Global Awareness:
Foreign Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

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Abstract: Developing intercultural communicative competence and global awareness were advocated in China's English curriculum in 2001. However, the concept of global awareness has not been very well explained and explored. Little prior empirical research has addressed the extent of global learning. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the beliefs and reported practices regarding global awareness of EFL teachers at one senior high school in Henan province in China. The participants were 17 English language teachers. The data collection method was in-depth interviews and focus groups. The data were coded and organized through grounded theory and analyzed using NVivo8. The findings showed the teachers' beliefs about the concept and aim of global awareness, the purpose and importance of global awareness, the relationship with language learning, and teaching methods in the classroom. It showed the gap between curriculum and teaching practices as well. Recommendations are offered for school faculty and English teachers.

Keywords: Global awareness, global learning, global issues, intercultural communicative competence, global citizenship education, teachers' beliefs and practices, EFL teachers, China

1. Introduction

Recently, global awareness has been emphasized in China's national teaching guidelines. On February 28, 2010, the Chinese government released the draft copy of "The National Guidelines for Medium-and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development (2010–2020)" (hereinafter referred to as "the Guidelines") (Ministry of Education, 2010). It states in Chapter 16, "to meet the requirement of opening up the Chinese economy and society to the world, large numbers of talents shall be cultivated that are imbued with a global vision, well-versed in international rules, and capable of participating in international affairs and competition" (p.34). We can see that the objective of cultivating students' talent is to cultivate international talents who have a global vision.

Global awareness was also highlighted in the English curriculum standards in 2001. The objective of English education at the basic stage is to develop students' comprehensive language competence, which includes language skills, language knowledge, emotion and attitudes, learning strategies, and cultural awareness. Cultural awareness was explained in more detail at the different levels. The documents showed that the eighth level of the goal of cultural awareness is to develop global awareness through learning English and world culture. The complete descriptions of the eighth and ninth level objectives are: to know cultural concepts

and background in communication; to have respectful and tolerant attitudes to other countries' culture; to be concerned with current events; and to have stronger global awareness. The curriculum's goal is to develop intercultural awareness and basic intercultural communicative competence and to broaden international perspectives in-depth. International perspective is one aspect of emotion and attitudes (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Developing intercultural communicative competence was advocated in China's English curriculum in 2001, and developing global awareness was advocated in high school English teaching, too. Some studies have examined teachers' beliefs and practices regarding intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education in China (e.g., Han, 2010; Han & Song, 2011; Zhou, 2011).

However, the concept of global awareness has not been very well explained and explored in China. Little prior empirical research has addressed the extent of global awareness. Though the policy-makers listed global awareness as a key word in the curriculum, little is actually known about the teachers' beliefs and teaching practices about global awareness.

This is a significant gap to explore teachers' beliefs about the concept and aim of global awareness, its importance and the relationship with language learning in the English curriculum, and the teaching methods in the classroom. Therefore, the present study addressed this gap by exploring the beliefs and practices regarding global awareness of EFL teachers at one senior high school in Henan province in China.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concepts of Global Awareness

Recently, many researchers (e.g., Hanvey, 1982; Kirkwood, 2001) have shown interests in global awareness and global learning. "Global awareness" as a core concept has been discussed in different countries like the UK and the USA. Hanvey (1982) was one of the first scholarly experts to define the concept of "global awareness". He proposed five dimensions to develop students' global awareness. These dimensions include perspective consciousness, state-of-the-planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices. Kirkwood (2001) described persons possessing global awareness as "those who possess high-tech skills, broad interdisciplinary knowledge about the contemporary world, and adaptability, flexibility, and world mindedness to participate effectively in the globalized world" (p. 11).

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) designed a Framework for 21st Century Learning which consists of core subjects and themes that revolve around three core skills: life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information media and technology skills. Global awareness is one of the 21st century interdisciplinary themes. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) defined global awareness as:

- using 21st century skills to understand and address global issues;
- learning from and working collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in

personal, work and community contexts; and

- understanding other nations and cultures, including the use of non-English languages (p. 2).

Some studies (e.g., DfES, 2005; Oxfam, 2006) of global awareness have reported the evidence that the concept of global awareness is related with the global dimension, global learning, and global citizenship education. Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2005) provided a framework for the global dimension in the publication "Developing a Global Dimension in the School Curriculum". The global dimension includes eight key concepts: global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development, and values and perceptions. The global dimension explores "the interconnections between the local and the global. It builds knowledge and understanding, as well as developing skills and attitudes" (DfES, 2005, p. 1).

