

**A study of the shaping of the ‘Emotion and Attitude’ domain in the new English language curriculum of China through an EFL textbook**

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## **A study of the shaping of the ‘Emotion and Attitude’ domain in the new English language curriculum of China through an EFL textbook**

The English language curriculum (ELC) in China has undergone numerous changes since its modernization movement in the late 1970s. The recent English language syllabus (Ministry of Education 2001) marks a new direction by incorporating ‘emotion and attitude’ as one of the ELC’s key domains. The implication is that the deep-rooted principle of learning a western language solely for instrumental purposes is extended to embody an integrative and intrinsic orientation as well. This paper explores the shaping of this new domain by studying the 2001 English language syllabus for what the domain entails. A prestige EFL textbook, PEP Primary English 6A, is also analysed to examine the extent the domain is addressed in the textbook in three aspects, namely the types of activities included, the language forms presented and the teaching strategies recommended. It is found that the target objectives of the domain are addressed adequately through the range of affect-related activities in the textbook. The language presented in the textbook is, however, relatively ‘emotion-free’ (Dewaele 2005) and the recommended teaching strategies in the accompanying teacher’s guide do not reflect all the strategies advocated in the syllabus for developing positive affective factors. Implications of the findings are discussed.

**Key words:** EFL textbook; affect in SLA; English language curriculum; primary education; teaching methodology

### **Introduction**

Since China’s modernization drive began in the late 1970s, considerable progress has been made to implement nation-wide reforms in the English language curriculum (ELC) at all levels. The on-going evolution of the ELC reveals the increasing status attached to English and also a continual readjustment in its role from being a political weapon for ‘international class struggle’ and ‘revolutionary diplomacy’ (Ministry of Education 1978)<sup>1</sup> to a means to acquiring knowledge and information for communication with the outside world and for the “national policy of reform and opening” (MoE 1993).

The latest English syllabus published in 2001 presents a drastic change in the orientation of English in the school curriculum set against the backdrop of information age and globalisation. The preamble of the syllabus points out that in the strategic development of foundation education, many countries have incorporated English learning as one of the major components of citizenship education. The renewal of ELC in China is to address the changing developments and requirements of the new era in line with the world trend. The syllabus contends that while the process of English learning ‘enables students to acquire language knowledge, skills and raises in them the ability to use the language, it should also be a process to strengthen their mind, nurture their temperament, extend their views, enrich their life experiences, develop their intellect, build up their character and raise the quality of humanism’ (MoE, 2001, 1). To align with the renewed orientation towards language learning, the syllabus presents the ELC objectives in a framework of five domains namely language skills, language knowledge, emotion and attitude, learning strategies and cultural awareness (MoE, 2001, 6). It is maintained that the ability of language use should be developed integratively through these five domains. The old curriculum

was considered lopsided with its focus mainly on language knowledge rather than making language learning interesting, relevant to students' life experience and intellectual level.

The significance of this change is that English language, for the first time in China, is not learned solely for utilitarian purposes that might benefit the nation but also for the development of the affective qualities of the individual student. Among the five domains of the integrative framework, this paper will narrow its scope on the 'emotion and attitude' domain as affect is considered a priority in the new ELC (Wang, 2007; Wang & Lam, 2009). 'Affect' is an area which used to be considered too sensitive to broach since it is frequently associated with western progressive value system (Hayhoe 1992; Ma 2007) that perceives education as a process of developing learners' individuality and aspirations that appear not at all compatible with the socialist ideology of China nor the more profound roots of Chinese culture which is collectivist rather than individualistic in nature and values a more constrained view of self (Lee 1996).

It is, therefore, the aim of the present study to explore what the new 'emotion and attitude' domain actually entails and how the domain is addressed in an English textbook at the primary level. The findings to the questions are to shed light on the shaping of the domain through the interplay of curriculum policy at the macro-level and the textbook writers' interpretation at the meso-level. The term 'emotion and attitude' will be used interchangeably with the term 'affect' in this paper as 'affect' is the term more commonly used in second language acquisition (SLA).

### **Review of 'Affect' in SLA**

Before exploring the definition of the 'emotion and attitude' domain in China's context, the paper will first review the conceptions of affect in the field of SLA so as to take account of international perceptions.

