DOES THE PROVISION OF AN INTENSIVE AND HIGHLY FOCUSED INDIRECT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK LEAD TO ACCURACY?

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This thesis imparts the outcomes of a seven-week long quasi-experimental study that explored whether or not L2 learners who received intensive and highly focused indirect feedback on one type of treatable error - either the third person singular –s, plural endings –s, or definite article *the* - eventually become more accurate in the post-test as compared to a control group that did not. The paired-samples t-test comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of both groups demonstrates that the experimental group did no better than the control group after they received indirect corrective feedback. The independent samples t-test measuring the experimental and control group’s accuracy shows no significant difference between the two groups. Effect sizes calculated, however, do indicate that, had the sample sizes been bigger, both groups would have eventually become more accurate in the errors targeted, although this would not have been because of the indirect feedback.
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Background

Giving more importance to content rather than form, some instructors across various disciplines might choose to ignore second language (L2) learners’ grammatical errors when they grade papers since these instructors understand the limitations of L2 learners as far as language is concerned (Ferris, 2002). However, not all instructors are lenient with L2 learners’ language usage (Hyland & Anan, 2006; Roberts & Cimasko, 2008). University professors- native speakers and non-native speakers alike - might strictly evaluate L2 learners’ pieces of writing, giving less priority to content, if errors arise because of forms (Ashwell, 2000; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Hyland & Anan, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Roberts & Cimasko, 2008). It might be argued that the formal aspect of language is only important as long as a person is studying at a school in a formal situation; however, L2 learners do not stop using English after they have completed their studies. With the emergence of technology and outsourcing, more and more ideas are being exchanged in written forms nowadays, and the use of the formal Standard English is preferred to communicate ideas in the real world (Ferris, 2002). To any employer, colleague, or client – whether they are in the United States or overseas - it is important that messages be communicated clearly and accurately so that they are not misinterpreted. Fast-paced as the world is, nobody would like to unscramble a message full of errors in order to understand its content. Many grammatical errors in a piece of writing might lead to a lack in clarity and accuracy, and, consequently, to a lack in comprehensibility (Ashwell, 2000).

In the field of second language writing, opinions differ on whether or not L2 learners become more accurate in their use of grammatical forms or linguistic features when their errors are corrected. The strongest advocate for abolishing written correction, Truscott (1996, 1999, 2007, 2009) keeps rekindling a fervent debate on this issue and compels researchers to carry out
studies to evaluate the comparative success of error correction in enabling learners to become more precise with their use of grammar. Truscott (1996) took a very radical stance and created an uproar when he called for the abandonment of error correction in his much contested thesis, “The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes,” which appeared in *Language Learning*. According to Truscott (1996), error correction is harmful to learners and does not promote accuracy. Truscott (1996, 1999) urges instructors to cease giving corrective feedback to L2 learners on the premise that it is ineffective in helping learners become more accurate in their use of forms or linguistic features. Truscott (2007) still maintains that “correction most likely has small harmful effects on students’ ability to write accurately and that we can be reasonably confident that if it does have any genuine benefits, they are so small as to be uninteresting” (p. 256).

Proponents of error correction (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, Young & Cameron, 2005; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, 2009; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima, 2008; Ferris, 1995b, 1999, 2002; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Sachs & Polio, 2007; Sheen, 2007; Sheen, Wright & Moldawa, 2009) acknowledge Truscott’s contention that there is not sufficient research evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of corrective feedback, but argue that this means there is a crucial need to carry out further research in this area. Ferris (1999) adduced that the basis of Truscott’s initial argument rested on his perusal of five studies carried out during the 1980s and early 1990s, which showed that feedback on grammar is detrimental to learners. However, studies in error correction during that time were at their “infancy” according to Ferris (2003). Not many studies in L2 error correction had been published, and the studies Truscott (1996) perused (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Kepner, 1991; Semke, 1984; Sheppard, 1992; Robb, Ross & Shortreed, 1986) had substantial methodological
shortcomings, according to Ferris (2003), which lead to the conclusion that error correction is ineffective. In her reevaluation of the studies, Ferris (1999, 2002, 2003, 2004) postulated that if the weaknesses of the previous studies could be circumvented in new studies, the efficacy of error correction could be more clearly gauged. She posited that if error correction is given in a “clear and consistent manner,” learners could become accurate in their use of linguistic forms and features (Ferris, 1999). Some proponents of corrective feedback also argue that the fact that fossilization might take place if learners’ errors are not corrected should also not be ignored (Ferris, 2004; Han, 2004; Kepner, 1991). Some teachers believe that corrective feedback promotes accuracy and leads to less ambiguities. For example, Ashwell (2000) reasons that giving corrective feedback on form is necessary since “linguistic accuracy is bound up with the communicative effectiveness of a piece of writing” (p. 229). He argues that grammar correction aids writers in bettering accuracy in their subsequent pieces of writings, thus allowing for better communication of ideas. Sachs and Polio (2007) imply that written corrective feedback presents learners with the prospect of “focus[ing] their attention on form… and notic[ing] the gap between their inter-language and the target language” (p. 69) which eventually fosters acquisition. Teachers and researchers further contend that learners’ expectations cannot be ignored. Surveys carried out on teachers’ suppliance of comments, annotations, and written explanations, and studies on form-focus feedback have revealed that, for L2 students, accuracy in grammar is of paramount importance (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Enginarlar, 1993; Ferris, 1995b; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; Hyland, 2003; Lee, 1997; Leki, 1991, 2008; Radecki & Swales, 1988). Students expect their teachers to correct their grammatical errors (Chandler, 2003, 2009; Lee, 1997, 2003; Leki, 1991; Truscott, 1996; Hyland, 2003). They believe the corrections they receive are beneficial in the sense that the corrections
enable them become more precise with their use of grammar (Chandler, 2009; Ferris, 1995b; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 1998, 2003; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1996; Leki, 1991; Loewen, Li, Fei, Thompson, Nakatsukasa & Ahn, 2009; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Truscott, 1996). Moreover, in some cultures, students look forward to producing an error-free written product since a work free of error implies that they “know the language” (Hyland & Anan, 2006, p. 515) and spares them from the reproach of not knowing the language (Ferris, 2002, 2003). Many teachers would certainly attest to their students’ resentment if they did not give their students any feedback on their writings as Truscott (1996) proposes (Ferris, 2003, 2004; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). An example is Chandler’s (2003) participants in the control group who had strong negative feelings about not receiving any correction on any of their errors during the study and who expected the teacher to direct their attention to all the errors in their papers.

Because of the aforementioned assertions and arguments, since the time of Truscott’s (1996) much contentious thesis, we have witnessed a proliferation of studies that have sought to investigate the efficacy of corrective feedback in non-native speakers’ written compositions during the last decade. Teachers and researchers alike have strived to find the best possible “strategies and techniques” (Ferris, 2003) to enable learners improve the accuracy of their use of linguistic forms and features by avoiding some of the flaws of the studies done prior to Truscott’s (1996) article. Although many of those research studies have shown that correction can lead to important gains in accuracy, we should not hastily jump to conclusions for even their methodologies and designs greatly differed. While gauging accuracy in learners’ writings, some researchers have looked at revisions of drafts instead of new pieces of writings and have targeted both treatable and untreatable errors in their learners’ written products by adopting an unfocused approach to error correction (Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland,
2003; Sachs & Polio, 2007; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). More recent researchers (Bitchener 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, 2009; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al., 2009), on the other hand, have circumvented the aforementioned flaws by espousing the process used in studies of oral corrective feedback. They have adopted a selective and focused approach over the unfocused approach to investigate the effectiveness of different types of direct corrective feedback on picture compositions instead of essays that require critical thinking and free expression of thoughts. From their studies, we can infer that direct corrective feedback, to some extent, enable learners become more accurate with the use of linguistic forms which are partially internalized when a moderately intensive and focused approach is undertaken. To this date, however, we still do not know whether indirect corrective feedback produces the same effect if a specific treatable error is constantly targeted for a period of time in an essay that requires learners to express themselves freely. This study endeavors to explore this issue.

**Literature Review**

Although studies throughout the 2000s have strived to correct methodological problems in the design of previous studies (as some researchers saw them), methodological infelicities have continued. In their quest to find the best corrective techniques that would enable learners to improve their accuracy in grammar, researchers of some available studies (Ashwell, 2000; Ferris & Roberts 2001; Truscott, 2007; Sachs & Polio, 2007) have looked at students’ revisions instead of new pieces of writings. However, studies that require learners to modify and rewrite another draft of their essay according to the teacher’s suggested propositions cannot be said to be a good guide to how proficient learners have become in accurately writing in English (Guenette, 2007; Hyland, 2006; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008) since the learners do not have to “engage
in guided learning and problem solving” (Lalande, 1982). Although studies looking at revisions of drafts evidence that corrective feedback is useful in editing and perfecting a learner’s script (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Sheen, 2007; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008), we cannot say with certainty that accuracy was gained because of the feedback received since the amelioration could have been the consequence of the mere rewriting of a second or third draft of the first composition with the teacher’s help (Guenette, 2007; Truscott, 2007). If assessment is to be made on whether learners do indeed become more accurate in a linguistic feature following corrections received, then it becomes important to examine the learners’ subsequent writings (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, 2009; Ellis et al., 2008; Bruton, 2009; Guenette, 2007; Truscott, 2007). If accuracy is to be measured, then “an initial text” (Bruton, 2009), in the form of a pre-test, and a new piece of writing, independently produced by the learners, should be examined “after the experimental period” (Bruton, 2009) in the form of a post-test, not rewrites (Bitchener, 2008; Bruton, 2009; Sheen, 2007; Truscott, 1999, 2007). The present study attempts to address this limitation by including new pieces of writings in the form of a pre-test and a post-test which the learners had to compose on their own.

In addition to looking at revisions of essays, many studies have adopted an unfocused approach to error correction, which is comprehensive in nature and targets other types of errors in conjunction with or without the linguistic feature/s being researched (Sheen et al., 2009). Teachers and researchers have looked at the correction of innumerable errors in their students’ written work (Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Hyland, 2003; Truscott, 2007; Truscott & Hsu, 2008). They have targeted all types of errors- syntactical, morphological, and lexical- in addition to errors on content and organization in their learners’ written products over the years. Their basic argument behind the adoption of an unfocused approach lies on the
premise that it is the predominant type of correction given in traditional pedagogical contexts (Sheen et al., 2009). Researchers advance the idea that if learners’ errors are not corrected, learners might have the false conception that their writings are impeccable and, hence, conclude that they need no further improvement in their written products (Lalande, 1982). Unfortunately, while comprehensively correcting all the errors, teachers and researchers have failed to distinguish between the types of errors they have marked. We have to agree that not all errors are comparable. To measure the degree to which learners become more precise with their use of linguistic forms and /or features, researchers and teachers alike must take into account that some errors are easier to correct while others are more difficult to correct. Ferris (1999, 2002, 2003) has differentiated between errors that are “treatable” and those that are “untreatable.” Ferris (2002) has proposed that a “treatable” error is one that is rule-governed. If students are given the rules, they should be able to correct their errors on their own (Ferris, 1999, 2002, 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Some examples of errors that Ferris (2002) quotes as being treatable are: verb tenses, noun endings, articles, and subject-verb agreement. Untreatable errors, on the hand, refer to those errors that are “idiosyncratic or idiomatic” in nature (Ferris, 2002). These errors cannot be corrected by referring to a textbook or set of rules (Ferris, 1999; Hyland, 2006). Students would need to refer to their acquired knowledge of the language to correct the errors by themselves (Ferris, 2002). Examples of untreatable errors are prepositions and word choice (Ferris, 2002; Hyland, 2006).

One of the most recent studies to shed light on the fact that some errors are more amenable to correction while others are not is Bitchener et al.’s (2005) study. Adopting a less focused approach, which aims at more than one category of error, Bitchener et al. (2005) preselected articles, past tense, and preposition, three linguistic features with which their
participants had difficulty, to investigate the effectiveness of two types of corrective feedback, (1) conference and direct written feedback and (2) direct written feedback only, as compared to a control group. The learners in the former group received direct explicit correction and supplementary examples in addition to more prospects of asking for clarification on their errors during conference sessions. Those in the latter group received overt correction only. The researchers calculated accuracy by dividing the number of the correct uses of the linguistic forms by the number of their compulsory usage. The result was then expressed as a percentage. The resulting data reveals that both groups failed to improve in the post-test given in week two. One possible explanation for this failure is the researchers targeted more than one kind of error in the participants’ essays. Bitchener et al. (2005) found out that, while selectively targeting errors, it is important to distinguish between errors that are treatable and those which are not. Following this discovery, Bitchener et al. (2005), supporting Ferris and Roberts (2001), have put forward that, from a pedagogical point of view, if we want to determine if learners can become more accurate in a linguistic form or feature, we should handle treatable and untreatable errors separately. Looking at both treatable and untreatable errors at the same time might not help learners attend to and “notice” (Schmidt, 1990) the linguistic feature that corrective feedback aims to target (Ellis et al., 2008). If we want our students to “notice” (Schmidt, 1990), assimilate, retain, and, consequently, use the feature under investigation accurately in subsequent writings, then our students need to focus on one type of treatable error at a time and ignore all the other errors that figure in their writing. As a result of Bitchener et al.’s (2005) study, a few researchers have investigated the effect of a focused approach in their learners’ essays.

Drawing on studies of oral corrective feedback (Doughty & Valera, 1998; Ellis, Loewen & Erlam, 2006; Han, 2002; Lyster, 2004; Iwashita, 2003) which have demonstrated that, when
learners’ attention is constantly drawn to the targeted errors in their utterances, they are capable of rectifying their errors and using the precise form of the linguistic feature or form being targeted in subsequent testing, more recent researchers (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, 2009; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al., 2009) have adopted a more focused approach and targeted specific treatable errors in their research. With the aim of finding the best corrective feedback strategy that would enable learners perfect their writing, the aforementioned researchers carefully planned their studies by avoiding some of the methodological flaws brought up by some researchers (e.g. Ferris, 2003; Guenette, 2007; Truscott, 2007) to investigate the reliability of corrective feedback in promoting accuracy gains. Including a pre-test, a post-test, and new pieces of writings, these researchers adopted a moderately intensive and focused approach to investigate various direct corrective feedback techniques. One of these studies is Bitchener’s (2008) study, which involved 75 low intermediate international visa students and adopted a moderately intensive and focused approach to error correction to investigate the effectiveness of the various combinations of direct written corrective feedback on the use of articles to correspond to the first and second mention of a noun. In Group 1, the researcher directly corrected and wrote the correct articles above the learners’ errors. In addition, the learners had a short written explanation and examples of the two uses of articles attached to their paper, and a mini-lesson that lasted for 30 minutes during which they received explanations, examples, and controlled additional practice exercises to work on. Group 2 received no oral explanation of the rules, examples, or additional exercises to practice. They only had their errors directly corrected and a short explanation of the uses of articles attached to their paper. Group 3 had only the correct forms written above their errors. Group 4, which was the control group, received no correction. All the participants in the four groups had 5 minutes to look at their
errors after they received the corrected copy of their essay. They wrote a new text for the immediate post-test after the treatment. Group 1 had the oral treatment immediately before they wrote the post-test. Accuracy was measured by dividing the number of correct uses of articles by the number of compulsory uses of articles. The finding of this study was that a moderately intensive and focused approach to error correction led to accuracy gains in the post-test. The resulting effect sizes, Cohen’s $d$, of the three experimental groups respectively – $d = 0.88$, $d = 1.2$, and $d = 1.38$ - suggest that direct correction had a great effect on accuracy as compared to the control group whose effect size was negligible ($d = 0.034$).

However, the above study too should be “read with caution” (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009) since it has a number of limitations. First, the amount of English instruction the four groups received greatly differed. Some students were studying full-time while others were studying part-time. It is not clear which students of the two categories (full-time or part-time) were assigned to the four groups. Furthermore, as compared to the other groups, the group receiving oral metalinguistic feedback had more instruction in terms of hours (30.5 hours if they had 3 hours of instruction 5 days a week and 50.5 hours if they had 5 hours of instruction 5 days a week). Hence, given this confusing variable, we cannot definitely conclude what led to the gain in accuracy. To gauge the effectiveness of corrective feedback then, it becomes important to control the variable amount of instruction. The present study takes into consideration this limitation by including classes that last two and half hours per week. It includes no such group that has additional instruction in the linguistic features investigated. The groups involved have the same type and amount of instruction during the class meeting times.

In addition to the above-mentioned lacunas, the researcher, because it has been argued that the tasks learners are given in research studies should be similar if accuracy is to be gauged
in L2 learners’ writings (Truscott, 2007), has used pictures which the learners had to describe. However, in the real world, in most pedagogical contexts, teachers do not expect L2 learners to do these types of activities. Thus, we are left in a quandary trying to decide which is more important - reliability of results (using tasks where all writers are writing about the same idea in the same way) or validity of results (using tasks that are used in the real world). Given that most teachers would require their learners to produce pieces of writings that require some degree of self-expression and critical thinking or are at least communicative in orientation, this study follows Bruton’s (2009) recommendation and uses a genre that enables them to express their ideas more freely instead of carefully controlled tasks like picture compositions each and every time.

Another limitation of Bitchener’s (2008) study is that the researcher did not consider his learners’ most problematic error to target in their essays. He did not individualize correction according to the learners’ needs or repeatedly target the errors to see if the learners would improve in those errors which are most challenging for the learners. The researcher instead pre-selected the linguistic features he aimed and provided the feedback to see if there is any amelioration in their use one week after the learners had received the treatment. Since teachers would most probably expect their learners to get better at the particular linguistic features that are problematic for them, in this study, the learners’ errors will be repeatedly targeted for a period of time, and the correction will be individualized as Bitchener and Knoch (2009) propose.

