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MA in Drama and Performing Arts in Education and Lifelong Learning

**DRAMA IN EDUCATION AS A MEANS FOR IMPROVING
ACTORS' CULTURE UNDERSTANDING ON
INTERCULTURAL THEATRE PLAYS**

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CONTENTS

Abstract (Greek)	4
Abstract.....	5
Keywords.....	6
1. Introduction	6
1.1. Background.....	6
1.2. Research Problem	9
1.3. Purpose of the Study	10
1.4. Research Questions.....	11
1.5. Definition of Key Terms	12
1.6. Scope of the Study	13
1.7. Significance of the Study.....	14
1.8. Limitations of the Study	15
2. Literature Review	15
2.1. Introduction of Intercultural Theatre	15
2.2. The Reason to Have Intercultural Theatre.....	16
2.3. The Problems in Intercultural Theatre	17
2.4. The Main Difficulties for Actors	19
2.5. How Should We Make Intercultural Theatre	20
2.5.1. What Actors Should Do	21
2.5.2. What Theatre Educator Should Do.....	22
2.6. Drama in Education for Improving Cultural Understanding.....	23
3. Methodology.....	23
3.1. Research Design	23
3.2. Sample and Instrumentation	25
3.3. Research Procedure	25
4. Data Analysis.....	29
4.1. Findings in Questionnaires	30
4.2. Findings in Interviews and Journals	33
4.2.1. Before the study period	33
4.2.1.1. Difficulties	34
(1) Language.....	34
(2) The mentality and the different way of thinking.....	34

(3) Physical movements	34
(4) Geographical distance	35
(5) Audiences' unfamiliarity about the story	35
(6) Fusion of Chinese theatre and Greek theatre	35
4.2.1.2. Expectations	36
(1) Open horizons	36
(2) Learn more about Chinese culture	36
(3) Learn about Chinese theatre and opera	36
(4) Know better about the different mentality and way of thinking	37
(5) Create a new theatre	37
4.2.2. End of the study period	37
4.2.2.1. Findings	38
(1) Language	38
(2) Chorus	39
(3) Gestures and movements	40
(4) Costumes	40
(5) History	41
(6) Intercultural theatre between Chinese theatre and Greek theatre	41
4.2.2.2 Limitations	42
(1) Time	43
(2) The scale of Chinese culture	43
(3) Specific case study	44
5. Discussions and Conclusion	44
Bibliography	46
Appendix	50

Abstract (Greek)

Όταν οι ηθοποιοί του θεάτρου συμμετέχουν σε διαπολιτισμικά θεατρικά έργα που αποτελούνται από δύο ή περισσότερες διαφορετικές κουλτούρες, έχουν τις δυσκολίες του πολιτιστικού σοκ, του στερεότυπου, της γλώσσας, της νοοτροπίας και πολλών άλλων παραγόντων. Όλα αυτά πρέπει να ξεπεραστούν προκειμένου να δημιουργηθεί μια επιτυχημένη διαπολιτισμική θεατρική παράσταση. Στις προηγούμενες πρακτικές του διαπολιτισμικού θεάτρου, η μελέτη και η εκπαίδευση των ηθοποιών πάνω στην κατανόηση κάποιας κουλτούρας συνήθως αγνοούνταν για πολλούς λόγους, μιας και η κυρίως προσοχή έπεφτε πάνω στα σκηνικά, τα κουστούμια, το μακιγιάρισμα και τα είδη φροντιστηρίου. Αν και υπήρξαν κάποιες απόπειρες από σκηνοθέτες και εκπαιδευτές να βρουν τρόπους να συνδυάσουν διαφορετικές κουλτούρες το τελικό αποτέλεσμα δεν ήταν τόσο ικανοποιητικό.

Σε πρόσφατες διαπολιτισμικές παραστάσεις έγινε μεγαλύτερη εστίαση στην πολιτισμική κατανόηση των ηθοποιών μέσα από τα σχόλια και τις γνώμες τόσο των ηθοποιών όσο και του ακροατηρίου. Είναι αρκετά δύσκολο να εκπαιδεύσεις ηθοποιούς στο να μάθουν μια διαφορετική κουλτούρα μέσα σε λίγους μήνες για μία μόνο παράσταση, όπως επίσης είναι μη ρεαλιστικό να ξοδεύεις περισσότερο χρόνο στο να εκπαιδεύσεις ηθοποιούς να μάθουν μια ξένη κουλτούρα υπολογίζοντας τα κόστη και την διαδικασία της παραγωγής. Έτσι, η εξεύρεση καλύτερων μέσων για την επίλυση αυτού του προβλήματος είναι απαραίτητη και ευεργετική για τη διαπολιτισμική θεατρική παραγωγή. Το δράμα στην εκπαίδευση έχει αποδειχθεί αποτελεσματικό σε πολλές περιπτώσεις όπως η διδασκαλία της γλώσσας, ή της ιστορίας, κυρίως όμως στα γυμνάσια ή στα δημοτικά σχολεία και σπάνια χρησιμοποιείται για ηθοποιούς του θεάτρου.

Στη μελέτη αυτή εφαρμόστηκαν και εξελίχθηκαν οι μέθοδοι του δράματος στην εκπαίδευση ώστε να μπορέσουν Έλληνες ηθοποιοί να κατανοήσουν την κινεζική κουλτούρα όταν δουλεύουν πάνω σε ένα κινέζικο θεατρικό έργο. Με αυτό τον τρόπο ερευνάται σε βάθος ο πιο αποτελεσματικός τρόπος στην πολιτισμική κατανόηση των ξένων έργων από τους ηθοποιούς τόσο σε θεωρητικό όσο και σε πρακτικό επίπεδο και οι ηθοποιοί γίνονται καλύτεροι έχοντας κατανοήσει σε βάθος τα διαπολιτισμικά θεατρικά έργα.

Η παρούσα μελέτη περιλαμβάνει 20 σεμινάρια που πραγματοποιήθηκαν εντός 4 μηνών, καθώς και την τελική παράσταση. Σεμινάρια και παράσταση αποτελούν τα βασικά σημεία της μεταπτυχιακής εργασίας, τα οποία αντικατοπτρίζονται στα συμπεράσματα της έρευνας.

Τα αποτελέσματα ήταν θετικά και το δράμα στην εκπαίδευση αποδείχθηκε να είναι χρήσιμο για τη βελτίωση της πολιτισμικής κατανόησης των ηθοποιών πάνω σε διαπολιτισμικά θεατρικά έργα. Η συγκεκριμένη έρευνα είναι πρωτότυπη και ίσως είναι η πρώτη φορά που το δράμα στην εκπαίδευση χρησιμοποιείται σαν εργαλείο στη θεατρική παραγωγή. Αυτή η μελέτη δίνει ένα καλό δείγμα για τις μελλοντικές διαπολιτισμικές θεατρικές παραγωγές.

Abstract

When theatre actors involve in intercultural theatre plays which consist of two or several different cultures, they would have the difficulties of culture shock, stereotype, language, mentality, etc. which need them to overcome in order to create a successful intercultural theatre performance. In the previous practices of intercultural theatre, the study and training of actors on culture understanding were mostly ignored because of various reasons, and the focuses were on the stage set-up, costumes, make-up, props, etc. Though there have been some efforts by theatre directors and educators to find ways to mix different cultures in one theatre performance, the outcome was not satisfying. In the recent intercultural performances the actors' cultural understanding has attracted more attention because of the feedback both from the actors and the audiences. It has been found difficult to train actors to learn a different culture within several months for one theatre production, and not realistic to spend longer time to teach actors a foreign culture considering the cost and production procedure. Thus, finding a better means to solve this problem is necessary and beneficial for intercultural theatre production. Drama in education has been proven efficient in many subjects such as language teaching, history, etc., but mostly seen in high schools or primary schools, and rarely used for theatre actors. In this study, the methods of drama in education were implemented and evaluated for improving the Greek actors' understanding on Chinese culture when working on a Chinese theatre play, to explore the efficient way to improve the cultural understanding of actors on the foreign plays, both theoretically and practically, so as for the actors to have better level in intercultural theatre performances. The study included the seminars for 20 times within 4 months, and one final performance. Both the seminars and the performance are the basic parts of this thesis which are both reflected by the results. The outcomes were positive and drama in education was proven to be useful to improve the actors culture understanding on intercultural theatre plays. This work is original and maybe the first time that drama in education was used as a tool for a theatrical production. This study gives a good sample for the future intercultural theatre productions.

Keywords

drama in education, intercultural theatre, culture understanding

1. Introduction

Drama in education has been proven by many researches to be useful in teaching various subjects such as history, language, mathematics, etc. However, there have been limited studies about drama in education for theatre actors. In the previous intercultural theatre performances, the theatre actors encountered difficulties in understanding the exotic culture, which was essential for them in order to act their roles. Throughout centuries, the focus to improve the quality of intercultural theatre performances had been mostly on play writing, stage setup, props, etc., but little attention was drawn to the actors. For the actors who had never been in contact with another culture, they could only work depending on their imaginations and limited information about that culture which obviously affected the results of the performances. So this study focuses on the actors in intercultural theatre performances, to explore the possibilities of using the methods of drama in education to improve the actors' understanding on a foreign culture.

1.1. Background

Along with the development of the history, theatre has been intercultural, as different cultures have been encountering and mixing with each other, and adopting the elements from the other cultures to use in their own theatre performances. This has happened both in the West and the East. Along with globalization, different cultures have easier access to each other, while in the meantime, conflicts and fusion both exist. As part of culture, theatre has been adopting the elements from foreign cultures throughout the history, such as the Greek Theatre and the Chinese opera.