In SLA literature, affect is difficult to define since it has many different facets and may be applied to a wide range of emotional or motivational variables (Gardner, Tremblay, and Masgoret 1997). Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972), pioneers in studies of affect, conducted classic studies of motivation and attitude as variables in energizing behaviour and providing purpose in language learning. This was followed by a plethora of research on language anxiety as a negative variable obstructing the learning process (Horwitz 2001). Arnold and Brown (1999) categorize these variables into individual factors which relate to learners as individuals (e.g. anxiety, motivation), and relational factors which relate to learners as participants in socio-cultural situations (e.g. empathy, classroom transactions). Indeed, Scovel (1978) simply categorises affect as a catch-all concept for most non-cognitive issues.

Later studies broadened their scope to include learners' personality traits (Dewaele and Furnham 1999; Ely 1986; Beebe 1983) and the study of affect as an explicit methodological variable in teaching (Tudor 2001). In language learning, there is a growing consensus among researchers that activating the positive affective variables is critical to sustaining the process of language learning (Arnold 1999). A focus on affect in class is also considered essential for the communication of emotion and the development of socio-cultural competence in a target language (Dewaele 2005).

While affect is seen as a means to facilitate language learning, it is also conceived as an end in itself. Reviews from socio-cultural and anthropological perspectives indicate that affect "floods" the diverse linguistic forms of different languages in

many ways (Ochs and Schieffelin 1989; Besnier 1990). The fact that language is replete with affective features suggests that language is a form of personal and affective self expression. This vision of language as self-expression coincides with the humanistic movement which regards the development of individuals into thinking and affective beings as one of the language learning goals. In Lewis' words (1993, 50), 'language is the primary means for our own personal self-definition'. Stevik even speaks of attending to learners' feelings, social relations, responsibility, and self-actualization which will ultimately enable them to pursue new 'life goals' and become responsible members of society (Stevick 1998, 166), a vision extending well beyond the language classroom.

In short, affect embodies a broad range of non-cognitive variables playing significant roles in the process of second language acquisition. It can be a means to facilitate language learning as well as an end in language teaching. With this understanding, the paper will turn to examine the definition of affect in the ELC of China to see if it is related to any of the perceptions reviewed.

### **The "Emotion and Affect" domain**

In the context of ELC in China, the official standpoint of the 'emotion and attitude' domain stipulated in the 2001 English language syllabus also reflects the different layers of understanding of affect as shown in the review above. The syllabus defines the domain as concerning 'inter-related factors like interest, motivation, confidence, determination, and co-operative spirit, which impact on students' process and effectiveness of learning, and contribute to the gradual shaping and development of their national awareness and international perspectives' (MoE 2001, 21-22). The definition focuses on those affective variables with largely positive impact. They can easily be categorised according to the framework of Arnold and Brown (1999) into individual factors (e.g. interest, motivation, confidence and determination) or relational factors (e.g. co-operative spirit). The definition clearly indicates a two-way relationship between affect and language learning such that the activation of the positive affective factors necessarily entails the effective learning of English. Moreover, in this process, the affective factors are reinforced, shaping the learners' character and ultimately, their national awareness and international perspectives, which echoes Stevick's (1998) educational vision of developing self-actualized individuals and responsible members of society.

To provide clearer goals for students across primary and secondary education to achieve within the domain, the syllabus presents a hierarchy of nine levels that encapsulates the relevant target objectives. While students at different schools may progress through these levels at varying speeds because of wide regional diversities within China, the general assumption for schools starting English teaching in Primary 3 is that the achievement of Levels 2, 5 and 8 for primary, middle and high school graduates respectively is possible.

The target objectives for Level 2, which fall within the scope of this paper, read as follows:

- interested in activities such as listening to and speaking English, reciting rhymes, singing songs, telling stories and playing games;
- willing to follow good models, courage to open one's mouth (i.e. speak), positive to participate, and active to ask for help.

(MoE 2001, 22)

These target objectives show other layers of understanding about the “emotion and attitude” domain. At the level of teaching, the domain is defined as affect related activities that involve spoken interaction, fun or creative expression such as playing games, storytelling, chanting rhymes and singing. This echoes Tudor’s view (Tudor 2001) of affect as a methodological variable in teaching. At the level of learning, the domain is defined as observable behavioural response in the form of interest and active participation in affect related activities.