Another study which points to the effectiveness of direct corrective feedback is that of Bitchener and Knoch’s (2008), which was similar to that of Bitchener’s (2008). Bitchener and Knoch (2008) haphazardly assigned 75 international students and 69 migrant students to one of the four groups: (1) direct corrective feedback, written and oral, (2) direct corrective feedback
and written feedback, (3) direct corrective feedback, and (4) control. The researchers reported that the percentage gain in accuracy for the three treatment groups between the pre-test and post-test given one week later was large. The post-test yielded very large effect sizes, $d = 1.21$, $d = 1.24$, and $d = 1.23$, for the three experimental groups respectively. Comparatively, the effect size of the control group was negligible, $d = 0.043$. However, this study too has confusing variables that make the results doubtful. This study suffers from the same weaknesses that Bitchener’s (2008) did in that the amount of instruction the students received and the students’ status - whether full-time or part-time - greatly varied. Furthermore, it does not use authentic tasks normally used in classrooms and does not target the learners’ most problematic error.

Sheen’s (2007) study deserves mention too since it is one of the first studies to carry out and initiate further research on a more focused approach to error correction. Sheen’s study (2007) sought to examine the comparative outcome of the provision of two types of direct corrective feedback to 91 students of intermediate proficiency divided into a direct correction only group, a direct metalinguistic group, and a control group. The candidates wrote a picture composition for a duration of twelve minutes for the pre-test and post-test. The treatment sessions consisted of rewriting fables read and explained in class. Before the participants produced their writings, the teacher again read the stories to the learners to remind them of the happenings therein. Effect sizes calculated for the three groups indicate that corrective feedback did have an effect on accuracy. The treatment produced a medium effect for the direct correction group ($d = 0.64$), a large effect for the metalinguistic group ($d = 0.81$), and a small effect for the control group ($d = 0.29$). That Sheen’s study produced considerable effect sizes is not surprising. Sheen’s study too has design flaws. First, it fails to distinguish between the amounts of instruction the students had. The students had either 1 hour 20 minutes of instruction or 3 hours
of instruction. Second, the researcher did not give the participants a different story for the pre-
test and post-test. She administered the same story for the pre-test and post-test (Sheen does not
mention when the post-test was given). Having the same story for the pre-test and post-test does
not represent a new piece of writing as the authors claim since the learners were already familiar
with the testing instrument. Third, the participants produced the essays with the help of prompts,
which included the noun, adjective, and verb, that guided their writing. The example Sheen
provides us, “old man, paint, and picture” (p. 266), indicates that the only missing element in the
prompts was the articles. As mentioned elsewhere in this paper, for us to measure whether
learners have become accurate with a linguistic feature or form, learners should independently
produce a piece of writing. Since the prompts completely guided the learners’ writings, we
cannot really judge whether accuracy was gained because of the treatment or the approach
undertaken. Last, and perhaps more important, is Sheen did not recruit her participants from
writing classes as the majority of the researchers (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener et
al., 2005; Bitchener & Knoch; 2008, 2009; Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001) have done
following Truscott’s (1996) article that encourages teachers to completely stop giving correction
on learners’ essays in writing classes. Sheen’s participants came from the all classes that were
offered at the community college where the study took place. By recruiting her participants from
all the classes offered, Sheen fails to consider the fact that “correcting written work for language
correctness is essentially a pedagogic issue” (Bruton, 2009, p. 606). She ignores teachers’
concerns and the pedagogical aspects of writing which Truscott (1996) argues should be borne in
mind when doing research on accuracy. Teachers correct learners’ essays for pedagogical
reasons and because they want their learners to become more proficient with their use of
grammar in the written work they produce for their writing classes. Hence, they would probably
be most interested to know what effect correction has on their writing students’ essays. To address these concerns, the participants in my study are recruited from writing classes.

Recently, Sheen, together with other research partners, did another study on accuracy. Sheen et al.’s (2009) study differed from the above-mentioned studies in that it investigated the effectiveness of a focused and an unfocused approach to error correction. They drew on Sheen’s (2007) methodology and gave the same treatment and narrative tasks used by Sheen (2007) to the focused, unfocused, and control group. The treatment differed in the sense that the focused group received correction on the two uses of articles while the unfocused group received correction on articles together with four other grammatical features like the copula be, regular past tense -ed, irregular past tense, and prepositions to refer to time and location. The control group only wrote the pre-test and post-test. They did not get the error correction treatment. Sheen et al. (2009) reported substantial preciseness in article usage for the focused group as compared to the unfocused and control group. The relative effect sizes were: $d = 1.3$ for the focused group, $d = 0.31$ for the unfocused group, and $d = 0.65$ for the control group.

Ellis et al. (2008) is the other study that investigated the effect of a more focused approach to error correction. They assigned 49 first year intermediate level Japanese university students who were taking general classes in English to a focused, unfocused, or control group respectively. All three groups wrote a new picture composition for the pre-test and post-test. The treatment was identical to Sheen (2007) and Sheen et al. (2009). While correcting the learners’ errors, the teacher targeted only articles in the focused group’s narratives. The control group had no correction on their errors. They only got a brief general comment like “Good!” or a question like “What happened then?” at the end of their essays. The researchers reported a gain in accuracy in article usage from the pre-test to the immediate post-test given in Week 6 for both
groups. No statistical group differences were observed, and effect sizes indicate that there was not much difference between the control group ($d = 0.67$) and the focused group ($d = 0.74$). The unfocused group, however, did much better ($d = 1.33$). However, this study too suffers from the weaknesses that Sheen did in that the learners did not come from writing classes and the researchers did not individualize the learners’ correction. The principal weakness of this study is the students were made aware of the errors targeted and the purpose of the study through the feedback on Task 3 and an exit questionnaire given to them immediately before they wrote the post-test (Xu, 2009). I concur with Xu (2009) who points out that those students who probably were not aware of the motivation that lay behind the study might have actually started to pay more attention to the features targeted in their writing when they wrote the post-test after they had received the feedback on Task 3 and completed the questionnaire. To avoid such flaws in my study, I proposed not to carry out such activities which will draw the learners’ attention to the purpose of the study before they write the post-test. The learners get the corrective feedback on their last piece of writing one week before they write the post-test.

The present study also differs from the aforementioned studies in the sense that it investigates indirect feedback. According to such researchers as Ferris (2004) and Bitchener and Knoch (2008), indirect feedback is different from direct feedback in that it leaves the learners to diagnose the errors they have made and correct the errors by themselves. The teacher only indicates the errors by highlighting them, circling them, coding them, or underlining them (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Robb et al., 1986) instead of writing down the answers or giving any explanations on the errors made. Indirect feedback has been said to be more superior to direct feedback in that it “increases student engagement and attention to forms” (Ferris, 2003, p. 52) and contributes to the assimilation of a feature. Yet, indirect feedback seems to have been
relegated to the background during the past few years. All the above reviewed studies have investigated various direct corrective feedback techniques. One of the reasons might be mainly because previous researchers had been ignoring this type of correction. A perusal of the studies done in the last two and half decades does indeed lead us to surmise that there was a tendency for researchers to carry out research which considered whether indirect feedback was better than direct feedback (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lalande, 1982; Semke, 1984; Robb, Shortreed & Ross, 1986). Bitchener (2008) and Bitchener and Knoch (2008) summarize those studies. From the above-reviewed studies (e.g. Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; Sheen et al., 2009), we can infer that direct corrective feedback to some extent enable learners become more accurate with the use of linguistic forms which are partially internalized when a moderately intensive and focused approach is undertaken. Still unexplored, according to Ellis et al. (2008), is whether an intensive and a highly focused correction, that is correction aimed at one type of error only, on a partially internalized feature leads to accuracy gains. To this date, we still do not know whether indirect corrective feedback intensively aimed at a particular linguistic error in a learner’s written product leads to accuracy gains or not. Such was the aim of this study.

In order to explore the above-mentioned proposal, this study (1) looks at errors that are classified as treatable, (2) includes new pieces of writings, (3) adopts a genre that allows for self-expression and critical thinking, (4) individualizes learners’ correction, and (5) looks at a form that has been partially internalized by the learners.
Research Question

Does the provision of an intensive and highly focused indirect corrective feedback lead to accuracy?

Method

Design

A quasi-experimental design that involved two intact classes was used for the purpose of this study. Two groups were created - an experimental group and a control group. After a preliminary analysis of the participants’ first essay, and based on the one type of treatable error that occurred most frequently therein, the 21 students were randomly assigned to either the experimental group or the control group. Accuracy in the use of the treatable error was measured through a pre-test, given in Week 1, and a post-test, administered in Week 7.

The experimental group received highly focused and intensive error correction on one particular type of treatable error - either on the use of the definite article *the*, the third person singular –s, or plural endings –s. The type of error selected for target depended on the one most common linguistic error the participants had in their first writing. Error feedback was given in the form of indirect coded feedback for four consecutive weeks. The errors were highlighted and the type of error was indicated in the form of written feedback at the end of the participants’ papers. The control group had feedback on errors not targeted in the experimental group every week.

Context

This study was carried out at the University of North Texas in two sections of an English composition class designed exclusively for international students who are non-native speakers of
English. Prior to registering for this class, the students should have passed one of the state mandated Texas Success Initiative (TSI) tests, which determine whether a student who seeks entrance in a “Texas public institution of higher education to enroll in freshmen level academic coursework” is college ready or not (http://www.unt.edu/academicreadiness/about.html). To be enrolled in this course, the students must have achieved the minimum score in the Reading and Writing section of the TSI tests. In addition, the students must have passed the TOEFL test with a minimum score of 79 if they had taken the internet-based test, 550 if they had taken the paper-based test, and 213 if they had taken the computer-based test. Some students enroll in this class after they have successfully passed the level 6 Intensive English class the university offers to international non-native speakers of English students. The above-mentioned standards were not used as a means to demarcate the level of proficiency of the students. They were instead used to ensure that all the students in the classes were alike and sufficiently advanced in their ability to use the English language.

Participants

The participants in this study were initially 21 undergraduate international students - 6 males and 15 females- who had enrolled in two sections of an English composition class restricted to international students only. They were all non-native speakers of English, mostly from East Asia - the People Republic of China, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. The rest were from Sudan. Of these 21 students, 62% were from China, 10% from Japan, 10% from Korea, 14% from Taiwan, and 4% from Sudan. Depending on their country of origin, they spoke Chinese, Korean, Japanese, or Arabic as their first language. Most of them had spent an average of 1.8 years in the U.S. The mean age of the students was 20.4 years at the time the study started.
Except for two students who had not yet decided on the field of study they wished to undertake, all the rest came from different departments like business, accounting, music, international studies, engineering, psychology, and computer science.

In a background questionnaire given to them before the start of the study, all the 21 students mentioned that they had had some formal English training prior to taking this class. Of the 21 students, 33.3% had studied English in their native country, 19% in the U.S., 42.9% both in their native country and the U.S., and 4.8% in another country other than their native country. While around 76% reported they had learned English grammar rules and terms intensively, 19% reported having learned English grammar and rules sometimes during their English learning years. One student did not report whether he/she had learned English grammar rules and terms intensively or not. The mean number of years of training in English language was 6.8 years.

Concerning whether they had taken any English class prior to enrolling for the current class, out of the 21 students, 20 students reported that they had taken an average number of 5.3 months of English classes. One student did not report how long ago she had taken any English class before this one. It is also not known whether any student had some kind of degree from their country of origin since this question was not asked to the students prior to the start of the study.

At the conclusion of the study, one student who completed the pre-test and the treatment sessions had to be removed from the study since she was absent for the post-test. Hence, I was left with 20 students, 10 in the experimental group and 10 in the control group, at the end of the study.

The same teacher, a native speaker, doing his masters in English with an emphasis in creative writing at the university, taught both classes. The teacher had neither any formal training
nor any prior experience in teaching English to non-native speakers. This was the first time he was teaching an English composition class especially devised for international non-native speakers of English students.

The Instructional Setting

As part of the university requirements, the students have to take an English course as a core requirement. The linguistics and technical department that supervises this class describes it to be essentially communication oriented. The ultimate objective of this class was to enable learners to improve their writing ability. Students learned strategies- for example, brainstorming, outlining, paragraphing, thesis statements amongst others- that would enable them devise, organize, and write effective analytical essays in this class. In addition to learning the aforementioned strategies, learners also discussed some readings they had to do in their prescribed textbook. The students had to do the readings irrespective of whether they participated in the study or not since the readings were a requirement for the class. However, it was expressly made clear to the students that their participation in the study would not affect their course grade. Hence, their participation in the study did not provide the learners with an incentive, which Guenette (2007) argues might be a source of motivation for participants to do better.

Students also normally receive grammar instruction in this class; however, for the purpose of the study, no explicit grammar instruction was given during the time this study was ongoing. The teacher postponed instructing grammar to the learners to after the post-test was obtained from the participants in Week 7. He reported that most of the time, they spent time in class discussions of the readings and explanation of strategies as determined by the teacher’s class syllabus (See Appendix B). He also mentioned that if they did any other class activities,
like peer reviews, for example, the activities were devoted to looking at structure mostly, not grammar. In all, the students met for class for a total of 2.5 hours per week and 17.5 hours during the course of the study.

Target Structure

As opposed to other studies which have aimed at only article usage (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, 2009; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007; Sheen et al., 2009), this study targets three linguistic features- the use of third person singular –s, plural endings –s, and the definite article the. From an SLA perspective, all these features are less salient phonologically (Ellis R, 2006; Ellis N.C., 2006; Sheen, 2007). They are all known to be problematic for non-native speakers of English. For example, many L2 learners fail to provide the –s form with the third person singular. If they provide the –s form, they do so with plural subjects as well. In discussions I had with her prior to the start of the study, the program advisor, who corroborated this fact, mentioned that international students tend to have difficulty with the third person singular –s. Furthermore, as an ESL instructor, I have noticed that some students have the tendency to use the be verb before the main verb or add –ing to the main verb when they intend to use the third person singular simple present form. Examples from the participants’ writings include a Chinese is always save money for their [sic] future and … an old Chinese woman saving a whole life money to buy a house before she dead [sic]. That the simple present singular –s is a longstanding and late-corrected error in SLA is evidenced by the fact that Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) found that the third person singular –s form was one of the last forms to be acquired by adult L2 learners of English.
Plural endings were targeted for the same reason third person singular –s was. Learners tend to omit the –s when they intend to use the plural forms of nouns. The definite article *the*, on the other hand, was targeted since previous studies have shown it is difficult for learners to become accurate with this feature (e.g. Bitchener, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007). However, the first and foremost reason these three features were targeted was because the learners’ first essay had demonstrated that the features were challenging for them. Furthermore, the majority of the participants had reported that they had learned grammar rules during their formal learning of English. Hence, we can infer that the participants had already partially internalized the features under investigation for, as mentioned before, they had had around an average of 6.8 years of formal training in English. The answers to the questions on the questionnaire related to their grammar knowledge (See grammar questionnaire in Ferris & Roberts (2001, Appendix A)) revealed that they knew the grammatical terms used in English grammar and writing classes.

Treatment

There were two groups in this study- the experimental group and the control group. Feedback was given in the form of highlighting and written feedback. The learners got neither direct corrective feedback nor explicit explanation on the target forms. They had to draw on their knowledge of the use of the target form to correct the errors on their own. The experimental group constantly received indirect feedback on one type of error in the form of highlighting for four consecutive weeks. The control group, on the other hand, had errors other than those targeted in the experimental group highlighted. The type of correction the control group received was unsystematic and sporadic for different errors, for example, fragments, run-ons,
paragraphing, and spelling amongst others, were targeted every week. A true control group that did not receive any correction could not be included in this study since the teacher believed that it was unfair to treat the students differently, and the unequal treatment would be detrimental to the learners. Other researchers (Bitchener, 2008; Bruton, 2009; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2002, 2004; Guenette, 2007) have alluded to the ethical dilemma faced by either themselves or teachers who had to include a group that received no feedback at all too. As such, this study investigates whether learners can use indirect feedback to correct their errors and become more accurate with the use of a specific grammatical point if they are constantly given indirect feedback on that feature. This method has been used since Ellis et al. (2008) called for the investigation of “correction[s] directed repeatedly at a very specific grammatical problem” (p. 368) as oral error correction studies (Doughty & Varela, 1998) have done.

Instruments

For the pre-test and post-test, the participants were required to respond to a prompt given to them. The first prompt required the learners to write on some cultural differences that exist between their own country and the U.S. The second prompt required them to compare two relationships they have had - one in their native country and one in the U.S. Both prompts were similar in the sense that they required the learners to compare and contrast two ideas and to use examples to support their ideas. Moreover, they were related to the theme “culture,” which was the focus of this writing class, and required some degree of self-expression and critical thinking from the learners.
Procedure

Students from two intact classes were approached to take part in the study on the first day of class at the beginning of the semester. They were given a written and oral overview about the study, and all their questions were answered before they signed the informed consent form and completed the questionnaire that asked them their demographic data and grammar knowledge as suggested by Ferris (2003) and Ferris and Roberts (2001). In all 30 students signed the consent form and completed the questionnaire; however, after a preliminary analysis of their first essay, 9 were removed from the study. A student who has achieved an accuracy score of 90% is said to have already acquired the grammatical feature (Brown, 1973, cited in Ellis et al., 2008). Therefore, those who had already become an expert in the use of the target forms were removed from the study. Others were not included since they did not have any error in the use of the three forms targeted.

The study took place over a 7-week period. The first essay, the pretest, was written on the next class meeting day after the students had signed the consent form and completed the questionnaire. This essay was not given back to the students to correct or glance over so that a comparison could be made to see whether there is improvement in accuracy in the use of the targeted errors at the end of the study. Both groups wrote their last paper, the post-test, in Week 7. The students had 30 minutes to write both the pre-test and post-test. On average, they wrote around 200 words for both the pre-test and post-test.

