TEACHING GLOBALIZATION
as a content-based language course to
Chinese students:
a case study at NENU

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Introduction

Globalization is a new yet old term to Chinese college learners. We have been talking about globalization since China entered WTO in 2001. However, few people seem to be able to tell what globalization actually is. With the help of the East West Center, Northeast Normal University, China (NENU) started in 2005 to teach globalization to Chinese learners of English in English through the E-commerce concentration of Department of Foreign Languages School. The work is conducted largely through a text, *Globalization Primer: a textbook for Chinese learners of English* based on the theory of content-based instruction in applied linguistics.
The teaching of globalization has been going on in the department for four years and about four or five teachers have been involved in the teaching. Both the textbook and the teaching have been accepted as successful so that the textbook was awarded the first prize in 2008 by NENU social science organization as an excellent work by NENU teachers.

A comparative study was conducted between 34 students who had taken the course and 30 who had not. The research seems to have confirmed the validity in teaching globalization as a content-based course. Students who have learned the course show some kind of maturity and sophistication towards the evidences and possible tendencies of globalization.
These students seem more positive and optimistic about the financial crisis and interpret globalization in a more comprehensive and varied ways. The most spectacular is that these students express a more objective and less biased views towards some key issues of globalization. Therefore, we are convinced of the feasibility of teaching/learning globalization as a course in college. The teaching experience at NENU seems to prove that content-based instruction is one of the possible ways of teaching globalization to EFL/ESL learners, through which both the teacher and the learner have acquired not only the contents of globalization but also the new language developed along with the social and economical changes of the world.
Contents

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Northeast Normal University (NENU)

- is composed of 18 colleges/schools with over 20,000 fulltime students and 7,000 students of continuing education. The Foreign Languages School offers various programs in three languages, English, Japanese, and Russian.

- English (business-oriented) Department, which offers business and technical communication programs, at Foreign Languages School was established in 2001 as a response to economic and international market needs. The program aims at training students with both English communication skills and basic professional knowledge of economics and administration.
The training offers both English and business skills through a wide-variety of English and business/computer related courses. Despite some recognition of the global economic and business changes brought about by globalization and their growing anxiety to know more about this important historical trend, students in the department still seem uncertain about the nature and dimensions of globalization, as well as its implications for China as well as for the world.
Northeast Normal University (NENU)

- In developing the globalization text, the aims were:
  - a) to introduce Chinese college students to a systematic study of globalization;
  - b) to encourage them to learn English using the real issues of contemporary globalization and;
  - c) to give them an understanding of globalization as an ongoing process.

  (Berry & Neubauer, 2007)
Content-based Instruction

- Theoretically the three aims are grounded in a popularly acknowledged view of communicative language teaching. Input does not mean intake, unless there is interaction (Ellis, 1985; Lier, 1988; McLaughlin, 1985).

To make basic social and political concepts and dynamics of globalization relevant to these language learners, the textbook is designed according to principles of content-based instruction/learning. By introducing globalization issues into interactive language classrooms, students simultaneously learn both the content of globalization and the language.
Content-based Instruction

- Content-based instruction (CBI) was introduced in American schools to meet the challenges of teaching school subjects to immigrant children from various social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Teaching language through differing contents or subject matters proved effective in language learning, as it resulted in a meaningful and interesting classroom atmosphere and consequently helped students improve all school subjects, as well as their physical and mental growth with regard to mainstream society. (Haley & Austin, 2004)
Content-based Instruction

Much of the work on integrating language and content draws on Stephen Krashen’s theory of second language learning. In accordance with Krashen (1985), success in acquiring a second language depends on focusing on meaning rather than on form, on language input being just slightly above the proficiency level of the learner, and encouraging instruction in an environment that has ample opportunity for meaningful interaction similar to those present in first language acquisition. That approach is commonly known as the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis.
Content-based Instruction

