.

Therefore, this paper will use the Chinese researches for references and try to make comparisons of the writing tasks between TOEFL and TEM-8 in regards to the respective scoring criteria, topic settings, and testing emphases.

3. COMPARISON OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TOEFL AND TEM

3.1 Scoring Criteria, Topic Settings and Testing Emphases of TOEFL

3.1.1 Scoring criteria

As seen in the references [15], and also see in Table 1. The writing task of TOEFL is scored from 0 to 5 with each level scoring based on the very details.

Table 1. Independent writing rubrics of TOEFL [15]

Score	Task description
5	An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively addresses the topic and task • Is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate explanations, exemplifications, and/or details • Displays unity, progression, and coherence • Displays consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, and idiomaticity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical errors
4	An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the topic and task well, though some points may not be fully elaborated • Is generally well organized and well developed, using appropriate and sufficient explanations, exemplifications, and/or details • Displays unity, progression, and coherence, though it may contain occasional redundancy, digression, or unclear connections • Displays facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional noticeable minor errors in structure, word form, or use of idiomatic language that do not interfere with meaning
3	An essay at this level is marked by one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the topic and task using somewhat developed explanations, exemplifications, and/or details • Displays unity, progression, and coherence, though connection of ideas may be occasionally obscured • May demonstrate inconsistent facility in sentence formation and word choice that may result in lack of clarity and occasionally obscure meaning • May display accurate, but limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
2	An essay at this level may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited development in response to the topic and task • Inadequate organization or connection of ideas

Table 1 continued in next page.....

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate or insufficient exemplifications, explanations, or details to support or illustrate generalizations in response to the task • A noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms • An accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage
1	<p>An essay at this level is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious disorganization or underdevelopment • Little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics, or questionable responsiveness to the task • Serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage
0	<p>An essay at this level merely copies words from the topic, rejects the topic, or is otherwise not connected to the topic, is written in a foreign language, consists of keystroke characters, or is blank.</p>

3.1.2 Topic settings

The written tasks of TOEFL include two sections: the integrated writing task and the independent writing task. The integrated writing task can be also seen as writing based on listening and reading, which requires examinees to write a conclusive passage after finishing reading a three-hundred word passage within three minutes and listening to a two-minute material [16]. The independent writing task can be regarded as writing based on knowledge and experience, which requires examinees to amplify a point by examples, reasoning, or argumentation to make a composition within thirty minutes.

One of its predominant characteristics is its question form—do you agree or disagree with the following statement? To match with composition in TEM-8, I will mainly study the independent writing task in this research.

In terms of topics, TOEFL mainly involves following fields: education, technology, media, success, work, government, friendship, generation gap, transportation, environment, money, leisure, family, animal, and food [17]. Just to name some, there are topics on how students elect courses, how teachers teach, how students' extracurricular activities in educational field, development of civilization, disappearance of dialects, leisure and entertainment in humane field, impact of cell phone, Internet, computer in technological field, development of agriculture and industry, urban-rural gap, after-tax profit of company in commercial field, energy degradation, restricted use of cars, forest coverage in environmental field, population aging, law and regulation, migration, ethnic issues in social field. To sum up, the topics are surrounded by education, culture, geography, society, sports, environment, tourism, and energy.

3.1.3 Testing emphases

The TOEFL test attaches importance to application and communication abilities.

Firstly, TOEFL becomes an integrated test by combining listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Gao Jian, Zhang Yi, 2012:140-143) with an aim to evaluate an examinee's ability to use a language in a specific situation rather than to use it in a separate context.

Secondly, TOEFL lays stress on whether it reveals an examinee's ability to live abroad. It focuses on the ability to use English instead of getting tangled with vocabulary and grammar.

Generally speaking, with an aim to evaluate how an examinee master one language in real life, its topics and themes are well designed and pertinent.

Thirdly, TOEFL pays attention to social ability. To meet such requirement, one needs to have command of pragmatic knowledge as well as common sense in the fields like education, engineering, economy, science, society and so on. Such philosophy challenges the traditional teaching, and a student educated traditionally may find it hard to score high if he learns English restrictive to vocabulary and grammar yet refusing to use it as a communication tool, which is the opposition to a real learning.