It was decided that the teacher would supervise the class while the students did the writings so that the students would feel less intimidated. The presence of a person they already knew would also prevent them from having unnecessary stress which might interfere with the
reliability of the result, and it would look like they were having normal class activities as compared to a test.

The participants produced four writings during the treatment sessions. All the participants wrote one in-class essay for 30 minutes once a week for four consecutive weeks. The table below shows the schedule of the study.

Table 1: Schedule of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Task 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feedback on Task 1; Task 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feedback on Task 2; Task 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feedback on Task 3; Task 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feedback on Task 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Post-test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For these essays, the students had to respond to a prompt the teacher gave them. These prompts were based on a reading the learners had done in their prescribed textbook *American Ways* and discussed in class previously. The essays were similar in the sense that the learners already knew the subject matter. Thus, they could focus more on the language instead of the content of their writing. Moreover, the essays also provided the learners with opportunities to express themselves and produce the linguistic features targeted in their essays.

Just like the pre-test and post-test, the teacher gave the students the topic and provided them with a ruled sheet of paper to write their essay. In informal conversations I had with him,
the teacher mentioned he answered any question the students had before they wrote their essays. After the completion of the essays, he collected them and submitted them to me in a sealed envelope to correct after class. I then word-processed the students’ essays using font Calibri (Body) size 11 and double-spaced them so that it became easier for the students to read and notice their errors during the treatment sessions. The typed copies were at least triple-checked with the students’ original handwritten copies before I highlighted the errors and indicated the type of error the student had made in the form of written feedback at the end of the experimental group’s papers. In cases of doubt, I double-checked the typed copies with the original handwritten copies to ensure the error I was highlighting was indeed an error. For example, in one of the papers, it was unclear to me whether the student intended the noun *American* to be plural or singular in the sentence *American think time is important* for it might have been possible that the learner had omitted the article *an*, which is known to be problematic for ESL learners. Double-checking it with the learner’s original handwritten copy revealed that the learner had intended the noun to be singular for it was apparent he/she had erased the –s he/she had supplied to the noun *American*. To ensure consistency, I did not highlight a linguistic form when the idea or sentence was ambiguous or when the student had used an idiomatic expression like *on the other hand* in a sentence. The control group got corrective feedback on errors not targeted in the experimental group. I highlighted their errors too and wrote down the type of errors they had made at the end of their papers.

To ensure that other students did not see the written feedback in their classmates’ papers, I stapled a white blank sheet of paper with the name of the student on it to the essays. The same procedure was used for the control group. The teacher handed the corrected scripts back to the students for correction the following week, that is seven days later. The teacher did not explain
the errors in the learners’ paper. The students were left to resolve the errors by themselves. They had at least five minutes to correct the errors in their texts. The students had to handwrite the correct answers above the highlighted words. The justification for this step can be found in Chandler’s (2003) study and Chandler’s (2009) rebuttal to Truscott (2009) in which the researcher stated that requiring learners not to correct their errors after the teacher had identified them was tantamount to the student not receiving any feedback. After the five minutes had elapsed, the teacher collected the essays before the students wrote the next one. He then submitted both the corrected scripts and new scripts to me after the class for analysis. The learners did not do any writing in Week 6 since I did not want them to be prepared for the post-test. In Week 6, they only corrected the errors in the essay they had written the previous week.

Scoring

Depending on the linguistic feature targeted, I identified all the compulsory uses of the linguistic feature in the learners’ written samples. The number of wrong usage was considered too since the learners tended to oversupply the forms in instances where they were not required. Accuracy score for the three linguistic features was calculated as proposed in Polio (1997). The number of correct uses was divided by the sum of the number of correct uses and number of wrong uses of the linguistic feature. The formula for the calculation is represented below:

\[
\frac{\text{number of correct uses}}{\text{number of correct uses} + \text{number of wrong uses}} \times 1
\]
Reliability

Some critics (e.g. Ferris, 2003; Guenette, 2007; Polio, 1997) advance that inter-rater reliability should be reported because different people have different points of views concerning what constitutes or does not constitute the correct use of a feature. In order to test the reliability of the scores of this study, 10% of the papers were randomly selected from both the pre-test and post-test and given to another ESL teacher with ten years’ teaching experience to correct independently one month after the study had finished. To calculate inter-rater reliability, the following formula, as used by Chandler (2003), was applied:

\[
\frac{\text{Number of errors marked by one rater}}{\text{Average number of errors marked by both Raters 1 and 2}} \times 100
\]

The calculated inter-rater agreement was approximately 95%.

Analysis

After the collection of data and calculation of accuracy rate, the students’ scores were input in SPSS 18, known nowadays by the name *PASW Statistics 18*, and descriptive and inferential statistics were generated so that an analysis could be made. To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental and control group, a two-tailed paired samples *t*-test was carried out. A two-tailed independent samples *t*-test was also performed to compare the experimental group’s performance to that of the control group’s performance. Alpha level was set at 0.05.
Results

The following table shows the pre-test and post-test means, standard deviations, and the gain score for both the experimental group and control group.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the Two Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Gain Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be gauged from the above table, the accuracy score of both the experimental group and the control group increased from the pre-test to the post-test. A paired samples $t$-test revealed no significant difference in the accuracy scores before and after the treatment, for both the experimental group, $t (9) = -1.386$, $p < 0.20$, and the control group, $t (9) = -1.6$, $p < 0.15$.

To compare the experimental group’s mean gain in accuracy to that of the control group’s, an independent samples $t$-test was performed. Assuming equal variances, the independent samples $t$-test revealed no statistical difference between the two groups in how much they progressed during the course of the study, $t (18) = 0.03$, $p = 0.97$.

However, effect sizes calculated do indicate that the treatment had an effect on the accuracy of the learners. The effect size of the experimental group was $d = 0.46$, and that of the control group was $d = 0.66$. The result of the effect sizes indicate that correction produced a near moderate effect size for the experimental group and an above moderate effect size for the control group. These effect sizes suggest that there might have been a statistical difference between the
scores on the pre-test and the post-test, but not necessarily between the control group and the experimental group, if the sample sizes had been bigger. In other words, both the experimental group and the control group would have increased their ability to correct the grammatical errors targeted in their writings over time. However, this would not have been due to the indirect corrective feedback since the experimental group did not progress more than the control group.

Discussion

This study had as principal aim to investigate whether the constant provision of indirect corrective feedback on a treatable error recurrent in learners’ written samples ultimately leads to accuracy gain in a new piece of writing. It contributes to the knowledge base in that it shows that correcting learners’ errors each and every time indirectly does not lead to greater accuracy gains. In doing so, it took into consideration some of the methodological weaknesses in more recent studies in second language writing.

It is worth noting that the finding of this study was based on tasks that are similar to those required in most English writing classes. It looked at new pieces of writings that required learners to critically think and communicate their ideas by giving their points of views instead of carefully controlled tasks like picture compositions. Additional fortes of this study lie in the fact that both groups received the same amount of instruction, and I was not involved in the teaching of the students. Having another teacher instruct the class ensured that there was a lack of involvement from my part and ascertained that I was not influenced by the students’ actual performance in class. The writing samples were the only means for me to gauge the learners’ improvement.
One would perhaps conclude that those learners whose errors are continuously targeted would notice their errors and eventually become more accurate with the problematic linguistic feature while those who did not have the errors continuously targeted would worsen. This, however, was not the case. The control group did as well as the experimental group. The results of this study indicate that the group whose errors were targeted systematically and consistently did not do better than the one whose errors were not. Before reaching a definite conclusion, though, it should be borne in mind that this study too suffers from several weaknesses.

Despite my attempt to control for mediating variables, corruption of data might have taken place. As previously mentioned, the learners in this study had been randomized in the classes so that there were a control and an experimental group. The possibility that the students in the experimental group had shared information with those in the control group and vice versa exists. Having two completely separate classes, one for the control group and another for the experimental group, at two different times during an academic year - for example, during two different semesters - might help avoid the principal flaw of this study.

Another explanation for the lack of gain in the experimental group might be because the learners in the experimental group’s level of motivation decreased when they constantly received correction on the same error every time. It is possible that they knew that they would have to correct the errors eventually; thus, they did not pay too much attention to the errors indicated to them. They might also have sought to avoid the feature investigated in their paper. For example, I noticed that some students resorted to the use of first person singular and plural subjects and the use of modal auxiliaries to avoid using the third person singular present form of the verb in some cases (Appendix C shows the error rate charts for the two groups during the course of the study). This behavior is not uncommon among learners. Sheppard (1992) reported noticing his students
embracing an avoidance strategy too, and I am sure that practicing teachers would corroborate this finding. Those in the control group, on the other hand, might have become more motivated to do better when they received correction on other errors as well. As a result, they might have become more vigilant on the grammatical aspect of their writing.

The possibility that the participants in the control group might have sought input elsewhere - from friends, tutors, or the writing lab- to improve their grammar should also not be ignored. The teacher also might not have been able to avoid discussing the features investigated in the study if some student had raised questions about those features during classroom discussions. If such were the situations, then this explains why the experimental group did not fare better than the control group. Since this study did not seek to examine the motivation level of the students, researchers might consider factoring this variable in upcoming research studies to see if it influences the accuracy rate of learners whose errors are constantly targeted. They might also incorporate a short survey or a one-on-one interview with the participants to elucidate the uncertainty about whether their participants have had some kind of input that helped them to improve their grammar or have sought to avoid using the feature investigated. Classroom observations might also clarify whether the learners have gained input on the forms during class interactions.

Another limitation of this study is related to the sample sizes. In this study, the sample size of the groups was small. Thus, I investigated the targeted errors as a group. Future studies might include a larger sample size to investigate whether the same result is achieved when the learners’ errors are intensively targeted. Prospective researchers might also examine the different features individually to gauge whether L2 learners can become more accurate with them when they are treated separately.
In addition to having a small sample size, this study had only one post-test. It did not test longitudinally. Indirect feedback has long been favored by researchers and teachers alike because it assists learners in becoming more proficient in accuracy in the long run (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lalande, 1982; Robb et al., 1986). This study was of short duration and could not have promoted long-term gain. It is possible that the inclusion of a delayed post-test will shed light on whether learners gain in accuracy when one type of error is constantly aimed in their essay. To my knowledge, no such studies exist. Thus, further research is required in this area.
APPENDIX A

STUDENTS’ BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONNAIRE
A.1. Student’s background

Age: _________  Sex:  M  F  Country of Origin: _____________
Primary Language Spoken: _______________  Major Field of Study: ____________
Length of Stay in the US: _____________ weeks / months / years
(Circle whether it’s weeks, months or years)

A.2 English learning background

1. Did you take English classes before?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. If yes, where did you take the classes? Circle all appropriate answers.
   a. In the US
   b. In your native country
   c. In another country other than your country

3. How long did you study English? Please write down the number. Circle whether it’s months, weeks or years.
   __________ weeks / months / years

4. When did you take English classes for the last time? Please write down the number. Circle whether it’s months, weeks or years.
   __________ weeks / months/ years ago.
APPENDIX B

CLASS SYLLABUS
**Class Syllabus (Week 1 is the first week the writings were done.)**

| Week 1 | What we’ll do in class: | Reading Exercises  
Brainstorming  
What to read: Nothing  
What’s due: Personal Narrative (in-class) |
|--------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 2 | What we’ll do in class: | Paragraphs (topic statements)  
Reading Discussion  
What to read: *American Ways*, Introduction, pp. xix-xxxii  
What’s due: Reading Response (in-class) |
| Week 3 | What we’ll do in class: | Paragraphs (supporting statements & transitions)  
Reading Discussion  
What’s due: Reading Response (in-class) |
| Week 4 | What we’ll do in class: | Thesis Statements  
Peer Review of Essay #1  
Reading Discussion  
What’s due: Rough Draft of Essay #1  
Reading Response (in-class) |
Week 5  What we’ll do in class:  Outlines
       Reading Discussion

What to read:  *American Ways*, finish Chapter 1
 (“Achievement, Action, Work, and Materialism” & “Directness and
 Assertiveness”), pp.24-31

What’s due:  Final Draft of Essay #1
       Reading Response (in-class)

Week 6  What we’ll do in class:  Introductions & Conclusions
       Reading Discussion

What to read:  *American Ways*, Chapter 2 (“The
Communicative Style of Americans,” “Preferred Discussion Topics,” & “Favorite Forms of
Interaction”), pp. 33-40

Week 8  What we’ll do in class:  Introductions & Conclusions (cont.)
       Reading Discussion

What to read:  *American Ways*, finish Chapter 2 (“Depth of
Involvement Sought,” “Channels Preferred,” & “Level of Meaning Emphasized”), pp. 40-54

What’s due:  Writing Assessment
APPENDIX C

ERROR RATE CHARTS
The error rate of each essay was calculated by dividing the total number of errors by the total number of words written by the participants.
APPENDIX D

OUTPUT FROM PAIRED SAMPLES $t$-test
### Paired Samples t-test Statistics

#### Paired Samples Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.177</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>-1.552600</td>
<td>.3543243</td>
<td>.1120472</td>
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<td>.0982084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
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<td>.2999407</td>
<td>.0948496</td>
<td>-.3650146</td>
<td>.0641146</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX E

STUDENTS’ WRITTEN ESSAYS
Essay 1

Student KLB

Different countries have different cultures. I am from China, I came to the U.S. last year, and I found differences between Chinese cultures and American cultures.

The first different culture is the holiday. The most important holiday in the US is Christmas. People go back home and get together on that day. However, In China, only teenagers like Christmas Day because it’s a excuse to hang out with friends and get gifts for them. The most important holiday in china is the Spring Festival, which is also called the Chinese New Year. Chinese people think it is the start of a year. People have a 7-day holiday and celebrate together.

Another difference between Chinese culture and American Culture is the school. When I was in high school. My classes were over at 6 everyday, and I also had a lot of homework. I always finished my homework after 12 a.m.. I didn’t have anytime to do extra thing. I lived in my uncle’s home in Houston during the summer holiday. He has a daughter who is 16 years old. She went back home from school at 2 p.m. .She had a lot of time to do what she wanted after school. She plays violin very well. I studied piano when I was a child, but I stopped practicing when I entered junior middle school because of too much homework.

These are two different cultures I found between America and China. I think I can find more in the future.

250 words
It is interesting to compare two different countries’ culture. And there are many valuable informations and ideas that each countries has. America and my native Korea have different cultures. what they pursue and have to do are very different.

In Korea, all most all teenagers of above eighteen years old live with their parents. It doesn’t mean that they are dependent, or they are lazy. But rather, living with their parents is more ethic idea. They live there to have relationships and to do the roles as what children are supposed to do. Even if they get old, some children live with their parents. Also, not because the parents are trying to get benefits from their sons and daughters but to live together and share happiness together. ‘They have limited life time so why don’t we use them together?’ is the idea.

In other hand American teenagers are more independent most of them leave their parents at age of eighteen. They are not cold-hearted, it is just the way they do. They get out and experience the society early and gets more responsible as a citizen of the United States. Even they get old, they do not live with their parents because their parents value more freedom of their children than their wants. It is a sacrifice for them.

Therefore each culture has its goods and bads Not all American cultures are good and not all Korean cultures are good neither. So what we need to do is simple, we just basically need to learn advantage of each cultures and mix them well. Then we would probably be a better person and furthermore, a better citizen of the world.
Different countries have different culturals which depend on the history, believes and so on. People can feel the differences of culture directly. When they live in another country. Western cultural is more open in some way. On the other hand, eastern cultural is a little bit close, like China. For instance, Asians always express their emotions indirectly. They never say “I love you” or “I miss you” to family memebers. The parents use their own way to love and care about their children. An asian bid is also suitable for this situation without the words of love.

The level of freedom can reflect the difference of cultural sometimes. In U.S., there are many public channels which aren’t support for the national government. They say want they want to say and post their anger of government. However, the public media is belong to the government in China. chinese can’t use individual opinions to instead of official opinions in public, because a chinese should show more respect to the government.

Since a human emerged in the earth, he tried to survive with the nature. He provided offsprings. As population of humans increases, they also develop the culture, the way of living. Because of different environment between nations, such as climate or vegitation, each countries own their native culture to survive. The U.S and Korea also have their own cultures. Especially, the origin of the U.S brought significant different culture from not only Korea, but also other countries.

The first thing that different between the U.S and Korea is, the way of speaking. Korean has formal way even in colloquial. so I could not get used to speak to adult in the U.S. For
example somehow I felt impolite to say “Hi.” so I always said “Hello.” In Korea, etiquette considers very important, because of some beliefs. However in the U.S, people respect each other no matter age or gender. (in my opinion).

So far, I learned through the U.S history, the U.S has formed by people who eagered freedom. If Koreans mostly follow the culture they are used to, Americans ask “why?” against it. which means, Americans hold their opinion very strongly. Sometimes. I could not understand about debate between teacher & student. It was hard to me to critical against what I learned.

I think people from other country getting culture shock in the US because it againsts what they used to. From long history with culture formed

239 words

Student ALZ

Although China has a long history with it’s own special culture, it is now just becoming similar with U.S. However, there are still some cultural differences between these two countries. To my point of view, Americans are like children, whereas Chinese are adults.

Children are childish, self center, and happy just like Americans. They care about themselves very much, going to the parties all the time, talking about superstars. They do not really care about the world outside, and they are happy with who they are. Enjoying their lives as children.

Chinese who are acting like adults are different from children. They are told to study hard as quickly as they can listen and speak. They are pushed to learn lots of different kinds of study by their parents all the time. Chinese know that they should not waste their lives to play, they must work hard to survive because of the large population in China.
Therefore, if one day a Chinese comes to America and meet an American, what is going to happen? The child won’t understand the adult, and the adult find the child too childish. Maybe that’s where the culture shock starts.