- From the sociolinguistic point of view, it is widely-held that creating language learning opportunities for learners that have a substantial connection to their communities and relevant content areas can build literacy and enhance learning in both language and content areas.
Content-based Instruction

Cognitively, language is taken as inseparable from thinking such that it plays a vital role in shaping learners’ construction of knowledge. In order to help students learn the target language, teachers have to help learners and themselves overcome previously held prejudices and stereotypical attitudes and develop understanding, tolerance and respect between cultures and through this inculcates a more sophisticated ability to negotiate cultural differences. It is in this regard that we believe that integrating globalization into language classrooms is not only a feasible but also a very sensible way of teaching, whereby students will learn English as related to the demographically and technologically rapidly changing world around them. Without the ability to conceptualize, understand and gain discursive familiarity with the ever-increasing circuits of the global interconnectedness, the learning of the language in ways that permit effective exchange in the contemporary world will possibly never be a success.
The Design of the Textbook

- As part of follow-up activity to the 2005 Educational Leadership Institute of International Forum for Education 2020, a group of Chinese teachers at Northeast Normal University (NE NU) tried very hard to have adapted a globalization textbook written by Paul Berry (an Economist) and Deane Neubauer (Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Hawaii, Manoa and the founding Director of the Globalization Research Center at the University of Hawaii.) into a content-based task-oriented language teaching vehicle. The adapted textbook (named *Globalization Primer: Task-based English Reading* published by NENU publishers January, 2008) has been used in NENU since the spring semester 2006, and has proved to be effective for Chinese learners of English at intermediate and upper-intermediate levels.
Globalization Primer: Task-based English Reading

Adapted from Deane Neubauer & Paul Berry, East-West Center, U.S.
The Design of the Textbook

The textbook, *Globalization Primer*, is composed of 15 chapters, covering basic ideas of globalization, equity and interdependence between nations, as well as a broad range of issues viewed both from the perspectives of those who tend to benefit from globalization processes, and those for whom it brings dis-benefits. The text materials can be digested for students of intermediate and advanced instructional English levels for the length of a semester at four hours per week, 15-18 weeks altogether.
Contents of the book:

- Chapter One: The Promises and Burdens of globalization: contested meanings and implications
- Chapter Two: The dynamics and Processes of Globalization
- Chapter Three: Levels of globalization
- Chapter Four: Inside the nature of global change: additional tools for analysis
- Chapter Five: Economics and Globalization
- Chapter Six: Education for a globalized world
- Chapter Seven: Globalization and Health
- Chapter Eight: Urbanization: Migration and Inequality
- Chapter Nine: Communication and information: the landscape of IT
- Chapter Ten: Food and Agriculture
- Chapter Eleven: Energy: the real engine of globalization
- Chapter Twelve: Globalization and Relocation of Labor
- Chapter Thirteen: Crime and Security
- Chapter Fourteen: The Global Environment and Prospects for Human Sustainability
- Chapter Fifteen: The End of Globalization: as We Know It?
The design of the textbook

- The content- and task- based orientation aims to help learners learn both the content and the language. In this vein, each chapter consists in three main parts,

- *pre-class field research*, including elements for in-class discussion on various general topics concerning globalization,

- *in-class readings*, which are again generally composed of three parts—comprehension, language understanding and language production through speaking or writing—and

- a *supplemental reading*, to be employed either as a classroom activity or homework assignment.
A Sample text

Unit 2 The Dynamics & Processes of Globalization

Field work

Knowledge of the following topics will be useful in gaining a deeper understanding of the text. Research the topics before class, prepare a presentation, which will lead or contribute to a discussion that will relate to the information you’ve presented to the text.

- China and international trade in the 19th century -
- Controversies over the IMF
- Controversies over the WTO
A Sample text

- **Speaking**
- **Task 1** Discuss in groups current news concerning globalization and related issues.
- **Task 2** Discuss in pairs/groups: How does the author use the terms “Dynamics” & “Processes” at the beginning of the following passage? In terms of globalization, what do they mean and, what is the difference?