A curriculum for global citizenship education has been developed by Oxfam (2006). The goal of global citizenship education is to develop citizens with the knowledge and understanding, skills, values and attitudes, and behavior that enable them to live responsibly in a globalized world. Oxfam (2006) saw the Global Citizen as someone who:

is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own roles as a world citizen; respects and values diversity; has an understanding of how the world works; is outraged by social injustice; participates in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global; is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place; and takes responsibility for their actions. (p. 3)

Oxfam (2008) has argued that the global dimension (DfES, 2005) and global citizenship have most of the same key elements, but with different ways of expressing them. The global dimension usually refers to the eight key concepts in education (i.e., social justice, human rights, conflict, diversity, values and perceptions, interdependence, sustainable development, and global citizenship), whereas global citizenship concerns outcomes in the individual (Oxfam, 2008).

In the UK, global learning is promoted by Think Global, which is a membership charity that works to educate and engage people about global issues. The Development Education Association's (2012) website has defined global learning (thinking globally) as education that puts learning in a global context, learning about the wider world and our interdependence with it. According to Think Global, global learning (thinking globally) fosters:

- critical and creative thinking;
- self-awareness and open-mindedness towards difference;
- understanding of global issues and power relationships; and
- optimism and action for a better world
  (Hogg & Shah, 2010, p. 2).

2.2. Studies of Global Awareness

Several studies have been carried out on teachers' attitudes to global learning (e.g., Clarke & Drudy, 2006; DEA, 2009; Ipsos MORI, 2009; McCutcheon, Knipe, Cash & McKay 2008). Clarke and Drudy (2006) used a questionnaire to measure 128 pre-service teachers' attitudes toward teaching for diversity, social justice, and global awareness in Ireland. The findings showed that the pre-service teachers would not be in a position to adequately meet the needs of students in diverse classrooms.

McCutcheon, Knipe, Cash, and Mckay (2008) used a questionnaire to explore teachers' knowledge and attitudes about the global dimension in education at 11 post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. The global dimension in this research can be understood through the eight concepts which include global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, social justice, interdependence, sustainable development, and values and perceptions (DfES, 2005). The results showed that the majority of teachers agreed that it is important for pupils to learn about the global dimension in school, and three-quarters of the teachers reported that they were aware of aspects of the global dimension in the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum.

DEA (2009) showed that though teachers expressed confidence in discussing general global issues, many teachers were not confident to teach about complex global issues, such as environmental sustainability or international poverty.

Ipsos MORI (2009) conducted research to investigate teachers' attitudes to global learning and their confidence in teaching it in the UK. The sample was 3,991 maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales. The findings showed that teachers believed it is important to teach global learning in schools, school should prepare pupils to deal with a fast-changing and globalized world, and most of the teachers agreed that thinking about how teaching contributes to make the world a better place motivates them to stay in teaching. However, Ipsos MORI (2009) argued there was a gap between "idea" and "actual" global learning because some teachers were not confident to teach about complex global issues.

Recent research has shown that not only teachers support global learning in schools, but also young people, parents, the general public, and business leaders in the UK all agree with teachers about the importance of global learning (e.g., Ipsos MORI, 2008; Hogg & Shah, 2010, 2011; ICM 2011). For example, Hogg and Shan (2011) reported that parents agreed that it is important for schools to help young people to think globally and be responsible global citizens.

The above definitions of global awareness and research have been explored by international scholars; the importance of global awareness has also been stressed in different fields recently in China, too. "Global awareness" was mentioned in fields such as politics, economics, history, geography, literature, and foreign language education. Many scholars explained their beliefs about global awareness from different research fields. Though the scholars explored the concept of global awareness, most of their studies were library research. I could not find many empirical research studies, and I also could not find a unified concept of global awareness that can be accepted by most people, so it is very difficult for educators and teachers to develop it in practice. Most researchers have stated their perceptions and suggestions, but the theories of global awareness stated by them are not systematic, and their suggestions are not from actual practice. It is not easy to judge whether the suggestions are effective or accurate. Furthermore,

the researchers did not show any feedback about the suggestions.

In China, some researchers, such as Han (2010), Han and Song (2011), and Zhou (2011) investigated teachers' beliefs and practices regarding intercultural language teaching. For example, Han and Song (2011) conducted a pilot study to investigate 30 university teachers' cognition of intercultural communicative competence in the Chinese ELT context. The results showed that intercultural teaching was limited because that the teachers were not familiar with special aspects of the target cultures. It was also limited by the inadequacy of intercultural elements in the teaching materials.

The teachers' beliefs about global awareness in the EFL class have not yet been widely researched in China. All we know until now is that the importance of developing students' intercultural communicative competence and global awareness has been emphasized in educational policy and foreign language curriculum. There is little empirical research available on the question of what are foreign language teachers' beliefs about global awareness and their teaching practices in the classroom. EFL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding global awareness still require in-depth exploration. In order to address this gap, I conducted a qualitative case study.

3. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The overall purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore EFL teachers' beliefs and reported practices regarding global awareness in foreign language teaching in China. More specifically, the research assessed the following research questions:

1. What are the beliefs about the concept of global awareness for foreign language teachers?
2. How do the teachers understand the purpose of global awareness?
3. How do the teachers perceive the importance of global awareness?
4. How do the teachers describe the relationship between global awareness and language learning?
5. What is the content of teachers' global awareness instruction in the language classroom?
6. How are the teachers' beliefs related to practices?

4. Method

The data reported here are part of my PhD study which used interview, focus groups, and classroom observations to explore Chinese high school English teachers' beliefs and practices about global awareness. For reason of space, here I focus in detail mainly only on the interview data.

4.1. Context and Participants

The high school I visited is one of the best high schools in Henan province, and it has an international program as well as the regular high school program. This is an ideal place to

research global awareness. The high school I visited had 15 classes for each grade. Every class had about 60 students. There were a total of 24 English teachers. Every grade had about 10 teachers.

A purposeful sampling procedure was used to select this study's site and sample. I chose extreme case sampling. Extreme case sampling is a form of purposeful sampling in which you study an outlier case or one that displays extreme characteristics (Creswell, 2011). I selected 17 high school EFL teachers to understand their beliefs about the global awareness and teaching methods in the classroom. Their participation was voluntary. I opted for a small sample site because I could interview them more deeply. As the research participants, 14 teachers were female and three were male. Their teaching experience varied. Each teacher taught two classes. Most of them hold at least a bachelor's degree.

4.2. Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study employed a number of different data-collection methods, including interviews, focus group interviews, and educational documents. Chinese educational policy and foreign language curriculum related with global awareness were analyzed as document data in the introduction section. The interview data was mainly analyzed and interpreted for teachers' beliefs about the concept of global awareness. The interviews were conducted in Chinese.

Semi-structural interviews with 17 EFL teachers of a high school in Henan province in China were conducted to explore how they conceptualize the concept of global awareness and the teaching methods in the classroom. The participants were teaching different grades. All of the 17 teachers were interviewed between 40 and 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded by IC recorder and video camera with the permission of the participants. I took notes when interviewing the participants, too. After the interviews, I transcribed the recordings into computer files and translated the interviews into English.

Rather than imposing a theoretical framework on teachers' beliefs about global awareness, I used grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) in the study to try to build up the theory from the teachers' own voices and ideas in real life. The study was "grounded" in the interview data and classroom observation of 17 English teachers. The analysis includes three major stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. To analyze the data, I first transcribed all interviews. The interview data analysis was performed by using the qualitative software NVivo8. The data were coded into different categories.

5. Findings

5.1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Concept of Global Awareness

One purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore a sample of high school English teachers' beliefs about the concept of global awareness. Analysis and interpretation of findings were organized into three analytic categories that were based in the English teachers' beliefs about the concept of global awareness. In this section, I would like to focus on the teachers' beliefs and discussion of the concept of global awareness. The following three core elements emerged

as categories from the interview data as being integral to global awareness:

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Attitudes

I found three core elements of global awareness: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In the literature on global awareness, most models have similar categories such as knowledge, skills, action, attitudes, and values (e.g., DEA, 2009; Dell & Wood, 2010; DfES, 2005; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). My finding support some scholars' models and frameworks. In order to analyze the teachers' definitions, I used Vygotsky's theory of everyday and scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1986). Scientific concepts can be defined as "systematic principles consciously applied to understanding diverse phenomena" (Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011, p. 152), and everyday or spontaneous concepts "are not systematic or have a very limited 'system'" (Swain, Kinnear & Steinmann, 2011, p. 150). So the three components of a scientific concept are (a) conscious (and consciously applied), (b) systematic, and (c) not bound to a context (Swain, Kinnear & Steinmann, 2011). While the individual teachers each displayed basic everyday concepts for global awareness, I discovered that by combining their understandings into systematic categories, they had relatively the same scientific concepts as presented in the literature. However, none of the teachers alone had a systematic, generalized, and conscious concept of global awareness. Below I look at the three core elements of global awareness and provide examples from the data.

5.1.1. Knowledge

The knowledge related to global awareness includes globalization, cultures, language, global issue, and cultural self-awareness. We can see some examples from the teachers:

I think global awareness is to be concerned about global issues, what happened in the world. (T4)

Global awareness is to understand different cultures in the world and other countries' information. It is about communication, too. It is thought, culture. (T3)

See yourself from the new perspective; you can understand your own culture more deeply when you understand other's culture. (T17)

Based on the analysis of the interview data, the findings showed that culture was mentioned many times. The teachers thought global awareness is about knowing different cultures in the world, and understanding Western countries' lifestyles and cultural background. Culture here includes two different cultures: one is the culture of other countries and world views, and the other one is one's own culture.