The recent intercultural theatre performance between China and Greece was "*Zhao the Orphan*" which was co-produced by National Theatre of Greece and National Theatre of China, based on a well-known Chinese play (National Theatre of Greece, 2018). This play was written in Yuan Dynasty, and was firstly translated into French in 1731 by

Joseph-Henri-Marie de Prémare as "*L'Orphelin de la Maison de Tchao*" (Liu, 1953). Because of the religious needs, Joseph-Henri-Marie de Prémare only translated the dialogues but the singing part were all missed, which was in fact the most valuable elements in Yuan Qu (the Chinese theatre in Yuan Dynasty). And then in 1736 and 1741, this play was translated from French to English by Richard Brooks and Green/Guthrie. Though the English translation was even better, the mistakes such as missing the singing part made by Joseph-Henri-Marie de Prémare were inherited in the English versions. Jean Baptiste du Halde who published the first French version in his book "*Description de la Chine*" mentioned in his book that, the singing lyrics in the play are obscure, because they contain many allusions that we have no way to know, as well as citing ancient literature (Halde, 1739). Chinese theatre became popular in Europe and "*Zhao the Orphan*" was later translated to many languages, however, the first translation by Joseph-Henri-Marie de Prémare also caused many misunderstandings on Chinese theatre and Chinese culture which continuously existed in the following versions (Liu, 1953).

The most famous adaptation was by Voltaire in 1753 (Shi, 2009) and the title of his play was "*L'Orphelin de la Chine: la morale de Confucius en cinq actes*" in which Voltaire praised the moral standards of Confucianism. His changes on the story intended to match the Chinese culture and European culture, and emphasized the kind morality and wisdom from Chinese civilization. But still he considered this play was too rough and the mixing of dialogues and singing and the self-introduction by the actors were not logical (Tian, 2008). Nevertheless, Voltaire's adaptation was more mature than the previous versions, and the premiere of his play in Paris was a big success. Later Arthur Murphy's "*The Orphan of China*" was also successfully staged in UK since 1759 (Liu, 1953). Different from Voltaire's, his focus was more about the revenge, though this version was the closest to the original version by Ji Junxiang, the original Chinese writer of this play (Bruce, 1970).

The more meaningful case was on 9th June 1911 in Theatre Art, "Le chagrin dans le Palais de Han" directed by Durec. This play was written by Ma Zhiyuan in 14th century

and adopted by Louis Laloy. Though the Chinese opera methods were ignored, the opera costumes were praised as the actors were like the authentic Chinese men and women, and this performance was considered to be an efficient way to know about China. The focus during this period was on the form of theatre performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2012).

The further development was the original creation by the European playwrights based on the Chinese stories, such as in 1913, “The Yellow Jacket” written by George Cochrane Hazelton and Joseph Henry Benrimo (Hazelton, & Benrimo, 1913) who studied many Chinese theatre plays especially Cantonese opera. They used some methods of Chinese opera performances in this play which was not familiar to European audiences, but also added some forms and methods which did not exist in Chinese theatre such as Chorus. Because the main form was Chinese opera, so chorus also served for the main theme, and made the introduction in the beginning about this play and emphasized that the location was in a Chinese theatre, so in this way, to drag the audiences to imagine they were surrounded by the Chinese environment, and the audiences would understand the following performance was based on the specific rules and standards.

The chorus even explained about the differences of the masks color (red, white and black) and asked the audiences to imagine the property man was invisible. The chorus also introduced in the beginning of every scene about the locations, such as the garden of the king, the yard of the house, etc., while the stage had nothing changed. The chorus here was essential to explain the rules to the audiences, but actually in Chinese opera there has never been chorus, and the audiences do not need these explanations. This performance proved that Chinese opera could activate the audiences’ imagination without the realistic scenes, within specific frameworks of rules (Fischer-Lichte, 2012). In all these practices, European playwrights and directors have made progress on understanding Chinese opera, but their focuses were still on the form of the performance including masks, costumes, etc., but the training on actors to have deeper understanding on Chinese culture was ignored.

In 2018 National Theatre of Greece invited the Chinese directors and two Chinese actors from National Theatre of China, to team up with the Greek actors to present this play adapted by Yu Qingfeng. With the support from the Chinese team, the production was made in three months, and the final performance was open to the public. Compared to the versions in the early times. This Greek Chinese version was very close to the original version and considered to be close to Chinese culture. However, the feedback from the Greek actors was both positive and negative. They enjoyed the experience of performing a foreign play about a story from ancient China. The content and emotions of revenge, power, sacrifice, etc. were familiar to them, which were also common in ancient Greek drama. However, they had difficulties in understanding the culture behind the play, such as the mentality of Chinese people, the traditions in that history period, the relationships among the roles, etc. These were not taught during the rehearsals and the actors followed the director's instructions to act their own parts. Without understanding these cultural elements, the acting would not be solid, and the actors would be hard to really find themselves in the roles.

This problem directly affected the actors in their performance, as it was hard for them to understand this Chinese play in their mind, but appeared as Chinese roles. Indirectly, the audiences were affected as they felt the conflicts between the actors' acting and understanding, and they could hardly understand the cultural elements either since the actors did not understand in the first place.

1.2. Research Problem

This problem has been also common in the previous practices. It is reasonable to adapt a foreign play based on the own culture, since there are demands no matter because of political, commercial or social reasons. For example, Arthur Murphy's "*The Orphan of China*" was explained to have the purpose for freedom and patriotism, if taking consideration of the war between UK and France in 1750s. Joseph-Henri-Marie de Prémare translated the first version for the religious purpose (Liu, 1953). William Hatchett's version in 1741 (Hatchett, 1741) was purely for political purpose to be

against the prime minister Sir Robert Walpole, however, there were too many mistakes in his version, especially he used the names randomly from Chinese history, and the result was that his play was impossible to be staged and in fact never. But when adapting a foreign play, it is important and essential to study and understand that culture in order not to make mistakes.

Not only theatre, but generally culture. There have been too many misunderstandings on Chinese culture in the Western world, though it is commonly understood that Chinese culture is vast and is not supposed to be defined as one culture. But many people would like to imagine their own Chinese culture, and then created so called intercultural. If the differences of the cultures are admitted, this should not be correct. Otherwise, there will not be intercultural since cultures are not respected. If the actors did not really understand the culture in a foreign play, including the mentality, the traditions, the relationships, the emotions, etc., their performance would be like a body without soul.

In order to truly and deeply understand another culture, one needs to spend time and energy to stay in this culture and study this culture, and sometimes needs luck to go really inside the culture. So when answering the question “how to improve the actors culture understanding in an intercultural theatre performance when they only have limited time to learn it and rehearse it?”, the cultural environment needs to be created for the actors. Though there have been many efforts to solve this problem, but few efficient solutions have been seen, and even in some cases there was lack of truly understanding on this problem.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the efficient way to improve the cultural understanding of actors on the foreign plays, both theoretically and practically, so as for the actors to have better level in intercultural theatre performances. So the participants in this study were theatre actors, and to be more specific, since the theatre play to be used in this study is Chinese, the actors were Greek. Considering the differences between Chinese and Greek cultures and theatres, it would be typical and representable to study the Greek

actors performing Chinese play. The actors were the students from the drama school, which by its nature could offer rich and reliable data, so the participation in every research activity could be guaranteed.

Both Chinese and Greek teachers involved in this study, and educational drama activities and methods were used in the research. Through the research period of four months, the Greek actors learnt the Chinese cultural elements in this Chinese play through educational dramatic activities, and the process was recorded to see their changes. In the end of the study, the changes in the actors' understanding on Chinese culture based on this Chinese play would be summarized, to assess the efficiency of drama in education on improving the cultural understanding for theatre actors on intercultural theatre plays. This study aims to explore better way for the intercultural theatre production from the angle of actors, and to overcome the difficulties on the culture understanding for the theatre actors when they perform a foreign play, in order to build up a sample for the future productions.

1.4. Research Questions

From the previous practices, we have seen some efforts dealing with this problem. Some tried to use the costumes and make-up to help the actors to look like from the other culture; some tried to use the music and movements for the actors; some tried to mix the stories from another culture with their own culture, etc. These were all meaningful practices, and have improved the depth of intercultural theatre performances. But this has been not always working. Take “Zhao the Orpahn” by the National Theatre of Greece and National Theatre of China as an example. The stage setup, costumes, make up and story are all Chinese, and there were also two Chinese actors to perform together with the Greek actors. These were helpful to present a Chinese theatre play using Greek actors, and obviously the Chinese director and actors helped improve the cultural presentation of this performance and avoid the mistakes on Chinese culture. However, there were still some questions on this case.

One question from the audiences was the language. “Why the actors were saying both Chinese and Greek? They pretended to understand each other, but we know they don’t know understand the other language”. It was nice to hear both Greek and Chinese language on the same stage, but how to let the audience feel comfortable and believe it?

One question from the actors was the mentality. “Though I can perform according to the play and the guidance of the director, I didn’t really understand why my role had this reaction, and it was so different from our own mentality.” Without truly understand the culture, the actors were hesitated in their acting.

Then we need to think about why we need to have intercultural theatre. So the question from Erika Fischer-Lichte was “*Whether the productive relationship, outlined above, of the theatre of one culture with elements of foreign theatre traditions fulfill specific functions which can barely be meaningfully compared to one another, or whether similar methods of approach to a production indicate a basic underlying unity, which would make the comparison of this phenomenon both fruitful and meaningful*” (Fischer-Lichte, Riley, & Gissenwehler, 1990:12).