195 words

Student GFZ

I come from China- a very old country. Our culture can be traced back to 5000 years ago. During such a long period of time, China has built distinct culture from other countries. We have lots of traditions, customs, rules and so on.

Christmas is one of the most important holiday in America. Americans celebrate new year in christmas; however, Chinese’s new year is ofter occur during Feburary. The exact date varies every year. Chinese have their own specific way to calculate the date. I can’t spend chinese new year celebration with my family after coming to United State. That’s really make me very sad.

American people tend to speak more directly than Chinese. Americans just talk about what come to their brain when they talk; on the other hand, Chinese like to talk in a humble way. For example, an American and a Chinese are praised by their manager because of excellent work they have done. The American may say thank you very much directly and he does made a lot of effort on it whereas the chinese may say no, you overpraised me, please correct my mistakes and I still have lots of to learn. That’s our culture.

200 words
Student UDR

Every country has special culture and different traditions because of history and area, and culture can show a nation’s spirit and civilization. China, which has over 5,000 years’ history, is my hometown. China has various culture because we have 56 nations, and so many traditions are famous all over the world. In the other hand, America, which is the core of the politic and business, is my second hometown. America also mix of many nations and cultures. Even though U.S doesn’t have such long history, it also show the active in different ways. However, it really has some differnces between U.S and China.

Firstly, the food is totally different between these two countries. Chines food is the most delicious food I ever ate even though American food also pretty good. A Chinese also very cares about the breakfast, and people will choose different kinds of food to eat at breakfast. Food culture is very important in China because many business problems and arguments will be decided result during the dinner or Lunch. If the food is really good, maybe the business will succus. However, In America, I don’t think the food culture is such important like China.

204 words

Student BRT

Our world is small. With the development of modern technology, the barrier of travelling to a new country becomes weaker and weaker. However, adapting to a new country is not an similar work as easy as travelling. The first barrier put in front of the new mover is the cultural, which including many aspects such as food, the way of thinking, habits and arts. Now, let’s talk about some cultural differences between the U.S. and China.
Firstly, the food is one of an obvious difference between US and China. As we all know, hamburger accounts for a large number of percentages in American food. The method of fry consist of almost the whole American food. Besides, usually American food only need 1-2 plates to hold food. However, the characters of Chinese food are in contrast. On the one hand, the methods of cooking in Chinese food are various. For example, if a Chinese want to cook a piece of chicken, there’s a plenty of cooking method can be choose. On the other hand, Chinese use more plates or bouts to put foods also.

Student MMP

Sudan is one of the largest Countries in Africa, where I was Born and grew up and reached the 20th of my age. Some people discribed Sudan as the gate of Arab People to East and Middle Africa Long time ago, carving a new culture, religion, Language and traditions to my country Sudan.

As a result of this immigration, all the lives was changed, they mix with the natives and create a new Generation in Sex, culture and believes.

Islam is the main Religion along with Arabic Language, So all the culture was built and based on those two things.

United States is a Large country too, but the immigrants this time came from europe, (…..)Brining with them a different culture which was going now.

One of the most differences Exist between the U.S and Sudan is the religion. Islam is the main Religion in Sudan and Christian is the most one one U:S.
In addition, language is different two, in Sudan Arabic is the main language beside a hundred of local language running on between groups, and in U.S English is the main. finally, the dress is totally different between Sudan and U.S. In Sudan we have a national dress (Jalabiya)

202 words

Student CYZ

Culture Difference between the U.S. and Japan

I have been in Texas for 14 months, and I have felt a lot of culture differences between the U.S. and Japan since I started staying here. The biggest culture difference is food.

In my country, most people prefer to eat rice than bread or pancake as a breakfast. However, I feel that Americans like bread or pancake. In fact, when I went to a restaurant to have a breakfast in the U.S. The restaurant didn’t have rice as a breakfast menu. Also, I feel that Americans don’t eat vegetables as much as Japanese. As the example which I mention before, There were a lot of meals without vegetables at the restaurant. There were pancakes, sausages, and eggs.

This culture difference made me fat and feel stressful, but I have been used to this. Everyone feels culture differences when they move another country or area. However, they need to try to accept these culture differences. Feeling culture differences is important for us because we can understand that there are a lot of cultures in this world.

184 words
Student JMK

Culture can be defined as the particular way that most people’s belief or behavior from their own country. Due to the fact that every different countries have their own cultures, it is very important to talk about some differences between different countries.

As a Chinese student, I came to the U.S two years ago studying in the American university. Differences of Culture shocked me when I just arrived the U.S. Americans and Chinese have totally different way to live their lives especially in the American college. American people are very passionate. They love parties. I have some American friends who really like parties. They have party from every Friday to Sunday night. Sometimes they just walk to the street and party with some strangers. However, Chinese people are kind of shame. I never had party with strangers in Chinese. Chinese people usually only have party with really close friends and families.

The food in the American is another thing that shocked me a lot. The first few month when I came here, I could not eat anything from American restaurants because of the cheese. American food have lots of cheese and Americans love cheese very much. However, Chinese people never put any kinds of cheese in the food. I know it is the culture’s difference, but I really could not eat anything when I just got here.

227 words

Student VRK

Cultural differences

China, a country has more than 5,000 thousands years history, is my native country. There are three main cultural differences that exist between the U.S. and china. The way of
people thinking is the first difference between Americans and Chinese. Americans are always describe themselves as an open-minded, friendly, and superior person. They are more likely to have a small-talk with others such as a person who is standing next to them while they waiting for the bus. Americans also think they are the best country and the most powerful country in the world because they have the strongest military force and economy. In the contract, chinese think themselves shy, and they like doing things in the “traditional ways”. Somehow chinese trend to be less creative than Americans. Chinese thinking methods are not like Americans, and they are not thinking in a directly way. Another difference between Chinese and Americans is the religion. Most of the Americans are christens or Cathlicas. However, most of the chinese believe Daolism or buddlism. Nevertheless, mixing religion now is very common in bothe china and American which is made by golbalization. The other difference is the food. Chinese spend a lots of time and money on their food. They think eating is the most important part of a person’s life, and they pay a lots of attention on the diversity of their food, the quinity of their food, and the cooking methods o f their food.

244 words

Student CXQ

Cultural difference differs from countless things between U.S and my native country, China. The most prominent diversity are as follows as samples:

An American’s thinking is more straightful than a Chinese, she/he says decline apparently instead of a Chinese’s graciously decline in daily life. In addition, a Chinese is more conservative than an American when thinking, who is less open-mind treating something.
What’s more, an American likes toast food. However, a Chinese love and intend to eat fried food, regard rice as main food instead of pizzas and hamburgers.

Come to their belief. An American believe in God, But a Chinese maybe a Buddha belief.

The habits also have some diversity. During walking, An American will greet with anyone by an gental smile or an “Hello”. a Chinese normally does not say hello to a stranger when having class or in public situation.

The holidays differ between them as well. American celebrate April Fool’s day and Valentine’s day. An Chinese has the dragon-boat Day and mid-autumn day. But both of them celebrate the National Day of their native countries.

From all above, we could draw an conclusion that our culture distinguished with American culture to a great extent. But both of them share a characteristic customs.

207 words

Student SPC

My culture

I’m a Chinese girl. I had lived in China for 17 years; I think I know China well very. China have more than 5000 years history. It is a long time. China is a shinny start in Asia. Therefore, Chinese very proud of themselves.

First, I’d like to introduce Chinese food. Almost everyone in the world know Chinese food. The tasty, the color and the smile are vey good. Some Chinese people like spacie food, some not. The north of china like noodles, and the south of China like rice. Every food in China has to be cooked; however, in the U.S. people eat most of thing uncooked like salad etc.
Second, the way people live in China have difference between people live in the U.S. Chinese have a saying: work harder and live better. Chinese people keep saving money to let life become better. They don’t enjoy their lives, just think working and making money are their duties. However, Americans like to enjoy their lives. In China, we have a joke, an old Chinese woman saving a whole life money to buy a house before she dead. However, an old American pay all her load back before she dead, and she enjoyed her house for more than 40 years.

212 words

Student HGY

Every country has their own unique culture, therefore, a normal thing between two different countries is culture shock. Also, culture can be divide some classify, which are eating habit and lifestyle.

Eating habits are usual things in culture shock. For example, I am a Taiwanese, and I had lived in my country for 20 years. However, I am living U.S now. I discover Americans usually eat fast food and sweet food which are totally different with my country’s. The eating habit in Taiwan is that most food cooked with oil or fried. Even I have been living in U.S for 2 years. I still cannot adapt in U.S eating habits.

The other culture shock is life style. In U.S, most stores closed at 8 o’clock, but in Taiwan, a store close normally at 11 o’clock. So people who live in Taiwan can find a fun in the night. There are big differences.

153 words
There are lots of cultural differences between the U.S. and China. In my opinion, there are three cultural differences between the U.S. and China: language, food, and lifestyle.

The most important difference for me is language. I don’t think it is easy for Chinese to study English. For example, only one English word can have many different meanings. You must use the correct meaning in your essay; however, you will miss the point. Because I was born in Beijing, I can speak and write Chinese easily and correctly.

Not only the language is different, but also food is different. In China, we always eat hot food and lots of vegetables. In America, we just eat fast food and meat. For example, I got 15 bls in America because I ate lots of cheese and meat. However, when I went to China for holidays, I lost weight. Americans like drinking coffee, and Chinese like drinking tea.

On the other hand, lifestyle is different too. In China, we always use subways, bikes, and buses to work. In America; the most important transport is car. We always walk a lot in China, however, in America, we always seat in car.

Language, food, and lifestyle are cultural differences between the U.S. and China. Although sometimes they make some troubles for me, I can solve them.

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Cultural Differences

My native country is Japan and it has many cultural differences from the U.S. Although both countries have had a huge influence on each other, the way they were developed is completely different and resulted in two very different countries.
First of all, history of the U.S. is comparatively short than Japan. Due to geographical features, Japan has developed its original culture heavily depending on oceans. On the other hand, the U.S. is a new country with mixed cultures from all over the world with various race, religion, and traditions.

The way people act is different also. Japanese tend to have busier life and be more strict and Americans tend to have more slower life and be more relaxed. You can clearly see the difference when it comes to being on time.

Student BLC

There are some cultural differences that exist between the U.S. and China. Take the Japan for example, the Japanese foods are more healthy than other countries, such as Sushi, Sashami, Vasabi etc... In some traditional festivels, A Japanese will wear Kimono, a kind of Japanese tradition closth, and with him/her family to watch fireworks.

In Korea, also, people have some unbelievable triditions. For instance, a Korean will be asked him/her age in first time. Base on Korean traditions, people must respect people who are older then them and take their words serously when they are talking.

Student CTB

U.S. and my native country have many different cultural differences. These cultural differences affect me a lot. The differences between U.S and Taiwan are food, teaching style, and hobbits.
Food is the biggest differences for me. Americans eat fast food and frozen food a lot. Therefore, when I do not want to eat those, and I want to save money for eating in restaurant, I have to cook by myself. In Taiwan, we have different choices of food in outside, and the food is usually cheaper than the food in America. Consequently, food is the biggest cultural difference that I still can not get used to it.

Second one is the hobbits. Almost every store closes before 9:00 in Denton. After that people have very little choice to go. However, in Taiwan, a lot of our stores. usually open untial mid-night, so I don’t usually get bored at the late night. On the other hand, the good point in Denton is that I can focus on study, which is the main point that come to U.S.A.

The third difference is the teaching style. We tend to give a lot of tests to a student. However, professors in America like a student to do a research paper. I cannot judge that which way is better than the other, but I still have troubles in doing research papers because I did not usually do research papers in Taiwan. Therefore, teaching style is the third cultural differences between Taiwan and the U.S.

Student QBB

Cultural Differences

Having been in the U.S. for one year, I’ve found there are many cultural differences between China and the U.S.. There are different races, different habits and different religions between two countries.
Firstly, the race between the U.S. and China is different. All of Chinese people have yellow skin, black hair and black eyes, yet in the U.S, there are many different races, like Europe- Americans, Africa- Americans and native Americans.

Secondly, the habits between a Chinese and an American are different, especially eating habits. Chinese foods are various, they contain many kinds of flavors. American food is more likely to be defined as burgers, pizza and fast food, which contains more calories. My friend had gained forty pounds in three months after she came to America; therefore, many people think American foods are unhealthy. Finally, there are lots of differences in religion beliefs between two countries. In the U.S., most Americans are Christian who believes in Jesus. However, in China, many people are Buddhist, but now more and more Chinese become Christian.

Essay 2

Student BLC

Most of international students have obstacles when they start to study in a foreign country. In the U.S., eighty percent of Chinese students have problems with American foods. Different from others, I don’t think the American foods as awful as they said. However, one thing which shocked me since I came to the U.S. is about making friends, which doesn’t mean I have problems with making friends, because a American person seems not enthusiasm with people from other counties, so we have to make friends with people who speak some language as me. It will not be for improving English. Therefore, I should speak more English per day so that I can get used to American’s lifestyle quickly.
Student VRK

One obstacle that I had to overcome since I came to the U.S. is the way of speaking. Of course English is not our mother tongue; therefore, every international student somehow has problem with the language. However, the way of speaking for me is more likely described as a communication obstacle or how to speak like an American. Speaking like Americans not only means using slangs correctly or having a perfect “native accent” but also means saying things in American ways.

Making American friends, watching American TV shows and reading books about American culture are three ways which help me a lot to overcome this obstacle. From hanging out with my American friends, I get a chance to learn their culture and the way of communication. Americans are frankly. They are not afraid of showing emotions, and they like to share their story or feeling to others. That’s not means they need everyone to agree their idea. That’s just the way how their socialized. From that experience I learn that being independent and keeping your own style is very important. Right now I would like to know American culture than I first came here.

195 words

Student MMP

Getting in the American life system is one of the most obstacle I had to overcome when I came to United State two years ago. the big difference of the life way between united state and the country where I came from, and to understand and be familiar with this life I had to do so many things, one of those thing is to ask. I started asking my friend who had hosted me about the main concepts I have to know to deal with people first, and to help me to start my own life. On
other hand I cared about rules and regulation in this country, what I have to do and what not, and by the time I learned more and still learning farm my every day life.

Since I got my own life and started my first job, so many perception of American culture was changed. I talked to American people about my observation, and when I got answers it became clear to me and gave me to understand the American culture and know more about their habits, believes and their life concept.

As a conclusion of my experience through the last two years, I think that the easy was to understand a nation culture is to live with them and learn from them how they live, eat ,Dress, talk and deal.

226 words

Student CXQ

As it known to all that U.S is a country with friendly customs. They greeting every days. and regard friend with their sincerely inner heart. Since I just arrived in US for one month, I have to overcome countless problem and obstacles. Their culture differ from my motherland country. In my opinion, perhaps the most obstacles is the way that I express my idea.

Americans love to express their thinking assertively, on the contrary, Chinese prefer to express undirectly. Therefore, if I am not agree with my roomate habit, I never say anything about them in my previous university. And we never greeting each other when we come back to room from classroom. What’s more, if neibouhood make lots of noise so that we cannot go to sleep, we normally dislike to complain in front of them because of “face.”

In US, everything turns around. Neighbours sometimes stick a paper on our door of room says their “little requirement” such as “don’t forget to turn off light” And my roomate would directly
say to me that I should be quiet tomorrow since I have to get up early. There loyal warming make relationship more friendly and happily. From now on. I will be do my best to overcome such habits so that we could understand each other.

Overall, those kinds of things make me percept the way of their culture. That is assertively and directly, which is extremely distinguish with the way in China.

244 words

Student SPC

When I came to the U.S, I was a 17 years old girl, with no social experience. Before I came here, I have been stayed in school for 12 years. My parents protected me very well. After I went to the U.S, everything changed. I have to become independent.

The most obstacle I had since I came to the U.S was finding a roommate. My ex-roommate broke our contract; I had to find a roommate immediately, otherwise, I had to pay all rent fee which I can’t afford it. Therefore, I began the finding trip. I told every friend as I can. After couple of days, still no result, I became more worried about that. Finally, A friend called me that she knew someone was looking for a roommate; I called that girl, she said she wanted someone can move into her Apt, I gave up. After that, I received many calls, but still no result. Happy, upsad, Happy again and upsad again. I feel very disappointted. I never thought about living in a foreign country can be that hard. When people feel sad, they can’t fell pity about themselves because it can make things worse. I’m still lucky, I got a girl who can be my roommate. After I had this obstacle, I became stronger. I realize every thing can be pass out if I keep stronge.

230 words
**Student HGY**

Some people dream going to abord to study or experience a different life. Studying in U.S is my dream, and before I came to U.S, I was exciting everything about U.S. However, I have had an obstacle since I came to America. For example, I discover most people who live in U.S are independent, and they are more self-center than Asian. In my country, most Taiwaness adapt in doing every thing together, such as shopping, eating, and working. On the other hand, most American enjoy individul life. I was dependent before I came to U.S, therefore, I got homesick, and felt unhappy living in American. However, I tried to make a lot of friends and told to myself that I can overcome it. Today I became little Independent and I enjoy American life.

133 words

**Student BRT**

One of the obstacle is the barrier of the languge. As we all know, every country have its own languge and its culture coming from its old history. Even the two countries have the same languge also have its own accents and culture. Obviously, if a stranger come into a new, unknown country, the obstacle of language is a huge wall blocking in front of him. Moreover, the problem of languge, which also means the lack of communication, can cause several different small problems such as continual culture shock, misunderstanding etc. For example, if someone have a language barrier in a country, he may misunderstand the native resident’s action because of the lack of communication. To sum up, languge like a backbone stretching to many small branchs, if you couldn’t handle it well, you will mess up everything.

