
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cultural Influence on ESL Students' Writing

Pinfan Zhu

Professor, Texas State University, U.S.A

Corresponding Author: Professor Pinfan Zhu, **E-mail:** pz10@txstate.edu

| ABSTRACT

Culture and language are closely related. Language is the carrier of culture. The words we write and the ways we communicate often mirror our cultural values, assumptions, beliefs, conventions, and perceptions. So, these elements form the code system by which we encode and decode messages that communicate our ideas. However, when people use their code system to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds with a different code system, problems are likely to occur. This essay aims at exploring the potential and possible problems that may occur in the use of words and ways of communication when ESL students write in English. It takes ESL learners of Chinese as an example to illustrate the problems. The method is a corpus-based study that focuses on language problems resulting from weak cultural awareness. Major findings include errors in aspects of diction, sentence patterns and discourse patterns, using Chinese students' writings as examples. The significance of the research lies in that it will enable ESL learners to be on the alert against the cultural influence on their writing in English and quickly realize these different ways so that they can write idiomatic English, not only grammatically correct English. It will also help ESL instructors quickly identify the problematic areas they need to work more with their students. In this sense, the article contributes to both ESL teaching and learning.

| KEYWORDS

Word, sentence pattern, language, cultural influence and awareness.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Culture and language are closely related. Cultural concepts infiltrate language and find their expression there. In other words, language is the carrier of culture. It mirrors the values, assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of people from a particular culture. Just as Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) points out, "We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language" (p.299-31). Thus, all the above-mentioned cultural elements form the frame of reference for our communication. Different cultures produce different frames of reference for their people to use in communication practices. But in such a situation, problems may arise if a wrong frame of reference is used in cross-cultural Communication. Within the same cultural and linguistic system, the use of words normally presents no problems when people of the same social and linguistic background communicate with one another in writing because they use the same frame of reference (code system). However, if they still use words that mirror their cultural values from their frame of reference to communicate with people from a different culture, their writing will likely be problematic if they do not have better cultural awareness. So, in teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) learners' composition, teachers will not only train students' language skills but also cultivate their cultural awareness so that their writing will be more idiomatic and accepted by native speakers. Through the author's teaching experience, he finds students tend to use the English language by subliminally following the language conventions of their mother tongue, which leads to awkward English. In other words, ESL (English as a Second Language) students may write a composition that is grammatically correct but not

culturally or idiomatically acceptable to native speakers. To solve this problem, the author contributes to this article that helps prevent students from continuing to write awkward English because of the influence of their native language.

Using ESL learners of Chinese as an example, this article discusses how culture may influence ESL students' choice of words, sentence patterns, textual organization, and values communicated in the text. It starts out with the problem of ESL students' confusion in the semantic aspect, then it continues to discuss problems in choosing sentence patterns, and finally, it discusses the textual organization problem and inappropriate values expressed in the text. The purpose is to help students realize how their own culture and language convention may influence their ways of using language and help them write correct and idiomatic English. Even though examples are from writing samples of ESL learners of Chinese, the principles are universally applicable to all ESL learners' situations, no matter whatever language background they are from.

2. Methodology

This research is a corpus-based study. Through extensive reading, collecting of students writing samples, as well as long-term teaching experience, the author has established a large bank of data. The author then applies a close text analysis of the data collected and identifies patterns of problems according to the criteria he established as guidelines for the analysis. For example, the linguistic study tells us words have collocation rules, positive and negative values, synonyms, false friends, and idiomatic expressions. In light of these categories, the author applies close reading to the writings by Chinese ESL learners and identifies problematic patterns that fall within these categories. In the same vein, the author identifies the preferred sentence patterns in both English and Chinese and tries to see if Chinese students still stick to their preferred sentence patterns when writing in English. So does the writer with textual organization methods. The major findings are as follows.

3. Findings in the Semantic Aspect

In writing, cultural elements are expressed in words and expressions. So, the words people use in their writing reflect their cultural values. The problem is that ESL students, when writing in English may still use words that reflect their cultural values, which seems strange and unnatural to native speakers who may regard their diction as inappropriate. Naturally, their writing will not be regarded as good in such a case. So, it is necessary to discuss how culture interferes with ESL (English as Second Language) students' use of words in their English composition. Once ESL students realize this interference, their cultural awareness in this aspect will be enhanced, which will help them choose the right words in their English writing. Consequently, their writing will be improved as they are able to use words more effectively and correctly. Through the author's long experience of teaching ESL English composition, he finds cultural interference in ESL learners' diction mainly reflects itself in the following ways. Here are some Chinese ESL students' writing examples.