3.2 Scoring Criteria, Topic Settings and Testing Emphases of TEM-8

3.2.1 Scoring criteria

As shown in the reference and also see in Table 2: Writing Rubrics of TEM-8 [19]

Table 2. Writing Rubrics of TEM-8 [23]

Score	Task description
20-18	Effective communication with accuracies The writing effectively addresses the writing task. It demonstrates a well developed logical organizational structure with clearly stated main ideas and sufficient supporting details. It has almost no errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or syntax, and it displays an adequate ability to use the language with appropriacy. No difficulty is experienced by the reader.
17-15	Good communication with few inaccuracies The writing adequately addresses almost the entire writing task, though it deals with some parts more effectively than others. It demonstrates a generally well developed logical organizational structure with main ideas and supporting details. It has relatively few significant errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or syntax, and it displays an ability to use the language with appropriacy. Very little difficulty is experienced by the reader.
14-12	Passable communication with some inaccuracies The writing adequately addresses most of the writing task. On the whole, it demonstrates an adequately developed organizational structure, though there may occasionally be a lack of relevance, clarity, consistency or support. It has occasional errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or syntax, which may, from time to time, obscure meaning, and for the most part it displays some ability to use the language with appropriacy. Occasional difficulty is experienced by the reader.
11-9	Problematic communication with frequent inaccuracies The writing only addresses some of the writing task. It demonstrates an inadequate organizational structure, and there may quite often be a lack of relevance, clarity, consistency or support. It has frequent errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or syntax, and it displays a limited ability to use the language with appropriacy. Some difficulty is experienced by the reader.
8-6	Almost no communication The writing almost completely fails to address the writing task. It has neither an organizational structure nor coherence. Almost all sentences contain errors of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation or syntax, and it displays no ability to use the language with appropriacy. Even after considerable effort on the part of the reader, the text is largely incomprehensible.

3.2.2 Topic settings

The writing task of TEM-8 adopts the form of introduction of certain situation and sometimes a given title. There is a set situation introducing a certain phenomenon with a brief abstract of reasons for both agreement and disagreement [20]. An examinee is expected to give his inclined point of view on such phenomenon with appropriate reasons. Moreover, a clear statement on writing form is given, that is, to give a point in the first part, amplify the point in the second part, and conclude the point in the third part. At the end of all statements, scoring criteria are listed in a brief way.

In terms of topics, TEM-8 mainly involves the following fields: personal character, campus life, idiom and slang, and education. To be specific, the topics appeared from 1998 to 2013 focus on the areas in education and campus life except network and technology in 2001. One point needed to be delivered is that students majoring in English are expected to extend reading in universities, while what is tested is much narrower than what is reading [21]. In preparation, examinees are inclined to recite some writing models hoping to form a composition regardless of whatever topic is in the examination, which is a stereotype among Chinese learners under an examination-oriented education system.

3.2.3 Testing emphases

The TEM-8 test lays emphasis on testing capacities so that language skills are claimed the most important. Some examinees may be examination-oriented and try to get good marks by overusing magnificent words and writing models [22].

However, it is not all the case.

Its emphases can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, the composition should have a distinctive and constant point of view. One of the scoring criteria is “the writing effectively addresses the writing task”, in other words, to stick to a point when undertaking discussions. This requires an examinee to make clear of his point at the first beginning and stick to it throughout the passage. Influenced by the internal examinations, plenty of examinees are prone to list two contrast points in the first two paragraphs, and keep his point of view in the dark [23]. Such doings is unwise in composing the independent writing task. It is suggestive that an examinee should state his point of view out in the first beginning, amplify his point in the following paragraphs through examples, reasoning, and other ways, and restate the point at the end of the passage.

Secondly, the composition should have a close argumentation and a strong conviction. It requires 2 to 3 sub-points to support and prove the argumentation, while sub-points needs example and reasoning to testify accuracy and rationality. During the process of argumentation, sub-points should cover all that the title mentions. Therefore, examinees are expected to study the questions carefully and find out some specific restrictions that need confirming and proving in the sub-points.

3.3 Comparisons

3.3.1 Comparisons of scoring criteria

In terms of scoring criteria, compositions of TOEFL and TEM-8 are evaluated as a whole. There are two common kinds of evaluating method, namely, evaluating as a whole and as

parts. The former one is that the examiner skims the composition and then score according to a list of scoring criteria, while the latter is that the examiner has to give separate marks for each part listed in the criteria. Both TOEFL and TEM-8 adopt the former one, which is, to evaluate a composition in an overall and balanced way, and reject to tangle with the minor vocabulary or grammar faults. In this case, an examinee is tested whether he can use one language to express himself in a logical way but not his mastery of language skills.