The above questions could all be answered if we find the answer for one question, how to make the actors truly understand another culture in the intercultural theatre play. If the actors could understand both cultures, they would find the answers for the mentality and language.

1.5. Definition of Key Terms

It is also important to define the intercultural theatre in this study. Intercultural theatre was defined as “*the meeting in the moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions, a temporary fusing of styles and/or techniques and/or cultures*” (Julie, H. & Tompkins, 2000:7) Knowles (2010:6) believed “*Theatre has always been intercultural*”. Interculturalism has been discussed by Schechner (1996:100) “*Real exchange of importance to artists was not among nations... but... among cultures*”. Fischer-Lichte, Riley & Gissenwehler (1990:5) defined intercultural theatre performance as “*Adopt*

theatrical elements from foreign cultures and use them in the own theatre”, so the traditions of their own theatre would be kept and in the meantime the traditions of the foreign theatre would be productively received in the form of elements.

Chinese theatre include two different types: Chinese spoken theatre and Chinese opera. Chinese spoken theatre was imported from Japan and Europe in early 20th century, which is actually western theatre. Chinese opera is rooted in Chinese traditional culture which consists of hundreds of sub-types, and the most well-known sub-type is Peking Opera. In this study, the Chinese theatre is mainly referred to be Chinese opera, and the intercultural theatre in this case is the fusion of Greek theatre and Chinese opera.

Drama in education is the approach which uses drama as a teaching and learning medium (Wessels, 1987), and is defined as “*an improvisational, non-exhibitional, process-centered form of drama in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact and reflect upon human experiences*” (Landy, 1982). Drama in education is also named as creative drama, theatre in education, dramatic education, etc. Focusing on process and through various activities, drama in education help the students create a learning environment and develop their knowledge and imagination, and can be the basis for teaching other subjects (Özbek, 2014).

1.6. Scope of the Study

16 student actors from Peiraikos Syndesmos Drama School were grouped to join this study for four months consisting of 20 times classes and seminars in the drama school’s classroom. Besides the two Greek teachers who taught the general acting and rehearsals, the Chinese researcher used the educational dramatic activities and methods in these seminars to help the actors to improve their understandings on Chinese culture generally and the Chinese elements in this play specifically, including martial arts, Chinese music and dance, gestures, traditions, history, language, etc. The researcher also involved himself as an actor in the project, so he was not only an educator, but also engaged in the actions together with all the participants.

It is worthy to highlight that the participants in this study were actors who had already had professional training and knowledge of drama; they were, thus, differentiated from other participants who were more common in the studies for drama in education, such as students from high schools, primary schools, etc. This certainly increased the difficulty of this study/project and higher requirements for the researcher, while it is also beneficial to prove the universality of drama in education for different subjects and different people. Considering this study's originality, it is useful for the training and study of culture understanding for actors in intercultural theatre performances. Drama in education has been proven to be useful for teaching the subjects such as language, history, mentality, music, movements, etc. So this study is about how to use drama in education as a means for teaching actors the aforementioned subjects which can help them to improve their culture understanding.

Action research is used in this study, which can “*professionalize teaching*”, “*enhance the motivation and efficacy of a weary faculty*” and “*meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body*”, described by Sagor (2000:9), and he also considered action research helpful since “*Relevance is guaranteed because the focus of each research project is determined by the researchers, who are also the primary consumers of the findings*” and “*action research helps educators be more effective at what they care most about — their teaching and the development of their students*” (Sagor, 2000:9). He defined action research as “*a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the ‘actor’ in improving and/or refining his or her actions.*” (Sagor, 2000:3).

1.7. Significance of the Study

The 16 participants showed strong interest in this project, and they would need to use their extra time in the school in order to participate in the seminars. In the questionnaire before this study, they expressed their expectation to open their mind in a different culture and to learn new techniques in Chinese theatre. Considering the problems which the actors in the performance of “*Zhao the Orphan*” faced, these student actors would benefit from this project to learn in depth the Chinese culture and get more knowledge

about the Chinese cultural elements which could be used in the theatre performance. They learnt the physical movements such as martial art and Chinese dance, and also the other elements such as singing, language, costumes, etc. It was a valuable experience for the participants to learn Chinese culture systematically in a short period which could be helpful in their future career as actors.

In the meantime, in the end of this project, these student actors would be expected to have improved their cultural understanding on this Chinese play, and in their performance, the audiences would enjoy a real fusion of Chinese and Greek theatre production. Even further, this study would build up a sample for the future intercultural theatre performances, to avoid the actors' misunderstanding or being lack of knowledge about the exotic culture, which would be an addition to the previous practices.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

This study is a case study for intercultural theatre and limited for Greek actors to work on a Chinese theatre play, while more research should be done for Chinese actors to work on a Greek theatre play, and even further to expand to actors of other nationalities and theatre plays of other cultures.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction of Intercultural Theatre

Since early 20th century, both in Europe and in the East there had been many practices on intercultural theatre, both on performance and education. In Europe, Brecht and the others adopted Asian theatre in their own; Ariane Mnouchkine put Japanese and Indian theatre elements such as costumes, make up, music and movements in the Shakespeare productions; Peter Brook had his experiments using African and Indian theatre; Eugenio Barba has adopted the elements of Indian theatre, Japanese Kabuki, Peking Opera, etc. in his Euro-Asian theatre. (Fischer-Lichte, Riley, & Gissenwehler, 1990)

In Japan and China, apart from the operas which had been lasting for hundreds of years, the spoken theatre was imported from Europe which was a derivation from the realistic theatre. It was firstly developed in Japan, and some Chinese students brought it to China mainly for the purpose of revolution of anti-feudalism which aimed to end the last empire of China and build up a democratic country. Since then, Japanese directors such as Suzuki Tadashi and Ninagawa Yukio has directed Greek tragedy and Shakespeare in the form of Japanese theatre. (Fischer-Lichte, Riley & Gissenwehner, 1990) In China, besides the spoken theatre which is typical European, there have been also practices combing Chinese opera with the Western theatre, such as Oedipus in the form of Peking Opera.

Culture exchange has been always happening, including theatre. But why the East and the West have been so interested in each other's theatre and trying to adopt the elements from each other though there are so many obvious differences. Erika Fischer-Lichte found the reasons from the West and the East were opposite: the Europeans criticize the current state of the contemporary civilization and wanted to abolish the individual personality, while the Japanese and Chinese aimed to develop the individuality in the society and to become modernized (Fischer-Lichte, Riley, & Gissenwehner, 1990).

2.2. The Reason to Have Intercultural Theatre

These adoption of foreign theatrical elements has had significant influence both in the East and the West, including "*aesthetic-theatrical methods of approach to a production*" and "*socio-cultural developments*" (Fischer-Lichte, Riley, & Gissenwehner, 1990:15). If take these two influences into consideration, a question will be raised for everyone involving in intercultural theatre: "Why do we need to have intercultural theatre?" If only importing foreign theatre performances, we can just use the original form. For example, we can simply present the Greek theatre performance in China, but no need to use the form of Chinese opera to perform a Greek tragedy. Some said using a foreign theatre form to perform an own theatre story is easier for the own audiences to easily understand the performance and in the meantime to have the chance to get touch with a foreign theatre. So this example could be helpful in Greece but why in China.

The starting point of intercultural theatre is not just interest in the foreign theatre form, but a specific problem originating in the own theatre (Fischer-Lichte, Riley & Gissenwehler, 1990). So adoption of the foreign theatrical elements is caused by the problem happened in the own theatre, and using the existing form of the own theatre can not solve the problem, then the foreign theatrical elements are reasonable to be used. The examples can be *Good Person of Sezuan* by Brecht (Brecht, 2008). It is clear that the intercultural theatre is not simply to put two theatre traditions together, but because of some problem in the own theatre and to be dominated by the own theatre. *“In the intercultural performance, therefore, the communication of the foreign does not occupy foreground interest. The goal is not that the audience be brought closer to, or made familiar with the foreign tradition, but rather that the foreign tradition is, to a greater or lesser extent, transformed according to the different conditions of specific fields of reception”* (Fischer-Lichte, Riley & Gissenwehler, 1990:283).

2.3. The Problems in Intercultural Theatre

The first problem is culture shock, which means when someone enters an unfamiliar cultural environment, he/she feels confused, anxious or fear because the social communication symbols and tools which he/she is used to are lost (Liu, 2014). When actors come to a foreign county, or work on a foreign play, whose culture is very different from that they are familiar with, they may become anxious and not confident especially when there is time limit for their works. Considering being lack of confidence in culture shock, drama in education aims to build up the belief and make the attitude right (Wagner, 1976).

The second problem could be stereotype (Liu, 2014). People are easily to have stereotyped impression or opinion on some specific things, with their judgements. For example, many European people believe that Chinese people are conservative and indifferent, or believe Chinese culture is as what they imagined based on limited information which are available from the medias. Chinese people or Chinese culture consists of huge population and various regional cultures, but in stereotyped opinions,

they are just one type. This is very dangerous for actors in intercultural theatre if they already prejudiced another culture. Stereotype is basically from education, society, media, etc.

The third problem is the mixing of languages. Language is one of the most important elements of theatre, and along with the globalization, there have been more and more double languages performances. Especially in some double-language regions such as the French-English theatre center in East Canada. Carlson raised the concept of “macaronic stage”, which has mainly two types: one is that the play adopts the characteristics of various languages of different cultures; the other is that the play was written in one language but uses more than one language during performance (Carlson, 2000). In the performance “*A Doll’s House*” in 1998 by Central Experimental Theatre directed by Wu Xiaojiang, Norwegian actress Agnete Haaland performed together with the Chinese actors and her role in the play was a Norwegian girl who married to a Chinese man, and the conflicts between the cultures were shown through the mixing of Chinese and English. The English language became the representation of Western culture. The second type can be found in “*King Lear*” which was co-produced by Yellow Earth Theatre from UK and Shanghai Theatre Art Center and directed by David Tse’ Ka-shing. Both British and Chinese actors participated and both English and Chinese were used in the performance. Carlson (2000) believed macaronic stage would grow together with the current multilingual cultural society.