3.1 Diction Problems because of Cultural Influence

Students are not aware that, of the same word, cultural implications are different. For example, some words have positive implications in one culture but negative implications in another culture. The word "propaganda" is just the case. In Chinese, this is a very positive word, while it is very negative in American culture. When reading the word, a Chinese reader may conjure up a picture in which people are enthusiastically going about popularizing some good things or ideas that may bring about benefits to them. On the contrary, an American reader, when reading the word, may think of some people, such as politicians advertising their ideas in an attempt to manipulate the audience for certain political purposes. So, the word is derogatory in a sense. Another example is the word "individualism." While the word is very negative in Chinese, implying selfishness, harming group harmony, and a tendency to show off oneself, it is a positive word in American culture, implying independence, the ability to manage oneself, and freedom in one's economic pursuits. As a result, when Chinese students want to express the idea of popularizing or advertising something good, they tend to choose the word *propaganda* in their English composition, which is not a good diction in American people's view regarding the occasion it is used. Also, when they describe a sports player who tends to be much egocentric, they use the word *individualism* to characterize that player. Needless to say, we have to remind students to avoid such errors.

3.2 False Friends Problem

In addition, students do not realize that some words from their native language form false friends with some English words. "False friends," according to the definition of the online Wikipedia encyclopedia, means "pairs of words in two [languages](#) that look and/or sound similar, but differ in meaning. English words like *actual* and *affluent* form false friends with Spanish words *actual* and *aflluente*, which mean *current* and *tributary*, respectively.

Similarly, Chinese *white wine* and English *white wine* are false friends. The former means a kind of strong alcohol, while the latter is not. The phrase *black sheep* in Chinese means a sheep that is black in color, but in English, it means a reckless and unprincipled reprobate. *False friends* are a common language phenomenon because people from different cultures have different interpretations and perceptions of the same thing due to different geographical or natural environments. However, they are misleading. Students need to avoid taking it for granted that words of the same forms must have the same meanings in different languages though such cases really exist. Such false friends sometimes are partially similar but not completely. In this case, students should not replace or substitute them randomly. The word *intellectual* is such an example. In English, it does not include people like college students, but in Chinese, it does. If ESL students make no distinction between them, they may not express exactly what they want to express in English. English itself has some false friends ESL learners may frequently confuse with. They normally contain the definite article "the" and the indefinite article "a." They look very similar in appearance but differ a lot in meaning. Look at the following:

- a. Out of question (quite easy, undoubtedly).
- b. Out of the question (impossible).

- a. Take the chair (to preside).
- b. Take a chair (to fetch a chair).

- a. A hundred and one (not an emphatic expression).
- b. One hundred and one (emphatic in calculation).

- a. She was with a child (not alone).
- b. She was with child (pregnant).

- a. They are students of our school (not the total number of).
- b. They are the students of our school (the total number of).
- a. I lived here for more than a year (a bit more than one year).
- b. I lived here for more than one year (not two or three years).

- a. In a family way (friendly).
- b. In the family way (pregnant).

ESL learners need to be careful of this type of false friend.

3.3. Collocational Errors

Collocations, which, according to Mona Baker (2000), mean the tendency of certain words to co-occur in a given language (47), also cause trouble for ESL students. Much accustomed to their cultural conventions, ESL students may still transfer their language collocations subliminally to English. For example, the author frequently finds Chinese students use *expensive price*, *fast speed*, and *a better English level*. Though these collocations are appropriate in Chinese, they seem awkward or redundant in English. Collocation errors may occur in other forms in addition to *a. + n.* They range from *v. + n.* (*polish the teeth* and *raise an example*) to *n. + v.* (The essay *hopes...*), *v. + prep.* (*discriminate to* and *congratulate for*), *a. + prep.* (be good *in* English), and to some sentence patterns (He explains me a question). Chinese students frequently confuse these collocations. To eliminate these errors, students need to prepare a dictionary of collocations, such as the *Longman Dictionary of English Collocations*, in addition, to having a strong awareness of culture-specific lexical collocations and grammatical collocations.