We can see that cultural self-awareness was expressed by the teachers through their

everyday concept: "See yourself from the new perspective; you can understand your own culture more deeply when you understand other's culture". Cultural self-awareness is a scientific concept which was defined by many intercultural scholars in regard to knowledge necessary for intercultural competence. According to Deardorff (2006), cultural self-awareness can be defined as meaning the ways in which one's culture has influenced one's identity and worldview.

5.1.2. Skills

The skills include critical thinking, communication, language skills, self-cultivation, and learning skills. The following are a few random examples that were mentioned by many teachers:

> The world is a big family. We cannot always stay at home; we should go outside and communicate with others. The communication is between different countries, neighbors, and colleagues. (T5)

> From the micro perspective, I think it is the same as Confucian personality ideals "Upright Heart, Self-cultivation, Family Harmony, State Governing and World Peace". They are the same thing. (T17)

> We should notice that critical thinking is an important concept here. Teachers gave the everyday concept: "You can understand yourself better through learning from others". These examples from the teachers make it clear that "communication" is a very important skill to promote global awareness. The teachers thought it is necessary to communicate with other countries' people. It is very clear that teachers described self-cultivation as one skill of global awareness. As a scientific concept, self-cultivation is one core concept of Confucian personality ideals which have influenced Chinese culture for two thousand years. T17 described the scientific concept of self-cultivation; T5 described it through everyday concepts.

5.1.3. Attitudes

The last category is defined as attitudes that include responsibility, tolerance, openness, justice, and respect. Some examples for the categories are:

> In my opinion, from macro perspective, global awareness is to develop students' international views, so they have tolerance to see the world, they can understand many things, they are not prejudiced, they cannot think which culture is good or bad, they should think every culture has its advantage and disadvantage, they can learn from other cultures. (T17)

> We need to educate responsible students and citizens. They should have responsibility for themselves, community, and society no matter whether they are Chinese citizens or global citizens. (T17)

A close look at these examples will reveal that tolerance and respect are explained by the teachers. They not only talked about their scientific concept, they too gave some detailed reasons to explain their everyday concepts. Respect is to treat other cultures and cultural diversity equally, and not to value other cultures with prejudice. The teachers stressed again that the students should have openness to the world and to people from other cultures, withholding judgment. Again, responsibility as a scientific concept was emphasized. The teachers hoped their students would be both responsible Chinese citizens and global citizens.

The analysis of the above three categories of teachers' concepts resulted in the framework for teachers' beliefs about global awareness showed in Figure 1.
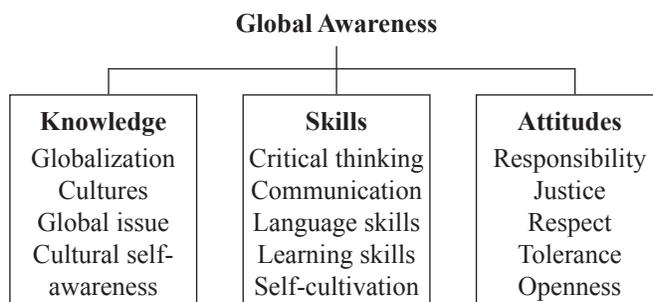
Global Awareness

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Globalization	Critical thinking	Responsibility
Cultures	Communication	Justice
Global issue	Language skills	Respect
Cultural self-awareness	Learning skills	Tolerance
	Self-cultivation	Openness

Figure 1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Concept of Global Awareness

5.2. The Teachers' Beliefs about the Purpose of Global Awareness

Because global awareness is one aim for high school English teaching in the curriculum, the teachers may have their ideas of the reasons. The objective of Chinese English education in the curriculum is to develop students' comprehensive language competence. In order to further demonstrate the connections of "global awareness" in the teachers' beliefs, the analysis of the purpose of developing global awareness from the interview might be fruitful. The participants' beliefs about the purpose of global awareness were grouped into two categories:

- To cultivate students' tolerance and open-mindedness
- To educate them to be global citizens

Question: What is the purpose to give emphasis on global awareness in foreign language teaching?

The participants expressed their beliefs about the purpose of global awareness:

It is good for students to develop understanding and tolerance. The student can improve his personal quality, he can understand more things in the future, and he can accept more new things. It can help a student to be open-minded and to broaden outlook, and gain more knowledge. (T9)

I can help students to broaden outlook, studying one more foreign language is like having one more eye and ear, it helps students to know outside of the world. (T14)

I think the most important thing is to let him know that he is not only a student at our school; he is also a citizen in the world. If he can think of problems and his behavior is based on the whole world environment, then he will have a whole concept. I think the main point is to consider him to be a global citizen. If he can be a global citizen, he will have global awareness. (T16)

We need to educate responsible students and citizens. He should have responsibility for himself, community, and society whether he is a Chinese citizen or a global citizen. (T17)

Reflections on some of the teachers' answers make it clear that the purpose of global awareness is to cultivate students' tolerance and open-mindedness, and to educate them to be global citizens.