- **Reading**
- **Task One** Dynamics of Globalization
  - In this unit we examine some globalization dynamics, social and cultural practices that can be identified as contributing in specific ways to increasing interdependence. We also examine various processes, ways in which this increasing interdependence takes place.

- **Trade**
  - Most observers of globalization begin their examination with the economic aspects of globalization. One dimension of these is trade, which we see as globalization’s primary dynamic and driver…….
A Sample Text

**Comprehension Check**

- Write a short answer to each of the questions to show your understanding of the trading system of the 19th century (as discussed in paragraphs 2 & 3)
- When did this system begin? What was the role of the “core”? What lead to the change in international trade? What was the role of the “periphery”? In the core-periphery system, where was the “core”? What was the foundation of this system? In the core-periphery system, where was the “periphery”? Can you infer what the difference was between the world in the 17th/18th centuries and the 19th?
2. The following graph represents changes in the ratio of world exports to world GDP as described in paragraphs 2-4. Please label the graph using time and/or event.
3. Analyze and infer the reasons for changes in trade that the graph shows. For example: What caused trade to fall in a certain period or how did an event cause it to rise?

4. Using your own words, write a summary of each of the three changes in the nature of contemporary world trade that were discussed in paragraphs 5-8.

5. Can you infer what kind of actions referred to as “nationalist economic behavior” in paragraph 10?

6. Write a paragraph which paraphrases the following sentences from paragraph 16.

“While the developed economies were losing jobs to the new economies (a process called at the time “de-industrialization”), the transformation of these economies into service and knowledge based economies made them attractive migration destinations for those from developing economies.”
7. **Show your understanding of globalization’s impact on education and culture** (as discussed in paragraphs 20-24) by writing a short answer to each of these questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>What is meant by “Increased service exchange is very much tied to the spectacular increase in the ways that information is created and exchanged, especially when information can be digitized.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>What is meant by “Knowledge workers”</td>
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<td>c.</td>
<td>What is meant by “symbols”</td>
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<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Does “global labor force”, only refer to those workers working abroad, for foreign companies and for companies with international business relationships?</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>What is meant by “symbolic processes”?</td>
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<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>How can advertising be seen as an “alternative education system”?</td>
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<td>g.</td>
<td>What are “positive” and “negative” identities? Give examples.</td>
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<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>Does “students of globalization” refer to actual students?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A Sample Text

- **Language and vocabulary**
  - *Match the words with their meanings*

1. (______) core-periphery system (para. 3)
2. (______) roller-coaster (para. 5)
3. (______) intra-industry trade (para. 6)
4. (______) concession (para. 12)
5. (______) feedback loop (para. 17)
6. (______) outsourcing of digitized labor (para. 20)

- The result of an action (or situation) acts as a cause for that same action (or situation).
- One institution hires another to provide services related to the handling of information in electronic form.
- When a country imports the same kind of product that it exports.
- Something you give or allow to someone in order to reach an agreement.
- Resources flow out of the developing world into the developed world the countries of which then process or make manufactured goods with those resources and sell them back to the developing world.
- A situation in which there are many big and sudden changes.
Further work: Discussion

1. Paragraph 7 mentions “transnational corporations which now dominate world trade.” These corporations have a tremendous impact on the world and on our lives but how much do you know about them? The following table lists the top 25 global corporations. Discuss what you know about each of them. How do they affect your life? Each student could choose one corporation to investigate in after-class research. Which company shows the highest ratio of profits to gross income?