3.4. Figurative Expressions

ESL students also tend to stick to the figurative idioms of their cultures when writing in English. Such figurative idioms often use animals or plants as vehicles. But people from different cultures often have different interpretations regarding the nature of the same animals. Dragons are regarded as auspicious animals in Chinese culture, but they are regarded as ferocious animals in English culture. So, their images are different in different cultures. If ESL students still use animals that have a positive image in their culture but a negative image in the English culture, the native speakers may regard such comparisons as ridiculous or inappropriate. Or they may feel uncomfortable. But such a phenomenon does exist in ESL students' writing. I found my Chinese students use metaphors such as "as timid as a mouse" and "a tiger in the way," which should be idiomatically expressed "as timid as a hare" and

“a lion in the way.” Other animals that have different cultural meanings in Chinese and English cultures are phoenixes, bats, dogs, etc. Phoenixes are more associated with beauty and auspiciousness in Chinese culture, while they are more associated with longevity and new life in English. Dogs have very negative associations as they are considered to be menial, dirty, and ferocious by the Chinese, but they are regarded as loyal and friendly by Americans. So, when using these animals in figurative idioms, ESL students need to be careful of their cultural implications.

4. Idiomatic Expressions and Syntactical Problems

Thought patterns are an important aspect of culture that may also affect ESL students' writing. Robert Kaplan (1967) pointed out that because of the spiral thought pattern of Chinese students (61), they do not normally follow a linear organization pattern, which is the typical academic pattern in American college writing. So they tend to achieve lower grades for their writing. But here, the author will first focus on word orders and discourse patterns.

4.1. Idiomatic Expressions Affected by Modes of Thinking

Different thought patterns may lead to students' use of an expression in the wrong order against that of the corresponding English expressions. For example, *in black and white*, *heal the wounded and rescue the dying* etc., are often read in English. There are also expressions such as *back and forth*, *in twos and threes*, and *right and left*, and the same expressions are also found in Chinese. The only difference is that these words are arranged differently. In Chinese, all these expressions become *forth and back*, *in threes and twos*, *left and right*, *rescue the death and heal the wounded*, etc. As a result, students still stick to these word orders of their mother tongue so that their expressions seem awkward to native speakers. So, this is something worth ESL students' attention too. Such a phenomenon reflects the different thinking orders of the English people and the Chinese people. Another occasion where a Chinese ESL student tends to follow his/her cultural thinking order is when they use multiple adjectives to modify a noun; they are unsure of the right arrangement of those adjectives, they would follow their cultural thought pattern and write phrases like “two new beautiful silk evening dress” and “a new beautiful Italian black jacket” instead of “two beautiful new green silk evening dress” and “a beautiful new black Italian leather jacket.” They need to follow the right English collocational positions like “Size (length, height,) + Shape + Age (old or new) + Color + Country (region, origin) + Materials made of + Usage (types) + the modified.” The same problem also occurs when deciding the right positioning of adverbials' time, place, and manner. Chinese people arrange places from the largest to the smallest and the same with time. For example, they would say China, Beijing, Wangfujing Street, No. 50. Or 2022, July 30. 8 am. But English people say these the other way round. They start with the smallest unit and then move on to the largest unit. ESL students tend to make mistakes in this aspect. There is also some difference in the positioning of adverbials of time, place and manner between English and Chinese. For example, English people would say, “I worked as a baby-sitter in the USA last year in order to earn some money.” In contrast, a Chinese would say, “I last year worked in New York as a baby-sitter to earn some money.” Obviously, cultural thought patterns also influence ESL learners' English writing.

In addition to the thought pattern influence on the word order, people of different cultures have different perceptions of the same thing. The different perceptions may also cause ESL students to misuse some words like nouns. In English, there are countable nouns and uncountable nouns. However, some uncountable nouns are countable in Chinese. Words like *advice*, *bread*, *furniture*, *news*, *soap*, and so on are just such examples. Chinese students tend to use *advice*, *news*, *furniture*, and *toothpaste* still as countable nouns when they write English composition, which is not correct and needs to be addressed. English countable nouns and uncountable nouns are a headache to Chinese students because some words are used both as countable and uncountable nouns, depending on what context these words are used, but the meanings will vary to some extent or considerably. Iron, beer, experience and wine are just such examples. ESL students need to cultivate awareness in this aspect. Otherwise, they misuse these words.

