



Faculty of Education, Language and Communication

**The Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence Using
Performed Culture Approach for English Majors in China**

Zhou Jingjing

**Doctor of Philosophy
2025**

The Cultivation of Intercultural Communication Competence Using
Performed Culture Approach for English Majors in China

Zhou Jingjing

A thesis submitted

In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

(Language Learning and Teaching)

Faculty of Education, Language and Communication

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK

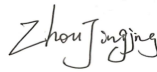
2025

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the works is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

.....

Signature



Name: Zhou Jingjing

Matric No.: 21010041

Faculty of Education, Language and Communication

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

Date : 12, August, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis marks the end of a long and memorable journey that I could not have been able to complete without the dedicated support of my supervisors and my family. My heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Florence Gilliam Kayad for her patience and professional guidance throughout my research. Her warm smiles helped me out of my depression, anxiety, and all difficulties. Also, I would like to extend my deep gratefulness to my co-supervisor, Dr. Vimala Govindaraju, for her helpful and insightful suggestions on my research. Special thanks to my husband, my daughter and my parents. Your support and encouragement are the source of strength for me to keep going.

Thanks to all the experiences in these four years. Each experience is a growth, converging into the width of life. The road ahead will be long and I will be gentle and firm, contented and progressive.

ABSTRACT

With the increasing frequency of intercultural exchanges, there is a significant rise in social demand for talents with intercultural communication competence (ICC) . However, due to their lack of experience in intercultural language teaching (ICLT), English major teachers in China struggle to effectively develop this core competence in students during their teaching. This issue causes students to easily develop misunderstandings and encounter communication barriers in intercultural interactions, thereby restricting the quality of talent cultivation for English majors. The Performed Culture Approach (PCA) is a new kind of ICLT approach that aims to cultivate students' ICC. The aim of the present study is to explore the cultivation of ICC using PCA among English majors in China from the perspectives of both the students and teachers concerned. It was achieved by investigating students' ICC level, comparing the perceived impact of PCA on ICC cultivation between teacher and student participants, and examining teachers' intention to use PCA. The present study employs an interpretivist case study approach, utilizing the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC, the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model, and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as its theoretical framework. Data was drawn from individual interviews with eight teachers and 12 students, and was analyzed using the thematic analysis method. The findings reveal that students' ICC is at a moderate level, showing an imbalance developmental pattern characterized as "knowledge-attitude-skill". Both teachers and students affirm the positive impact of the PCA on ICC. PCA enhances students' language proficiency, improves their intercultural behavior skills, and boosts students' classroom participation and learning motivation. The learning facilitation factors of PCA include performance evaluation, performance activities,

and pre-class tasks. However, there were notable variations in teachers' intention to use PCA. Perceived behavioral control, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and teachers' cognition of ICLT influenced their intention to use PCA. Teachers' intention to use PCA was determined by internal factors more than external factors. A cross-analysis of sub-cases from the perspectives of divergence and convergence yielded three themes: students' developmental needs for ICC, the consistency between the PCA and students' ICC developmental needs, and teachers' ambivalence towards using PCA. An ICC cultivation model in the context of EFL in China was proposed based on students' ICC development needs and facilitation factors of PCA. These findings have implications for policy and practice for the implementation of PCA in ICC cultivation among English majors in the EFL context of China.

Keywords: ICC cultivation, impact of PCA; teachers' intention to use PCA; teachers and students' perspectives

Pembinaan Kecekapan Komunikasi Antara Budaya Menggunakan Pendekatan Budaya yang Dilakukan bagi Pelajar Jurusan Bahasa Inggeris di China

ABSTRAK

Dengan peningkatan kekerapan pertukaran antara budaya, terdapat peningkatan yang ketara dalam permintaan sosial China terhadap bakat yang mempunyai kecekapan komunikasi antara budaya (ICC). Walau bagaimanapun, kerana kekurangan pengalaman dalam pengajaran bahasa antara budaya (ICLT), guru-guru jurusan Bahasa Inggeris di China menghadapi kesukaran untuk membangunkan kecekapan teras ini secara berkesan dalam kalangan pelajar semasa amalan pengajaran mereka. Masalah ini menyebabkan pelajar mudah mengalami kesalahpahaman dan menghadapi halangan komunikasi dalam interaksi antara budaya, dengan itu mengehadkan kualiti pembinaan bakat untuk jurusan Bahasa Inggeris. Approach performed culture (PCA) adalah sejenis pendekatan ICLT baru yang bertujuan untuk memupuk ICC pelajar. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka pembinaan ICC menggunakan PCA dalam kalangan jurusan Bahasa Inggeris di China dari perspektif kedua-dua pelajar dan guru yang terlibat. Ia dicapai dengan menyiasat tahap ICC pelajar, membandingkan kesan yang dirasakan PCA terhadap pembinaan ICC antara peserta guru dan pelajar, serta meneliti niat guru untuk menggunakan PCA. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kajian kes interpretivist dengan menggunakan model teori Tiga Dimensi, model penilaian CIPP dan teori TPB sebagai rangka kerja teorinya. Data telah diambil daripada temu bual individu dengan lapan guru dan 12 pelajar, dan telah dianalisis menggunakan kaedah analisis tematik. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa ICC pelajar berada pada tahap sederhana, menunjukkan corak perkembangan yang tidak simetri yang dicirikan sebagai “pengetahuan-sikap-kemahiran”. Kedua-dua guru dan pelajar mengesahkan kesan positif PCA terhadap ICC. PCA meningkatkan kecekapan