As a sea student living in U.S.A., I also knocked into the barrier of language before. For example, once I come to the USA at the beginning, I go to the Mc Donald and try to order the
French fries; however, because I don’t know how to call french fries in English, I ever couldn’t buy the food I want. After 2 month, with the continual studing the English, I finally overcome it.

211 words

Student CTB

Language is an obstacle for me when I came to America. Actually English was always be a tough subject for me. Therefore, I tried to aviod learning English when I was in Taiwan. However, I have to use English everyday now. I think that I can talk to someone in English better now. How do I do that? I keeped remembering new vocabularies to help me overcoem it because more vocabularies was remembered, more information was gotten.

Inaddition, I learned that if you want to speak a good foreign language, it’s not enough just to talk with a native speaker. For example, you can read articles, learn grammers, and study new words. When more English words I can read, I understand more American culture. This is really open my mind. I am not so narrow anymore. I know different cutures have different living styles. Although it is hard to get used to American culture, it is more important that I can learn something, and after I back to Taiwan, I will treasure Taiwan more because every culture is unique and valuable.

181 words

Student UDR

Studying abroad is not an easy thing when people really live in another country. Language is the biggest and first obstacle I met in U.S. Communication is the basic skill for people living in this world, but I can’t communicate easily when I came to U.S. I lived in dorm, and My roommate is an American. We like to talk with each other, but we always
misunderstand. Therefore, it is really a big obstacle I have ever had. However, everthing has changed now. I can communicate with my classmate, American friends and teachers. Also, I can express my opinion clearly. The reason why I overcome it, is studying very hard in language school and practicing a lot after class. No tricky way, just working hard.

By this thing, I learned a lot of knowledge and experience. Everyone will meet obstacles or barries. Some people fell down, but some people stand up. Moreover, they find the way lead to success. If I work hard and have the willing to study, I can overcome such hard thing. Therefore, Confidence and hard work are two skills for reaching the goals.

I don’t think this thing has changed my perception of American culture. Before I came to U.S., I had already thought that I would meet some obstacles when I study in there. Nothing is easy, and don’t need hard work. Even though American and China have different culture, many points are similar. Therefore, I don’t think it changed my perception of American, culture.

I came to U.S. at July 28th, 2007. I remember this date very clearly because this is one of the most important date in my life. I was confident when I land this country; however, life is tougher than I thought.

I attended Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) first before going to UNT. I feel very impressed about this building that it is full of international students and everyone seems very excited. The classes get started at the second day. Everyone works very hard, so do I. Unfortunately, my grades were not as good as I desire. It seems like tests are more difficult than those exercises we did. My grade wasn’t good until the first semester ends. It’s kind of no passing. I made an appointment with my instructor’s to ask could he improve my grade if my
grade is around 68, 69 because as he knew, I worked very hard. My instructor didn’t say no directly but I can tell that he won’t improve my grade to 70 even there is only 1 grade difference. I didn’t understand immediately because there is a high probability that teacher will like to help hard-work students to pass in my country. My instructor said he needs to follow policies and rules of IELI. I began to realize that every American follow rules of the society make this country develop so fast. If I was in my homeland, although teacher grade tests higher, my problem still exists.

I have learned a lot from this experience. I study harder than I did before coming to U.S. I recognize that 89 is a B even though only 1 mark to reach an A.

For most of the foreigners who come to America, language is the first obstacle that needs to be overcome. As my own experience, language actually is a big challenge.

When I first arrived Texas, I had many problems to face in my daily life. For example, I need to pay for my dorm, I need to make an ID card, and I need to find the buildings of my classes. However, it was really hard if I could not speak English well. At first I was too shy to ask helps, but then I found that I must open my mouth to talk to other people, otherwise I could not fix the problems I had in my life. Therefore, I began to make some international friends who come from other countries. Although my English was not good enough, and I made lots of grammar mistakes, I still tried my best to chat with others in English. After few month, my English was getting better and better.
I found out that nothing is impossible if a person wants to try from this experience. In addition, I am glad I have overcome it.

It doesn’t change my perception of American culture too much. However, when I was trying to improve my English, I had a roommate who doesn’t like Asian very much, and she made me feel that American are not always smelling for real. Generally, the way I improved my English was a nice experience.

246 words

Student RWD

In 2006 summer, I came to the U.S as an exchange student by myself. Even though my host family treated nice way, I faced a problem in school. I got promise from teachers willingly help me, however, it was hard to follow school work, worse than I was worried.

Among the obstacles, the major problem was I could not catch well what teachers talking about. Especially in Biology, those science vocabulary drived me crazy. I could not live without dictionary. Everytime when my parents asked me about school life, it got my nerves.

Nevertheless, my host family cheered me up wi helping my homework. They always said me to take easy. In 2 months, my grade was improved gradually, I became able to homework by myself. A year later, I did not need dictionary except when I write essays.

Through this obstacle, I learned how to wait and how to study. Although expected result or goal did not come out, I take a deep breath, and look for any problem that needs to fix. As my English skill getting improved, I made good friends- able to have a good conversation. Therefore, I understood about American life and style.

I still have some problem in style of writing, such as word choice. I believe I can handle it sooner, as I faced before.
Student YHB

Solving problems can help me grow quickly, which always encourage me to live happy in U.S. I couldn’t image that there are too many problems of living in another country, such as lifestyle. Homesick is an absolutely obstacle for me. Even though I am able to take care for myself, I can’t control my emotion of missing family and friends in the first month. I told myself that it’s the time for your growth. If I still depend on my parents and under their care to live, I will don’t know what is independence. After that, I began to learn how to suit for the lonely life. Staying alone makes me to think deeper and reconsider my goals. I agree with that every coin has two sides.

Student OSJ

There are always some obstacle for foreigners to face when they are trying to learn a new language. For example, I had some trouble listening and talking when I just came to U.S. However, since I changed my attitude toward this problem, whole thing got changed.

As a Korean I had no problem in talking or listening to people, I could say whatever I wanted and there was no problem. But when I first came to U.S. It was hard to endure the fact that I couldn’t say what I wanted. Therefore I decided to go out and ask people; directions, words and anything. I used my body language whether it helped or not. I tried to make up sentences, nevertheless, they didn’t make any sense.
As time passed, I became more active, aggressive and hardworking. At the same time, my ability for English also developed. So I realized that whatever I do, I need to step up and knock the door, nobody is going to open the door unless I open it.

Before I came to U.S I had perception that Americans are kind. And it was so, but I thought since they were independent, they might not be social. It was actually opposite, they love hanging out with people. They rely on each other.

Therefore I will be active, aggressive and outgoing to achieve what I want. Sometimes I may not be able to do so. But the concept of idea is the most important. If I decided and try, I will eventually achieve what I want.

259 words

Student CYZ

An Obstacle I Have Had to Overcome

When I came to the U.S, I had to live in a dormitory because of my organization’s rule. It was an obstacle for me because living in the dormitory with someone who has different culture, different lifestyle, and speaks different language made it difficult for me to live comfortable.

My first roommate was an American girl. I was shy and couldn’t speak and understand English, we couldn’t communicate each other. She tried to talk to me, but I didn’t, so she might have felt uncomfortable. The second roommate was a Mexican girl. I was still shy, but I was getting better of speaking English, so I tried to talk to her as much as possible. However, because of her lifestyle and behavior, I started feeling uncomfortable. Unfortunately, I couldn’t tell her what I didn’t want her to do, so I wrote a letter. However, it made our situation even worse. Eventually I tried not stay in my room. I went to the library when I wanted to study. I tried to go
outside with my friends. But, I realized that I should try to talk with her. So, I talked to her, and I found that she just wanted to talk with me. I learned that communication is important. We need to share our opinions.

From this experience, I try to be talkative person, know people, share opinions. This experience made me succeed in my college life in the U.S.

246 words

Student KLB

I came to the US last year. It is my first year that I had to live alone. I thought I could take care of myself. However, it was not true. One of the obstacles I have faced since I come to the US is the careless.

I can remember it was a rainy day when I had to go to the registration. I met many different people who were also freshmen. We talked very happily. Suddenly, I found I couldn’t find my I-20 form and the passport which are the most two important things to me. I thought I left them in my dorm, but when I got back to my room, I couldn’t find them. I felt anxiously because I had to finish my register and go to take a test in 30 minutes. Finally, a student called me and told me he found my things in his bag. I had to go back to the building in the rain. When I finally got my I-20 form and passport back. I got totally wet.

Now, I am not careless any more. I always checked all my stuff when I left some place, and I haven’t lost anything after that day.

203 words
**Student QBB**

When I came to America, I had lived in the dorm for two months and had two American roommates. They were my first impression of Americans, specifically, black Americans.

My first roommate is a nice girl, she’s outgoing and really friendly. However, our living habits were totally different. She always come back to the room after 3:00 a.m. and use the microven to cook and take shower. I woke up evey night beause of those noise, and couldn’t get into sleep before she went to sleep. However, I had had class at 8:30 am everyday, so I was really tired everyday. Moreover, one night she brought her boyfriend to our room to sleep with her. that’s really unbelievable to Chinese people and we consider it as unrespectable. Thus ,I moved to another dorm. My second roommate is weird. She slept all daytime like she didn’t have any classes, and I had never seen any books on her table. The horrible thing is, she slept daytime, and used whole night to talk with her friends on cellphone. More over, I was distrubed by really loud sound from TV when I was sleeping so many times and she had never heard my words and complainning, which made me angry. Therefore, I moved out of campus and have really good time with my roommates until now. Yet I think maybe this is Americans’ life style, we’s better make ourselves to fit them, because we come to the U.S., sometimes we have to change our habits. I am trying hard.

256 words

**Student LKE**

Although I had many obstacles since I came to America, probably the biggest problem I had and still have ia talking in front of people. In my native country, we don’t emphasize the importance of public speaking as much as in America. I never had any training on doing a
presentation before coming here and was never good at doing it. However, most classes requires me to do a presentation of some sort. So it forced me to overcome my shyness and be able to present my idea in front of people.

I still have troubles when it comes to doing something in front of people, but I learned not to be so scared of presenting my ideas and be confident. I think that all the trainings of public speaking in American school result in most Americans being able to express their feelings and ideas to other people.

148 words

Student JMK

The biggest obstacle I have faced since I came to the U.S. is the way that people talking. Before I came to the U.S, I thought it was easy to communicate with Americans because I had learned English for years and I thought that Americans were friendly. However, Things did not happened on the way that I exected to. Although I had enough acknowledge of English for daily communication, is was not too easy to talk to a native American. The reason why this happened is because American and Chinese have totally different cultures. Unlike the Chinese people always try to hide their real feeling, Americans perfer talking to others with their opinions directly. Therefore, I was shocked when my American friend told what I was supposed to do and what I was wrong. However, I finally realized that is part of American culture. People are never hiding thier thoughts from you. It is also part of things I have to learn about and I’m still working on it.

169 words

Student ENQ
I have been here for 2 years. There are many obstacle things for me during these time, but I have had to overcome since I came to the U.S. Missing hometown and language are most obstacle for me in the U.S.

Firstly, missing my home is one thing that prevents me to study well in the U.S. I am the only child in my home, and we have two lovely dogs; my parents always cook lots of food for me and I don’t worry about anything. Since I came to the U.S., I tried to make friends and go to some place to relax myself. I find I can solve this problem well by talking my friends. They always listen to my sadness and we share our happiness.

Not only missing home but also studying language obstacle me. It’s difficult for me to study other language. I always ask my American friends and ask teacher for help. Also I watch some TV shows to improve my English. I can understand more America culture than before.

Missing hometown and studying English are obstacle things for me, but now I have already solve them.

193 words

Essay 3

Student MMP

Relationship out of marrage is one of the most unallowed Relations between men and woman in the common community concept in my native country Sudan. Strong relationships can be occur but in a special and regulated limit, and most of the time been controled by some assumptions and values. For example, during all the education stages the boys are totally separated from Girls, but this seperation is automaticly ended when they getting to the colleges, and the assumption for the relationship between them is to be during and arrround the college.
these relationship can be improved to a family Relation under the control of both families, so it can Not developed to a sexual or unaccepted relation.

Here in U.S. it looks totally different, as I Noticed, relationship between boys and girls can be Normal and clear, and also it may be infront of family members.

146 words

Student HGY

What are the assumptions in your native country? Are these bad or good? Every country has different value of assumptions, it may means good to this country, but not to other country. In Taiwan, tatoo is not commonly accepted. Most Taiwanese will treat the person who has tatoo on body differently with normal people. They think the person who got tatoo must be bad person, bully, or ganster; therefore, having tatoo is not considerable in our society. On the other hand, having tatoo is normal thing if you live in U.S. Most American tatoo may symbol an individual’s sprint, belief, or memory. Also, it could be a cool or fashionable affair. I believe that tatoo is one of arts, just like some people show arts on papers, but some people just show by their body. No one can remark someone in any ways, everyone has his or her individual beliefs and value. Just follow what they want.

157 words

Student RWD

Last night I had argument with my ‘friend,’ about I’m being rude to him. Before going over what happen, I’d like to talk about the different assumption of ‘friend’ in the United States and Korea.
I remembered that one of teacher in high school (I spent highschool days in the U.S.) called me as “good friend.” It was shocked that admired teacher call me in such way. Moreover, next day, some graduated students visited the teacher. And I had chance to join the conversation. Another shock was that the graduated students call my teacher with her first name, “Pam.”

In Korea, one’s age, gender (rarely), and position are considered as a really big deal. No one can call elders with first name or consider them as friends. My friend, whom I had argument with, felt bad about my attitude, no respect with his age.

In Korea, assumption of being friend is similar age, status. And it needs any kind of connection between people. However, in United States, everyone who has close relationship can be friends.

Nevertheless one can be a friend in ‘easier’ way in United States, the relationship of friend seems not deeper as in Korea. Because of individualism, very strong value in the United States, keeps each other having some distance, with another reason of respect.

I do not judge which way of relationship is good or bad. Each country has advantage and disadvantage for their own way. As I like both my Korean and the U.S. friends.

Student CXQ

It is know to all that American’s value and assumptions differ from each other. One thing, for sample, raising parents is everyone’s, responsibility when they have grew old, it is not proper value that send them to nursing home or somewhere else. It is against the moral to do so.

If a person do not do these things, they would be regards as not filial pity. Filial is the most important value in Chinese culture. In ancient times, children should not eat any meat during the three years after parent died. What’s most distinguish with there in America.
Student YHB

Individualism

One of the most difference between Americans and Chineses is the attitude of individualism. Most of the chinese can’t understand and accept the individual phenomenon in U.S. For example, many young American people who are 20 or more younger move out of their parents’ house to live alone. Americans think that it is normal and good for children’s growth. On the other hand, chinese parents don’t allow their children live by themselves because they consider that they are too young to live without care and protection of parents. If chinese parents don’t do well, they will blame themselves which Americans totally can’t understand.

Student SPC

Cultural Difference

The earth is really big. If you want take plane from Asia to North America, it probably takes 14 hours. Because there is a long distance between those two mainland; There are a lot of cultural difference between those areas.

There is a difference between China and the U.S. :Puerperal month. In China, after woman gave birth to a child, that woman have to stay in bed for a month, we call that Puerperal month. Women have to be carefull in this month. If that woman don’t take care of herself, it may cause some serious fever, after becoming old. Women can’t eat cold food, walk outside, or taking shower (that seems strange). After been a month, the parents should hold a party for that bady, after that party, the mother can begin live life as it was. However, in the U.S., after gave birth to a child, they begin to walk away, get some flash air. Also, some doctors encourage
patients to get some cold food or soda to stop painning. People don’t care much after gave birth. That is huge difference between China and the U.S.

192 words

*Student BLC*

If you buy some products from a supermarket, such as Wal-Mart, Kroger, or Target in the United States, you would always be welcome to refund during a period. People, therefore, often do refund after they buy it. And then, these products, which are refunded from customers, will be repackaged and resell to public. This is a strange phenomenon, but it is a wonderful system for customers.

It is never happened in my countries. Chinese is not allow fro refunding even people have a persuasive reason. The products will be allow for

92 words

*Student BRT*

One of the different assumption is the driving attitude between China and U.S. As we all know, Chinese is a crowded country and the life speed is fast due to the high speed development. The traffic always is poor and tooks people a long time driving. In order to get fast to the destination or get rid of the annoyance, drivers never let the passerby go at first; they always strive to be the first to across the road. However, the traffic situation in US is totally contrary. For example, every time the car will stop and wait for a while if there’s a passerby in front of them or trying to across the road. If we evaluate these two situation very shallow, we are easily to draw the conclusion that Chinese is more uncivilized or poorer driving skills than U.S; however, if we add the lifestyle and the fact of population to the extension of our thinking, may
be we will get an another different conclusion. Moreover, may be we egnore an important fact also, belief. As we all know, U.S is a very religious country and most of people live in there believe in god and thought the god always watch them; however, Chinese do not have these views. Probably, that’s the reason why the driving situation is so different either.

224 words

*Student VRK*

People in China assume, for example, that people who have tatooes are really bad people. They assume “tattoo people” used to be stay in the prison or some underground organizations. They must have some dark or unclear histories such as drug dealers. If a “tattoo people” goes to a interview, the bosses will automedically put that person in the waiting list because they think a tattoo person doesn’t have the ability to handle a office job. They are aggressive and uneducated, so they can’t sit infornmt of the desk for 8 hours and explain to customers which kind of insurances are fit on them. However, in the U.S, this kind of assumptions are less strong than it in china. When you walking in the hallway of an University in the U.S., you can see many student have tatooes somewhere in their body. When someone see a person have tatooes, they will not say something like ; “oh my God, You have a tatoo. That’s so bad.” In the contact, they will say:” You got a tatoo? That’s cool.” This reaction because the indivdulism of Americans. People get tatooes because they just want be look different.