The syllabus further suggests that the “emotion and attitude” domain requires the support of ‘a tolerant, democratic and harmonious learning atmosphere’ in the classroom and four strategies are recommended to establish such a classroom atmosphere:

- (1) respecting individual students, actively encouraging them to endeavour in their learning, safeguarding their self-esteem and positive attitude;
- (2) incorporating affective education in English language teaching, designing different co-operative learning activities to foster collaborative learning, peer help and to provide the experience of joint achievement and honour and to develop co-operative spirit;
- (3) paying special attention to introvert students or those with learning difficulties and trying the best to create more language application opportunities for them; and
- (4) establishing a harmonious and democratic channel of communication between teachers and students, conducting frequent teacher-student reflection on the learning process and outcomes, and developing teaching and learning through mutual encouragement and support.

(MoE 2001, 28-29)

To sum up, affect in the ‘emotion and attitude’ domain of ELC in China has different facets. At the conception level, it refers both to positive affective variables as a means to effective English learning and also as an end of the learning process which shapes students’ character and national and international outlooks in ways valued by the country. At the pedagogical level, the goal of the domain is realised in the primary English language classroom through affect-related language activities implemented under a conducive classroom atmosphere. Students’ performance in this domain is judged mainly by their behavioural expression of interest and participation in the activities. However, the affective features of the English language itself seem not to be exploited sufficiently in the domain to contribute to the students’ learning. Language, be it one’s mother tongue or a foreign language, embodies affective features when used for human communication and expression. If ‘emotion and attitude’ is considered an essential domain in the ELC framework, it would not be adequate to omit the mention of how language laden with affect might be turned to the learners’ advantage.

### **Research concerning the ‘Emotion and Attitude’ domain**

The ‘emotion and attitude’ domain implies a new concept in the teaching of English in China as entailed in the classroom strategies recommended in the syllabus. Firstly, there is greater emphasis placed on learners as individuals and a concomitant commitment to learner-centred teaching rather than teaching merely to serve the teachers’ instructional goals or the corporate political-socio-economic objectives of the nation. The explicit reference to the need to respect individuals and to cater for those with learning difficulties demonstrates a more humanistic way of looking at

learners and learner difference. Secondly, sound interpersonal relationships, tolerance and collaboration are valued as there is much stress on creating a harmonious and democratic atmosphere marked by enhanced collaboration among students and improved communication between teachers and students. This is very different from the achievement-based and competitive atmosphere overshadowing schools in China, a country renowned for its ‘examination-oriented’ education (Zhong 2006), nor is the democratic approach compatible with what the country is used to under the one-party rule. In other words, while there is an explicit indication from the policy makers towards a more humanistic oriented education, how the proposed classroom strategies for the affective domain are manifested in textbooks or classroom teaching is worth exploring.

Review of studies related to the domain, however, show a lopsided focus on its implications for teaching at the theoretical level (Dang 2008; Hou 2004; Meng 2002; Huang 2003; Yang 2002; Zhang 2004). Research into affect-related teaching in the EFL classroom or the related pedagogic resources is limited. Zhou and He (2005) studied the extent to which 502 secondary English teachers incorporated affective teaching strategies into their teaching and concluded that only about half of the teachers surveyed showed awareness of the importance of affective factors in teaching, and among them, only about 25% had a planned approach to doing so. Li and Siu (2009) interviewed 8 primary English language teachers, who were considered progressive in their teaching, on the affective features after observing their demonstration lessons. They found that these teachers shared a conviction concerning the importance of affect for the effective English learning by their students and demonstrated their belief by activating such positive affective factors through the extensive use of games, songs, stories and role plays. While these teachers were capable of creating a harmonious learning atmosphere in lesson, the classes observed were seemingly rehearsed for demonstration purposes only, thus not representative of ordinary classes. Strategies which require teachers to pay special attention to learning difficulties or learner difference and to establish a democratic communication channel between teachers and students were not evident. In other words, many challenges remain for primary teachers as they seek to address the objectives embodied in the new domain in their teaching.

Studies of textbooks in China are legion (Zhang 2005) but little is found that analyses EFL textbooks in relation to the affective curriculum goals, except for a recent study by Chen (2010). Chen conducted an extensive study focusing on the co-deployment of linguistic and visual resources in a total of 117 primary and secondary EFL textbooks in China. The study concludes that while visual images play an essential role in conveying positive affective meaning, the linguistic elements in these textbooks does little to convey affective meaning.