3.3.2 Comparisons of topic settings

In terms of topic settings, TOEFL differs from TEM-8 in two aspects. One is the question-setting form. TOEFL has two parts of writing tasks: the integrated writing task and the independent writing task, while TEM-8 has only one task of writing that is similar with the independent writing of TOEFL. The other is the range of topic settings. From what I have listed above, TOEFL definitely boasts a wider range than TEM-8.

3.3.3 Comparisons of testing emphases

In terms of testing emphases, TOEFL emphasizes application and communication capacities, while TEM-8 inclined language skills. To some extent, TOEFL is communication-oriented with the purpose of evaluating whether an examinee is qualified to live and work in an English-dominant world, while TEM-8 is examination-oriented with the purpose of evaluating whether an examinee is proficient in using English vocabulary and grammar. An examinee of TEM-8 will recite vocabulary and drown himself/herself in a sea of exercise in reading comprehension, listening comprehension and the like because a certificate of TEM-8 is a knocking brick of a decent job.

3.3.4 Comparisons of cultural differences

In terms of cultural differences reflected from the two examinations, I would like to explore in the following aspects.

Firstly, Chinese education is society-oriented, while American education is individual-oriented. Cultural dimension theory, developed by Geert Hofstede, describes two values--individualism and collectivism. Regarding the individualism, there is a clear gap between the West and the East. The West countries, America as an example, are considered as highly individualistic, while the East countries, China as an example, have strong collectivistic values. Applied to education, individualism and collectivism explain the very fundamental system in America and China. To be specific, education in China fails to free itself from the shackles of taking exams for passing exams. Students depend on a large number of repeated exercises and homework to pass an exam, numerous boring language points recited and individual characters ignored. Under such system, students are difficult to fun themselves in learning for learning is only a task in their eyes. With a society-oriented philosophy, students are cultivated to enter famous universities and be celebrities in certain field. Therefore, the marks are highly emphasized that students with good marks are blue-eyed boys in the schools due to a lack of evaluating measurement in morality, habit, cooperative inclination, and the like. On the contrary, America is guided by pragmatism with an individual-oriented core. It runs with an emphasis in cultivating pragmatic personnel as well as an aim of gaining recognition of the mainstream and professional development. Students are required not only to study academic lessons, but to participate in all sorts of sports events and social projects so as to improve their integrated competitiveness. Under two distinct educational cultures, the most common comment that students in China get is

that you are not good enough and you need to improve yourself, while students in America get that you are the best.

Secondly, Chinese culture is of internality, while American culture is of externality, proved by that TEM-8 attaches importance to language skills and TOEFL lays stress on communication. China is an inland country generating an inland culture. Since ancient China, it has been invaded by other tribes and countries so that the Great Wall was built to protect the country. However, it is also a proof that China tends to stick to its own culture and refuses to accept others. Throughout the history, what is really happening to every attempt to embrace other foreign cultures is that we are assimilating and getting minor changes. So is the official English examination, i.e. TEM, follows the examples of overseas English examinations yet keeps mostly to Chinese characteristics of an inclination to language skills. However, American cultural mainstream originates from Europe where boasts an open marine culture. A swarm of foreign students and scholars arrive and settle in America every single year bringing cultural diversity and clash. Such phenomenon reflects itself in TOEFL that an exam should focus on examinees' abilities to use English to communicate.

Thirdly, Chinese culture is of great humanity, while American culture is of great science. The Confucianism with ethics and morality at its core dominates in the traditional culture offering an explanation that Chinese culture cherishes humanity and sensibility. In TEM-8 writing, examinees are likely to express their opinions on issues like youth self-centeredness (TEM-8, 2003), things learned in the four-year campus life (TEM-8, 2008), and impact of financial disparity on friendship (TEM-8, 2007). In contrast, Americans are mostly immigrants from Europe, and American culture is actually modern European culture. Europeans admire science, logic and reasoning, such characteristics inherited by Americans. Its global English examination, TOEFL reflects and proves in the question form—do you agree or disagree with the following statement, where an examinee needs to use logic and reasoning to express himself /herself with scientific and rational examples.