2. The following graph shows the growth in the world’s population. How does this growth affect the current migratory period discussed in paragraph 15?
If the educational changes described here were widespread, would that lead to long term changes in Chinese culture?
Feedback from the textbook users

- In order to explore the validity or effectiveness of teaching globalization as a language course to Chinese learners, the curriculum development group generated a questionnaire (see Appendix) composed of ten free-answer questions. These range from basic understandings of globalization and the interrelations between globalization and various areas (i.e. food and technology, economic development, higher education, health, environment, energy, etc), to the students’ ability to solving problems by responding to the current situation in U.S financial markets. (20/12/2008)
2. How do people interpret globalization, according to your knowledge?
3. What areas of the modern society are affected by globalization? Please exemplify.
4. What role can science and technology play in addressing the threatening global food crisis?
5. Why should there be a global economy? What factors contribute to such a phenomenon?
6. In what way(s) can higher education prepare students amid the trends of globalization?
7. What health problems has globalization given rise to?
8. What is the relation between globalization and environmental degradation?
9. What role does energy play in the process of globalization?
10. How do you understand the current U.S financial crisis from the point of view of globalization?
Feedback of the textbook users

- To avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity or hindrance of the language barrier when students answer the questions, the questionnaire is translated into Chinese. (The curriculum group is fully aware of the irony of conducting this questionnaire in Chinese, but the emphasis in this instance was on acquisition of globalization content rather than on English language progress.)

64 students (34 from graduating class who learned the course of globalization a year ago and 30 on the third year who are going to take the course the coming semester) from the English (e-commerce) Department, took part in the questionnaire activity. They finished the task within one hour in a morning class period administered by two teachers who are well trained in research traditions. 62 questionnaires were collected and 58 (30 from the first group and 28 from the second) considered valid and analyzed by two teachers through negotiation and classification of the answers into groups, i.e. general understanding of globalization, Questions 1—2, knowledge of details of globalization, Questions 3-9, and interpretation of current financial crisis Question 10.
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Feedback of the textbook users

The responses suggest a great difference between the two groups of learners in all the three areas mentioned previously. Generally speaking, students who have attended the course of globalization displayed maturity and sophistication toward the topic of globalization, including varied understandings of what globalization is, deeper understanding of the knowledge of globalization, less biased views concerning past and future effects of globalization, and more optimistic faith towards the financial difficulties the current world faces. On the other hand, students lacking the systematic learning of the globalization course view globalization in more or less superficial or stereotypical ways. Detailed examination is given below.
a. Liberal vs. stereotypical views of globalization

- Students completing the course of globalization (hereafter referred to as Group 1—Experimental Group) interpret globalization in as many as sixteen different dimensions, as summarized from Questions 1 and 2, while views from those who have not completed the course (Group 2—Controlled Group) can be roughly classified into only six.

- To the question, “How do you understand globalization?” G1 students explain globalization as economic development brought about by interdependence between nations (14 out of 30 students), redistribution of raw materials and capital or production prioritization and resource sharing (12 out of 30), or by opportunities and challenges, cultural diffusion, and the “natural tendency of the global economy”, etc.
a. Liberal vs. stereotypical views of globalization

- The commonly used words by G2 students to express globalization are cooperation (12 out of 28) or connection (10 out of 28). Some claim that globalization means physical and spiritual interchanges between nations or that refers primarily to economic globalization. Some say that globalization is the capitalist invasion to other parts of the world, etc.

- When reporting how they other people regard globalization, as targeted by Question 2, G1 students present around 12 views, while G1, only 6. The following is a summary of the views from the two groups.
b. Optimistic vs. pessimistic views towards globalization

In terms of the relation between globalization and the environment, G1 students seem to be more optimistic, though the two groups admit that globalization has resulted in a deterioration of the natural environment, and that there is an indirect relation between globalization and environment. However, G1 students seem more certain that there is a cause-effect relation between the two, particularly the way that developing nations sacrifice environment for development (10 out of 30 students), engage in the transferable use of natural resources and export environmental problems to other nations. On the other hand, G2 students seem to hold a strong view that damage to the environment is a set of consequences transferred from the developed countries to developing countries, particularly in terms of the air and noise pollution.
b. Optimistic vs. pessimistic views towards globalization