### **Textbook Selection and Method of Analysis**

Textbooks in China are very much a ‘curricular artefact’ and the ‘main manifestation of the intended curriculum’ (Adamson 2004, 6 and 8), and that for many teachers in China, they are the major, if not the only, pedagogic resource to hand. Given this background and the fact that it is not easy for outsiders to research normal lessons in China, the study of how the proposed teaching activities and classroom strategies for the affective domain can be manifested will be done through a case study of a primary EFL textbook in China with its accompanying teachers’ guide. It is believed that textbook as the major, if not the only resource material used by English teachers in

China, can provide an initial glimpse of the shaping of the affective domain at the meso-level of curriculum development.

Given the restricted scope of the present study as an initial investigation, only one primary EFL textbook has been chosen for a more in-depth analysis. The work, PEP Primary English 6A, has been selected because the People's Education Press enjoys prestige and status as an official publisher in China. Indeed, until 1986, it produced the only unified set of EFL textbooks authorised by the MoE and it still dominates, capturing over 60% of the market (Lingo Media, 2005). Book 6A for primary 6 students is chosen since it is at this stage of schooling that the target elements at Level 2 of the domain should be fully imparted to the children.

Unlike Chen's study which focuses on the language-image relationship across different EFL textbooks in China, the present study explores the textbook from three perspectives – firstly, the perspective of 'affective learning' as reflected through the types of activities which aim to develop positive affect in students; secondly, the perspective of pedagogy as reflected through the affective teaching strategies recommended in the teachers' guide, and thirdly the perspective of affective expression as reflected through the language forms and meaning presented.

With regard to the 'affective learning' perspective, the organisation of each unit in the students' book was examined. The activity types presented in each unit were counted and matched against those listed under Level 2 of the target objectives of the 'emotion and attitude' domain, i.e. listening to and speaking English, reciting rhymes, singing songs, telling stories and playing games (hereinafter referred to as affect-related activities). The purpose was to ascertain the extent to which these activities are covered in the textbook as students' performance in participating in these activities is stipulated in the syllabus as manifestation of their affective learning. Since 'listening to and speaking English' as a category of activities is too broad, the term 'role play' was used instead in the activity identification process, confining the activities of this category to those which involve a process of listening, speaking and interaction among groups/pairs of students instead of merely reciting or attending to listening comprehension exercises. Activities which focus on presenting language forms, controlled practices of language structure or vocabulary, pronunciation drills, listening and reading comprehension are consequently categorised under 'other activities'.

The pedagogical perspective of the textbook is studied through examining the teaching strategies recommended in the teachers' guide and the foreword to the textbook. In the teachers' guide, a teaching plan for a randomly chosen unit was analysed in detail to see if it reflects the four suggested strategies in the syllabus which aim at creating 'a tolerant, democratic and harmonious learning atmosphere' necessary for affective education.

The study then explores the perspective of affective expression, meaning the link between language and affect in the textbook. Vocabulary and textual meaning are analysed so as to assess the extent to which the textbook exposes students to the use of English as a means of affective expression on various topics of interest. The vocabulary of the textbook examined was confined to the word list at the end of the textbook. From it, emotion words were identified. The definition of emotion words by Dewaele and Pavlenko (2002, 281) was employed for this purpose, that is 'abstract and metaphorical words that refer to feelings, interests, desires, and judgements and belong to a number of grammatical classes: verbs (to love, to hate), adverbs (happily, cheerfully), nouns (joy, fear) and adjectives (sad, upset)'. Affect expressed in texts was identified on the basis of the following criteria adapted from Martin and White

(2005) and Chen (2010), that is whether they indicate (i) an ‘emotional surge’ with associated behavioural manifestation (e.g. she laughed; he sings happily); (ii) an ongoing mood / an internal mental process (e.g. he is a happy boy, she likes singing); (iii) a reaction to a past, present or prospective stimulus (e.g. Wow! That will be fun!); and (iv) an evaluative comment (e.g. you are right; that is beautiful).

## Findings

### *Coverage of activities for affective learning*

The PEP textbook contains 6 units plus two interspersed revision units which are not included in the analysis. The units follow a uniform pattern of organisation. The Warm Up section presents the topic and context of the unit which helps activate students’ schema. This is followed by Sections A and B, the two core sections, which present the target vocabulary and language structures together with language practice activities. The unit ends with Section C, an extended section which is optional and may be used at the teacher’s discretion.