5.3. The Teachers' Beliefs about the Importance of Global Awareness

Next, I would like to focus on teachers' beliefs about the importance of global awareness in this section. As well as outlining some of the teachers' main ideas, I will introduce some examples. Question: How important do you think global awareness is in learning a foreign language? Why do you think so?

All of the teachers agreed that global awareness is very important. There are three kinds of categories for the importance:

- Language learning and communication with foreigners;
- Students' personal development;
- Developing students' open-mindedness and critical thinking.

The first category is that global awareness is beneficial for language learning and communication with foreigners. For example:

I think it is very important, the aim of foreign language teaching is to develop students' foreign language learning ability and language learning, learning foreign language is to integrate with the world, and communicate with foreign people. So the students should have such mentality and awareness of communication. That is it. (T3)

The second category is that global awareness is good for students' personal development. Personal development can be understood as good future and career. For example:

If we can develop student's global awareness or world view, they will have a higher position for the future career, living and life planning. (T15)

The third category is that global awareness is good for developing students' open-mindedness and critical thinking. For example:

Of cause it has great advantages. It can help students to broaden visions and change their thinking. The foreign language is another culture; it is good for students' perspectives, thinking style, and habits. (T10)

5.4. Teachers' Beliefs about the Relationship between Language Learning and Global Awareness

In this section, I would like to lay special emphasis on teachers' beliefs about the relationship between language learning and global awareness. The relationship can be classified into two categories:

- Global awareness is in close touch with language learning and culture, they are a single undivided whole;
- Language is a tool and bridge for communicating and understanding the world.

The interview question was: What is the relationship between global awareness, language, and culture? The following serve as some examples:

I think they are completing whole, complementary, and indivisible. (T8)

English is a tool, if you can learn English better, you can communicate with the other people in the world, then you can know the world more through the tool and to contribute for human and global development. It is a bridge and tool. (T16)

5.5. Teachers' Practices Regarding Global Awareness

From the interviews and classroom observations, I found that the participants' general teaching methods were nearly the same, they followed a unified teaching model; however, when they taught global issues in the classroom, they used different methods according to different teachers' teaching styles. I would like to describe their general teaching methods and global teaching methods in the following sections.

5.5.1. General Teaching Methods

Every grade had different teaching methods, however, the teachers of each grade kept the same teaching model. When I asked the participants about the general teaching situation of grade one, T7 commented:

Our teaching design follows three dimensional objectives of new curriculum. It includes knowledge and skills, process and method, emotion, attitude, and values.

The new curriculum not only emphasizes knowledge and skills, but also emphasizes process and method. Students' subjective roles were emphasized more than before. The curriculum suggested that teachers should give students more time in the classroom to develop their subjective role. (T7)

After she explained the three dimensional objectives of new curriculum, she continued to comment on the characters of English teaching of grade one:

The four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) were developed in grade one. Speaking maybe is weak, but we always emphasize listening. Reading is the most important skill, then is writing, the last is listening and speaking. We speak English in the classroom. (T7)

T9 recalled the teaching model when she taught grade one last year:

We have a teaching model, and every class has the same model. We usually spend several minutes doing one activity at the beginning of class. For example, we review the content of last class, the students write some English proverbs and teach them to other students. (T9)

Then she commented on the teaching model of grade two:

We do not have any activities now. Sometimes we let students do an exercise at the beginning of class, such as proofreading, blank-filling or asking questions. After the exercises, we begin the class. The teaching model of each unit is the same for each teacher at our school. Each unit includes six lessons: warming up, reading up, knowledge points, grammar, writing, and vocabulary. (T9)

T7 and T9 commented the teaching model of grade one and grade two, another participant described the teaching model of grade three.

The teaching model of grade three is based on the traditional three-round revision. The first round revision is basic knowledge, the second round revision is grammar, and the third round revision is the university entrance exams. During the three round revisions, the students' study is doing exercises. Students' speaking and listening abilities are not high; their study followed the exam's guide. (T15)

5.5.2. Global Teaching in the Classroom

The English teachers taught global awareness through the following ways: the global issues in textbooks, films, music, debate, group discussion, newspapers, role play, and examinations.

When I asked the participants in the focus group interview about how to teach global issues in the classroom, all of the participants said that they nearly followed the same teaching

methods: introducing one global issue, organizing group discussion, watching video, making summary, and giving action guidance. One of these participants described this method in this way:

> One lesson only has 40 minutes; usually, we introduce some topics like global warming, then organize different groups and let students discuss this topic. The students will have many different views. Then I will play a video and show some survey study in order to let them have a general understanding of global warming. Then I ask them what to do? Low-carbon life and reduce carbon emissions. (T12)