- Little was said by G2 students concerning the relation between globalization and the current financial crisis in the U.S. except that it is an unavoidable tendency owing to the connection between the U.S. economy and the rest of the world or to the disadvantages in general wrought by globalization. However, G1 students view this phenomenon as a more complicated chain of causality involving many factors, such as rapid development of globalization, consequences of international loans and investment, as well as the expansion of the super nations, etc. However, they seem optimistic toward the situation and some state that the current worldly financial crisis can not last long.
c. Objective vs. biased view of effects of globalization

G1 students seem more objective, more mature and liberally predisposed than G2 students. When talking about globalization and education, G2 students give very simple responses as to the ways higher education prepares students amid the trends of globalization. They use such terms as multi-intelligent, skilled, creative, qualified, specialized, while G1 students, in addition to these elements also focus on attributes of adaptability (13 out of 30), acceptability and respect for differences, open-mindedness, unprejudiced, psychologically well prepared, the breakthrough of narrow nationalism, as well as risk-taking, problem-solving, independence and communication skills. On the whole the patterns show significant differences in levels of cognitive complexity in expressing this relationship.
c. Objective vs. biased view of effects of globalization

- G2 students believe that (capitalist) economic and technological development is the main driver for globalization, while G1 students, again have more complex and varied views, centered especially on the analysis of the relation between the uneven distribution of raw materials and capital and priorities of production, the imbalance between supply and needs, as well the interdependence between nations and consumer economics, etc. Some also regard globalization as the natural development or development of labor and technology or the pattern of progress of human society.
d. Deeper understanding vs. superficial knowledge of globalization

- Both groups agree that economics and culture are the two areas most affected by globalization as are others, such as politics, science, and education. G1 students also mention labor, religious and cultural values.

- Both groups agree that technology promotes production by development (e.g. by raising genetic food) and help curb food crisis. However, G1 students also mention the use of land, the quality of food as well as the use of smallest cost to get biggest benefit and help the world people from hunger, etc.

- In G2, however, 4 out of 28 students express a puzzled view concerning health and globalization, energy and globalization as well as the current situation of financial crisis. And they simply say, “I don’t know.”
Conclusion

The teaching experience at the Northeast Normal University suggests that content-based instruction could be a feasible way to teach globalization to ESL/EFL learners, as it gives priority to the role of the learner in the classroom and provides context for students to negotiate issues closely related to their lives in the language they would love to practice. Teaching globalization as a course seems helpful in the way that it has empowered the learners by providing them with systematic knowledge of economic and technological globalization and their impact on social and cultural lives. Compared with non-globalization course takers, these students seem more optimistic and better prepared for the new challenges present in this rapidly changing world. As the immediately foregoing finding suggest, seeing globalization with a broad, integrated framework allows learners to locate themselves within these complex processes and see connections that are missed by those lacking the experience. In addition they seem possessed of a greater degree of critical thinking and a capacity to view the world in a rational way.
Conclusion

- However, as reported by some students, globalization remains a new and dynamic social phenomenon to many Chinese. Teaching globalization in Chinese colleges is still in its infancy and will take some time before Chinese teaching institutions realize the necessity to focus on globalization as an independent course. Further, there are not many teachers who are sufficient equipped with the knowledge or have the interest in teaching a course on globalization.

- Nevertheless, we have moved one step towards the goal of teaching globalization as a way to help cultivate the open-minded and optimistic international talents, who will serve all mankind for the benefit of the common good.
References

Thank you for your attention.
Categories of the questions

- General understanding of globalization, Questions 1—2;
- Knowledge of details of globalization, Questions 3-9;
- Interpretation of the world financial crisis Question 10.
Subjects

- G1: 34 students who have attended the course of globalization
- G2: 30 students who haven’t had the course

Valid questionnaires: 58 out of 64
3. Research Result and Analysis

- Students who have taken the course displayed maturity and sophistication toward the topic of globalization, including varied understandings of what globalization is, the less biased views concerning past and future effects of globalization, and the more optimistic faith towards the financial difficulties the current world faces.

- G2 understand globalization in a more or less superficial, biased, and ethnocentric ways.
1) Globalization study enhances students’ knowledge of what globalization is.