Affect-related activities are located in different sections of each unit and there is a rather consistent pattern of distribution in each unit as evidenced by Table One below.

Table 1: Number of affect-related activities in a typical PEP Primary English 6A unit

Activity Section	Role Play	Rhyme / Chant	Song	Story	Game	Other	Total
Core	2	1	0	0	1	10	14
Optional	1	0	1	1	0	3	6
Total	3	1	1	1	1	13	20
Percentage of affect-related activities in a unit							$7/20 \times 100\% = 35\%$

The above table shows that affect-related activities occupy approximately one third of the total activity range. This indicates a conscious attempt of the textbook to address the target objectives of the ‘emotion and attitude’ domain as stipulated in the syllabus. The distribution of activities shows that role play has 3 times more coverage than the other affect-related activities. This is understandable as the second descriptor of the domain’s target objective states that one of the foremost things for students to achieve a breakthrough is the courage to “open their mouths”, in other words, to speak English without inhibition.

There is an even spread of other types of affect-related activities in the unit. However, the song and the story are placed in the optional section. While one can say that singing and chanting share some interchangeable features, the role of storytelling is more crucial and irreplaceable. The relegation of story to the optional section probably reflects the conception that stories are secondary to the language drills and practice in the core sections.

### *Teaching strategies for affective education*

To find out how far the four teaching strategies to develop students’ affect in a tolerant, democratic and harmonious learning atmosphere as stipulated in the syllabus

are conceptualized by the textbook writer, the teachers' guide for the textbook and the foreword to the students' textbook are studied.

*Strategy One: Respect individuals, encourage endeavour, safeguard self esteem and positive attitude*

The teachers' guide does not make any explicit reference to respecting individual students. However, it does stress in the introductory pages the importance of teaching in a lively way, stimulating students' interest, motivating them and encouraging them to participate with the consequent provision of positive feedback from the teacher.

The foreword to the students' book demonstrates a more respectful orientation to students, though not as individuals. The foreword is written in Chinese to ensure easy understanding and is in the form of a letter addressing students directly in a warm and friendly way. It explains to them the recent changes in the textbook and suggests various English learning strategies. It even seeks to relieve their anxiety about possibly unknown words in the reading passages by advising them to guess the meaning from context. These words demonstrate that the writer had the audience in mind in the compilation of the textbook.

*Strategy Two: Design co-operative learning activities, foster collaborative learning, peer help, joint achievement, co-operative spirit*

The teachers' guide provides 6 lesson plans for each unit in the textbook. Affective objectives are stated under the overall unit objectives, giving the lessons a clear affective orientation. The spirit of co-operation and the need for collaboration and peer help is recurrent in the affective objectives of a number of units. For instance, the affective objectives for Unit 2 'Where is the Science Museum' is 'to cultivate among students the good quality of solidarity, friendship and mutual assistance, to enable students to co-operate positively with others in group activities and to accomplish the learning task together'.

The lesson plans also incorporate the extensive use of group activities through role plays and games. The following table shows the range of affect-related activities in the suggested lesson plans for Unit 4, a unit chosen randomly for illustration.

Table 2: Number of affect-related activities suggested in the 6 lesson plans of Unit 4 in the teachers' guide.

Activity Lesson	Role Play	Rhyme / Chant	Song	Story	Game	Other	Total
1	1	0	1	0	2	2	6
2	1	0	0	0	4	5	10
3	1	1	1	0	1	4	8
4	1	0	2	1	2	3	9
5	1	1	1	0	1	5	9
6	1	1	1	0	2	4	9
Total	6	3	6	1	12	23	51
Percentage of affect-related activities in the lesson plans							28/51 x 100% = 54.8%

Table 2 shows that there is a very high percentage (54.8%) of affect-related activities in the lesson plans of the unit as compared to the activities presented as content in the textbook (35%, cf. Table 1) and a high proportion of these activities involve group or pair work in one way or the other, so indicating how Strategy Two has permeated the lesson design.

The foreword to the students' book also implicitly conveys to students the spirit of peer help and co-operation by stating that the path to English proficiency is not to recite language patterns mechanically, but to use the language for 'discussing matters of their interest, expressing their thoughts, understanding others' and for creating a sense of enjoyment through participating in games, songs and chants. Students are also encouraged to ask questions and inform one another of what they know.