Another participant expressed her teaching method about how to introduce global issues: "I introduce global issues from local issues in our life. I also introduce global issues from newspapers like 21st Century English newspaper" (T9). Another participant expressed her teaching method in the following ways: "The general activities are related to the textbook. I often use role play. When I taught environment protection topics, I first organized small group activities, and then every member expressed his idea. For example, I let students watch Michael Jackson's 'Earth Song'" (T3). Another participant said writing can develop students' global awareness:

> We have written some essays, for example, if your net friend comes to China to visit you, how do you rent a house for him? This is very useful practice. There is another one, if your net friend comes to China to attend summer camp, please introduce him. (T5)

> To compare with language skill objectives, cultural objective is lower. When the students could not achieve the objective of language skills, the teachers have to reduce cultural awareness. (T8)

6. Discussion

The theory and literature about global awareness have mostly dealt with general subjects at school, and little empirical data has been gathered about global awareness in foreign language teaching a secondary education. Even in foreign language teaching research, where culture and intercultural competence have been explored recently, global awareness was mentioned little.

The present research is an effort to fill in this blank by beginning to explore global awareness in foreign language teaching. Through an examination of the beliefs of English teachers about global awareness in English language teaching, the findings showed different themes. I discuss key findings from the interviews and focus groups.

6.1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Concept of Global Awareness

The major findings of present research are about teachers' beliefs about the concept of global awareness and their teaching methods in the classroom. A framework of global awareness

which includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes was built.

It was very difficult for teachers to define the concept of global awareness. Most teachers said they could not give a clear definition of the concept of global awareness. They described it with one or two elements and some examples. The teachers used everyday concepts to describe global awareness from their teaching experience and professional knowledge. Not only did the participants in my research find the difficulties of conceptualization of global awareness, but even, for the university English teacher, Han and Song (2011) found Chinese English teachers' conceptualization of intercultural communicative competence and its relevance to ELT was ambiguous.

Based on the review of global awareness research, I found most of the frameworks or theories have similar categories. Most of them mentioned some common elements: global knowledge, global issues, and foreign language. However, my finding of the framework does not include behavior or action. The framework includes knowledge, skills, and attitude. It is similar with most models' categories. Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) stated that the theories and models of intercultural competence both display considerable similarity in their broad brushstrokes (e.g., motivation, knowledge, skills, context, and outcomes) and yet extensive diversity at the level of specific conceptual subcomponents. My high school group of teachers produced as a scientific concept as a group (Figure 1) through their everyday concepts. This framework could be given back to teachers and used to guide the curriculum and teaching in a more comprehensive way.

6.2. Global Awareness and Intercultural Communicative Competence

In my interview data, most of the teachers talked about global awareness together with intercultural communicative competence. The reason is that intercultural communicative competence was emphasized as one aim of English language education in China's English language curriculum. The teachers in my research believed that the purpose of global awareness is to cultivate students' tolerance and open-mindedness. Tolerance and open-mindedness are key elements in Byram's (1997) descriptions of intercultural attitudes. Intercultural attitudes refer to "curiosity, openness, the affective ability to 'decentre', which implies abandoning ethnocentric attitudes and relativising one's own values, beliefs and behaviours" (p. 57). My research findings support Byram's (1997) intercultural communicative competence model which includes attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness. The teachers believed that the students can broaden their outlook through learning foreign language and different cultures. If the students have tolerance, they can understand many new things and cultural diversity; they can think about questions from different views.

The teachers also agreed that an objective of English education is to communicate with people coming from different cultural backgrounds through language and cultural teaching. The teachers emphasized communication as language education's aim many times in the description of the importance of global awareness and the relationship with language learning. These teachers' beliefs supported Byram (1997, 2008), who has argued that the purpose of foreign language education is to develop students' intercultural communicative competence, and to educate them to be intercultural speakers and intercultural citizens.

The teachers in my research perceived the relationship between global awareness and language teaching in two categories: global awareness is in close touch with language learning and culture and are a single undivided whole; language is a tool and bridge for communicating and understanding the world. My findings support Byram's argument about the relationship between language, culture, and communication. Byram (2009) pointed out that:

> The aims and purposes of foreign language education have changed in the past few decades, with the much stronger emphasis on communication. Language teachers should plan their teaching to include objectives, materials and methods that develop the special elements of intercultural competence. Teachers of language need to become teachers of language and culture (pp. 330-331).

6.3. Global Awareness and Global Citizenship Education

My interview data showed that the teachers perceived the purpose of global awareness is to cultivate students' tolerance and open-mindedness and then to educate them to be global citizens. What kind of citizens did the teachers hope to create? The interview data reported that the teachers hope to educate responsible and high quality talents. The students should have international perspectives. We can see that some concepts are mentioned such as global citizen and responsibility. Both of the two teachers (T16 and T17) mentioned the relationships between being a Chinese citizen and a global citizen.