The fourth problem is “mise-en-scene” which means the stage step and coordination. There have been quite some Chinese directors having adopted Western theatre plays in the form of Chinese opera, and the main reason could be that it is easier for foreign audiences. If Chinese directors and actors perform theatre (spoken theatre) for foreigners, the audiences can not understand the language, while in the form of opera, there are more visuals such as gestures, movements, make up, costumes, etc. However, Western theatre is realistic theatre while Chinese opera is virtual performing art, the stage setup are very different. In order to overcome the difficulties, in the “*Desire Under the Elms*” which was performed in the form of Chuan Opera in 1989, three efforts were

made including (1) the stage setup combining virtual and realistic, (2) natural style of makeup and adding modern elements in the costumes, and (3) using both the performing techniques from Chinese opera and Western theatre (He, 2011).

The fifth problem is the localization of subjects. Adopting foreign plays was not only to know another culture, but also to solve the problem in the own culture. “*An Enemy of the People*” adopted by Central Experimental Theatre, the director Wu Xiaojiang was asked about two questions: How will Chinese audiences see this subject which is about water pollution and environment protection? Will this story in the play be accepted by the current China? Actually this subject is what is happening in China, so this play was adopted and performed in China for many times (Wu, 2001).

A very important issue in intercultural theatre performance is “*the criterion of fidelity and authenticity*” which could be the first barrier in understanding the intercultural performance (Shi, 2015:36). The resources for the actors to get to know another culture are critical and important. The heart of the theatre and drama works is the aesthetic, which is “*culturally situated*” (Greenwood, 2011:47-52). So the authentic aesthetic of one culture in intercultural theatre performance is the key content that the actors need to learn, and as Greenwood (2011:47-52) emphasized, “*learning about the aesthetic, learning through aesthetic experience*” and “*aesthetic learning*”.

2.4. The Main Difficulties for Actors

In intercultural theatre, the actors would not simply seek to act like foreign actors, but still act as themselves and in the meantime equipped with new understandings on the foreign culture. It is very easy to see actors trying to imitate those in the foreign theatre forms. For example in “Zhao the Orphan”, the Greek actors tried to be like Chinese opera actors. But firstly it is too difficult since the Chinese opera actors have to be trained since very young age but not within only several months, and secondly the actors would be possibly losing their own characteristics while not like Chinese actors either. So what should the actors do in the intercultural theatre? What kind of difficulties

they could meet when they learn and perform a foreign play? How could the actors to work with foreign actors and directors on a co-production?

The main difficulty would come with the languages, including the language of the play's text and the also the language of daily communication. A foreign play is normally written in a foreign language, and language is the carrier full of culture. The foreign text would be translated to the own language, but the translation may lose some cultural taste and meaning from the original play. *“Among different culture backgrounds, the low efficiency on communication happens because of the different culture systems which the languages belong to, and also the untranslatability of some language symbols.”* (Liu, 2014) In the intercultural theatre education project “Common Stage” involved by students from National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts and Zurich University of the Arts, the difficulties in both language communication and translation were observed (Liu, 2014) .Though the students from Switzerland and China were both able to speak English, it was still not easy to express clearly their opinions and ideas clearly in the non-native language. After the accumulation of misunderstandings in their communication, mutual-trust became another problem which affected severely on their collaborations. In the theatre play “The Story of Heroes”, the students from the two countries had very different understandings and definitions on “hero”. In Chinese students' opinion, only those historical figures or a soldier who saved others' life could be called hero, while the students from Switzerland had wider definition on this word, and considered the idols such pop stars could also be heroes. After many arguments and discussions, they could finally reach the mutual understanding.

Behind the different understandings caused by language, the conflicts were actually between different cultures which generated different values on society, family, history, etc. When language communication does not work, non-language communication can be an alternative way. However, there are still some words, meanings or ideas which can not even be expressed with non-language communication.

2.5. How Should We Make Intercultural Theatre

Intercultural theatre is not simply translating a foreign play to the own language, or using the own theatre form to perform a foreign play. It should be a process of “productive reception”, that is, “*an intercultural performance productively receives the elements taken from the foreign theatre traditions and cultures according to the problematic which lies at the point of departure*” (Fischer-Lichte, Riley, & Gissenwehler, 1990:284). In order to implement this process, considerations need to be carefully taken on the follows: which culture or theatre tradition will be looked; which elements shall be chosen; in what ways shall these be altered; how shall they be combined. The decisions on the above questions would be based on the potentiality of the theatrical form, the specific restrictions of production and the impending problem. Under this process of “productive reception”, it would not bring a copy of a foreign theatre performance, but expand the potential means of the own theatre, or even create a totally new theatre. So this is a transformation of two or even more cultures and it would activate the potential of the own culture and theatre.

2.5.1. What Actors Should Do

Firstly the actors should admit and face the problems and difficulties in the intercultural theatre performances. Every culture has its own characteristics, and when different cultures meet, there must be the problems such as conflicts, low efficient communication, etc. These problems affect the actors’ work in the performances, but also at the same time are opportunities for actors to open their horizons and explore more possibilities. Secondly if actors are involved in intercultural theatre, they must learn and get familiar with not only their own culture but also the other cultures. This is the base for successful collaborations. So actors can not stop learning the cultural elements and philosophy of the other cultures, and implement them into the current project. Thirdly, prevent stereotype on other cultures but respect the differences from the own culture. Trust the other actors and the other people in this project (Liu, 2014) . Fourthly it is language. Besides the playwrights and the translators do their best to make the translation closest to the original meanings, the actors should also try to learn and practice the other language, in order to reduce the misunderstandings and low efficiency in communications (Wang, 2014).

2.5.2. What Theatre Educator Should Do

Pinkert (2011) believed “*Theatre acting is a cultural practice*”. So the theatre educators do not only work on theatre and education, but also “*engage themselves with cultural practices and images beyond the theatre*” (Pinkert, 2011). Theatre educators consider themselves as learners, and in return, they make their practical theatre skills available, so that the players can become conscious of this “practical knowledge” (Pinkert, 2011).

When the actors from Western countries perform Chinese theatre plays, the main difficulty would be the way of artistic expression. This should also be the focus by the theatre educators. Western theatre seeks real environment so the actors performance and the props are as real as possible, while the Chinese opera is normally performed in virtual and programmatic way. In the limited stage, the opera actors’ performance can create the infinite atmosphere and meanings. For example, an opera actor walking one circle on the stage can mean he/she having traveled thousands of kilometers. About the props, on the stage of Chinese opera, there are not real buildings, doors, ships, horses, etc., but the related movements are expressed with defined gestures. This is not easily understandable for the actors and audiences from the Western world, who are used to the more realistic stage setup and movements. And also in Chinese opera, because of the philosophy of Confucianism, the emotions should not be over expressed, which is very different from the Western theatre (Sun, 2014). For example, when actors perform crying sadly, in Western theatre the actors could really cry loudly, but in Chinese opera, the actors only hold the tears in their eyes, and use the sleeves to cover the face. There have been some experiments in Chinese opera to cross the borders, such as the Peking opera “Farewell My Concubine” performed in Beijing, a real horse came to the stage which had never happened before in the opera stages (Feng, 2014).

Chinese opera is full of the cultural elements of Chinese culture, so for the foreign actors to perform Chinese opera or a Chinese theatre play, they need to have careful study on Chinese culture in order to understand the mentality but not only similar in form. Even only the form, it is also difficult for the Western actors to imitate since the

details of singing, rhythm, gestures, etc. are all standard, which to be trained since the young age of the actors. Only those actors who can innovate based on the strict standards could be called “masters”, such as the most famous artist of Peking Opera Mei Lanfang (Sun, 2014). Physical training exercises are easier for the students to dive into the roles and the plays because “by creating an intensive atmosphere of excitement” (Tuisku, 2010). So the theatre educators need to make realistic and practical training and practices for the actors to adapt to different culture and theatre.

2.6. Drama in Education for Improving Cultural Understanding

Drama in education is experiential and multimodal, and can motivate and activate the sensitivity of the students towards foreign cultures, and increase the cultural awareness and literacy. Through the role-playing activities, the students’ learning were more engaging, fun and meaningful (Bournot-Trites, et al, 2007). Drama in education has been proven to be useful in teaching different subjects, so the elements of another culture such as history, language, music, etc. can be taught through the dramatic exercises and methods. As Baldwin and Fleming (2003:17-30) suggested, “*Drama provides a particularly powerful methodology for developing the teaching and learning of literacy in a broader sense*”, and with educational drama the students could learn literacy socially, intellectually, physically, emotionally, morally, spiritually and culturally. As the top difficulty for actors in intercultural theatre performance is language, educational drama can be useful to improve speaking, listening, reading and writing.

According to the above literature review, my hypothesis is that, drama in education is useful for improving the Greek actors’ cultural understanding on the Chinese theatre play.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Seeking to solve the problems and improve the actions of the actors in their works, action research is used in this study as a collective process of understanding change in a classroom and organization (Mertler, 2013). The researcher proposes a new course of action to improve the practices of the group of participants, and involves himself/herself together with the participants. In the beginning of the study, a problem is determined, and then the actions are carried out for a specific time period during which observations are collected and changes are recorded. Action research aims at finding solutions rather than testing theories, so this study has direct relevance to practical actions and results.

