It is widely regarded that how we behave and learn are under the influence of culture. According to McLaren (1998), “Learning style is the way in which human beings concentrate on, absorb, process and retain new and difficult information.” China which is in Asia and Czech Republic which is located in Europe are two different countries, so the cultures in these two countries are different. What is more, it is not surprising to find that the learning styles of students from these two countries are different. This paper aims to make a comparative study of high school students’ learning styles in the Czech Republic and China.

Meichen Zhang selected an interesting topic. She compared learning style preferences in Czech and Chinese secondary learners.

The structure of the thesis is very clear. The impressive list of bibliography indicates the author read widely and studied the issue of perceptual learning styles thoroughly. She demonstrated a
sound understanding of the underlying theory. Her arguments are most logical and well-founded (Even though I have some reservations concerning Chapter 3 where Czech individualism is explained by the influence of the Hussite movement, which I find a little simplifying).

In the empirical part Meichen Zhang presented her own research realized in the Czech Republic and in China. Her findings correspond with Hofstede’s cultural dimensions theory. She claims that the fact the learning style preferences are culturally conditioned indicates they can be modified and extended, which I find original and logical.

What I missed in the description of the sample was the specification of the age of the participants and their expected language level. The questionnaire was administered in English at the Czech schools and in Mandarin Chinese at the Chinese school. I recommend that the specification of the age and expected language levels should be discussed at the defence.

The thesis is written in a very good academic English. Occasional mistakes (verb forms, articles) do not prevent understanding.

All in all, the diploma thesis is a very successful piece of academic work.

Questions for the defence:
1. Is pairwork and groupwork more frequently used in English lessons in China than in the Czech Republic?
2. Do you think teachers should encourage learners to develop their less dominant perceptual styles?

Defence: recommended

Final assessment: B