*Strategy 3: Special attention to introvert students or those with learning difficulties*

Strategy 3 is rarely touched upon in the teachers' guide nor in the foreword to the students' book. The only place where learning difficulties or learner difference is mentioned is in the introductory section of the teachers' guide where teachers are advised to handle the 'story time' in the optional section differently according to learner difference. More capable students can be required to understand the story, retell and perform the story in their own words, average students to understand and read aloud the story by following the audio recording provided, and weaker students to simply understand the story and identify pictures as the audio recording of the story is played. There is, however, no mention of how introvert or passive students should be catered for anywhere.

*Strategy 4: establish a harmonious, democratic channel of communication between teachers and students*

Strategy 4 is not made explicit in the documents although one can infer from the nature of the affect-related activities like games and songs that a harmonious atmosphere is crucial for their effective implementation. Little is said about establishing a democratic channel of communication between teachers and students except that teachers are reminded in the guide not to be engaged in teacher-talk all the time but to encourage students to raise questions as well. A further gesture towards the establishment of a democratic channel between the textbook writer and students is found in the final paragraph of the foreword in the students' book. It states that the textbook series has been written for the students and that, if they have any thoughts about the textbook, they are welcome to write to the writer/editor. This may mark an incipient shift away from established conceptions of the teacher's authoritative role towards a more facilitating and collaborative one.

***Expression of affect in the textbook language***

Among the 185 vocabulary items to be learned as listed at the back of the textbook, only the following 11 emotion words are identified:

Verbs: enjoy, feel, need, want

Nouns: fun

Adjectives: excited, dear, easy, lovely, sure

Adverbs: well

In other words, only 6% of the words in the word list of the textbook concern affect while the rest are largely neutral.

A review of the content in the core sections of each unit also yields very few examples of texts encoded with affective expression. This is not surprising as a quick scan at the themes of the 6 units shows that most of the themes<sup>2</sup> lend themselves more to dialogues involving direct exchanges of facts such as telling directions, describing daily routine rather than affective expression.

Affective expression in the dialogues to be learned in the core sections of each unit is not much evident in units 2, 3, and 5 which relate to location, spare time activities and jobs. In other units, it appears mostly as a positive reaction to a suggestion (stimulus), such as indicated in bold in the following extract:

#### Unit 1

Jim: Can I go on foot?

Chen: **Sure, if you like.** It is not far.

The reading comprehension texts in the core sections of the unit display the target language structures of the unit, but in more extended form. Students are expected to gain only a receptive understanding of the extended language forms which contain a greater variety of affective expressions (the nature of such expressions are indicated within the brackets of the sample texts), for example:

#### Unit 4

Extracts from email messages:

**I am happy** to have a new pen pal. (ongoing mood)

**I like swimming** .... (internal mental process)

Australia **must be fun!** (evaluation)

It is in the narrative genre that most examples of affective expression in the textbook are found. For instance, the reading text of Unit 6 personifies water vapour in the air as 'little Water Drop' who 'sleeps in a river', 'wakes up', 'feels very hot' and 'goes up' to the sky thinking that it may be cooler there. Affective expression is conveyed vividly in the anthropomorphism of 'little Water Drop'. In addition, the story in the optional section of each unit also contains more affective elements. The story is presented through a sequence of 6 cartoon strips with accompanying dialogues which build on the theme and helps to recycle and extend the unit's target language. Within the limitation of space and language structures to be used, affective elements are still evident in these stories. The story in Unit 1 about two friends discussing how to get to a restaurant for lunch furnishes an example. In this little story, the two main characters with look of enthusiasm made evaluative comments like 'It's (going by taxi is) too expensive' and 'It's (walking there is) good exercise' to each other's suggestion of ways of getting there. Their trip is, however, spoilt because they jay-walk and are fined by the policeman. Their shock and regret are well captured by their facial expression and the verbal exclamation - 'Oh no! It's a red light' and apology - 'I'm really sorry, sir'. There is also a sense of humour as the story ends with the utterance 'Ah .... But our lunch?!' as the meal money is used to pay the fine. The cartoon drawing together with the verbal expression for the purpose of evaluating

ideas, responding to challenges or mishaps and expressing mood show the potential of the narrative text in exposing students to the language of affect.