bahasa pelajar, memperbaiki kemahiran tingkah laku antara budaya mereka, dan meningkatkan penyertaan kelas pelajar serta motivasi pembelajaran mereka. Faktor-faktor pemudah pembelajaran PCA termasuk penilaian prestasi, aktiviti prestasi, dan tugas pra-kelas. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat variasi yang ketara dalam niat guru untuk menggunakan PCA. Kawalan tingkah laku yang dirasai, sikap terhadap tingkah laku, norma subjektif, dan kognisi guru terhadap ICLT mempengaruhi niat mereka untuk menggunakan PCA. Niat guru untuk menggunakan PCA lebih ditentukan oleh faktor dalaman berbanding faktor luaran. Analisis silang sub-kes dari perspektif perbezaan dan penumpuan menghasilkan tiga tema: keperluan perkembangan pelajar untuk ICC, konsistensi antara PCA dan keperluan perkembangan ICC pelajar, serta kekecewaan guru terhadap penggunaan PCA. Model pembinaan ICC dalam konteks EFL di China telah dicadangkan berdasarkan keperluan perkembangan ICC pelajar dan faktor-faktor pemudah PCA. Hasil kajian ini mempunyai implikasi untuk dasar dan amalan bagi pelaksanaan PCA dalam pembinaan ICC dalam kalangan jurusan Bahasa Inggeris dalam konteks EFL China.

Kata kunci: *Pembinaan ICC, kesan PCA; niat guru untuk menggunakan PCA; perspektif guru dan pelajar*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
<i>ABSTRAK</i>	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.2.1 Intercultural Communication Competence Cultivation	3
1.2.2 Performed Culture Approach	6
1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study	8
1.4 Operational Definition of Terms	9
1.5 Significance of the Study	11
1.6 Organization of Chapters	11

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 Intercultural Communication Competence	15
2.2.1 Dimensions of Intercultural Communication Competence	16
2.2.2 Intercultural Communication Competence Assessment	26
2.2.3 Intercultural Communication Competence Cultivation Model	26
2.2.4 Intercultural Language Teaching in English as Foreign Language Teaching	38
2.3 Performed Cultural Approach	46
2.3.1 Performed Cultural Approach in Chinese as Foreign Language Teaching	46
2.3.2 Performed Culture Approach in English as Foreign Language Teaching	50
2.3.3 Performed Culture Approach and Communication Language Teaching	52
2.4 Impact of Performed Cultural Approach	54
2.4.1 Evaluation Criteria for the Impact of Teaching Program	54
2.4.2 CIPP evaluation model	56
2.5 Teachers' Intention to Use Performed Cultural Approach	60
2.5.1 Factors Influencing Teachers' Intention	60
2.5.2 Theory of Planned Behavior	62
2.6 Conceptual Framework	66
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	70
3.1 Introduction	70

3.2	Research Design	71
3.3	Research Site	77
3.3.1	Overview of the Case	77
3.3.2	Analysis of the Typicality of the Case	81
3.4	Research Participants	83
3.4.1	Teacher Participants	85
3.4.2	Student Participants	90
3.5	Instruments	94
3.6	Pilot Study	100
3.7	Data Collection Procedures	102
3.7.1	Interview Data Collection Procedures	102
3.7.2	Observation and Document Material Collection Procedures	105
3.8	Data Analysis Method	107
3.9	Trustworthiness	112
3.9.1	Credibility	112
3.9.2	Confirmability	114
3.10	Research ethics	115
3.11	Limitations of the Study	116
3.12	Chapter Summary	118
	CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	119

4.1	Introduction	119
4.2	Teacher participants' Perspectives	119
4.2.1	Students' Intercultural Communication Competence Level	119
4.2.2	Perceived Impact of Performed Culture Approach	143
4.2.3	Teachers' Intention and Factors Influencing Their Intention to Use Performed Culture Approach	156
4.3	Student Participants' Perspective	176
4.3.1	Perceived Impact of Performed Culture Approach	176
4.3.2	Comparative Analysis of Two Students Groups	191
4.4	Cross-case Analysis of Teacher and Student Participants	196
4.4.1	Convergent perspectives	196
4.4.2	Divergent perspectives	197
4.5	Discussion	198
4.5.1	Students' Intercultural Communication Competence Level	199
4.5.2	Impact of Performed Culture Approach	204
4.5.3	Teachers' Intention and Factors Influencing Their Intention to Use Performed Culture Approach	211
4.6	Chapter Summary	216
	CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	218
5.1	Introduction	218
5.2	Summary of the Study	218