Onomatopoeia is an area that best explains people's different perceptions of the same things. Even if it is the same animal, the noise it makes is presented in different ways in different cultures. A sheep baas in English but produces a sound like “mee-” in Chinese. A dog barks in English but *waans* in Chinese. Not only is the difference found in animal noise but also in other types of noises, such as choo-choo by trains and dub-a-dub by a drum which are also different in Chinese as the sounds become “*hong-long-long* and *dong-dong*”, respectively. However, ESL students, influenced by their cultural conventions, may also, at times, use onomatopoeia inappropriately. Their main problem is to use their native onomatopoeia to replace the English equivalents. For example, some of the writer's students used “*dong-dong*” to replace the knocking sound of rub-a dub or used “*ti-ta-ta*” to imitate the sound of a trumpet. The same can be said of using colors. People of different cultures use different colors to describe the same thing or concept. For example, to express jealousy, English-speaking people use “green-eyed” while Chinese use “red-eyed.” The English “gray hair” is similar to the Chinese “white hair.” So, once in a while, ESL students may make mistakes in this aspect. For

example, some Chinese would use “hong cha (red tea)” to express “black tea” in English, which may not be understood by native speakers. So, instructors need to remind ESL students of the cultural use of colors to avoid unnecessary errors.

4.2. Sentence Patterns

In terms of sentence patterns, differences also exist between Chinese and English. According to the author's study, English has preferred sentence patterns like hypotactic sentences and loose sentences, while in Chinese, paratactic sentences and periodic sentences are more frequently used. Hypotactic sentences or hypotaxis (from Greek: “arrange under”), according to the definition of the *American Heritage Dictionary*, is “the dependent or subordinate construction or relationship of clauses with connectives (649); for example, ‘I shall despair if you don't come.’” Parataxis or paratactic sentences (from Greek: “arrange side by side”), on the other hand, means “The arrangement of clauses one after the other without connectives showing the relationship between them (1952). Example: The rain fell; the river flooded; the house washed away. Here is a hypotactic sentence:

When I try to understand what it is that prevents so many Americans from being as happy as one might expect, it seems to me that there are two cases, of which one goes much deeper than the other (Lian Shuneng 49).

It is easy to see that in this not very long sentence, there are seven conjunctions such as *when, what, that, that, which, as, and than*. But, when it is translated into Chinese, only *when, what* and *than* are translated, and they are not translated as conjunctions but as prepositions. In other words, no conjunction is used. That's to say, hypotactic sentences tend to use many conjunctions, while paratactic sentences use much less conjunctions. The former is characterized by subordination or like a tree that branches out from the trunk, while the latter is like a train that is connected by individual carriages.

4.2.1. Hypotactic Sentences vs. Paratactic Sentences

Not understanding this English preferred feature, ESL learners from China tend to write English sentences that are more paratactic than hypotactic. Here are two examples:

1. Guilin is a tourist city. It has a long history. Its landscape is second to none in this world (Three sentences, paratactic).
Revised: As a city of tourism that has a long history, Guilin's landscape is second to none in the world. (Only one sentence by using a conjunction).
2. She is dishonest. That quality of hers disappoints most of us. I don't trust Her. (four sentences in a paratactic manner).
Revised: Because she is dishonest, which disappoints most of us, I don't Trust her. (now, one sentence in a hypotactic manner).

If the two sentences are not improved, they leave us with the impression that the writers are not mature thinkers, and the language appears childish and choppy.

4.2.2. Periodic Sentences vs. Loose Sentences

Another sentence pattern problem is that ESL learners of Chinese like to follow the preferred sentence pattern when writing in English. As Lian Shuneng (1998) pointed out:

While English speakers prefer loose sentences (sentences that always have the main clause or main idea coming before the subordinate sentence, Chinese prefer periodic sentences, which normally have a main point written at the end of a sentence; This, according to Scollon (2015) corresponding to the conventional thought patterns identified in the academic writings both in English and Chinese, Westerners favor a deductive pattern in organizing their ideas in writing which states the points first and then uses supporting details to justify the points, in contrast, Chinese people favor an inductive pattern in organizing their ideas or thoughts in their writing, which states the supporting details before they come to their points, this difference results in the use of the two sentence patterns by Westerners and Chinese: loose sentence pattern (points first, supporting details next) vs. periodic sentence pattern (supporting details first, points next), here you see an example of using periodic sentences in writing by Chinese ESL learners:

Take lung trouble, for example. If it results from heart trouble, that is regarded as “fire subjugating metal.” If it is caused by liver (wood) trouble, that is referred to as “wood reversibly restricting metal.” If it is led by the spleen

(earth), trouble is looked upon as an “illness of mother-organ involving son-organ.” And if it is due to kidney (water) trouble, that is taken as an “illness of son-organ involving mother organ” (Enwei, TCM Basic, Chapter 3, Section 6).

In the paragraph, four complex sentences are used, all of which are periodic sentences. They are introduced by if-clauses, and the main points are at the end of each sentence. The happy thing here is that all these sentences are not long enough to create difficulty, but they create a monotonous rhythm in the paragraph. They also show the writer’s preference for periodic sentences.

According to David Megginson:

Loose sentences are the most natural for English speakers, who almost always talk in loose sentences; even the most sophisticated English writers tend to use loose sentences much more often than periodic sentences. While a periodic sentence can be useful for making an important point or for a special dramatic effect, it is also much more difficult to read and often requires readers to go back and re-read the sentence so that by the end, the reader has forgotten the main point is (Megginson).

The writer found in writings by Chinese ESL learners that, of 100 complex sentences that have subordinate sentences, about 70 percent of them are periodic sentences. This may create a constraint for Western readers, as pointed out by Megginson. So, this is a problem ESL learners need to pay attention to in writing English essays.

5. Textual Organization Affected by Cultures

People of every culture have their own communication style, which, when manifested in writing, observes certain rhetorical patterns. Without understanding the different styles of communication, ESL learners tend to follow the style favored by his/her culture. According to Edward Hall (1976), an American cross-cultural researcher, there are two types of cultures in the world: high-context culture vs. low-context culture. People from a high-context cultural rely on more paralinguistic cues such as facial expressions, gestures, proximity, posture and echoing for interpreting messages, while those from a low-context culture rely more on communications that take place most often through written or spoken (verbal) speech, and rules are directly and explicitly stated. Guo (1998) summarized the communication styles of the two cultures as follows:

Table 1. Communication Styles of the Two Types of Cultures

<p style="text-align: center;">Low-context Culture</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overtly displays meanings through direct communication forms 2. Values individualism 3. Tends to develop transitory personal relationships 4. Emphasize linear logic 5. Values direct verbal interaction and is less able to read nonverbal expressions 6. Tends to use “logic” to present ideas 7. Tends to emphasize highly structured messages, give details, and place great stress on words and technical signs 	<p style="text-align: center;">High-context Culture</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implicitly embeds meanings at different levels of the sociocultural context 2. Values group sense 3. Tends to take time to cultivate and establish a permanent personal relationship 4. Emphasizes spiral logic 5. Values indirect verbal interaction and is more able to read nonverbal expressions 6. Tends to use “feeling” in expression 7. Tends to give simple, ambiguous, Non-contexting messages
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The United States, the UK, and Germany are of low-context cultures, while China and many other Asian countries are of high-context cultures. ESL learners tend to follow the communication style of their own culture. They can yield the following problems.

5.1 Implicitly Imbedded Meanings

Still sticking to their culture-favored communication style, ESL learners of Chinese tend to imply their points in their writing. Here is an example:

I am not a policy maker, but I have a dream of tractors singing in the fields and trucks roaring effortlessly on roads.
I am not an agricultural technical program planner, but I have a dream of seeing farmers studying science and technology and working comfortably with machinery (Matalene 1985).

It can be seen from this passage that the writer wants to criticize the inefficiency of the Chinese Department of Agriculture, but he does not speak his intention explicitly. Instead, he expressed it by using his dreams, which he hopes will come true, to suggest that the Department should try to realize these good things. But as an English reader, an American would not prefer this indirectness. Americans say what they want to say, not in a beat about the bush manner.