The strengths of action research were described by Sagor (2000:3) as (1) “professionalize teaching”, (2) “enhance the motivation and efficacy of a weary faculty”, (3) “meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body”, and (4) “achieve success with ‘standards-based’ reforms”. He also considered action research helpful since “*Relevance is guaranteed because the focus of each research project is determined by the researchers, who are also the primary consumers of the findings*” and “*action research helps educators be more effective at what they care most about — their teaching and the development of their students*”. He defined action research as “*a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the ‘actor’ in improving and/or refining his or her actions.*” (Sagor, 2000:3).

In this study a practical case is implemented in order to test the efficiency and possibilities on how to improve the actors’ culture understanding on a foreign play when they study and perform it. Through the action of teaching and learning, the researcher can test regularly the results of the findings and decide the actions to be taken for the next research period. So action research is appropriate for this study, while the limitation of researcher’ own bias need to be taken into consideration. As the comparison would focus on the differences of the Greek actors’ understanding on Chinese culture in the beginning and in the end of the research period, the bias of the researcher would be maximumly limited.

3.2. Sample and Instrumentation

The researcher was involved also as a facilitator, educator and practitioner, that is, besides working as a typical researcher, the researcher not only taught the participants Chinese culture, but also joined the group to rehearse together. Two other teachers together with the researcher gave classes of acting and directing, while the researcher's teaching focused on Chinese culture education using the methods of drama in education.

A group of 16 Greek actors of the second year and the third year students in Peiraikos Syndesmos Drama School formed the sample. All the participants (7 men and 9 women) were student actors and had no experience on Chinese theatre. They participated in the classes and rehearsals for 20 times over a period of 4 months with the teachers and each class duration was 5 hours, followed by a final performance. The study was based on a Chinese theatre play titled "*Farewell My Concubine*" which was written by the researcher and adapted from a masterpiece of Peking Opera. Two Greek teachers taught the group of the actors on the general acting and rehearsals, and the Chinese teacher taught the Chinese culture and the cultural elements related to this theatre play. The methods and activities of drama in education were implemented in teaching the cultural courses.

Data was collected from the beginning of the study till the end of the performance. Participants were asked to fill a pre-test questionnaire and a final-test questionnaire to measure their understanding level on Chinese culture. The teacher's journals were used to record the development of the participants' learning, and the participants were interviewed by the researcher to collect their feedback and thoughts.

3.3. Research Procedure

In order to assess the changes and development of the Greek actors' understanding on Chinese culture, the researcher chose a master piece of Peking Opera *Farewell My Concubine* which was based on the real story in Chinese history which was well-known to Chinese people, and adapted it into a theatre play which was then translated into

Greek and Chinese. The play was written in English first, in order to have the mutual understanding between the playwright and translator, and try best to avoid misunderstandings on translation. The researcher who was also the playwright had plenty of discussion and communication with the translator who was one of the directors, to make sure both share the common understanding on the play. The researcher also joined together with the Greek actors in the performance; this is also in line with the concept of “actor-teacher” in Theatre in Education which emphasizes that the teachers of theatre in education should also be actors or performers (Williams, 1993).

Within four months, the group had 20 classes which was 5 hours each with the two Greek teachers and one Chinese teacher. In every class, the two Greek teachers had the regular acting class for the students based on this play, and the Chinese teacher taught the students about Chinese culture. In the first 4 classes, the general elements of Chinese culture were introduced and practiced including Chinese music, martial art, gestures, history, etc. Various activities of drama in education were used in order to help the actors to have better understanding on these cultural elements.

(1) A step together from the circle and moving or stopping together which helps the actors to understand the different values of group behavior and individual behavior in the East and the West, and the balance between group and individual in Chinese theatre,

(2) The picture exercise in which the actors were divided into several groups, and each group imitate a picture shown by the teacher. The pictures were some Chinese stories, and sometimes the actors had difficulties to understand the stories. After the group imitated the picture, the rest of the actors guessed what the story was. Then the group started moving and improvising in slow motion based on their understanding on the story, and the rest of the actors guessed again. This exercise was also a role play, to help the actors reflect and discuss based on team works (Çerkez, et al, 2012). But how much information must be shared during the role play? Heyward (2010:202) found out "*The deliberate withholding of truth is a useful strategy to enhance emotional engagement*".

So in this exercise, the researcher did not disclose the stories in the pictures in the beginning, but let the actors to role play based on their own understandings.

In maintaining emotional engagement in the drama it is important for the lecturers to consider how they disclose information to move a role-play forward. The deliberate withholding of truth is a useful strategy to enhance emotional engagement.

(3) The music exercise, the teacher played several Chinese instruments such as Xiao the flute, and the actors improvised along with the music to feel the characteristics of Chinese music. Bolden (2017) have done studies in his musically enhanced narrative inquiry, and found that sound and music can be helpful for narrations. So the music exercise was helpful for the actors to travel through the stories.

(4) The exercise of Chinese martial art, in the beginning two of the actors who studied martial demonstrated the fighting, and then the teacher taught all the group Taiji Quan and in the meantime connected martial art with music and other Chinese culture elements to help the actors understand that all Chinese cultural elements are connected with each other. There are more exercises, such as through storytelling to help the actors to know about Chinese history and the relationships of the historical roles, through the masks to help the actors to understand the differences between Chinese opera and Greek theatre and historical knowledge contexts (David, 2016), through the singing and poem reading to help the actors to learn Chinese language, etc. In the journal of the teacher, the improvement of the actors on learning these Chinese cultural elements were recorded. Through the several classes with the methods of drama in education, the actors grasped the basics on Taiji Quan and breathing techniques, and knew the basics of Chinese history. They learnt the different ways for greetings in ancient China, and improved their movements in Chinese ways. They managed to read the Chinese poems and even to sing the Chinese songs. They also managed the Chinese dance which was part of the first scene of the play, though many detailed needed to be improved.

After several classes, the focus moved to the theatre play *Farewell My Concubine*, and the actors and the directors started to work on this play. Having built up the basis of the general understanding on Chinese culture, the teachers started to lead the actors to the specific history period of the play which was 206 BC to 202 BC. The Greek teachers led the actors to read the play, and the Chinese teacher told the story of Chu Han Contention and the relationships of the heroes in the play. Especially the mentalities of the people in ancient China were explained to help the actors have deeper understanding on the roles. There were some exercises for the actors to improvise off scenes in which they could imagine and develop the stories.

Some actors had the feedback that they felt difficult in the beginning because it was a very different culture and they didn't know how to work and what they could do. They were lack of information and the time and the location of this play were too far away from them. They felt culture shock when put themselves in a foreign play. But after some exercises, they gradually got the idea on their roles. They tried to reduce the stereotype on traditional China which they had only seen from the films, and the cultural exercises were helpful for them. Besides, the off-scene improvisations also helped the actors to develop their own understanding on the story and the relationship among the roles (Davies, 2011), and though the scenes the actors improvised on were not written in the play, they referred to specific themes.

An important feedback was about language. Through the exercises, they felt not difficult to manage reading Chinese poems or even singing Chinese songs, but it was difficult to use Greek language or their body language to express the authentic Chinese taste. In some scenes, they found difficult to act, such as the sword dancing in Hongmen dinner when Xiang Zhuang tried to kill Liu Bang during his dance.

After 12 classes, the teacher brought the Chinese costumes which were Han clothes and wore by Chinese people in daily life in ancient times. As an ancient civilization, clothing is important part of Chinese culture and many rules are applied on the styles and the ways to wear. In all cultures costume carries the symbolic meanings and have

social interactions (Turner, 1993). When actors dress the costumes, they act as the roles (Bell, 1976). Costume contains the social elements such as social classes, gender, etc. (Barnard, 2002). So the selection of specific costume is important for theatre productions and the costume would express specific meaning to audiences (Oklobia, & Bakare, 2009). In the study by DeCoursey, the drama students felt exceptional and capable, and also happy, confident and interested when they wear costumes which brought them qualified experience. More importantly, the students felt the costumes helped them understand and express their roles, when they were lack of the related professional experience. Costume motivated their understanding on the culture and facilitated their performance (DeCoursey, 2014). The actors had the exercises on putting on the costumes, and walking, greeting and sitting when wearing the costumes. In the teacher's journal many mistakes of wearing costumes were recorded, even after the teacher had taught the correct ways. The actors had difficulties when sitting and standing with the costumes, and the actor who had the costume with big sleeves found stressed and not easy to act. Costumes helped the actors to gain more feelings as roles in ancient China, compared to wearing the modern clothes in the previous classes.

In most of the classes, the exercises of martial art, breathing, gestures, dancing, etc. were used to help the actors to physically understand Chinese culture, and the exercises of Chinese speaking, singing, ritual, history, costume, music, storytelling, role-play, etc. were used to help the actors to mentally and psychologically understand Chinese culture. Besides the above, more drama activities were used in this study and multimedia were used and the related Chinese films, performances and documentaries were shown to the actors.

During the whole research period, interviews were also made to the students to collect their feedback including their difficulties in the studies, their achievements, and their thoughts on the intercultural theatre production.