5.3	Implications of the Study	220
5.3.1	Theoretical Implication	220
5.3.2	Methodological Implications	223
5.3.3	Practical Implications	225
5.4	Recommendations for Future Research	228
5.5	Conclusion	230
	REFERENCES	231
	APPENDICES	250

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1 Information of Teacher Participants	90
Table 3.2 Information of Student Participants	94
Table 4.1 Factors Influencing Teachers' Intention to Use PCA	174
Table 4.2 Themes of Impact of PCA from Students' Perspective	195

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1 Three-Dimensional Theoretical Model of ICC	18
Figure 2.2 Classification of ICC Instruments	27
Figure 2.3 CIPP Evaluation Model	57
Figure 2.4 Theory of Planned Behavior	64
Figure 2.5 Conceptual Framework of the Present Study	69
Figure 4.1 Hanfu Show in the Classroom	134
Figure 4.2 The ICC Cultivation Model Based on PCA	211

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFL	Chinese as foreign language
CLT	Communication language teaching
EFL	English as foreign language
ICC	Intercultural communication competence
ICLT	Intercultural language teaching
PCA	Performed Culture Approach
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

With the development of globalization, communication between different cultures has become increasingly frequent. During cultural exchange, integration, and even assimilation, cultural collisions often occur due to cultural differences (Fantini, 2000; Sun, 2016; Toomey & Chuang, 2005). The ability to carry out effective intercultural communication in a multicultural environment while maintaining one's cultural identity largely depends on the communicator's intercultural communication competence (hereinafter referred to as ICC) (Byram, 2020). Intercultural perspectives on diversity and globalization are expanding the body of knowledge in both theory and practice in the 21st century (Kim & Bhawuk, 2008). This expansion has led to a growing interest in intercultural communication between nations and an increase in intercultural studies (Peng et al., 2020).

As the global lingua franca, English has evolved into a bridge for intercultural communication (Phuong, 2017). Over the past decade, language teaching policies in many countries, including the U.S., European nations, and Malaysia, have placed a greater emphasis on the cultivation of ICC. The Council of Europe emphasizes the importance of ICC by incorporating an intercultural dimension into language teaching objectives, aiming to equip learners to engage with speakers of other languages on an equal footing (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, 2001). In Malaysia, the country's multiethnic society and the pressures of globalization have heightened educators'

awareness of ICC in higher education (Mahmud et al., 2010). This focus on ICC in language education reflects broader concerns about fostering global citizenship in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world, as ICC is indispensable for meaningful intercultural dialogue (Byram, 2020).

As for China, in the process of globalization, the implementation of “One Belt and One Road” policy will undoubtedly make China a more open and culturally diverse society. It is a major strategic measure and the top-level design of China’s economic diplomacy, which aims to further open China to the outside world. The intercultural exchanges and cooperation between China and the nations along the “One Belt and One Road” initiative will deepen under the guidance of the strategy. Additionally, at the beginning of the 21st century, the Chinese government introduced the “cultural output” strategy. It emphasizes the need for China to actively disseminate Chinese culture in foreign exchanges and enhance the international influence of Chinese culture.

In China, English majors represent one of the key professional groups facilitating intercultural exchanges. Driven by globalization, internationalization pressures, and the nation’s ambition to foster shared global development while expanding its influence in international competition, China has prioritized the cultivation of ICC in English language education. As early as 2004, the Ministry of Education initiated reforms in English teaching to align with the demands of global communication. Since then, the ministry has implemented a series of policies aimed at systematically integrating ICC development into the English curricula.

In 2004, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued *The Requirements for Teaching English in University Programs*, which pointed out that the nature of university English

teaching is based on the knowledge of the English language and application skills, with learning strategies at the core, and ICC as the main content (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2004). This requirement has drawn widespread attention to ICC cultivation in the English education sector.

The Quality Standards for College English Teaching, promulgated in 2018, further institutionalized the ICC and set specific goals, including cultivating students' cultural empathy and critical analysis awareness. In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued *The Guiding Opinions on the Teaching of English Majors*, providing specific guidance for the ICC training of undergraduate English majors in terms of concepts, goals, practices, and quality. Regarding quality requirements, the guideline suggests that students retain their Chinese cultural identity and possess an international perspective.

As evidenced by policies issued by China's Ministry of Education over the years, ICC cultivation has become a key mission for English majors (Wen, 2022). In response to the needs of the national talent strategy, China's English education community is actively promoting the cultivation of ICC in English teaching and exploring new intercultural language teaching (ICLT) models (Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2022).

1.2 Problem Statement

1.2.1 Intercultural Communication Competence Cultivation

However, the current state of English language teaching in China has yet to fully align with national policy expectations (Wang & Pan, 2019). The integration of ICC cultivation into EFL teaching remains a significant challenge, and its implementation in practice remains far from satisfactory (Mu & Yu, 2023).