There are numerous differences between cultures in China and America. Reflected from two examinations, differences in society-orientedness and individual-orientedness, internality and externality, humanity and science are iceberg.

3.4 Difference Analyses

The differences in two English exams do exist, and there are reasons they exist.

3.4.1 Education background

China and America have distinct education background.

Chinese education focuses on knowledge accumulation on a basis of convergent thinking, while American education focuses on abilities to tackle real problems on a basis of critical thinking.

Students in China learn in a static way that they are required to master and memorize lots of language points, but American students are encouraged to innovate and learn in a dynamic way. In other words, China worships a kind of model-like education, and America admires a sort of elitist-style one, which enjoys a similar opinion commented by Professor Yang Zhenning that China and America shares quite little in educational philosophy proven by his personal observance that America education does good to about 30% to 40% students

belonging to a smart group (or the elites) because they are allowed for a load of flexibility to arrange their studies on a personal basis so that they enable to approach success with more ease, on the other hand, Chinese education tends to benefit about 30% to 40% students of a non-smart group (or the average) that they can succeed thanks to a model arrangement working to lay a good foundation.

Such divergence shown themselves rather apparently in the teaching goals of primary education of the two countries that Chinese aim to develop a child's intelligence with gaining good score at the core but Americans have only but one end which is to cultivate a child's creativity for the sake of his/her future life.

As such, it is natural that we take credit very differently. In China, a student may suffer a lot from a red-looking credit record due to pressure coming from peer competition, parent criticism, and gossipy remarks. However, an American student seem to free from all these because such credit record is regarded as a personal item deserved privacy so that he receives little stress if he fails the terminals as long as he has proven that he has learned something useful and beneficial from what he is taught in schools.

3.4.2 Individualism and collectivism

America respects individualism, and China reverences collectivism.

American education worships a student's personal character and creativity, in other words, individualism is of complete importance. Chinese worship collectivism. Students tied to the relevant values are educated to worship collectivism. In teaching activities, standard answers are set and creative ideas are rare in classrooms, while in American classrooms, students are advocated to put forth new ideas and challenge their teachers, which is rarely seen in China.

To find explanations and reasons for all these differences, we notice that environment provided for students in two countries is what we need to keep an eye on. American kids are advocated to do experiments to develop their abilities to make observance, to organize events, to solve problems and the like, while, across the oceans, Chinese kids restricted by examination-oriented education are vulnerable to an influence of traditional teaching that they receive an incompatible two-tier education, the primary phase for foundation-laying and the advanced phase for studies and researches.

A perfect Chinese student should be like this: he/she is utterly diligent and gentle from primary school to high school and make a sudden change to be an active critic in studies by coming up a sea of new thoughts to do something remarkable for the people. What a student! What a genius! However, what is the possibility of that? How could we reap sweet fruits from a tree that is oppressed in the stage of sapling?

3.4.3 Foundation and diversity

Chinese education pays much attention to foundation, while American education prefers diversity.

American students enjoy relaxing and free surrounding and their personal interest and hobbies are being taken care of, however, Chinese students may find it dull to learn in the schools. Chinese education with the feature of a fast speed, a high degree of difficulty and

abstract, and a large amount of language points can be very stressful. A lesson which takes one week for American teacher to teach can take only ten minutes in China. That perfectly explains why there is comment saying that Chinese students are the hardest ones around the world. Chinese can have a lot of burden on study, which comes chiefly from loads of repeatedly dull homework that can drive a student to burn the midnight oil and even ruin a hard-earn long-cherished vacation.

On the contrary, little news is heard about homework burden on Americans. Perhaps such news is close blocked by American media, or they are just free from it. From what I have learnt from the foreign media, students in America are actually quite busy in all sorts of school and extracurricular activities to develop their hobbies and extend their social circles, but never get stuck in endless homework or examinations. When an American is improving his/her ability to be an independently capable citizen, a Chinese student may do exercise of the same type time after time hoping to get more familiar with one type of question which is likely to appear in the coming exam. As the old saying goes, practice makes perfect. Thanks to the repeated exercises done ahead of an examination with barely bothering to summarize a method to solve a kind, a Chinese can be very impressive in testing. Few countries can be equals when it comes to a student's foundation in knowledge and ability to pass exams, but many surpass in the perspective of diversity in learning.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION

Through the comparison between the writing task in TOEFL and TEM-8, some philosophy can give some advice on how Chinese higher education improve to cultivate students majoring in English into real English users who are capable of using English as a communicative tool.