195 words

*Student GFZ*

In China, boys pay the bills usually when they date with girls. It’s almost a defaut rule in China. Things like watching movies, having lunch/dinner and even shopping, boys pay these bills usually. In other words, when a pair of young people in a relationship, there is an
assumption that boys pay the bill. I’m not very aware of Americans’ way to distribute bills, but I think girls probably will pay a portion based on Americans’ individualism.

I have heard and experienced many consequences about boys pay the bill when they in a relationship. Be honestly, although girls enjoy it very much, they still feel embarrassed when they break up. My male friend also complained to me that why always boys pay the bill, he is still a student and he had not marry her yet. Whenever a relationship ends, he will lost a bunch of money. I think this kind of pheneomenum must can be studied based on China’s traditional beliefs and values. Traced back to 5000 years ago until even now, women stay at home to take care of family elder people and children; on the other hand, men make money outside home. Even now, boy’s parents will give girls’ family a bunch of money as a gift if they engaged.

I guess, American will be relatively more individually when they in relationship.

225 words

Student CTB

College is a general educational system in my country. In addition most of students attend college in 19-24 years old. Just very little person full-time working after they graduate from high school. However, in America, some people tend to work first before they earn enough money to go to college, so the average of the age of college students is older than Taiwan.

Parents in Taiwan like their student keep studying after high school. On the other hand, parents in America might want their childrens have some working experiences because working experiences help people to think what they really want to do, and what is the goal in their life. Working can also open a person’s mind. For example, a work place consists of different people for different spheres. It is a good opportunity to learn the things that they can’t learn in school.
Parents in Taiwan think that school can help a student learn anything he will use in future. For example, both studying and working need patience to deal with. They even think that if you don’t finish college, you wouldn’t be successful in working, neither.

Student ALZ

Due to the fact that China has a large domain, there are many difference between each area. Canton, located in the eastern south of China, is a province with it’s own special culture separate from other provinces. Therefore, Cantonese make assumptions against people who are different from them a lot.

The most common assumption which Cantonese would like to make is that people who come form all the other provinces are come from north. Cantonese think that the best province of China is Canton which is located in south, and next to HongKong; therefore, people from other provinces are northern, which has a derogatory meaning. Even inside Canton, if they see people who don’t speak Cantonese, those people could be assumed that they come from north.

Cantonese think that people come from north are poor. They always judge people with where they come from and what language they speak.

In my point of view, it’s a problem which exist everywhere else because people always try to be separate from each other.

Student UDR

China is my native country, and China has a very long history. Therefore, China has many assumptions, and most of them still can influence people in the daily life. Even though
U.S. also has many assumptions in the own culture, comparing these two countries have many different assumptions.

In China, for example, if you see a beautiful girl on the way to the school, and you see her for a while, they will very unhappy with your action. However, in U.S., If you see a girl for a while, not only will they look happy, but also they will smile to you. That is one of small thing can show the differences between these two country’s cultural.

Why Chinese girl think this is a rude thing is reasonable. First, the edacution in school teach them that is bad thing when boys always look at you. The meaning for that is they want to make relationship with you. However, in here is totally different. They think that is a proud thing when people look them, and they think that is a praise for them.

183 words

Student OSJ

Each country has its own beliefs and values. And based on the background, religion, and experience, each person has different beliefs and values. In Korea family is a big issue and it is serious and they need to be together. American family is more indepent and has tendency to be more free. Each of them has its advantage and disadvantage. We can not tell which is right or which is wrong.

In Korea, we have assumption that every single teenagers must live with their parents. And most of them do. As a parent’s view, they see their children as more vauliable people than them. They will take care of food, cloth and shelter for them. As a family children must live together to share love and enjoy happiness. If any children left their home and went out to live their own. They considered as bad children because they denied their parent’s unfailing love and efforts. A children’s view, they must obey their parents and treat them as parents. They are
required to help them. For example, cleaning houses together with their mom could be it. And doing simple errands are the examples of it. They live together to see and study their parent’s view and ideas. But they can disagree or decide not to follow. I believe it is a great cultural event because teenagers are the people who need the most help. They are the ones who are going to turn into children to young adults. And their parents who already gone through those, would likely to advice that would help them out. Therefore living together and share values and beliefs are absolutely important.

In other hand, most American teenagers are assumed to live their own. When I first heard of it, I thought it was harsh for them to live by themselves. However as I studied in America by myself, I started understand why they are living on their own. Americans are aggressive active and passionate. They value privacy and independent heavily. They step into the world and experience it. If you are about nineteen years old and live together with your parents. You would most likely to be called “looser.” From American teenager’s view it is their right and need for them to be independent. They will endure things that world make them suffer. And eventually they will become moral citizens of the United States.

The best way for us to deal with different assumption is to understand each other. It doesn’t mean we need to get persuaded but just to acknowledge them as culture and respect them.

432 words

*Student KLB*

In the US, many assumptions are different from China. The most important characteristic of Americans is individule. They believe freedom, and they make decisions themselves, even though they are very young.
One important reason of why americans are individule is the way American parents train their children. Many parents don’t think their children can take care of themselves. However, American parents train their children to make decisions themselves when they are very young. For example, my parents didn’t give me any money until I was 7. They always bought me things, but, sometimes, I didn’t like them. On the other hand, I saw many children bought things in the fast food restaurant, and their parents just stood behind them.

What’s more, I live with three americans now. All of them go to work every week. When they was 18 years old, they left home and made their own money. Their parents just help them to pay the tuition and the housing. They have to decide how to spend their money. However, I use money from my parents now, and in China, many students don’t need to go to work when they are in the university. Parents will cover everything for them.

This is the most important assumption from China.

209 words

Student LKE

One assumption that is different between the U.S. and Japan is the way to treat seniors. In the U.S., it is very common to treat people equally if they are standing in the same position no matter how old they are. On the other hand, in my country, Japan, we are usually expected to treat older people or people with longer experience than you have with much more respect. For example, one college student in a sports team is likely to treat others who have been in the team longer than he has with respect even if he is a better player than they are. There is even a possibility that he would have to be put with more burdens such as taking care of the team’s equipments.
I think that this assumption of having a respect and putting so much importance on seniors comes from hierarchical society that we used to have.

Student CYZ

In Japan, we have a different assumption of how parents treat their children. All parents in the world love their children, but parents treat their children different ways depends on different cultures. Some cultures may feel that the way of treating children in different cultures seems the parents don’t love their children. However each culture has different assumptions.

For example, children in America start living without their parents from earlier age than Japan. In Japan, it is normal that children go to college from their parents house, and even they live with their parents when they work. The parents in Japan prefer to live their children especially girls. They always worry about children and want to know what they do. On the other hand, most of my American friends live by theirselves. The surprising fact for me is that some my friend started having own car when they became 16 year old, and they went to high school by driving. Basically, I think American people like to become independent earlier.

In short, I think this assumption difference is because of not only culture difference but also the scale of the country. America is much larger than Japan, so they are likely to move a place away from their house. In Japan, even if they moved differet place, it is still near, and it is easy to visit their home town. I think both of assumption are good for children.
Student QBB

In my native country China, students consider the importance of education is kind of different with Americans. Most students in China do really hard work before getting into an university, but not that hard during the college life. However, in America, students doing hard. In China, we learned so much during middle school and senior high school. We learned calculus, organic chemistry, electromagnetics and so on. High school students always try hard to go to an univerity. And then, most of my friends said their college study is much more easier, and it’s not difficult to graduate with a good GPA.

However, in the U.S., people are easy to get into an university, but the studies in the university are really hard. Compare to China, what American students learn in high school is really easy, and they don’t need to try very hard to go to an university, because Americans consider the college study is more important.

In America, student learn more from books, but in China, people learn more about how to be sociable, thus there are more organizations in Chinese univerities. However, in the U.S., students get more knowledge during the university life.

Those are different assumptions between the students in China and in the U.S., we can’t say which assumption is more good, but just trying to fit it where you are.

225 words

Student ENQ

There are many different assumptions between China and America. One of these is smiling to people. In our country. We do not often smile to the strangers if just on the way to work or school. While, in the U.S. you can always meet strangers smile to you and sometimes they say hello or good morning to you. In my country, if strangers say “hello” or smiling to you,
you will feel uncomfortable because you think that stranger has some purpose to you or they will need your help. However, in the U.S., when strangers smile to you, we will smile to them too. I think it is just for friendly and just make you feel happy. This is the different assumption that makes different actions and effects.

Not only smiling but also talking in class is different. In our country, teachers do not like students interrupt their lessons. If you have questions or opinions, you can ask them after class. While in the U.S, you have free to share your opinions.

173 words

Student JMK

Many strong things and different experiences have appeared since I came to the U.S. The most different experience that I have seen is the way How American parents treat their children. I was living in an American family for half year. The host was a single mother who has a daughter going to college in New York. One day she told that her daughter usually works in a bar during the weekend and pays almost every bill on her own. I could not believe that because she is a very nice woman. I think I should have treated her own daught in a better way. I told her in China parents always take care everything for their kids, only very poor students have to work in ord to pay their tuitions. She shocked at this time. I told her since Chinese government has had one child policy for decades, child seems to be the most important number in the family. She seemed hard to accpect that child is the most importenton in the family. However, she told me that everyone has to learn how to be independent and how to make their owe desisions even for children. She could pay everyting for her daughter, but that is not good for her in her future.

214 words
Essay 4

Student HGY

Some informalities can be accepted in some countries, but not to other countries. Respecting for elders is a common behavior in Taiwan, and has been taught since people were children. If someone doesn’t respect to elders, he or she will be treated as impolite or not accept well-education. Taiwan is a traditional society, and most families follow the traditional way from previous generation. Each person is taught to respect elders either in school or family, which is important things to every Taiwanese. However, in American society, respecting elders is not as important as in Taiwan. Americans treat every one is equal, and they focus on informality between each other. It is huge different.

114 words

Student VRK

Informality is the most obviously signal which others could easily find in this country, and it becomes a representative flag of the American culture. In this case, the informality is not means rude or inappropriate. The informality here equals casual. They are dressing casually. In America people will see jeans, T-shirts, and jogging shoes this kind of outfits everywhere, and Americans are wearing them most of the time. From college students to the President of the U.S. they like to be casual because Americans believe that all men are created equal. No matter who you are you are just a part of human. Even though you are the president of the U.S., you are still a part of this group just like other normal people, and you still wearing jeans and jogging shoes. However, in China the place where I come from is not like America at all. Informality will be labeled rude. Our president should wear suit all the time. If we see some photos about our president who are
wearing a jean and jogging shoes on the newspapers, we will think that he is so unprofessoral as a persident.

193 words

Student YHB

Informality
The attitude of informality in America is totally different than that in china. Respect is considered at the most importance level when people communicate, especially for the old. Many Chinese teachers emphasize that students state the same level in school. Actually, the points of “fair” just appear in sharing different opinions or ideas. For example, you shouldn’t use slang while talking with professors. According to the “American Ways”, some professors invited the students who met twice to their house for parties with other staffs. This situation isn’t normal in china. Having meal with professors may happen after graduation. In the period of chinese in middle or high school, we don’t have that kind of chance to meet professors after school.

121 words

Student ALZ

Informality

The informality of America and China are somehow different. China has more than 5000 years history, so Chinese want their own styles of doing anything.

Although the using of slang in China is similar with America, the way to respect elders or others with status is not the same. Chinese also think that people need to take care of others who need help, but they don’t do it well. For example, most of the Chinese only show their respect to elders on the buses by offering elders their own seats. In contrast, American may not offer their
seats to elders due to the fact that there are not that much population in this country, but they will show their respect to not only elders but also every one else. That American know how to respect each other is something that Chinese need to learn more about.

One should respect others, then others will respect back. If one know how to respect others and his or herself, the using of slang, respecting for people with special status, and dressing styles won’t become problems. Otherwise, people are judging each other all the time.

192 words

Student MMP

Respect of elders is so important issue in my native Country, and every body concern about it and give it a great space in the common life.

Since we grew up the first thing our parents teach us is to respect others specially those elder than us, and they start practice it around the family first then the nabours, the relatives and Automatically past to foriegners out side the home. for example, if we talk to some body older than us the first thing is to be standing up straight and talk seriously and respectfuely to him, and we can’t raise up our voice or saying or showing any kind of arguement or disrespecet.

However, here in U.S it looks different, Younger people are totally free to say or to do what they think it’s right, and that may be with parents, friends, relatives or even the forigners. For example, if one of their parents ask them to do something, it’s so easy for them to refuse or to say or to show their unacceptance to do that thing, on the other hand, this can’t be happen in my native country.

Older people must be treated in special way in my native country from both younger and older people in formal way without any exception and totally differnet than the way older people be treated here in U.S.
After Korean war was over, there was a national campaign in Korea, named “Korean Time.” Since the U.S. army decided to stay in Korea, Koreans often had contact with the U.S people. However, there was a struggle between the U.S and Korea because of aspect of time.

In the United States the accuracy, such as deadline or meeting time considered as very significant, However, Koreans more cared about the “result,” more than making it in right time.

Nowadays, I see almost no difference of perspective of time in the U.S and Korea. However, now, I find that each country has different idea of speed.

As I mentioned before, in the United States, people assume the “accuracy” as very important, no matter how long it takes it. In the other side, Koreans cared about “speed,” how fast you can finish or make the work. For example, which country has the number one internet service? Korea has the fastest internet connection in worldwide. In other word, (in negative aspect), Koreans are pretty impatient. Nevertheless, it is idea of “saving time.”

In the United States, when I talked about this issue, people talk about the mistake that one would make by speed, and emphasize how useless idea being hasty.

One day, I had to fix camera in the U.S. I expected to be fixed in a week as it was in Korea. However, it takes a month to solve the problem, I usually complain this point when people blame about the speed.

No matter what, these are different aspects of way to save time in two countries.
Student SPC

Time as Resource

Cultural differences could be showed in anywhere. China is a one of the oldest country in the world; Like group wine, mellow and sweet. However, the U.S. is a young country, strong and firm. In china, old people always think studying was the most important thing. There is a say: study hard for ten years in order to be a governor. Therefore, people forced on studying. Spending most of their life to take that exam; Until now, most of people still think education is the only way to change life. They don’t want waste time, they don’t go outside to play and they don’t do anything beside studying. They think join social life is very waste of time.

However, in the U.S. most of students don’t just stay in room study. They always going outside to see the real world. Most of time they traveling or reading outside book, doing something by hand. Before college, kids only have few class on day, teacher always let them to join social life, such as: doing part- job or be a volunteer. That is a good way to build experiences. Americans always thing spend time to do something they care about is more important than always studying.

Which way is waste time, which way is good using time, it is a hard question.

223 words

Student BLC

Time

Chineses has a proverb which is “Time is money.” In my opinion, time is more important than money because we can use time to earn money, but we cannot usu money to buy time.
Time is always limited for an adult. Most of people are always complaining about that time is not enough for working, studying, or playing. In addition, many people can not relized that time are wasted in everytime.

However, for a kid, they have never worried about time. The reason why kids have much spare time is that they do not need to work, and they may not start studying.

Time is significant in every country. However, the difficult things is to control and use time efficiently.

Student CTB

Americans and Taiwaness have different informalities for the use of slang, respect for elders or those which status, and dress. Some of the informalities are the same, some of those are different.

First, both Americans and Taiwaness use slang in informal occasions because it is polite. In addition, slang is used by younger people more in America. This is the same in Taiwan.

Second, Americans call their sister, brother, or other relatives in their first name. However, Taiwaness don’t do that. We thike that the way to show respect for them is not calling their first name if they are older or have higher status than us.

Third, Americans don’t have to wear uniform in most schools. However, we have to wear uniform every day. If you don’t wear uniform, you might not allow to sit in the classroom because it’s very serious. Therefore, dressing code in Taiwan and America has big difference.

In conclusion, the use of slang, respect for elders, and dress are different informalities. After I came to America, I have to get used to it in order to adapt here.
**Student GFZ**

Informality between China and America

For the past two years of life in America, I didn’t find lots of differences about informality customs between China and America. For example, we use slang very often in informal places; we respect for elders most time and we dress formally when we attend conference or interview. On the other hand, Americans especially young adults use slang when they chat; Americans treat elders very politely and Americans dress casually in most time but they will wear prom dress when they attend graduation ceremony which so do Chinese.

If you ask me to talk about specific differences between China and America, I will like to the use of slangs. The use of slang is more often than in China. The atmosphere in America classrooms is more relaxed and warm than China. Despite of the fact that students make fun with friends and use slangs very often, we almost don’t say informal words in class time unless the teacher uses slang as well. Sometimes certain will feel uncomfortable with students’ slang that serious teachers tend to consider this behavior as a insult. In other words, the relaship between students and teachers is more serious in China than America. Parents and teachers expect us to show completely respect to the elders according our tradition. This is a demonstration that we thanks to those people who teach us.

230 words

**Student BRT**

Informality in the use of slang

In China, slang is one of very popular forms of speaking between people; however, using slang sometimes also is very sensitive and dangerous. On the one hand, if you play with your friends, using slang is ok and sometimes even can be very useful for relaxing the atmosphere of
the situation. On the other hand, however, if someone use slang uncareful or inappreciate, the consequence usually is very embarassed. For example, if you say some lure slang to your girlfriend while the elder is in there also, usually the atmosphere will be very embarassed.

In America, using slang also is popular and sometimes can be considered as a sign of humor. However, as same as in China, which slang can be used well also need to depend on situation. For example, when you stay with your friends and chat with each other, using joke always is the best way to talk. Moreover, joke usually cares from slang either. That’s the reason why slang is so common among peers. However, slang cannot be used in every situation. As same as the example I mentioned in the first paragraph, if you use an inappreciate slang in front of elders, elders will definately be embarassed and attach a label of “rude, inappreciate people” on your head possibly.