Interestingly, chants and songs, the most expressive genre in the textbook, do not contain as much affective expression as one may have expected. Even if they do, the affective component is inconspicuous. For instance, the chant for unit 3 is made up of a list of statements repeating the language pattern 'I'm / We are going to ....' with the last line ending in an affective note:

I'm going to buy a book,  
I'm going to take a look,  
:  
:  
I'm going outside to play.  
I'm going to have a **good** day! (evaluation)

The chant appears to have been hijacked for the purpose of presenting/consolidating the target language structure of the unit. Nevertheless, with the lines being rhythmic and ending in rhyming couplets, the chant may still be fun to read/perform if well led by the teacher. In other words, their potential to create a positive learning atmosphere depends very much on the pedagogical skills and personality of the teacher.

The above analysis shows that there is very little affect encoded in the textbook vocabulary or in the dialogues which serve to display the target language patterns. This suggests that affective expression is not the core element to be learned in English. The chants and songs are not rich in affective language either though they may be good vehicles for bringing about a positive learning atmosphere. While some reading texts and the story of each unit do provide students with some exposure to the affective language, the suspicion is that the story in the optional section can very easily be sacrificed when class time is running short.

## Discussion

Seen holistically, the analysis of the PEP textbook for Primary 6 reveals that the textbook writer is conscious of the 'emotion and attitude' domain in the design of the textbook in different respects. Deliberate efforts have been made to address the Level 2 target objectives of the domain by incorporating more than 30% of affect-related language activities in the textbook. Among these activities, the majority are related to developing listening and speaking through role plays supplemented by enjoyable activities like chants, songs, games and stories. The two target objectives of the domain, namely interest in the affect-oriented activities and positive attitude in learning are adequately addressed.

The lesson plans in the teachers' guide further incorporate more affect-related activities (more than 50%) than can be covered at different stages of each lesson. While teachers are advised to make judicious decisions in selecting the language activities for their class, the positioning of stories and songs in the optional section does convey a hidden message that these are of secondary importance. The small percentage of emotion words represented in the word list of the textbook and the minimal affective elements in the dialogue practice scripts are further evidence of Dewaele's claim that many foreign language textbooks are 'emotion-free' (Dewaele 2005, 375) and do not prepare learners to become proficient foreign language users

capable of identifying and expressing emotions crucial to human mental and social life. This may be related to the preconception that language should be made less difficult for foreign language learners. While the theoretical basis of such preconceptions is unclear, more and more research is pointing out that the supposed need to simplify language for EFL learners by eliminating socio-cultural components involving aspects such as pragmatic meaning (Vellenga, 2004) or the representation of honorifics (Brown 2010), and in this case affective expression, is depriving learners of the opportunity to learn language as it is used in real life.

The minimal importance attached to storytelling is a severe underestimation of the potential of the genre. Metaphors and stories are effective vehicles, especially for young learners, to share experience of human activities and to capture interest and invoke their passion. It has been shown earlier that, even within the strict confines of the textbook, the affective element present in the rather contrived stories have rendered the texts more interesting and lively than any target language pattern drills could. If the narrative genre can be given more prominence in the ELC of China through the inclusion of more authentic children's stories that convey something of the wonder of childhood, the affective element will have a more profound ability to engage, motivate and even move them deeply (Shanahan 1997, 2008).

Similarly, the language in other affect-oriented texts like songs and chants in the textbook generally consist only of colourless vocabulary items and factual statements. They represent only the body but not the soul of affective language expression. Moreover, their incorporation into the routine of almost every lesson plan as evidenced by the teachers' guide can lead to an adverse effect produced by a diet of dry sentence structures. While the format of fun activities may motivate young learners in the initial stage of their learning, their interest needs to be sustained in the long run by intrinsic interest and relevance in the meaning and feeling conveyed by the language. Quality text of appropriate affective expression on a theme can achieve this more effectively than the mere quantity of affect-related activities.

With regard to the teaching strategies for affective education, the focus of the documents studied tends to stress on developing positive attitude, raising interest and developing co-operation and peer learning. Strategies to respect individuals, to cater for learners with special needs and to establish a harmonious, democratic communication channel between students and teachers are rarely found, except for fleeting references to such phenomena evident in the words of the textbook writer to students in the foreword. This largely mirrors the findings of Li and Siu (2009) mentioned earlier. Moreover, teachers in their study further raised concerns in employing such strategies in class as they are considered time consuming, especially under examination pressure, and impracticable for large classes.