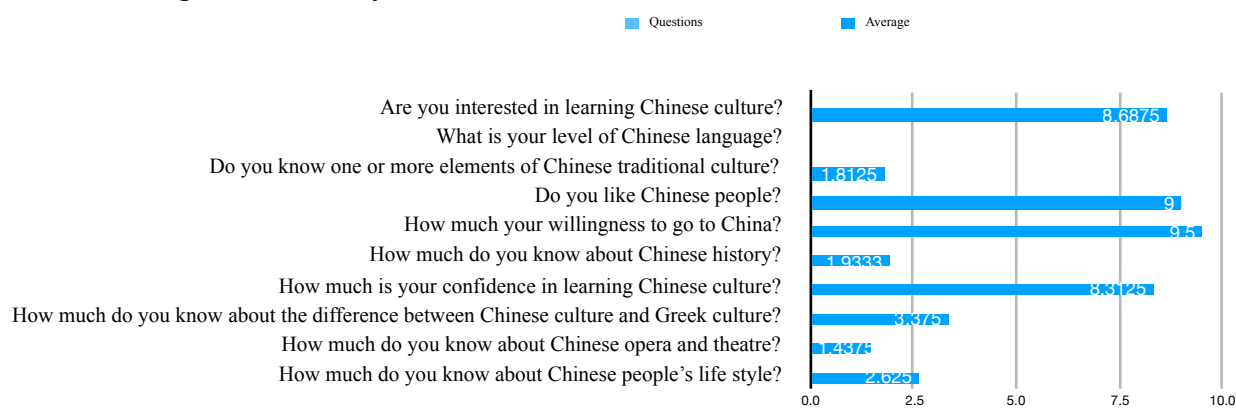
4. Data Analysis

The data included the answers to the 10 questions in the pre-test questionnaire and the final-test questionnaire, the interviews with the participants and the teacher's journal as well as the video recordings for all the classes.

4.1. Findings in Questionnaires

In the beginning of the study, the participants answered the questionnaire which gave the overview of the participants' status of understanding Chinese culture and their motivation and interest.

Chart 1: Questionnaire of Pre-test



Though none of the participants had studied Chinese, or had been to China, they were all highly interested in Chinese culture, and had strong willing to go to China. They were lack of the knowledge of Chinese culture and had not studied the elements of Chinese traditional culture, such as music, martial art, calligraphy, etc. They knew very little about Chinese history, the differences between Chinese culture and Greek culture, as well as between Chinese theatre and Greek theatre. Very few of them had seen Chinese opera. Generally they liked Chinese people, but they knew little about Chinese people's life. Their impression about Chinese people were still mainly from the films and medias, but had limited chance to meet Chinese people. However, though they did not know much about Chinese culture and Chinese theatre, they had high confidence in learning Chinese culture.

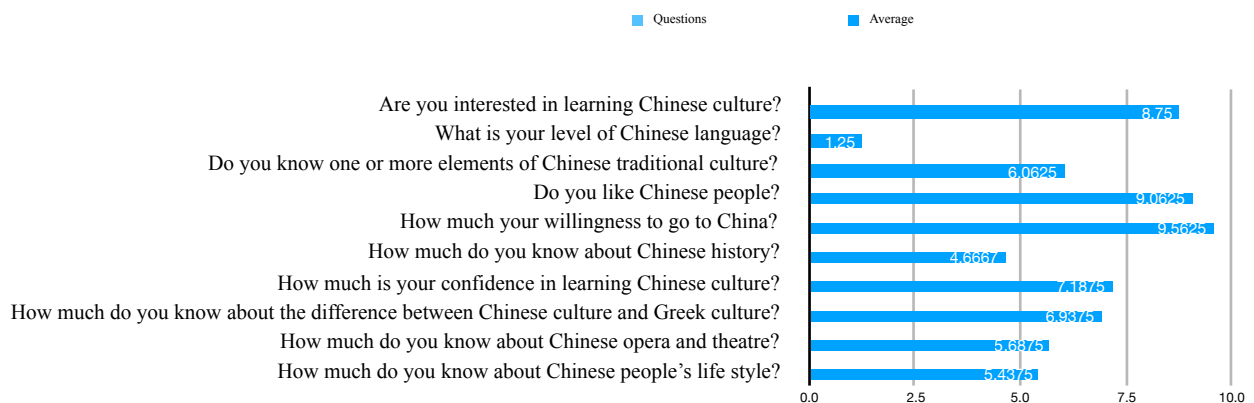
In 4 months, there were 20 classes in total 100 hours including the methods of educational drama to teach Chinese culture for the Greek actors based on the Chinese theatre play “Farewell My Concubine”. Besides the general activities to build up the basic knowledge of Chinese culture, the dramatic exercises including role play, physical theatre, language, music, story telling, masks, etc. were implemented based the specific play and the specific story. From Table 1, the related exercises used for different purpose are listed.

Table 1: Chinese culture elements and exercises

Chinese Culture Elements	Exercises of Drama in Education
Language	Poem reading, Chinese names, short sentences
Music	Improvisations along with playing the Chinese instruments Xiao and Xun, singing Chinese songs
History	Storytelling, role playing, picture exercises
Mentality	Off-scene improvisations, storytelling
Gestures & Movements	Martial arts exercises, greetings
Chinese Opera	Masks, multimedia
Traditional Clothing	Lecture, wearing exercises, moving exercises

In the end of the research period, the questionnaire of the final test with the same questions were given to the participants.

Chart 2: Questionnaire of Final Test

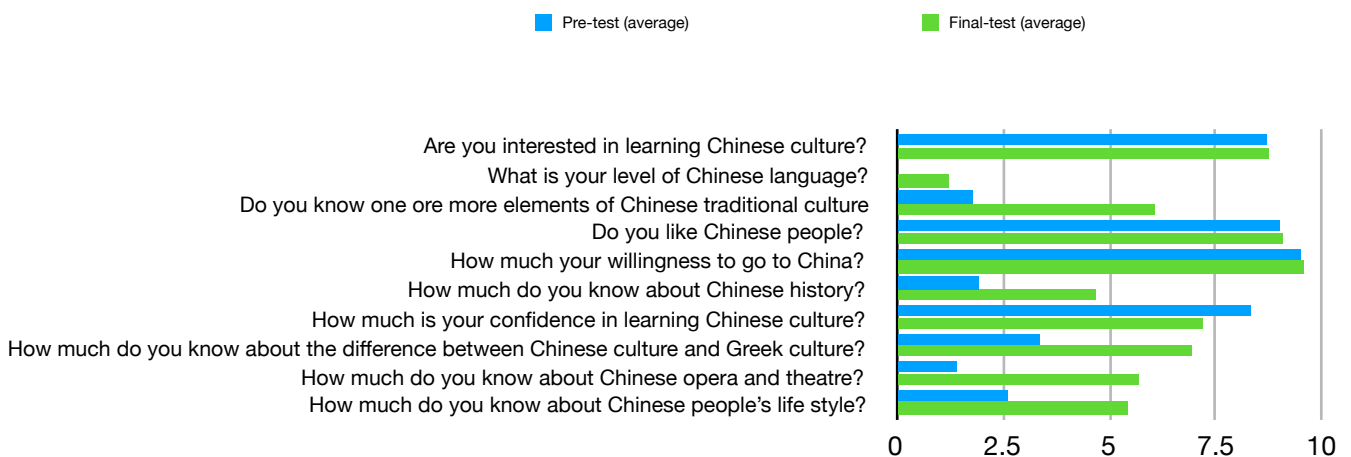


The data of the pre-test questionnaire and the final questionnaire were put together, in order to see the changes between the beginning and the end of the research period.

Table 2: Questionnaires of Pre-test and Final-test

No	Questions	Pre-test (average)	Final-test (average)
1	Are you interested in learning Chinese culture?	8.6875	8.75
2	What is your level of Chinese language?	0	1.25
3	Do you know one ore more elements of Chinese traditional culture?	1.8125	6.0625
4	Do you like Chinese people?	9	9.0625
5	How much your willingness to go to China?	9.5	9.5625
6	How much do you know about Chinese history?	1.93	4.67
7	How much is your confidence in learning Chinese culture?	8.3125	7.1875
8	How much do you know about the difference between Chinese culture and Greek culture?	3.375	6.9375
9	How much do you know about Chinese opera and theatre?	1.4375	5.6875
10	How much do you know about Chinese people's life style?	2.625	5.4375

Chart 3: Comparison between Questionnaires of Pre-test and Final Test



From the comparison, the participants remained the strong interest in learning Chinese culture, and strong willingness to go to China, and still liked Chinese people. They improved their level of Chinese language, after studied the poems in the play and even managed to sing the poems in correct accent. There was significant improvement on the question about knowledge of one or more elements of Chinese traditional culture. Through the dramatic exercises, they managed to learn Chinese dance, martial art, gestures, language and history, and gained knowledge about Chinese music, traditional costumes, etc. The knowledge about these elements were all used in performing the play *Farewell My Concubine* and the results were proven to be satisfying. In the meantime, they had some taste about Chinese opera and theatre, and especially got to know some differences between Chinese culture and Greek culture. Through the activities, they also learnt more about Chinese people' life style, and got a real picture about Chinese people. However, the confidence of the participants in learning Chinese culture dropped in the end of the period. After getting to know more about Chinese culture, the participants understood the difficulty in learning Chinese culture which is one of most ancient civilizations in the world. But from the absolute figure, the participants still had high confidence though reduced compared to the beginning of the research period.

4.2. Findings in Interviews and Journals

During the whole research period, the researcher kept making journals, interviews and video recording, so as to record the changes of participants.

4.2.1. Before the study period

Generally the participants were eager to learn Chinese culture, and highly interested in learning Chinese theatre. The first 4 classes were generally about Chinese culture, and through the dramatic exercises, the participants built up the basic knowledge about Chinese culture. During these weeks, the participants were interviewed by the researcher about the difficulties they may have and their expectations on this project.