5.2. Inductive Pattern

In addition to the implicitness issue, there is also an issue of inductiveness. As mentioned above, low-context people like a deductive pattern in academic writing, which means stating the point first; then using supporting details to support the point. However, ESL learners of Chinese tend to follow their inductive pattern in writing. Here is another example:

Because most of our production is done in China now, and uh, it's not really certain how the government will react in the run-up to 1997, and since I think a certain amount of caution in committing to TV advertisement is necessary because of the expense. So, I suggest that we delay making our decision until after Lego makes its decision

Scollon (1995) commented that even though the words and the sentences of the writer are easy to understand, a Westerner may still have the feeling that his main point is not clear. The reason, he explains, is that the reader (an American businessman) and the writer (a Chinese businessman) are using a different rhetorical or textual patterns to organize the discourse.

5.3. Pretentious Style

Finally, the writer wants to point out that ESL students may still follow their writing style in writing English composition. Here are some Chinese students' examples. In Chinese writing, a pretentious style is favored. Chinese people tend to think that prose or an essay is a place where authors demonstrate their literary talents or their well-learned status, so they try to use the showiest words or cite extensively proverbs, old idioms, metaphors, and famous sayings, which is not advocated in English writing. Look at these examples from Chinese students' composition:

1. He slept like a log and woke up at the crack of dawn, fresh as a daisy.
2. In class, we twittered like little birds, laughing with wholeheartedness and cracking jokes with ease of mind.
3. The little river runs through the village like a shiny, silver, long snake (He, 1995, 211).

The exemplary sentences are filled with figurative idioms and flowery words, which are regarded as beautiful writing by Chinese people, but not at all as such by native speakers, as they advocate the use of plain, concise, and sincere words. Therefore, English instructors may also want to remind students not to apply their native diction style to English writing if it happens to display a great disparity.

6. Discussion

This paper discusses cultural influences on ESL students' choice of words, sentence patterns, textual organization, and others. It shows that it is not enough to improve ESL students' English writing skills only by teaching them the necessary language skills. Cultural awareness is important as well. Instructors need to observe carefully so as to find out how ESL students transfer their writing style to English writing so as to help them accordingly. Otherwise, even with better language skills, students still write something that seems alien and unnatural to native speakers and is not real English. The writer also wants to point out that when he mentions preferred sentence patterns or textual organizations, he does not mean that English does not use other sentence patterns or textual organizations. This is only a matter of which is more conventional or preferred. But this matter is still of importance. Just as Kirk St. Amant (1999) points out: "Recent research has indicated that even when reading or speaking in another language, the reader or speaker still prefers the rhetorical patterns of his or her native culture and even judges the effectiveness of other language documents according to their cultural rhetorical expectation" (298). This quotation means that only following

the rhetorical patterns and communication styles of the target language can writers really achieve effective and successful communication. The writer also wants to state that, limited by a single individual's effort, by no means can it be said that the paper exhausts all the cultural aspects that may influence an ESL student's English composition. Also, more research or data are needed to further strengthen and validate the author's arguments in the above-mentioned areas. But surely, every single effort will add more knowledge to teaching and learning English as a second language.

7. Conclusion

As the reader can see from the foregoing discussion, while learning English, ESL students are faced not only with language problems but cultural influences as well. This cultural influence permeates every aspect of language use, from diction to sentence patterns, organization, and idioms. In fact, even in content selection, cultural influence also exists. For example, in writing business letters, Chinese students tend to include some greetings or personal matters to establish harmonious relationships with managers. The director of the technical communication program of Texas Tech once asked the author why Chinese students tend to ask after their family members. To Americans, business means business. No other unrelated matters should be involved. But influenced by Confucianist moral etiquette, Chinese students are likely to ask after family members and show kindness and care. If this influence had been clear to the director, she would not have such a question. Other professors find that Chinese students tend to use the first-person plural in writing composition. They think writing is a way for an individual to express his/her ideas and feelings, so "I" should be used, not "we." They do not realize that China belongs to a cultural orientation of collectivism, which emphasizes group harmony and we-relationship, and that's why Chinese students tend to use "we" instead of "I", which belongs to the cultural orientation of individualism. Again, this tells us cultural awareness is very important in learning language use. So, instructors need to cultivate students' cultural awareness and enable them to understand the cultural difference in all aspects of language use. Only by doing so can ESL students overcome the influence and write appropriate and idiomatic English.

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