For a long time, China's English major education has been predominantly shaped by traditional pedagogical approaches, examination systems, and teachers' competencies, resulting in a persistent focus on linguistic symbols and communicative language teaching (CLT). The teaching of linguistic symbols follows the traditional teaching concepts centered on the linguistic knowledge system, which focuses on learning to correctly use the components of the language system and the ability to communicate as the primary teaching goal. This overemphasis on language proficiency is frequently associated with dominant language learning methodologies, which tend to prioritize linguistic accuracy and fluency over cultural understanding (Khan et al., 2023). Meanwhile, CLT often neglects intercultural contexts, rendering it insufficient for fostering students' ICC (Dai, 2019).

Firstly, there is an apparent disconnect between the theoretical models of ICC and teaching practice, and ICLT has not yet developed an operable implementation path. While scholars have developed numerous theoretical frameworks for ICC development (Baker & Fang, 2021), these models often remain overly abstract, confined to conceptual levels without specifying concrete pedagogical practices aligned with each theoretical dimension. Consequently, teachers struggle to translate these frameworks into effective classroom instruction (Zhang & Yao, 2020), which significantly hinders the practical application of ICLT. Existing research on ICLT and ICC cultivation is hindered by methodological limitations and insufficient empirical depth. Current studies remain predominantly theoretical (Wang & Pan, 2019), with empirical work largely restricted to quantitative approaches and controlled experiments. Crucially, there is a lack of in-depth qualitative investigations into classroom dynamics, teacher-student interactions, and contextual factors (Wen, 2023). This narrow methodological focus fails to provide robust empirical foundations for refining ICLT practices.

Secondly, there is a significant one-sidedness in the content of teachers' teaching practices. Teachers predominantly focus on transmitting factual cultural knowledge (e.g., festivals and customs) while largely neglecting critical dimensions of ICC development, including intercultural conflict management and training in local culture dissemination (Gao, 2016; Hu, 2019). This narrow approach fails to foster the comprehensive development of students' ICC competencies (Liu et al., 2016; Wang, 2016).

Thirdly, current research on ICLT methodology predominantly employs quantitative experiments to assess teaching effectiveness, while largely neglecting qualitative investigations into how teachers comprehend, adapt, and implement these approaches across diverse instructional contexts (Wen, 2023). This methodological imbalance has resulted in a limited understanding of the contextualized mechanisms underlying ICC cultivation, consequently failing to address the practical challenges encountered by frontline educators.

Insufficient scholarly attention has been paid to the challenges and needs of teachers, who are the primary implementers of ICLT. Current research has failed to systematically examine the key barriers to ICLT implementation, including institutional constraints, resource limitations, and teachers' cognitive biases (Samovar & Paulsrud, 2020). The lack of understanding of the teachers' perspective has significantly hindered the effective integration of ICLT into actual classroom practice.

It can be seen that due to the lack of effective methods to guide the teaching of the ICC behavioral system, teachers feel at a loss in teaching (Zhang & Yao, 2020). The fundamental challenge stems from the current ICLT research's failure to construct a comprehensive teacher support system—one that bridges theoretical models with practical

teaching strategies. This critical gap ultimately explains the persistent disconnect between policy objectives and classroom implementation.

It can be seen that due to the lack of effective methods to guide the teaching of the ICC behavioral system, teachers feel at a loss in teaching (Zhang & Yao, 2020). The fundamental challenge stems from the current ICLT research's failure to construct a comprehensive teacher support system—one that bridges theoretical models with practical teaching strategies. This critical gap ultimately explains the persistent disconnect between policy objectives and classroom implementation.

1.2.2 Performed Culture Approach

Performed Culture Approach (PCA) represents an innovative ICLT methodology developed by Galal Walker's research team at the Ohio State University. This pedagogical framework reconceptualizes language acquisition as a process of cultural behavior acquisition. Through carefully designed intercultural communication scenarios, PCA facilitates experiential learning by enabling students to engage in simulated intercultural interactions within classroom settings actively. This dual-focused approach simultaneously develops both linguistic proficiency and intercultural behavioral skills.

The method's emphasis on immersive scenario practice effectively bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical intercultural behavior. This teaching method aligns precisely with the essential requirements for developing ICC (Gong & Zhang, 2025; Walker, 2010). As Byram (2008) emphasizes, authentic ICC can only be fully developed through experiential learning in simulated or real-world contexts. Studies have shown that in the context of teaching Chinese as a foreign language (CFL), PCA can significantly enhance learners' ICC by creating immersive interaction scenarios and facilitating practical

application of cultural knowledge (Gong & Zhang, 2025; Jiang, 2021; Yu, 2020).

Over the past decade, some Chinese teachers have begun applying PCA to EFL teaching in China. However, adoption patterns have revealed significant divergence: some teachers have successfully sustained PCA-based ICLT practices, while others have returned to a traditional approach after a period of implementation. The new ICLT approach is, in fact, a proposal for a revolutionary shift and challenges traditional practice in China. Teaching reform is a complex process that is influenced by various factors (Fullan, 2001; Thurlings et al., 2015), and reforms are not consistently implemented as expected (Maass et al., 2019).