Hogg and Shan (2011) defined being a responsible global citizen as acting on an understanding of global challenges in order to create a more just and sustainable world. The purpose of global awareness in my study is the same as Oxfam's (2006) framework of global citizenship education. The key elements for developing responsible global citizenship are identified as: knowledge and understanding; skills; values and attitudes (Oxfam, 2006). According to Oxfam (2008), global citizenship education can be related to different curriculum subjects at school, and Oxfam (2008) gave schools some guides to develop global citizenship in foreign language curriculum:

- explore issues of identity and diversity by considering similarities and differences between peoples, places, cultures and languages;
- develop awareness of global interconnectedness in that languages are continually evolving and borrowing from each other;
- develop knowledge and appreciation of different cultures and their different world views; and
- provide opportunities to explore global issues while developing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills (p. 19).

Oxfam's statement of global citizenship in foreign language curriculum can help the high school teachers to reconsider the curriculum and design a teaching plan from global perspectives. Applying global awareness can enrich the content of the English curriculum.

Intercultural communicative competence has been introduced into the Chinese English

curriculum; global citizenship can also be integrated into the curriculum. Teaching for intercultural communicative competence might be complementary to global citizenship education for foreign language teaching. Byram (2008) has argued that education for citizenship has to engage with people of other forms of life or cultures, and with their language and language games. Language teaching must take intercultural competence as one of its aims. Language teachers and those who teach citizenship education are pursuing the same goals. Byram (2008) stated:

> It is the notion of taking action that links the concept of intercultural communicative competence with education for citizenship. My argument is that it is the purpose of FLT and the duty of teachers, not only to combine utility and educational value, but also to show learners how they should engage with the international globalised world in which they participate. That is a move "from" FLT within education "to" FLT that brings a specific additional contribution to education for citizenship (p. 229).

In my study, the teachers believed that the aim of global awareness is to develop students' intercultural communicative competence and global awareness and to educate them to be global citizens. Being a global citizen is stressed as an educational aim. However, the teachers' concept of citizen in my study is a global citizen which is different from Byram's intercultural citizenship. Intercultural citizenship education is a new concept that is based on European context. Chinese teachers are not familiar with it.

6.4. Teachers' Practices Regarding Global Awareness

For the general teaching methods at this school, every grade had different teaching methods, while the teachers of each grade kept the same teaching models. For global awareness teaching in classroom, the English teachers taught global awareness through the following ways: global issues found in textbooks, films, music, debate, group discussion, newspapers, role play, and examinations.

Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) suggested that language teachers can promote the intercultural dimension even if the teachers have to follow a set curriculum or program of study and teach grammar. As Byram et al. (2002) pointed out, "grammatical exercises can reinforce prejudice and stereotypes or challenge them", and "one important contribution to an intercultural perspective is the inclusion of vocabulary that helps learners talk about cultural diversity" (pp. 21-22). Byram's research gave useful implication for English teachers to develop students' global awareness. So even in the test-centered teaching context in China, the English teachers can also develop students' intercultural communicative competence through grammar and vocabulary practice. If the Chinese teachers can consider the cultural and global dimension, the usual grammar and vocabulary teaching and learning would be good ways to develop global awareness.

Lázár et al. (2007) discussed methods based on literature, films, and songs that can help develop intercultural communicative competence. They also gave examples of activities and projects to incorporate literary pieces, film scenes, and songs into teaching. My findings support

their results of the Intercultural Communication in Teacher Education (ICCinTE) project of the ECML (European Centre of Modern Languages). The participants in my research also used literature, films, and songs for global teaching. The limitation in my research is whether the participants in my research used these methods effectively and frequently. Due to the exam and limited teaching time, the teachers could not use these teaching methods for every class. I believe that the participants in my study can teach English more effectively if they can follow these guidelines in the project.

Translation is a normal language learning activity in my findings. Translation as sources of data can be used for promoting intercultural competence in the language classroom (Elorza, 2008). Translation activities can be used as cultural awareness training tools and develop students' critical awareness. The participants in my research taught cultural and global issues in the translation practices. My research findings support the results by Han (2012) who found that the most often used technique to teach culture of secondary English teachers was through the textbook. The intercultural activities regarding the skills and attitudinal dimension development were not much used. My research also showed that teachers only taught global issues and cultures, they did not know how to develop students' global skills and attitudes.

6.5. The Relationship between Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Practices

Though intercultural communicative competence and global awareness were emphasized in China's foreign language curriculum, I could not find a detailed explanation of the framework of global awareness and the teaching approach. There is a big gap between the curriculum and teaching practices. After Parmenter's (2010) analysis of intercultural aspects in 65 different countries' national education policies and curriculum, she pointed that "many policy-makers are happier producing lists of key words and phrases than working out a coherent framework of how these fit together and how to achieve them, but this is a feature that is probably not unique to issues of being intercultural" (p. 85). The situation of intercultural and global aspects in China's foreign language curriculum is consistent with the description in Parmenter's analysis.