First, strike a proper balance between linguistic foundation and comprehensive ability in using language. Linguistic foundation is always a spotlight in traditional English teaching, teachers spending much time talking about grammar, word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and the like in a separate content. Seldom will an class give students all-in-one education, for example, a well-designed situational method connecting every bit of teaching points. For students in colleges and universities, language points have kind of stepped aside from the highlight, and how to integrate what they have learned in the previous schooling is put first in the agenda. In short, how to use or how to communicate matters.

Higher education should aim clearly to focus on communication and application. As an increasing fast step of globalization, the importance of English as a communicative tool overarches. TOEFL is designed to test if an examinee is able to use English in life and work rather than mere language skills. The past mentality that students should be able to understand certain English material is no longer trend-right. Nowadays, more and more people apply English to actual work and communicate with others directly in English. Under such trend, our education needs some adaptation so as to improve application and communication abilities.

Higher education should pay attention to students' integrated abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Our education is prone to reading, but the other basic factors are dependent in learning English. Such teaching focus will also impair a student's interest and motivation to learn. Therefore, for the sake of better outcome in teaching and learning, the four basic elements should be paid equal importance and attention.

Second, strike a proper balance between autonomous learning and class teaching. A distinct difference in learning habit of American learners and Chinese learners comes out of this point. Researches reveal that many teachers and students in China still prefer the tradition teaching method, which the role of teacher and the role of student are unchangeable. However, autonomous learning, developed in the 1970s among the developed countries and resulted from achievement in humanistic theories of self-actualization as well as encouraging changes in teaching method, has proven to be new yet popular among students. Education based on humanistic theories of self-actualization claims mutual control during the teach-learn process. Students learn by self-taught and thus are teachers themselves. Such self-taught method is widely recognized in America campus. Students are likely to read quite a few books as reference or supplement to the related course. Additionally, plenty of time is available for learners to explore what interest them. With abundant time, interdisciplinary learners are not hard to find. In higher education, there is no need to fill from Monday to Friday with different courses, offering more time for learners to explore the endless world. Also, curriculum needs to be well arranged and designed, a proper proportion of theory and practice. Activities involved situational English using, widely known examples as English corner and China National Model United Nations, can be advocated to promote all-round learners. Given such opportunity in a high frequency, students are possible to make impossible progress.

Third, strike a proper balance between cultural competence and language competence. Viewed from testing emphases and topic settings in the TOEFL, Chinese learners may experience difficulty if s/he wants to score high in TOEFL writing. The reason lies in yet-to-be-improved cultural competence. Cultural competence comprises four components: (a) Awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (b) Attitude towards cultural differences, (c) Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and (d) Cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (Mercedes Martin, Billy Vaughn, 2007:31-36). How to students in Chinese campus develop cultural competence? Answers may come from sufficiency of new teaching-learning assistance tools like multimedia, autonomous learning platform, virtual learning community. However, the most direct way to cultivate such competence to to see and to experience. English native speakers, or foreign teachers find their way in the Chinese campus, bringing actual culture-related contact with the students. Through interactions with foreign tutors, learners know for sure how two cultures differ and how to develop cross-cultural skills. Additionally, cooperations with overseas institutes that aims to offer more importunities for learners to go aboard living and studying in English-speaking surrounding are one of the best way to develop cultural competence. Such opportunity remain privilege for those who are excellent in traditional schooling, which seems to be a vicious cycle for those who are average in schooling and desperate for progress.

To sum up, TOEFL is widely recognized, so is TEM-8. Through comparison of writing parts of the two examination, we see an iceberg of differences in America and China and a leak in Chinese higher education. America prefer individualism, externality, science, while, China prefer collectivism, internality, and humanity. In the field of education, language is acquired, yet it can be learned to acquire with proper learning method. It is necessary that we stress linguistic foundation, class teaching, and language competence, however, it is better to strike balance between linguistic foundation and comprehensive ability in using language, autonomous learning and class teaching, and cultural competence and language competence.

5. CONCLUSION

Through this research, vividly I could sense how differences in culture influenced education, how differences in two exams revealed two distinct educations, and how differences in writing tasks showcased ways to improve higher education on English in China. Hopefully, this research could lead to more studies in this field and develop an efficient way to real English learning and using.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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