- Q 1 How do you understand globalization?
- G1 students:
  - Redistribution of raw materials and capitals
  - Production prioritization
  - Resources sharing
  - Economic development brought about interdependence between nations
  - Opportunities and challenges,
  - Cultural diffusion,
  - Natural tendency of global economy, etc.
Q 1: How do you understand globalization?

- G2 students:
- Cooperation or connection.
- Physical and spiritual interchanges between nations or simply economic globalization.
- Capitalist invasion to other parts of the world, etc.
Q2: How do people interpret globalization, according to your knowledge?

- G1 students:
- Fortune and disaster.
- Gradually optimistic
- Challenges and opportunities
- Pessimistic
- Happy but depressed
- Take it for granted
- Communications between nations.
- The world becomes one small village.
- The gap between the rich and the poor
- Pressure means promotion.
- Many people don’t know what it means.
- People just accept it critically.
Q2: How do people interpret globalization, according to your knowledge?

- **G2 students:**
  - Social development
  - Communications between nations
  - Advantages and disadvantages
  - Avoidable result
2) Globalization study gives students faith to face the challenges globalization has brought about.

- **Q 8 What is the relation between globalization and environmental degradation?**

  Both groups:
  - globalization brought about deterioration of natural environment
  - an indirect relation between globalization and environment.
  - a cause-effect relation
  - developing countries sacrifice environment for development (10/30),
  - transferable use of natural resources
  - general environmental problem to all nations.

  G1:
  - transference of damages from the developed countries to developing countries
  - air pollution
  - noise.
Q 10 How do you understand the current U.S financial crisis from the globalization point of view?

G1:
--- A complicated chain relation between many factors
   (rapid development of globalization, the international loans and investment, the expansion of the super nations)
   --- It can not last long.

G2:
--- an unavoidable tendency,
--- the connection between U.S economy and the rest of the world
--- disadvantage brought about by globalization
3) Globalization study assists the reformulation of students’ worldviews and the avoidance of prejudices and stereotypes.

Q 6 In what way(s) can higher education prepare students amid the trends of globalization?

Both groups:
--- multi-intelligent, skilled, creative, qualified, specialized;
G1:
--- adaptability
--- acceptability and respect for differences,
--- open-mindedness, unprejudiced,
--- psychologically well prepared,
--- breakthrough of narrow nationalism,
--- risk-taking, problem-solving, independence and communication skills
Q 5 Why should there be a global economy? What factors contribute to such a phenomenon?

G1:
--- uneven distribution of raw materials and capitals
--- priorities of production
--- unbalance between supply and needs
--- interdependence between nations
--- consumer economics
--- globalization as the natural development or development of labor and tech or progress of human society.

G2:
--- (capitalist) economic and technological development
4) Globalization study helps develop students’ creative thinking and ability to solve problems.

Q 3 What areas of the modern society are affected by globalization? Please exemplify.

Both groups:
--- economics and culture
--- politics,
--- science,
--- education.

G1:
--- labor
--- religious
--- cultural values.
Q 4 What role can science and technology play in addressing the threatening global food crisis?

Both groups:

---technology promotes production by development (e.g. by raising genetic food)

---help curb food crisis.

G1:

---effective use of land
---quality of food
---use of smallest cost to get biggest benefit and
---the world people from hunger and guide to the future, etc.
G2:

---difficult to explain the relation between health and globalization
energy and globalization
current financial crisis and globalization
Conclusion

Teaching globalization is helpful in the way that it can
---help learners to understand globalization in a more
  objective, comprehensive and systematic way.
---overcome biased views or prejudices and help train
  world talents who can contribute to the benefit of all
  the peoples in the world.
---content-based instruction is an effective way to teach
  globalization to students of business as it can improve
  students’ language skills (e.g. the vocabulary used to
  deal with world matters) as well as help reconstruct
  their view of the world.
References

Thanks for your attention!