Notably, existing research on PCA in EFL contexts still has limitations that hinder a comprehensive understanding of its implementation and impact. Regarding research content, most studies focus on the effect of PCA on improving students' academic performance in English. At the same time, there is a lack of research on its impact on ICC cultivation. Comparative experiments are mainly adopted in terms of research methodology, with a shortage of qualitative case studies. Regarding research subjects, insufficient attention has been paid to teachers' and students' perceptions of PCA.

Numerous studies show that the sustainable implementation of a new approach depends on how it is perceived by stakeholders rather than how effective it is reported. Their knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions play a fundamental role in understanding the teaching reforms (Blignaut, 2007). As the primary designers, facilitators, and assessors of instructional processes, teachers play a central role in determining the success of pedagogical innovations. Their perceptions and attitudes toward PCA constitute critical factors in its effective implementation. However, while teachers are undeniably the key

practitioners in this educational reform, the significance of their role has not been adequately recognized or investigated in current research (Le, 2020).

Similarly, student perceptions are crucial in approach change. In essence, the impact of pedagogy should be explored by the actual situation of attainment of cultivation goals and students' perceptions (Guo, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a case study on the implementation of PCA in English majors teaching in China to understand students' ICC level and their development needs, the impact of PCA on students' ICC development, and the factors affecting teachers' intention to use PCA. When educational leaders identify the key factors shaping teacher and student perceptions of pedagogical reform, they can strategically allocate resources to address these influences and optimize the implementation process (Jeff & Harold, 2002).

Against the above background, this study takes the implementation of PCA in cultivating ICC among English majors in China as a case study. Firstly, it examines students' ICC levels from teachers' perspectives to identify students' developmental needs for ICC. Secondly, starting from the perceptions of teachers and students, it explores the impact of PCA in ICC cultivation to determine whether PCA can meet students' developmental needs for ICC. Thirdly, it investigates teachers' intention to use PCA and the factors influencing their intention. Finally, based on the results of data analysis, it puts forward suggestions for applying PCA in ICC cultivation and proposes a cultivation model.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to explore the cultivation of ICC using PCA among English majors in China from the perspectives of both the students and teachers concerned. The

specific objectives are:

- i. To examine the students' ICC level from the teachers' perspective.
- ii. To explore teachers' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation.
- iii. To explore students' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation.
- iv. To determine teachers' intention to use PCA in ICC cultivation and the factors influencing their intention.

1.4 Operational Definition of Terms

The study refers to eight important terms: ICC, ICLT, PCA, impact, intention, English majors, teachers, and students. The former describes the key concepts and the latter the participants of the study. The conceptual framework and the participants will be discussed further and described in detail in Chapters Two and Three.

In the present study, ICC is operationally defined as a multidimensional construct rooted in Spielberg and Cupach's (1984) Three-Dimensional Theory (knowledge, attitude, and skills), with specific sub-dimensions adapted from Gu (2021) to reflect the Chinese higher education context. It is conceptualized as the integrated ability to engage in effective and appropriate intercultural interactions, encompassing the following interrelated components.

Knowledge dimension refers to the cognitive foundation for intercultural communication, including three core elements: (1) target language cultural knowledge (understanding of the cultures associated with the English language); (2) learners' national culture; and (3) world cultural knowledge (a broader awareness of global cultural diversity

beyond the target language context). This multidirectional knowledge system emphasizes not only cultural understanding but also the basis for bidirectional cultural dialogue.

Attitude dimension refers to the affective orientations that underpin intercultural engagement, consisting of: (1) cultural relativism (including awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind, respect for cultural diversity and equality, and a clear sense of one's own ethnic and cultural identity); and (2) global mindset (an openness to engaging with diverse cultural perspectives). These attitudes foster inclusive and equitable interactions while affirming the value of cultural identity.

Skills dimension refers to the practical capabilities to implement effective communication, including: (1) linguistic skills (the ability to apply language rules in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating); (2) interactive skills (establishing and maintaining intercultural relationships, and managing intercultural conflicts); and (3) cultural dissemination skills (using the target language to explain and promote one's native culture). These skills enable learners to navigate specific communicative contexts while fulfilling the practical goal of "telling China's story well".

This operational definition integrates internationally recognized core elements of ICC with culturally specific and educationally relevant sub-dimensions from the Chinese context, providing a concrete framework for measuring and analyzing the ICC development of Chinese English majors in the present study.

In the present study, ICLT refers to the teaching paradigm that focuses on cultivating learners' ICC in EFL teaching. PCA refers to an ICLT method applied in ICC cultivation among English majors in China, and the main concepts of PCA are performance activity. Performance activity will be examined from the target orientation, content,

cultural context, organization and students' participation in class.

In the context of educational research, impact refers to observable and systematic changes in students' learning processes or outcomes resulting from a particular teaching method. The present study relates to the effects of PCA in ICC cultivation in terms of students' and teachers' perceived feasibility, operability of PCA in the EFL higher education context of China, its influence on students' learning process, and outcomes in academic and non-academic development.