The main implication of the above discussion is that the textbook, at the meso-level of curriculum development, plays a very important role in converting official policy and curriculum guidelines into a form readily accessible to teachers. Wang even thinks it plays 'a dictating role' (Wang, 2007, 100) in English language teaching as teachers in China rely heavily upon the textbook writer to translate the aims, contents and suggested methodology from the syllabus into the textbook. Nevertheless, while the content and the activities in the textbook can help teachers sense the change in the orientation of the syllabus, teachers need to understand the meaning for the change and have their own attitude and orientation changed. If not, what happens in the classroom may only be an implementation of affect-related activities in the textbook at a very superficial level. This is particularly so in regions with limited teaching resources and few opportunities for in-service professional

training. Moreover, although affective expression through the English language is not an area of focus in the ‘emotion and attitude’ domain of the ELC, the discussion above has indicated the importance of this area for EFL learning. It is now opportune for more work been done in enriching the quality of textbook material, especially the language for affective expression so that the affective features of language itself might become ‘an inducement to language learning’ (Shanahan 1997, 168).

Before drawing the conclusion, the author has to point out that the present study as a preliminary exploration of the affective domain interpreted through textbook has its own limitation because it is based on the case study of only one textbook. While results from more sampling of textbooks would strengthen the arguments, the fact that the chosen textbook is widely used and often regarded as representing the official stance, makes the discussion still meaningful.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has shown that ‘emotion and attitude’ is a new domain in the current ELC of China, embodying new concepts, values and attitudes which vary greatly from previous practice in China. It is found that the domain as delineated in the syllabus is firmly rooted in SLA theory. Activating positive affective factors at the individual or relational level is a means to foster better learning of English, and also an end itself as learners’ positive affective qualities will be enhanced. The paper also shows that the target objectives of the domain in the curriculum are addressed by the textbook under study in the form of a variety of affect-related language activities. The accompanying teaching plans to the textbook are also replete with such activities.

While the mode of these affect-related activities may motivate learners and lead to more active participation in class and perhaps interest in learning English, it is difficult to judge how learners’ positive affective qualities will be enhanced as the content of the textbook is affect-free and many of the humanistic teaching strategies advocated in the syllabus are not evident in the teachers’ guide of the textbook. Changes to the teaching strategies also have to come from changes to teachers’ own concepts and attitudes towards a more humanistic approach of education. It is unclear how ready teachers are with such changes if textbook writers are not capable of fully translating them into practical guides. The frequent use affect-related activities mainly as vehicles for language practice as found in the teachers’ guide suggests that affective learning is merely addressed ‘quantitatively’ rather than ‘qualitatively’.

Another aspect which is lacking in the shaping of this domain is the development of learners’ affective expression. This is an area of crux as the affective and aesthetic aspects of language can make language learning more lively and relevant to the learners as individuals with thoughts, feelings and emotions. Does the gap reflect the assumption that affective expression would render the language yet more difficult for beginning EFL learners? Further research can be done to find out if the domain objectives and the textbooks for secondary students have greater focus on developing students’ affective expression or whether the gap exists across all levels. In any case, with China emerging onto the world stage more prominently and opening to more international exchanges at different levels of life, Chinese EFL learners need to be better equipped in regard to English learning, not just cognitively but affectively and this could easily be started by using more stories and texts with more affective expression at the primary level.

It should be noted that the purpose of this paper is not to criticise the curriculum under study. Rather there is a wish to affirm what has already been accomplished and to suggest areas for yet further, continual improvement. It is hoped that the initial findings from the limited scope of the present study would be a starting point for further extended study in the difference between the curriculum and the textbook and also between the intended curriculum and its actual implementation. The shaping of the 'emotion and attitude' domain requires not just a change in written policy and guidelines, but the concerted efforts of the authority, textbook writers and teachers as a whole in exchanging views more about the meaning of the domain as manifested at different levels through 'a tolerant, democratic and harmonious atmosphere' (MoE 2001, 28) so that its intended aims can be better achieved.

### Notes

1. Citations from the Ministry of Education (MoE) in this paper are translated by the author.
2. Titles and themes of units in PEP Primary English 6A are: (1) How do you go there (means of transport, traffic rules); (2) Where is the science museum (location, directions); (3) What are you going to do? (spare time activities); (4) I have a pen pal (hobbies, daily routine); (5) What does she do? (jobs); and (6) The story of rain (water cycle, plants)

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