4.2.1.1. Difficulties

When discussing about difficulties, the participants frankly expressed their concern about being lack of information about Chinese culture which is different from Greek culture. The differences between the two cultures would make the actors difficult to think and act in a different way which they had never been in touch with. But in the same time, the participants believed that was the beauty of this project, to get to know Chinese culture and then to find the similarities that can bring the two cultures closer.

(1) Language

The top difficulty which was mentioned by almost every participant was Chinese language, both speaking and writing. Compared to Greek, Chinese language is a totally different system, and for the Greek actors, it was hard for them to manage the language. None of the participants had studied Chinese before. However, as a key for learning another culture, language is the carrier of the culture, so the participants understood they would have to learn Chinese language though being aware of the difficulty.

(2) The mentality and the different way of thinking

When actors performing a foreign play, this could be the main problem which affects the actors' acting and the audiences' understanding. This was also the main reason why the actors may have culture shock and stereotype when they were involved in intercultural theatre. This was also the key issue for the cultural understanding in intercultural theatre in the past practices since the fusion of the theatre from different cultures was not simply the mixing of the forms, but the truly adaption and understanding of the mentality of each culture. If the actors could not understand the mentalities of the roles in that specific culture and history, they would not be able to act that role. They could imitate the role, but the outcome would be artificial.

(3) Physical movements

Some of the participants raised the difficulty in the physical movement, since they would be expected to act as Chinese but not Greek. The gestures and movements of Greek people and Chinese people are different, so the physical training would be necessary to overcome this difficulty.

(4) Geographical distance

Geographically China is far away from Greece, so it is even more difficult for Greek people to really explore Chinese culture because people can't truly understand a culture if they have never been in that country which gave birth to the culture. None of the Greek actors had been to China, and all their knowledges about China were from films, medias and internet, or imagination.

(5) Audiences' unfamiliarity about the story

Greek audiences are familiar with the Greek tragedies, but not Chinese theatre plays. So the narration would be important for the audiences to understand the story in limited time. Greek audiences had seen very few or never seen Chinese theatre plays and were not familiar with Chinese history. For example, the story of *Farewell My Concubine* was from a story in Chinese history and known to almost all Chinese people, but in Greece only a few people knew about it from the Chinese film with the same name in which actually the history story was not stated. Besides the story, the way of the actors' acting would be critical to help audiences to understand this play.

(6) Fusion of Chinese theatre and Greek theatre

This is the fundamental difficulty of this project, which would not be a Chinese theatre performance nor a Greek theatre performance. How to mix the elements of Greek theatre and Chinese theatre but avoid the conflicts between the two different cultures? How to meet the aesthetic requirements? It would be a process of creating a new theatre based on Greek and Chinese theatre.

4.2.1.2. Expectations

(1) Open horizons

The participants believed this would be a good chance for them to learn about Chinese theatre, and more importantly to open their horizons. They expected to see something new, but not to copy something already existing. Drama in education or creative drama can develop the students' critical thinking skills and add insight (Batdı and Batdı, 2015). The project expected to improve the Greek actors' understanding on Chinese culture when they perform a Chinese theatre play through the methods of drama in education. This would be helpful to significantly to improve the Greek actors' abilities to perform better in intercultural theatre performances.

(2) Learn more about Chinese culture

The participants expected to learn some elements of Chinese culture, and more importantly, to have a deeper understanding on a different culture and to open a unique window of knowledge to one of the most ancient cultures in the world. They expected to learn about Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, as well as Chinese dances, martial arts, language, music, etc. which could be used in the performance. Some of the participants expressed that they enjoyed this journey of trust and knowledge.

(3) Learn about Chinese theatre and opera

The participants were interested in knowing more about Chinese opera, especially the play "Farewell My Concubine" was a masterpiece of Peking Opera. However, due to strict requirements for learning Chinese opera, it was not realistic for the participants to learn to perform Chinese opera within four months, but it was important for them to know more about Chinese opera and use some of the gestures, movements, masks, etc. in this project. The participants expected to bring closer to them a country that was far away from their country, and to keep some tools for their own acting by the end of the project. They expected to learn some techniques of Chinese dances and movements of Chinese opera and theatre, because they believed the physical movements as Chinese

would be difficult for them. They also expected to see how human relationships and weaknesses were expressed in the Chinese theater, and the similarities and the differences between Chinese theatre and Greek theatre.

(4) Know better about the different mentality and way of thinking

This was a new experience for all the participants to work on a Chinese theatre play, while they had never had experience with Chinese people, so it was difficult for them to understand the mentality and way of thinking of Chinese people. For example, there was a saying by the King in the play, “If we do not return to our hometown when we become successful, it would be like wearing nice clothes and walking in the dark night.” This was a well-known saying for Chinese people, but for the Greek actors it was difficult to understand.

(5) Create a new theatre

Some participants believed the best part of this project is to create a new theatre from the beginning based on both Chinese theatre and Greek theatre. And this experience would be beneficial to the other intercultural theatre projects in future. As all the participants understood that this project would not be a Chinese theatre or Greek theatre, but would create a new theatre based on Chinese and Greek theatre. So the participants expected to incorporate elements of Chinese culture into Greek. They expected to create a theatre which would be understandable and accepted by both Greek and Chinese audiences, as they believed from whatever country that someone comes from, theater is one and theater unites.

4.2.2. End of the study period

During the four months, from the journals recorded every week, the changes were found in the participants’ knowledge about Chinese culture and abilities in some elements of Chinese culture, such as Chinese dance, language, music, movements, mentality, etc. Especially since the 5th class, the researcher together with two Greek directors started

to use the Chinese theatre play “Farewell My Concubine” written by the researcher as the material to teach the participants, and because of more specific content, the participants gradually had more obvious improvements. The methods of drama in education were proven to be efficient for teaching Chinese culture to the Greek actors during a theatre production, which could help the actors learn faster.

4.2.2.1. Findings

(1) Language

Though the main language which the Greek actors would speak in the performance was still Greek, considering that it would not be realistic for them to manage to speak all the scripts in Chinese only after four months, the participants were still trained to read and sing Chinese poem in Chinese, and more importantly, to say all the Chinese names correctly. Chinese language has four tones, which is very difficult for Greek actors to speak correctly. But the requirements in this project was to make the Greek actors’ pronunciations in correct accent to be like authentic Chinese. The researcher used the musical method to help the participants to understand the differences among the four tones, and used the storytelling to help explain the meanings of the poems and songs. Poetry can create rich language learning opportunities because of various reasons (Hess, 2010/2011). Drama in education’s methods helped the participants to improve culture understanding, and several studies have proven the importance to incorporate culture study in language learning (Sapir, 1949; Byram, 1989).

Besides speaking Chinese, another study was done on putting both Chinese and Greek languages on the stage. How can we communicate organically between Chinese and Greek languages and how can audiences perceive the use of two languages on the stage? It was confusing for the audiences to see the Greek actors speaking Greek to Chinese actors, and then Chinese actors speaking Chinese to Greek actors. Though the actors could “communicate” fluently after many rehearsals, the audiences understood in fact the Greek actors and Chinese actors were not able to understand each other though they pretended to be. Though with the subtitles the audiences could understand what

both actors said, it would still be “embarrassing” to see the actors “automatically” speaking to each other in different languages. In order to solve this issue, one solution in this project was to use one role as a translator for the King acted by the Chinese actor. Since in the play the two Kings were from two different nations, and in the real history, the people from different areas of China could not understand each other because of their different dialects, so this setting would be reasonable and the audiences could understand.

Greek and Chinese languages belong to different systems, and especially on language thinking mode, there are significant differences. Some of the vocabulary in each language has no related translation which can reflect the full and accurate meaning. This caused the difficulty in translation, as well as the efficiency of communication.

There was also difficulty in communication which is another issue for language. In this project, the Greek and the Chinese participants used English which was the third language as the medium for communication. This made the information dissemination more complicated. The Greek participants need to firstly translate their ideas to English, and then pass to the Chinese researcher, which was vice versa. During this process, there could be some mistakes in expressions. Even if the participants were excellent in English, it would still not easy to express the cultural meaning from the Greek or Chinese theatre and many information may be lost in this process.

(2) Chorus

Though in Chinese theatre there is not chorus, in this project chorus played an important role as an element from Greek theatre. The translation for the lines of the chorus were adapted into the Greek theatre mentality, but the conflicts between the two cultures were concerned. The participants’ feedback showed that they did not know what they could do in order to be like Chinese but also keep the taste of chorus. However, along with the participants’ deeper understanding on Chinese culture, they became easier to adapt them into a Greek chorus with Chinese styles. The chorus turned out to be Greek, but the audiences could see clearly the Chinese cultural elements such as movements,

appearance, masks, words, etc. The chorus made the atmosphere stronger and more influential.

(3) Gestures and movements

It was difficult to capture the Chinese way of behavior and gestures as Greek actors. Greek theatre is realistic theatre while Chinese opera is virtual theatre. The movements in the realistic theatre is very different from the virtual theatre. Generally the gestures and movements of Greek people and Chinese people are different, so the Greek actors needed to have physical training in order to act like Chinese. The methods used were the exercise of Taiji quan which is one of the most classic Chinese martial art, and it not only helped the actors to have the movements of Chinese style, but also helped their Chinese dancing. After the exercises, the actors improved significantly on their movements.

The gestures for greetings were also important since in ancient China etiquette was the characteristics for different people. The scholars and the military generals had different ways to greet, and the ladies had their own way to greet. These also needed to be practiced. The exercise of Frozen Picture¹ was used to for practicing the greeting gestures, after many times the actors were used to greet in this way. In the end of the final performance, the actors greeted in the traditional Chinese way to the audiences who were impressed. Besides gestures for greeting, but also for sitting, walking, fighting, etc.