Intention is central to the concept of voluntary action (Lau et al., 2004). In the present study, it refers to the willingness of teachers toward the use of PCA among English majors in China, including complex situational contextual factors and deeper psycho-perceptual elements which can be divided into attitude toward the behaviors, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control according to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 2006).

The English majors in the present study are those in higher education who take English as the main content of their studies and aim to cultivate talents engaged in foreign-related business, translation, and English teaching. Teachers in the present study refer to English major teachers who have experience in implementing PCA in Chinese public general undergraduate universities. Students are defined as undergraduates or graduates who have been taught in the PCA model for more than one semester.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Cultivating ICC in EFL teaching in China still faces numerous practical challenges, and can not fully meet the demands of talent development and national strategies. As an

important approach to cultivating ICC, the localization application mechanism, situational adaptability, and specific implementation path of PCA in the Chinese-English program have not been systematically explored. Significant gaps in relevant empirical research make it challenging to address the urgent need for theoretical guidance in teaching practice. Against this background, the present study focuses on implementing PCA to cultivate ICC among English majors in China. It conducts a qualitative multi-case study from the dual perspectives of teachers and students. The significance of the research is mainly reflected in the following aspects.

Theoretically, the present study aims to deepen the understanding of the complexity involved in cultivating ICC within the Chinese educational context. By identifying the developmental characteristics of students' ICC, it will contribute new empirical insights that support the construction of ICC cultivation frameworks tailored to China's higher education environment. Secondly, the present study intends to systematically explain the mechanism of PCA from four dimensions: context, input, process and product, which can expand the theoretical connotation and application research of PCA, break through the single orientation of existing research on the "effectiveness verification" of PCA, and provide theoretical support for its localization development in EFL context in China. Thirdly, it will enrich the theoretical research on ICLT in China and expand the research on PCA from the CFL field to the EFL field.

Practically, firstly, this study intends to assess students' ICC levels from teachers' perspectives, which is conducive to accurately identifying students' core needs in ability development and addressing the limitation that existing studies primarily rely on students' self-reported data. Its findings will more precisely reflect the gap between teaching

objectives and students' abilities, providing direct references for teachers to optimize curriculum design and adjust teaching strategies.

Secondly, it helps promote the localized implementation of the PCA teaching method in China's ICLT. This study will clarify the key links in applying PCA, assist teachers in avoiding blindness in practice, and enhance the operability of intercultural teaching. Analyzing the impact of PCA from the dual perspectives of teachers and students, and verifying whether this teaching method can effectively match students' developmental needs for ICC, helps respond to the core issue of "the degree of fit between the PCA teaching method and training objectives".

Thirdly, it can provide empirical evidence for ICLT teaching reform and policy-making. The study will systematically sort out the obstacles for teachers to implement PCA, offer a micro perspective for understanding the practical barriers in implementing teaching methods, and provide a realistic basis for educational management departments to formulate supportive policies. Meanwhile, it responds to the demand for national foreign language education to "tell China's stories well". It helps solve practical dilemmas in ICC cultivation, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of foreign language education in the contemporary context.

Fourthly, based on the results of data analysis, specific suggestions for the application of PCA in ICC cultivation are put forward, and a targeted cultivation model is constructed, providing an operable theoretical framework for intercultural teaching practice in non-Western English contexts. It helps to bridge the gap between theoretical research and practical operation, and provides a new perspective for optimizing ICC development strategies in different educational environments.

1.6 Organization of Chapters

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the key elements of the entire study, which includes the background, problem statement, operational definition of terms, aim and objectives, research questions, significance and the organization of the study. The second chapter is a literature review, which generally summarizes research status, main opinions and achievements of previous researches, as well as research trends and research gap in this field. The present study primarily reviews existing researches from four aspects: ICC, PCA, impact and intention and the conceptual framework of the present study. The third chapter introduces the research methodology, including the research paradigm, research design, participants, data collection and analysis method and process. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the data analysis, addresses the research questions, and discusses the implications of the findings within the context of the present study, as well as their connections to previous studies and the theoretical framework. The last Chapter summarizes the present study and offers suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review provides the conceptual framework on the cultivation of intercultural communication competence (ICC) using Performed Culture Approach (PCA) among English majors in China. Relevant theoretical frameworks such as the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC, Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) evaluation model, and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) are used to build the foundation in the present study. It begins a review of ICC, including a definition of ICC, ICC cultivation models, assessment of ICC, and intercultural language teaching (ICLT) in EFL teaching to explain the current research of ICC cultivation in EFL. The second part summarizes the research results of PCA in EFL and Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) teaching. The third part gives a specific literature review on theories and practices associated with teaching effectiveness of teaching approach and teachers' intention to use PCA.

2.2 Intercultural Communication Competence

The present study focuses on ICC cultivation. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive review of the definition, dimensions, cultivation models, assessment of ICC and ICLT. Only by clearly defining the core connotation and constituent dimensions of ICC can a theoretical direction be provided for constructing a scientific training path. Sorting out the existing culture models, assessment methods and ICLT can not only draw on the existing practical experience, but also identity the deficiencies and gaps in the current research, and find the right entry point for the subsequent exploration of the

application of PCA in ICC cultivation.