The results of DEA (2009) showed that there is a large gap between the proportion of teachers who think schools should teach global issues and the current school system actually providing global learning. The main reason for this gap is that teachers lack of confidence in teaching specific global issues. My findings are in line with their results. My research findings also show that teachers did not have confidence to be a global teacher. Some teachers thought they need to study from students, because students have much new global knowledge, and they have strong curiosity to the world. But from my findings, there are other reasons for the gap besides confidence; the main reason is that test-centered teaching and teacher training are also needed.

Some researchers have recently reported a gap between teachers' beliefs about intercultural teaching in the curriculum and teaching practices in China. For example, Han (2010) pointed out the gap between teachers' willingness and practices to teach culture in her research of Chinese secondary school teachers' beliefs about intercultural language teaching. Her results showed that teachers' devotion of time to culture teaching is less than the time devoted to language teaching though they expressed their willingness to teach culture in the language

classroom. Zhou (2011) conducted a mixed research to explore Chinese university EFL teachers and their intercultural competence teaching. The results showed that teachers believed that the linguistic dimension was more important than the cultural dimension in the objectives of EFL teaching; however, the teachers were positive toward the integration of English language and its cultures. My research findings also support the results about teachers' lack of confidence to teach complex cultural and global issues from Han and Song (2011) and Ipsos MORI (2009).

Not only did the teachers agree about the gap, but parents and business leaders also pointed out that schools should promote global awareness in the curriculum. For example, Hogg and Shah (2011) conducted a survey of parents' attitudes towards their children's education. Based on the findings, they suggested to the policymakers to design a school curriculum that creates spaces for teaching about the wider world. More specifically, the new national curriculum should include global issues, and the teachers should be given more confidence and freedom to develop the curriculum.

In my interview data, the teachers believed that language learning is more important than global learning. The teachers agreed that global awareness is connected with language learning, but language learning is still more important than global learning in the teaching practices. There is some evidence from the UK that supports my findings. A survey about 500 UK senior business leaders' views of global thinking as an important skill for young people was conducted by ICM Research on behalf of Think Global and the British Council (ICM, 2011). The findings of the report entitled "The Global Skills Gap: Preparing Young People for the New Global Economy" showed that for job seekers, knowledge, and awareness of the wider world is more important than the degree classification or A-levels. My findings about teachers' beliefs about the relationship between language learning and global awareness contrast with the UK senior business leaders' views. Though education between China and UK is different, I find that the high scores are still an important aim for school education in the two countries. The teachers in China need time to study and prepare to teach complex cultural and global issues. Then, they could enhance their confidence to teach culture more deeply.

7. Conclusion

In this study I have explored Chinese English teachers' beliefs about the global awareness and their reported teaching practices at one senior high school in Henan province in China. Through an analysis of teachers' beliefs about the global awareness, my study provides a framework for global awareness, the purpose and importance of global awareness, the relationship between language learning and global awareness, and teaching methods in the classroom.

The framework includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Knowledge is related to globalization, cultures, language, global issue, and cultural self-awareness. The skills include critical thinking, communication, language skills, self-cultivation, and learning skills. Attitudes include responsibility, tolerance, openness, justice, and respect. The purpose of global awareness is to cultivate students' tolerance and open-mindedness and to educate them to be global citizens. There are three kinds of categories for the importance of global awareness: global awareness is beneficial for language learning and communication with foreigners; global awareness is good for students' personal development; global awareness is good for developing

students' open-mindedness and critical thinking. The relationship can be classified into two categories: global awareness is in close touch with language learning and culture, they are a single undivided whole; language is a tool and bridge for communicating and understanding the world. The English teachers taught global awareness through the following ways: the global issues in textbooks, films, music, debate, group discussion, newspapers, role play, and examinations.

The study was limited in several ways. The participants in the study are not all of the teachers at the school. If I could interview all of the teachers, the framework would include richer contents. This study is the first step for me towards enhancing the understanding of the teachers' beliefs about the global awareness and their teaching practices. Since teachers' beliefs influence their practice (Borg, 2006), and in order to understand teachers' beliefs better, their classroom practices should be studied further. In order to understand the whole concept of Chinese EFL teachers' beliefs about global awareness, further study of teachers' global awareness beliefs should be conducted through quantitative research methods. A questionnaire study could be conducted to collect more participants' beliefs about global awareness. For future research on global awareness and teachers in the field of foreign language education, we should consider the teachers' roles, school activities, and students' attitudes toward global awareness. These aspects will be included in my future research.

This framework of global awareness (Figure 1) could be given back to teachers and used to guide the curriculum and teaching in a more comprehensive way. In addition, I believe that teachers' beliefs can help teachers to think of global awareness in addition to language skills when teaching. It can also help policy-makers to consider the concept of global awareness from teachers' voices. The findings of my research have implications for teacher professional development, English teaching material development, and curriculum design.

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