(4) Costumes

The costumes of traditional Chinese clothes were very helpful for the participants to have real feeling as Chinese, when they put themselves in the beautiful clothes. The traditional Chinese clothes used for this project were Hanfu, which were worn in China

¹ In the exercise of Frozen Picture, the participants walked randomly in the space with the rhythm by the drum, and when the drum was stopped playing, all the participants stopped their movements and greeted with the other person beside him/her with a Chinese traditional gesture. They could define their own roles and choose different gestures in order to understand and remember the differences among these gestures.

in the past thousands of years. Compared the moment before and after wearing the costumes, the participants behaved quite differently. Especially for the male actors, the costumes includes long dresses for men, so the walking, sitting and standing became more difficult for them. They needed to practice how to sit and stand without stepping on the dresses. The costumes also helped the participants have better understanding on the gestures and movements. Clothing is one of the most important element of Chinese culture, and is a symbol of the civilization. So it helped the Greek actors understand the beauty of Chinese culture, and treat themselves as Chinese. Certainly it took the participants long time to get used to move after wearing the costumes, but the outcome was satisfying.

(5) History

As both ancient civilizations, in order to work on both Greek and Chinese theatres, it is important to learn both civilizations' history. The theatre plays were mostly about the stories in the history, such as "Agamemnon" was about the history of Mycenaean civilization. The play "Farewell My Concubine" was from the real story in Chinese history from 206BC to 202BC about the contention between Chu and Han which were two strongest vassal states against the brutal Qin Empire. The King of Chu Xiang Yu and the King of Han Liu Bang were known to all Chinese people, as well as this story.

However, that part of the history was very complicated and many important people and events happened. So it was not easy but important for the participants to know about this history. Drama in education is useful in teaching history, and many games and exercises were used to help the participants to learn Chinese history, and also the relationships of the heroes in this play. This also helped the participants to know more about Chinese mentality, especially in the specific history period. From the questionnaire and the observation, the outcome was improved compared to the beginning of the study.

(6) Intercultural theatre between Chinese theatre and Greek theatre

Based on a Chinese theatre play, working with 16 Greek actors, the Chinese researcher made this experiment of intercultural theatre to fusion Chinese theatre and Greek theatre. In this study, the focus would be improving the Greek actors' cultural understanding on Chinese culture when they perform a Chinese theatre play. It can be also vice versa. Both theatres have great cultural background, so it was interesting to see the two theatres mix with each other. It was a very difficult and ambitious project and very beautiful at the same time. The actors needed to find themselves in two cultures at the same time, standing both in China and Greece. They needed to think in both Greek and Chinese. Throughout this process, the drama in education was helpful on "reflection" that aimed to "*access the 'universals' of human existence and to be able to relate one's experience within the drama to universal aspects of that same experience*" (Wooster, 2007:13). Though there are different mentalities and ways of thinking both in Greek and Chinese culture, the actors can find either the common ground of both cultures, or related their personal experience with the roles. Drama in education encourages sustaining personalities while exploring other experiences. Theatre is a great way to marry the people from the two civilizations and to learn from each other. Considering only within four months, the Greek actors made great progress in learning Chinese culture and had created a successful intercultural theatre.

4.2.2.2 Limitations

The subject studied in this project has been a main problem in the past intercultural theatre productions, and though various efforts have been made, there have been few solutions for this problem. It was ambitious to study such subject within only four months. However, the researcher considered this study as an experiment which could be successful or failed. Since drama in education has been helpful in other subjects such as language teaching, history teaching, etc., would it be also helpful for theatre actors and theatre performing arts? It did not intend to improve the actors' ability of acting, but their understanding on a foreign culture so as to have better performance in a foreign theatre play. According to the outcomes from the questionnaires, the interviews, the journals and the final performance, drama in education was helpful in such subject. But still there are some limitations in this study.

(1) Time

It was obvious that the time was not enough though four months had been spent for this project. The participants were the students of the drama school, and occupied by heavy schedule from Monday to Friday. Thus only Saturday would be available for the project, and five hours a day was reasonable. But according to the feedback of the participants, once a week was not enough for them, and after six days they needed to refresh themselves but many information had been lost after one week. So the frequency was not enough. The researcher also intended to bring the participants to attend some Chinese cultural events in Athens in order for them to have more experience with Chinese culture, but due to the tight schedule in the school, the participants could not gain this experience to help them increase their understanding on Chinese culture within limited time.

Besides the frequency, four months were not enough for learning Chinese culture, especially not only one or two elements, but in a comprehensive scale, including Chinese language, music, dance, martial art, history, etc. It has to be admitted that the participants had only some taste of Chinese culture, which helped to gain more cultural understanding so as to act their roles in the theatre play, but their knowledge on these elements were still far from satisfaction. Though the participants had already impressive improvement during the four months, they would be much better if given longer time.

Considering the limited frequency and duration of the study, the results could be more clear and accurate if the participants could have more time work on this project.

(2) The scale of Chinese culture

When Greek actors learned Chinese culture for theatre performance based on a Chinese play, it was impossible for them to learn everything about Chinese culture. The scale had to be limited to specific history period and specific content. For example, in this study, except the first four classes which the participants learnt the general knowledge about Chinese culture with the researcher, from the fifth class the teaching was limited

based on the theatre play “Farewell My Concubine”. The history period was limited to 206BC to 202BC; the Chinese language teaching was limited to saying the poem in this play; the movements and gestures teaching was limited to that specific history period. Since Chinese culture is vast and huge, this study may have limitations on the Greek actors studying these specific content of Chinese culture, but may change if the content was different.

(3) Specific case study

This was a specific case study for Greek actors to improve their understanding on Chinese culture when perform a Chinese theatre play. More studies should be done for more actors of different nationalities to work on the theatre plays of different cultural backgrounds. With more cases the findings can be more accurate.

5. Discussions and Conclusion

From the literature review, the problem for actors’ culture understanding in intercultural theatre was proven but ignored in the previous practices, while more efforts were made on the stage setup, costumes, etc. The same problem has also existed in the co-production of Greek theatre and Chinese theatre. The actors were lack of information of another culture which caused culture shock and stereotype, as well as hesitation in their acting. Besides the directing and rehearsing, studying another culture was also important for actors in intercultural theatre. But it was not realistic for the actors study a foreign culture within several months while in the meantime they need to work on their rehearsals for the performance. The researcher raised the possibility to use drama in education to help actors improve their culture understanding in such case.

In this research project, the findings after the four months’ study have proven drama in education is useful and helpful to improve Greek actors’ understanding on Chinese culture when working on a Chinese theatre play. The actors improved their language skills, gained better understanding on Chinese mentality and way of thinking, managed the Chinese gestures and movements when wearing Chinese costumes, knew more

about Chinese history and specifically the story of Chu-Han Contention, and even granted the abilities for Chinese singing and dancing. With all these achievements, the actors presented a successful performance of “Farewell My Concubine” for the Greek audiences.

But there were certainly limitations since only four months were not enough for the Greek actors to go deeper into Chinese culture so when they work on another Chinese theatre play, they may need to study more different content of Chinese culture. Even further, this study was limited to Greek actors with Chinese theatre play, while to have better conclusion for this subject, more studies should be done for actors with more nationalities with the theatre plays of more culture backgrounds. For future research, the study can be set for longer time with bigger sample, and done for as many times as possible.

This study’s positive result gives a good sample for the future intercultural theatre productions, to know how to improve the actors’ culture understanding. When an intercultural theatre production is initiated, besides working on the scripts’ translation, the stage setup, etc., the producers and directors should also put more attention on the study and training of the actors’ understanding on the foreign culture, for which the methods of drama in education would be useful. Generally drama in education is useful for teaching culture, and it works for theatre actors.

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Appendix

1. Questionnaire for the Project “Farewell My Concubine” - Beginning of the Project

I. Please answer the below questions with the numbers from 0 to 10. "0" means nothing or the least preference, and "10" means fully agree or favorite.

1. Are you interested in learning Chinese culture?
2. What is your level of Chinese language?
3. Do you know one or more elements of Chinese traditional culture?
4. Do you like Chinese people?
5. How much your willingness to go to China?
6. How much do you know about Chinese history?
7. How much is your confidence in learning Chinese culture?
8. How much do you know about the difference between Chinese culture and Greek culture?
9. How much do you know about Chinese opera and theatre?
10. How much do you know about Chinese people's life style?

II. The below two questions are open questions, and please write down your answers under the questions:

1. What do you think is the biggest difficulty in understanding Chinese culture?
2. What are your expectations in this Chinese-Greek collaborated theatre project?

2. Questionnaire for the Project “Farewell My Concubine” - End of the Project

I. Please answer the below questions with the numbers from 0 to 10. "0" means nothing or the least preference, and "10" means fully agree or favorite.

- (1) Are you interested in learning Chinese culture?
- (2) What is your level of Chinese language?
- (3) Do you know one or more elements of Chinese traditional culture?
- (4) Do you like Chinese people?
- (5) How much your willingness to go to China?
- (6) How much do you know about Chinese history?
- (7) How much is your confidence in learning Chinese culture?
- (8) How much do you know about the difference between Chinese culture and Greek culture?
- (9) How much do you know about Chinese opera and theatre?
- (10) How much do you know about Chinese people's life style?

II. The below questions are open questions, and please write down your answers under the questions:

- (1) In this project "Farewell My Concubine", what is the biggest difficulty for you?
- (2) What have you achieved and learnt in the past four months in this project?
- (3) What have you not achieved and you are willing to continue to learn?
- (4) What are your opinion and thoughts on the collaboration between Chinese and Greek theatre as an actor?