To sum up, although the method of using slang has a little difference between China and U.S., they are almost the same.

242 words

Student CXQ

It is well-known habit people in China respect for elders, no matter parents or elder siblings and coursins.

In ancient times, the status between parents or uncles and child are not equal, since the child should obey parent’s requirement whatever they are correct or incorrect idea. The parents rule everything of their children, Include, marrage, go or not to go to school (female could not go to school when in ancient time). Even now, many family think that we should obey them in every situation, just because they are my parents.
In China, young generations sometime will give their seats to old people when in the bus, or intent to help to take things of the old. People when they go upstairs. However, Western countries many not do these thing, according some articles I read about USA culture and habits. The older will be unhappy if you are motivated to help them take their stuff when upstairs, they will think we regard them too old or useless people. They want to be admitted to have strength. and they are healthy enough to do everything by them selves. These thinking idea really differ from China.

From the following samples above, we could draw an inclusion that cultures really differ from nation to nation.

212 words

Student OSG

Respecting for elders or those with status are important matter in Korea. Whether they are great people or immature people, we have to show respect. In United States you show respect in different ways.

In Korean language, there is a grammar that you use for elders and those with status. Whether you respect them in your heart or not, You have to use it. Any adults from Korea would expect any teenagers to be polite and obedient to not only to their parents but any who are older than them. But it doesn’t mean that they don’t have right to express their own ideas or thoughts. My friends in Korea would use proper and polite form of language and behaviour if they came to United States and meet my professor. There many ‘respect’ behavior, for example when you are having drink with elders and those with status, you need to hold your glass with two hands and face the back and drink it. However it is true that as time passes, young people started to ignore these or forget the customs we have.
Unlike Korea, United States don’t use languages for elders. Perhaps some conservative elders would make you say ‘sir or ma’am.’ However, Americans don’t use languages for elders. Sometimes they seemed to treat them as their friends. And it is socially acceptable. No-one would criticize you for it. For example if I don’t call my professor ‘Sir’, he or she won’t get upset nor he or she would get angry about it. You just need to be polite and formal.

My guess is that it is because of cultural background and ideas. Koreans value tradition and customs where Americans value individualism. There is no correct answer for which one is right or which one is wrong, nor there is no which one makes more sense nor doesn’t make sense. Each of them is very unique ideas and thoughts. We don’t have to change stuff. We just need to fix things and learn better ideas from each. So we could make better society.

344 words

Student LKE

Time as a Resource

Although it seems like Americans tend to be overly conscious when it comes to time, with various ways to save time, I believe Japanese tend to care more about time than Americans. Americans have came up with many products to help save the time and so to live a life more efficiently. Fast food restaurants are a good example. They came up with systematical way to serve people quickly and foods that can be eaten while driving. Japan has had a huge impact from american culture and adapted to time efficient way of life. However, Japanese seems to be more precise with time. We are usually taught that to be on time is to be early and to be late is to be on time. You can clearly see this attitude when you see how precise Japanese trains are. They operate without a minuet of delay unless accidents happen. As far as I have seen, most Americans tend to be more linient with time eventhough they are always trying to find a way to
save time. If my friends are to plan a trip to somewhere, they would look up the fastest direction and plan to stop by a fast food drive-through, but it is very likely that they will leave thirty minutes later than they actually planned.

To me, it seems like most Americans are trying to find ways to save time, so they can take the time to do other things. On the other hand, Japanese seems like they have to be busy in order to be efficient.

261 words

Student CYZ

Time

People sometimes feel time is going by fast but sometimes slow. However, time goes at the same speed for everyone. Basically, Japanese are strict about the time. Since I came to the U.S., I have felt like people in America don’t seem to care about the time as much as Japanese. I think the difference of the assumption of the time comes from the difference of the lifestyle.

In Japan, people usually use a public transportation such as a bus and a train when they go to work or go to school. In a big city, most trains arrive at a station about every five minutes when it is crowded time. Even though it is not a crowded time, trains arrive at a station about every fifteen minutes. This culture makes people in Japan think time is really important. On the other hand, Americans are little loose about the time even if they think time is important. My American friend never shows up on time. When I go to a class, many students come to the class late. When I go to a party, it started 45 minutes later than the time I heard. I found that their assumption about the time is different from Japanese. For example, American usually say “give me a second”. When they want people to wait, but of course people wait more than a second.
This example, represents American’s assumption about the time. Once again, American think time is important as Japanese think.

    In short, every person think time is important, but how strict about the time is different depending on the different cultures.

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Student QBB

Respect for elders or those with status

In some aspect, people have different attitudes across the culture, but there still are some same connections. For example, how do people look at elders or leaders of the country or some organizations and firms are somehow different and somehow same.

    Once I was in my American friends’ house, I saw the president Bush’s picture on their refrigerator. I asked them if they like Bush, they asked me to see what was on it, and then I saw a sentence under his picture: “I’m not a tree, I’m a bush!” That made me laugh and surprised. People will never see something like that can be sold in China. We can say how don’t we like the president, but not in public, and things can’t be published to make fun of the leaders of the country.

    However, in the same way, both people in two countries are respect of old people. On the other hand, Chinese can’t show their unrespect to their president in public, yet Americans seem much more free with it. That’s the different culture between two countries.
Student KLB

We have 24 hours or 1440 minutes a day. Somebody thinks we have a lot of time in our lives. Actually time flies. Time we have is not unlimited. It is also a kind of resources which is scarced. We need to use it in a right way.

When I was a child, I alway liked to watch TV after school. Sometimes I sat in front of the TV the whole night, and my father would be angry. He thought I was wasting time. I couldn’t understand him because I thought I had a lot time, and I couldn’t do my homework the next day. I know I was wrong. I am nearly 20 years old, but when I look back, it just likes I was in the primary school yesterday. When we grow up, we can understand time is a resource better because we have already wasted a lot.

When I came to the US, I found peope here pay more attention to time than Chinese. They always have their own schedule everyday, and they do everything on time. Some of them seemed to rush with time. In China, we don’t care if you are late, but in the US, some people will be angry if you are not on time even you have a excuse.

217 words

Essay 5

Student YHB

Directness

If people ask me to make a quick common for people who come from western and eastern, you will say that open and close are the characteristics for people on Western and eastern, especially in the behavior. I can find the difference in the manner of speaking, thinking, and treating people. I still remeber an example which taught me simply and directly that American is directness.
When I went to Donver, I was invited to a Chinese family who have been America more than 15 years. At the dinner time, the hostess deliver the food from me to others, because the table is too big to get the food at the end of table, but I rejected to get some food at the first time, for I thought that the old should have food before me. Still finish dinner, I didn’t see the food get back. Actually, I didn’t have some food. After that people told me that hostess thought the I didn’t like what her cook, so she didn’t pass the food to me again.

179 words

Student BRT

As we all know, USA is one of the most liberal countries in the world. The people over there always tend to be more focus on themselves and emphasize on own responsibility. Therefore, they are usually more assertive but less direct than other countries in the world.

On the one hand the people in U.S.A are very polite. Because of the education and value, Americans usually are very sensitive about own responsibility. While someone has to cross others’ behalf, they always will apologize and explain the reason for a while and then do it even it is a small thing. For example, everytime while the people need to pass by me but I block him at that time, they never cross me rudely; on the contrary, they usually say “excuse me, my I …” at first place and then cross me politely. However, if it happens in China, people usually directly pass by.

On the other hand, people in U.S. are assertive respectively.

162 words
Student HGY

Before I made American friends, I just knew a little about American, but not at all; however, after I made some American friends, something surprised me. For example, I had a party with new American friends, it was first to see them, absolute, most American would show their kind to new friends, and we started to play drinking game, like mixed all kinds alcohol together, and losers had to drink it, but during game time, some Americans just quit, and they said they didn’t want to play. I got shock because how they could reject something to someone directly if they didn’t like it, didn’t they feel embarssing to someone or apologize?

Most Asian would hide real emotion, and protent to accept something even they don’t like it. I learn rejection from my American friend, and I think it cool because I can show my opinion directly.

147 words

Student BLZ

The ways of talking are different between China and U.S. The American people talk directly and frankly. They often say something directly to their friends. Different from the U.S. Chinese people talk indirectly. For example, if you want to use some one’s computer, at first, you might say sumthing good in this computer and then try it. American people might say that directly. They rarely tell lies.

67 words
Student RWD

I often had heard about assertiveness of the Americans before I came to the United States. Emotional and sensitive, I was kind of worry about getting hurt. However, astonishingly, I am the “blunt” person more than others.

Definitely, Americans’ way of talking is different from Koreans’. Especially, Americans more willingly talk about their opinion. If learning the information (through memorizing) is important in Korean Education, criticizing the information is more significant in the U.S.

I did not have trouble with American’s directness. Americans pretty cared about me hurting from their opinion. As much as closed to a person, she or he watched out one’s language. (speaking).

Sometimes, some people, particularly asians, gain the courage when they’re with a group of people. Of course, my attitude also change depends on my circumstance (background.) Through feeling a support from group, people are tend to speak frankly. However I am in different case. Whether my belonging to group does not matter. Depends on whom I with majorly impacts on my speech. Because of cultural difference, the U.S. people are cool with assertiveness. However some asians consider assertiveness as being rude or thoughtless to ignore the other’s feeling from the speech.

Thus, I do not think I significantly felt any different of directness in here (U.S) and Korea, due to my personality.
Student ALZ

American, to my point of view, are not direct but assertive. What I consider direct is people who speak for truth. For example, if I make a dinner for you, and you don’t enjoy it, you will say that you don’t like it. However, American don’t do this often. People in America say thing friendly and nice all the time. American prefer passing positive information to negative information. Once I bought a bottle of bubble tea to my American roommate, who never tried it before. She told me she liked it after she finished the bubble tea, but who knows if she’s trying to be polite or really like it. Another example of American trying to be polite is when they ask me where I come from. Everytime I say I come from China, they tell me it’s cool. However, do they really think it’s cool? If they really think it’s cool, why don’t they ask any more questions? Perhaps American are polite with strangers, but direct with friends. Since I don’t have any American friends, I can’t show examples about it.

American are assertive because they think their country is the best in the world. Indeed, they are really not as smart as they think. For instance, every one know America has high level education, but what students learn at college are not really high level study. There are countries outside have great education with out the title of high level.

242 words

Student CTB

People in America are very talkative. They like to talk to strangers. They always be kind and friendly to talk to strangers. The conversation might be bord. However, the point is to share people’s daily lives and personal opinions. In my opinion, Americans like to talk more then listen which unlike Taiwanese. Taiwanese don’t feel confident to share their opinions. We like to
listen more. Therefore the situation when I talk to a American is usually like he keeps talking, and I keep listening. In addition, my English speaking skill is not good enough to support me keep talking. However, I actually like to listen to others’ story. I enjoy listening more than talking. Therefore, I still enjoy talking to Americans. The difference between Americans talk to friends and strangers is that they do not talk private things to strangers. They talk indifferent things to strangers. They just share private things with friends. When Americans talk with a group of people. They always can’t wait to share their opinions.

169 words

Student UDR

I have already came U.S for 2 Years, and I met some American friends in different ways. Peole, who I met in America, are speaking directly. They will tell me what they think, and that is totally different in my country. For example, One time, I have trouble with my social security number card because I lost that car. When I told one of my friend, he speak to me very seriously. In addition, he took me to the place to replace that card immediately. I am so happy, and I think that is so effecient. Moreover, people speak in groups are diffrently with one person. When we speak in a group with my friends, I feel not so good. The reason is I can’t understand sometime. They speak faster than the time they only speak to me. In addition, sometime they use the slang. I prefer to speak to one person.

152 words

Student CXQ

In the United State people speak to people more directly and assertivenessly. When meeting with strangers, they will greating each other as well.
When I just arrived here in UNT in a couple of days and move into maple hall, the neighbours often come up to me and shake hands with me very motively. What’s more they even sometimes speak the words “Hello.” in Chinese friendly. When come across a familiar friend, they normally greeting with “how is going?” “How are you”, or “How is your class today”.

When people have lunch with another in the same desk, they usually greeting each other and chat with others such as majors, nationalities or hobbies each other, finally they would say “feel free to have a seat in my room, my room is what number, welcome!”

In my opinion, Americans treat new friends and strangers the same, which is both friendly and passionately.

151 words

*Student SPC*

I’m a straightforward person. I talk to people assertiveness. Also, I hate to guess people’s minds. I have a friend; he always makes me fricking out. He do everything and say every words indirectly. being a friend with that person is very tired for me. He also is a doubt face person. He treat strangers and very close people dffererently. To strangers, he always being very quiet and very polite. He makes every person in public thinks he is a great man. However, When he with his friends, he shows his opposed face. He is a capricious person, and he is very lazy.

Once we were togethere to go a party. On that party, a lot of people were older than us. We sat together. When he talked to other persons, he spoke very polite, and his voice was very low. He did everything carefully. However, after we came back from that party, everything changed. He talked about some jokes, and his voice was as louder as he could.

What a opposed person!
Student VRK

In the U.S. the level of directness is much more higher than the level of directness in my native country. Americans are consider as frank, open, and direct. If people are doing something that they don’t like, they will tell them directly. They will say, “I feel uncomfortable while you doing this,” or “I don’t like that.” They want to let people know how they feel about something personally in order to make things clear. However, in the real life Americans are “way to too polite”. An example from the American Ways told a story about an Asian invited his American friends to his apartemnt to share a dinner he had prepared. Although many Americans respounded they liked his food, he didn’t think they really like it. When Americans want to refused something they will smile and say “I am sorry.” In this point of view, Americans are “cold’ and uneomotional. Therefore, many Arabs and Latin Americans think that Americans are “cold” and “fake.”

Student OSJ

In my opinion, most Americans are direct and assertive. Depending on situations and people, the way they treat vary. Americans are usually polite and pay attention to not to hurt other’s feelings. How they treat to strangers are in friendly mood. They come with big smile and speak gently. They talk in assertive way. They might ask personal questions like age, weight or looks. Depending on each person, one might think they are rude and one might think they are not rude. To friends, they get more direct and assertive. They might make jokes about you or make
fun of you. But most of time, it is just a joke. However, some people might see it as insult. And Americans are willing to share secrets and express emotion to friend. Sometimes they just start telling you those whether you want to listen or not. They are also direct and assertive in expressing their ideas. Some people would tell you that the clothes that you are wearing look unbalanced or might even say, you got fatter face-to-face. It doesn’t mean that they hate you nor they are trying to insult you. they are just making their ideas. It is true that many Americans fight about these directness and assertiveness. But they are trying to get more friendly to you. And they want to be closer to you.

226 words

Student MMP

People in United States are so nice, and this was my first impression when I Reached The united States, and with time I found that it was kind of culture or nature.

Greeting along with nice smiles are the first thing I got when I talked to the Customs officer at Airport when I arrived, and when I Passed him to the checking counter I also got the same way of treating.

In addition, the helping spirit was the common sense I felt later on when I started my common life in United States, and there was no differnence with one person than it was in group.

Moreover, one of the most thing surprise me and made me pleased is the special way of treat when they know that am not an American, and I really felt that they tryed to do their best to avoid making me feel I am a foriegner.

Unfortunatily, and because of my busy life I got, I didn’t got chance to get a real close friend, but fortunatlly the friendship spirit I got from all those people at work, accomodation,
stores and everywhere made me feel that all of them are friend and the are all treat me as a friend even if tha for Just moments.

213 words

*Student CYZ*

**Directness and Assertiveness**

Basically, Americans speak more directly than Japanese. Also, Americans are more assertive than Japanese. Since there are different communication styles between American and Japanese, I sometimes struggle to communicate with American people.

American speaks more directly. For example, I had an American roommate, and she complained about me by telling me what she didn’t want me to do directly. On the other hand, I didn’t tell her my complains, but I tried to show her that I wanted to tell her by acting. I never tried to speak. Typically, Japanese supposes someone to understand what he/she wants to tell without being told directly.

Another example, when a student came class late. American students say “I am sorry about coming late.” first then telling a teacher why he/she was late. However, Japanese students tell a teacher the reason first, then say “so, I was late.” This is a kind of indirect communication.

Americans are more assertive than Japanese. It means that Americans are more friendly. In Japan, they think people who they don’t know are strangers. For example, when a teacher says them to make groups in the class, it takes long time to make groups because they don’t know each other. On the other hand, American students can make groups immedately even though they don’t know each other. They then enjoy talking and knowing each other.

In short, I like American communication styles than Japanese ones.
**Student KLB**

In China, people always express their opinions in different ways. Sometimes people may think you are rude if you say they are wrong directly. However, in the US, Americans like to point out your mistakes directly, and it always heard not very comfortable. It is useful because it is the easilieas way to let you know what you should do.

I live with three American guys. They always say what they are thing directly. For example, I have a bike, and I take it back home everyday because it is a brand new one, and I don’t want it to be stolen. My roommates understand it. However, our living room is not very big, so my tires always hit the walls and make the walls dirty. My roommates don’t like it, and they say, “Hey, we need to clean the walls if you make them dirty. Be careful when you park your bike at home.” At first I can’t understand them for I don’t think it is a big deal, but I think they are right now. It is an easier way to solve problems.

**Student JMK**

I was a little afraid when the time I came to the U.S. I did not know how they would treat me since I was an foreigner. However, this thought disappeared as soon as I arrived. Americans are friendly. They treat everybody almost in the same way. They love to talk to people with their ideas, moreover, they usually speak to me with their opinion directly especially for something they dislike. I was not trying to disagree with them because I thought that would hit their feelings. However, I was wrong, I realized that Americans are willing to hear some different
opinions. They treat me just like they treat any other American people. I made lots of American friends.

