

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Silence in the classroom

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**SILENCE IN THE CLASSROOM**

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## Abstract

Silence is a common phenomenon in human interaction. Silence is the absence of sound. There will be no interaction and communication if there is silence (Scollon & Scollon 1980). People always perceive silence as a sign of refusal, irresponsiveness, inactiveness and passiveness. There are many studies about the silence in the classroom especially of the Asian students. They criticize that the traditional Confucian culture still affects the interpersonal communication between the teachers and the students (Flowerdew & Miller 1995, Scollon & Scollon 1994). In other words, it is the traditional Chinese culture to blame for the silence of the students.

This study is to investigate the silence displayed by a group of secondary students. It is hoped to find out that, besides the Confucian culture, what the other factors are which contribute to the silence in the classroom. This study uses the ethnographic approach based on the model of Spradley & Mann's *The Cocktail Waitress*. It is hoped that through interview, audio-taping and observation, other reasons can be revealed.

## 摘要

「靜」是人類相互溝通帶來的常見現象。「靜」和「聲」是相對的，沒有聲音便是靜。靜相等於沒有溝通 (Scollon & Scollon 1980)。「靜」帶來的訊息是拒絕、沒有反應、沉寂和被動。

有關學生在課室內的沉默，特別是亞洲區學生的沉默，已經有很多學者研究過了。這些學者認為孔教文化對老師與學生之間的溝通仍然有深遠影響 (Flowerdew & Miller 1995, Scollon & Scollon 1994)。亦即是說，學生的沉寂是歸因於中國傳統文化的。

這個研究針對一群中學生在課室內的沉默，希望找出除了傳統孔教文化外，尚有那些因素導致學生的沉默。本研究以 Spradley & Mann's 的 *The Cocktail Waitress* 為藍本，採用了訪問、錄音及觀察等方法希望從人種誌的角度來探討這個問題。

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