119 words

Student ENQ

In the United States, most people are very friendly. In my opinion, I think American are directness and assertive.

First American always speak loudly and have their own style. For example, if you are in the student union, you can hear their voice from very far. Maybe they think that loudly speaking can make them wake up and show their mood. They also speak with their own style. For instance, you can easily see they use both verbal and nonverbal language to communicate with people.

Secondly, I think American treat us different between strangers and friends. For instance, in the first class, they introduct themselves. While next time when they see you, they will shake hands and talk to you exciting. They also can make fun with friends and hand out with them.

Third, American treat different between one person and groups. For example, for one person, they can just share opinions and talk whatever they want. While, with groups, they must have a leader and discuss with all of people.

171 words
Student LKE

Americans seem to be more direct and assertive than people from other countries as far as I experienced. Not that they are trying to be rude, but in general, Americans tend to say exactly what they want to say and make sure they are heard.

In my native country, it is a common manner not to express your feeling too much as to make others with different opinions uncomfortable. Also we tend to be very vague when making suggestions to others. On the other hand, most americans seems like they are not scared to express their opinion in any situation. My american friends are not afraid of making suggestions to me if they don’t like my fashion when most Japanese tend to say stuff not to hurt my feelings.

However, the level of directness and assertiveness changes depending on how close relationship you have with others. as I mentioned earlier, my american friend made the suggestion because we are very close, but she would probably not have said the same thing if we just met a week ago. also, if we are in a group of people at the time, she would not say it in front of others, but probably waited until she can speak to me by ourselves.

as a conclusion, americans tend to be more blunt than people from my countries, but the level of directness and assertiveness varies with the situation and timing.

237 words

Essay 6

Student CYZ

I have two friends who I can call them best friends. One is Japanese and she went to the same high school with me. The other is American, and she went to the same college, but she
goes to another college now. They are my best friends. However, there are some differences of relationship between the Japanese friend and the American friend.

One difference is how often we met each other and how it affect our relationship. The Japanese friend whose name is Chinami met me everyday at school. Therefore, we were always close each other. Meeting every day made us keep a good relationship and encouraged us to communicate. On the other hand, since my American friend whose name is Kelli doesn’t go to the same college, we can’t see each other everyday. It makes me difficult to communicate with her and get close each other. Although we don’t meet often, we have a really good relationship.

Another difference is how physically close each other. I think Kelli is much closer than Chinami because of culture. When I meet Kelli, we always hug. However, Chinami doesn’t hug. Hugging makes me feel Kelli is a really close friend and be able to trust her.

The other difference is how much I talk them about myself. I didn’t talk to Chinami about my personal problem because I was afraid of being hated by her. I really liked her, so I didn’t want to break our good relationship. On the other hand, I can talk to Kelli about all things without being afraid of being hated. I think why I can talk to Kelli about all things is that we don’t meet each other often. I don’t know why this situation makes me comfortable to talk. Another reason is that Kelli has a similar personal problem, and she also talks to me everything. She always tells me that she will be here for me. We really care each other.

In short, it is a fact that both my friends are my best friends. However, different situations and ways of communication make each relationship different. This differences might come from culture differences. I like friendship in the U.S. better than in Japan.

369 words
“Wherever you are, I’m here with you, we’re best friends forever.” My best friend Jia told me that before I came to the U.S. “Don’t care too much about other people’s thinking and just be yourself, remember I’m here being with you.” My friend Ashley told me that yesterday when we were talking. Jia and Ashley are two girls; one is in China, another is here in the UNT. They always support me and encourage me even though they have different background and they don’t even know each other.

Jia is a very usual girl whose family is not very rich, and she hasn’t experienced any important event”, Just like many Chinese girl, she doesn’t have very interesting life experiences. However, Ashley is a Taiwaness girl, she had lived in Thailand for two years and came to the U.S. when she was 15 years old. Her step-father is an American, so she has a green card. She has a lot of amazing experiences in those different countries, and she has a really nice family.

Those two girls are totally different, however, they love me in the same way. Unlike many other friends, they make me feel safe. I don’t worry about if some day they will disappear or leave me because of arguing or anything. They make me feel no matter how far we from each other, they won’t forget me and always give me the best wishes. I feel comfortable to share secrets with them.

Those two different girls, love me in the same way.

256 words
Student LKE

although I could not find any obvious difference between best friends I have in america and in my native country, Japan, I found a big difference with not-so-close friends in these two countries.

The biggest difference is the amount of physical contact I make with friends. In america, I feel like I am touched more than with my Japanese friends. Even if I am not so close to a person, he or she is likely to pat me on the shoulder or give me a hug. On the other hand, I would very likely not make any physical contact with a person until we develop a deeper relationship.

When I develop a close relationship with a person, I become intimate with that person in the same way in both countries. However, it seems like how we develop those relationship is different in the aspect of physical closeness.

148 words

Student KLB

We have different relationships with different people. We have friends, roommates, classments, and so on. Some relationships in China are as same as them in the U.S.. For example, we hang out with friends, discuss with co-workers both in China and in the U.S. However, one relationship is totally different between Chinese and American.

The relationship between classments in China is different from it in the U.S. In China, students take classes together as a class. Students in the same class have a same schedule. They stay together everyday. When I was in China, I knew everyone in my class clearly. All of them are my good friends. In constant, in the U.S., every student can choose their own classes. Some classes are very big. They sit between different people every class. It’s hard to meet new friends.
in an American class. Students don’t talk with each other. They left classroom as soon as the professor says the class is over. When I met somebody on campus, I don’t even know we are classmates.

I enjoy the time with my classmates in China. We are good friends. I also trying to talk with my classments in the U.S. I think we will have a good relationships.

206 words

Student ENQ

In my life, I have a lot of friends. In China, I have a sweety girl who always plays with me and share happiness and sadness with me. We got together to walk to school, studied together. I also visited her home to play with her. We enjoyed our students’ life. However, we did not talk a lot about our bad behaviors. For example, sometimes I felt uncomfortable with her because I did not like people touch my head, I felt angry, but I did not tell the truth for her. I thought we would break up our friendship, if we always talked our bad behaviors.

On the other hand, I have a good friend in U.S.A. She is my roommate, and we have lived together for 1 year. We are the same age. Of course, we have the same interest and same background. At the beginning, I did not talk a lot with her, but I felt she was a cute and warm-hearted girl; as a result, I talk more with her and when I feel bad or uncomfortable, I will discuss with her. I think we have already built our strong relationship.

In short, I think as I grow up, I can learn a lot about friendship, and I can understand my friends pain and needs. Also, I am always proud of my friends.

226 words
Student JMK

Many different things have appeared since I came to the U.S. I had different life’s experiences. I made new friends. However, the most difference that I experienced is the relationship between students and teachers in the U.S.

When I was in Chinese school, Teacher was the only person who talks during the whole class time. I, as a normal Chinese student, was always sitting in the classroom and listening to the teacher. If we had questions, usually we had to raise our hand first to get the permission from the teacher, then we could ask questions. Chinese class seems very mean and serious. Teacher in China is more likely to be just a introducer, Student and teacher usually do not have too much communication after class time.

However, this relationship is completely different in the U.S. American class requires student to participate. We can just speak out our thoughts and questions whenever I have them. Teachers are more likely to be friends. Students and teacher can talk about everything in their daily lives. American class always make people feel joyful.

That is the most different relationship I have experienced in the U.S.

192 words

Student GFZ

Today, I want to share some ideas about friendship. Be honestly, I have different kinds of friendship experiences after coming to America. The first friendship that I want to talk about today is between people come from as same country as I’m from-China. The second is about American friends and I.
I came to U.S.A. when I was seventeen. I just graduate from high school. I have to say that my most real friendship only happened before coming to U.S. A. I made a couple of very closed friends from elementary school, middle school and high school. We’d like to share extremely private matters sometimes which I did rarely in U.S.A. People are easy to be friends when they were young since there are few advantage conflicts. In other words, we view this world easily causes we treat people simply when we were kids. Things changed after we grew up. I do have friends here but they are not so close that I have not feel a sense of strongly warm relationship yet. We share trivial information like leasing apartment, furniture on sale and where to get a coupon. We play very boring games during parties and make silly jokes on boys and girls. We laugh a lot but we don’t really feel happy. People tend to be more individual than I saw in my home country.

American friends are more open than I had in China; especially girl friends. I don’t know why. I like them.

247 words

Student BRT

As Americans always say “small world”, it’s no doubt that there’s so many similarity between two countries; however, mo matter is the style of living or relationship with your friends always have more difference between one country to another.

As a friend, Americans usually are more direct than Chinese. That means if Americans want you to do a favor or to do something, he will directly state it; however, if that friend is Chinese, probably he will try to curve another way to talk about it implicitly. For example, assuming a situation that your roommate mess up the room and need somebody to clean the
house together, if he is a Chinese, probably he will talk about another topic at first and try to lead you to the final topic about room and then ask you to help him; however, if he is an American mostly he will directly ask you to do him a favor.

Student ALZ

Friendships

Friendships in America and China are quiet different. People in America are more self-center than people in China; therefore, it is not easy to become close friends in United States. Although American people ask each other how do you do all the time, they don’t seem like they really want to know. American are only expecting answers, like fine from other people. However, when Chinese people ask others how do you do, most of the time they are waiting for long answers.

When I was in China, I didn’t have many friends because I am a person who take friendship very seriously. I didn’t have many friends; nevertheless, almost all of my friends were my soulmates. Whe could show our true sides to each other and share those stories deep inside our minds. When I came to America, however, everything’s changing. People are buzy for social, study or enjoy their own spaces. Noone wants to pay attention to his or her heart. My dification of friendship is changing because of the different environment. I have lots of friends, which means people who can say hi to each other, but none of them is my soul mate.
Student CTB

The relationship between co-workers and I are similar in Taiwan and America. We help each other in a working place; for example, we cover each other when arriving late or making mistakes in a job. Facing to a boss makes us feel pressure, so we always get together to complain boss or chatting to make us feel released. We spend so much time in a working place so we definitely close to each other. In our free time, we go out together. Co-workers are just like friends. There is no difference between America and Taiwan.

95 words

Student UDR

The friends, who I have, are different between my native country and U.S. In China, I have many close friends, and we can hang out frequently. Moreover, we like to talk each other the interesting things which we met, I never feel lonely when I stayed in my country because of them. However, In U.S., it is hard to find such close friends. The reasons are various, but independent theory is the most essential reason. U.S people think that every people should have their own life, and it is hard to get close to American guys. Therefore, lonely still surround to me even though I have some friends in here.

112 words

Student YHB

Relationship

There is a big difference in the definition of friends between U.S. and China. First, I can talk with my former close friends everything, but I need to think about for a minute before
talking with my friends because I should make sure which fields they don’t like. For example, people who come from different part of China have different talking manners. People who live in the north of China always directly talk with others, like me. When I talk with friends in U.S., I need consider these differences. If I directly say something to a friend who is from South of China, I may hurt her. In China, I never worry about this difference, for most of us use direct way.

123 words

VRK

One of the hugest difference between the friendships which I have in my country and the friendships which I have in the U.S. is the level of involvement. Many Americans do have the relationship that they called close friends, but the relationship as close as the relationship in my country. In my country, a person who can be called as a close friend which means that we can called them anytime no matter in what kinds of situations. A close friend will help you out with anything. We can spend all the time together, and we can do all the thing together. However, American close friendships are different. Morelikely, Americans often have friends with whom they engage in specific activities. It’s really hard for Americans can find a person whom can do all the things together. Instead of that, Americans have friends who can hanging-out together, who can drinking together, or who can chain-smoking together. They morelikely to do those things with different person or goups. For example, if a American just finish his/her namery work in Friday, and he/she wants to have some fun in the nightclub after work. They may call their drinking-borthers instead of a close friend who can talk feelings with.

205 words
Student CXQ

We have friendship not only in our native country, but also in the United Stated when we study abroad. The relationship play very essential role in our daily life, Since we share happiness, sorrow, gloomy, frustration together. Our happiness turn into twice as much as before, and then sorrow become half than before.

I consider that the similar between friendship now and before when I was in China is both relationship make me not feel lonely, help me go through obstacles, overcome walls together. We learn each other in the same class, especially classmates. We help each other with our study, solve the problems. Moreover, we walk home together when the school ends or when the vocation is coming we take the train come back together.

What’s more, friends make me have have companions travelling in holidays. As in China, we had a very wonderful travelling to other province in China, which was a very well-known place of interest and relic of history. Because we are hometown friend, both from a same city, we thirteen people traveled together and had great fun in the beautiful place. We lived in the same floor of a Inn and play games every night before go to sleep. Which, was really a heart print in my mind.

In conclusion, as far as I concerned, the two relationship similarity are helpfulness and make each other happiness when we are lonely. And both of them are dispensible in my life in China and nowaday in United States.

252 words

Student SPC

Relationship
Walking along in the street of Denton. Usually, there are some people sitting two sides of street chairs. They usually talk to you when they see you. People in the U.S are very nice. Americans are very friendly, they treat people equally; If you want to find a person to talk, or you want to make friends, it’s very easy in the U.S. Talking to stranger in the street is very common in the U.S. However, in China, if you talk to someone who don’t know, people may think you are crazy. Making a friend is very easy in the U.S, but making a close friend is very difficult. Maybe is a culture difference, it is very hard to talk Americans deeply. We have few thing sin common. and nothing to share about. Also, it hard to express our feeling.

141 words

Student BLC

Chinese students always respect their teacher, and they never interrupt the words teacher said in class. In Chinese class, you might not see a student interrupts teacher in class. Students are always listening while teacher are speaking.

In the U.S., teachers are always treated like friends by students. Students can interrupt teacher in any sentence and chat with their teacher. If a student suddenly come out a question in class, it is very normal in American class. However, it very strange in a Chinese class. Students will be though impile by other if their interrupt their teacher in class.

In Chinese class, there is only one person can talk that is teacher. Others are listener.

115 words
Student RWD

Having academic experience in both, Korea and U.S, I have an advantage to meet people broadly. Because of not only different personality, but also some kinds of characteristics of each country, even if in similar relationship, such as classmates, lunch buddy or neighbors, they were different in some aspect.

For example, the idea if classmates in both countries should be different in order to two countries’ different school system. While Korea focused on homeroom system, with require students to take same subjects (classes), the U.S let student have the choice of classes-although students in different grade, they were able to take same class together. In Korea, classmate more likely refers to students who are in same homeroom. The homeroom arouses more bonding, between the students since they involve in most school activities together. Therefore, I felt more closeness in Korean classmates compare to the U.S.

However, in U.S taking same classes with different grades, I got to know more people in school. While I focused on only my homeroom classmates, broadly I felt to involve in school. Nomatter what, going same school brought up bond.

The different relation of classmates in both country shows the characters of two country in relationship. In Korea, the closeness is infinite unless one is trust. However, it is possible because of the range of people who one knows. However in the US, the relationship is like salad bowl, different vegetables in one bowl.
**Student HGY**

In my native country, I had few friends who I close to. We might not meet each other or hang out often because we have our own businesses. However, we usually talked in MSN or on phone, and we usually had a party once a month to improved our relationship. When I got some trouble or depression, they would help or support me. They never disappear when I need them.

By compare, I have lived in U.S for 2 years, I also made some friends, who close to me. In U.S, all my friends are students, therefore, they are busy at studying. Although we don’t meet each other often, we will hand out or have a party once a month. Also, we use MSN and phone to contact each other, when I got some problems, they help me a lot.

140 words

**Student MMP**

No dought my relationship with my English teacher back home and here in U.S is totally different, and ways of each one of them look extinguished and excited.

Most of the time people who teaching English classes at school back home were so serious and had a special character, so my relationship with my English class teacher was most of the time limited in the class hours, and normally I avoided any kind of communications outside class hours. Although he all the time asking us as students to be in contact with him at any time we need help, but that kind of invitation was really considered as a compleshment of a duty rather than admire of help.

On the other hand, my relationship with my English class Teacher in u.s is so great and excited, and it was built from the first day of class. in addition his ways of communication with me and his friendly character helped me to got a normal and simplified relationship with him and
encourage me to ask more question and interactive with him through class hours, and this was really lead me to more love and admire to his class.

Student OSJ

Depending on country, there are different ideas of term ‘friend or acquaintance.’ In my native country, friends are those who would be there for you always; moreover, they would willingly sacrifice for you. In America, it is rather in small group. It is mostly about sports friends, debating-friends, or lunch-friends. Each of them has unique characteristics and has advantages.

In Korea, friends do usually share interests and do things that his or her friend do unless it is bad thing. As my friend I get to know each other more and more, we would probably share personal stuff. And at some point, my friend would be a person who I would willingly help even if I would take big loss. Sometimes we advise each other; therefore, each of us can trust one another. But it doesn’t mean that we don’t argue or fight. Close friends tend to fight more than just acquaintance. However, the fact that we fight is not important, what do we do about it is important. Most of time it doesn’t last more than a day. And even if it lasts more than a day, we would probably ask forgiveness for the next day. This kind of relation give me courage and I get this feeling that I could compete against the way with my friend. Unfortunately there is a disadvantage for this, it is hard to make friends like this. First, it takes some time, and effort. Furthermore their are not many people who would trust you and understand without question.

In other hand America prefer different relation, friends hang out with changes depending on what I do, and where I am. We might share same intrest, idea or belief. we would trust each
other. However, there is always a boundary that I must not cross over. It could be religion, or any other personal stuff. So it is hard to get to know who really my friends are. Maybe it is because my friends and I haven’t got to know long time enough. But they seem to refuse to across their boundaries.

There is no right or wrong answer, nor which is better. I am just curious what suits me better. I will seek more and more relationships in both countries and I will try to find my answer.
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