2.2.1 Dimensions of Intercultural Communication Competence

Over decades of research on intercultural communication, several phrases are used to describe intercultural communication, namely, intercultural communication, cross-cultural communication, and transcultural communication (Deardorff, 2004). The present study adopts intercultural communication, and other forms of expression are also used as keywords in the search of literature to ensure that the data is comprehensive. The study of ICC originated in the United States in the second half of the 20th century and gradually emerged in Europe. The conceptualization of ICC differs by discipline, reflecting varied methodological and theoretical priorities (Byram, 1997; Hammer et al., 2003). Chen (1990) defined ICC as the ability to perform communicative behaviors effectively and appropriately in a given context to obtain the desired response. Spitzberg (2000) stated that ICC was determined by whether or not a behavior is appropriate and effective in a given context. Wiseman (2003) defined ICC as the knowledge, motivation, and skills required to communicate appropriately and effectively with members of other cultures.

Perry and Southwell (2011) pointed out that scholars had generally acknowledged that ICC referred to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of different cultural backgrounds. All of the above definitions refer to the same three concepts: context-specific, effectiveness, and appropriateness. These definitions suggest that communicators with ICC communicate appropriately and effectively and achieve the purpose of communication through ICC.

Some scholars emphasize the importance of language in ICC. According to Mikolič (2020), language usage and cultural perception were crucial aspects of local, regional, and

international life. Fantini (2020) suggested that the target language proficiency was a fundamental component of ICC. He defined ICC as the capacity to engage both effectively and appropriately with individuals from distinct language-cultural backgrounds. Pishghadam et al. (2020, p. 20) believed that skills entail “the structures and expressions of language that instantiate the cultural background of a nation and include a reciprocal relationship between language and culture”.

These definitions (Fantini, 2020; Mikolič, 2020; Pishghadam et al., 2020, p. 20) suggest that communicators with ICC not only communicate appropriately and effectively across linguistic and cultural barriers but also achieve the purpose of intercultural communication. However, in the context of globalization, intercultural communication can take place not only in the target language culture, but also in the mother tongue culture or the third culture, so the communication environment is changeable. Therefore, globalization of ICC is no longer a one-way adaptation to the target language culture, but requires communicators to maintain their original cultural identity while transcending the ability to communicate with any specific culture.

The present study aims to explore the cultivation of ICC in the EFL context; therefore, it uses Fantini’s (2020) definition, arguing that ICC refers to the complex capabilities required to perform effectively and appropriately when dealing with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The theoretical construction and development process of ICC have shown significant academic debates and paradigm shifts. Scholars have explained the dimensions of ICC from different disciplinary perspectives. Spielberg and Cupach (1984) considered that ICC contain three dimensions of affection, cognition, and behavior, and refined it into

the operational level of knowledge, attitude and skills, which provides a basic conceptual framework for people to understand ICC. It has been highly recognized by scholars and become a classic theory for ICC.

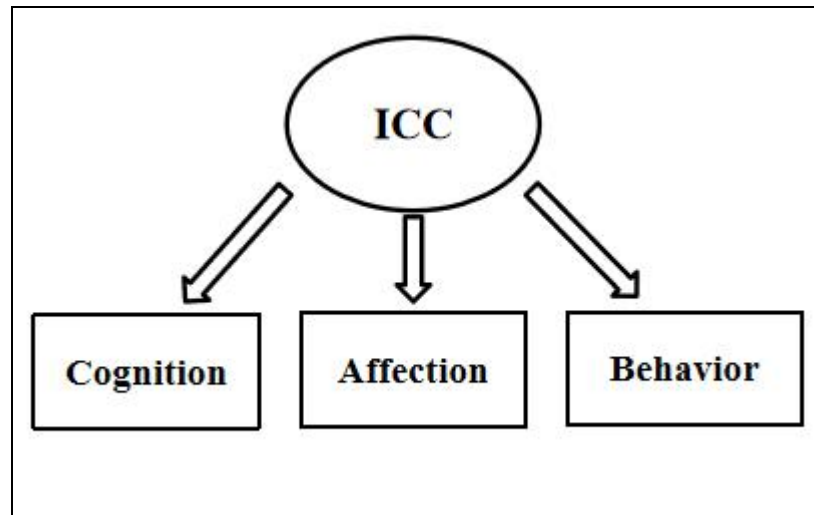


Figure 2.1: Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC
(adapted from Spielberg & Cupach, 1984)

As shown in Figure 2.1, the first dimension, cognition, refers to awareness of communication, including cultural knowledge of the target language and awareness of values; the second dimension, affect, refers to the desire to communicate with others, including cultural identity and tolerance for uncertainty, flexibility and suspension of judgement; and the third dimension, behavior, refers to the range of skills required to engage in communicative actions, including problem solving, relationship building and task completion in intercultural environments (Martin, 1987; Paige, 1986).

The Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC forms the three sides of an equilateral triangle. A comprehensive image of ICC is formed by all of them, each of which is equally significant and interdependent. The model incorporates various methods for examining ICC that have been recommended by academics (Collier, 1989). It provides a guideline for

future research in this field (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

Chen and Starosta (1996) further studied on this basis and subdivided the specific elements of the three dimensions. In their opinion, affection refers to intercultural sensitivity, that is, the communicator's emotion or preference in a specific situation. Cognition refers to intercultural awareness, which mainly includes self-consciousness and cultural consciousness. Behavior refers to intercultural adroitness, which refers to the skills of communicators in implementing communicative behaviors and accomplishing communicative goals. The theory of Spielberg and Cupach (1984) provides a fundamental conceptual framework for understanding ICC. Its advantage lies in maintaining the integrity of the theoretical system while allowing for cultural adaptive adjustments. It has been highly recognized by scholars and has become a classic theory of ICC.

On the other hand, Byram (1995) proposed that ICC included four elements, namely knowledge, skill, awareness and attitude. In 1997, Byram added another element, namely a speculative judgment of one's own and the culture of others. Byram put forward the concept and dimension of ICC from the perspective of foreign language teaching. Therefore, his dimensional criteria are widely used in foreign language teaching. Byram (1995)'s research broke through the limitations of Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC and was the first to propose the revolutionary dimension of critical cultural awareness, elevating ICC from the skill level to the cognitive reflection level. This conceptual system he proposed provided a theoretical basis for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and promoted the formation of a new paradigm of intercultural civic education. However, Byram's (1995) conceptual system do not fully take into account the structural inequality in cultural interaction, and its applicability to

non-European language teaching remains unverified.

Furnham and Marks (2013) further subdivided the dimensions of the Three-Dimensional Theory. They proposed that affection dimension consists of three components, namely tolerance for ambiguity, intercultural self-efficacy, and positive cultural orientation. Tolerance for ambiguity reflects the ability to approach uncertain situations calmly and avoid unnecessary distress or emotional conflict. The cognition dimension includes four components: self-awareness, social monitoring, perspective taking judgement, and cultural knowledge application. Self-awareness gives a person insight into how his/her behavior patterns, values, and beliefs are shaped by his/her own culture; social monitoring provides insight into an individual's ability to accurately interpret nonverbal cues as well as vocal cues in intercultural conversation (Lodder et al., 2016); In order to understand other people's perspectives, motivations, and presumptions during intercultural contacts, one must give up personal prejudice, preconceptions, and ethnocentric attitudes (Griffith et al., 2016); In order to accomplish effective intercultural interactions, cultural knowledge application requires a person to actively seek out unknown but valuable cultural information in addition to using known culturally generic and culture-specific historical and geographical information.

Spitzberg (2009) pointed out that it was precisely because of this multidisciplinary nature that ICC itself had the characteristics of multifaceted. Most scholars had eventually come to the conclusion that ICC contains knowledge, attitude, and skills (Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2004; Odag et al., 2015). However, the structural relationship among these dimensions, the different standards for ICC in specific national cultural contexts, and assessment of ICC are still being explored.

The Eurocentric bias in ICC research has been intensely criticized since the late 20th century. Koester and Lustig (1991) noted that Western ICC theory did not necessarily adapt to non-Western cultures. Similarly, Martin (1993) indicated that the positivist Western paradigm was prejudiced against different cultures. Non-Western theories have undergone significant development during this period. Under the trend of globalization and multicultural communication, the ICC starts to shift from communicative competence, which adapts to the target language culture in a one-way manner, to the open intercultural personality with multicultural awareness, which requires the communicator to communicate beyond any specific culture while maintaining the original cultural identity (Dai, 2019). Scholars (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005; Chen, 2005; Hunter et al., 2006; Kim, 2001; Nwosu, 2009) have begun to develop the notion of global capacities and broaden the dimensions of ICC in the context of globalization. In 2005, Kim (2005) expanded on the original theory to include the concepts of global mindset and global thinking, and Byram (2014) introduced the concept of intercultural citizenship.

The efficacy and control goals of the Western conception of ICC, according to Bruneau (2002), were problematic because they did not adequately take into account emotional and moral considerations. Chinese scholar Gao (2006, p. 30) creatively reconstructed Western communication theory from the perspective of traditional Chinese philosophy and proposed a binary framework of “Dao” (the Way level) and “Qi” (the Tool level) for ICC. “Qi” (the Tool level) refers to the instrumental dimension, mainly including observable communication skills such as language accuracy, non-verbal symbol application, and speech rotation, emphasizing situational adaptability and explicit cultural knowledge reserves, which echoes the concept of *savoirs* proposed by Byram (1997). “Dao” (the Way level) refers to the dimension of humanistic care, rooted in the Confucian

ethical thought of “harmony without uniformity”, and encompasses deep dimensions such as emotional wisdom, moral cultivation, and the construction of long-term relationships, reflecting the Eastern culture’s emphasis on interpersonal harmony.

The theoretical innovation of Gao (2006, p. 39) lies in breaking through the technical limitations of the Western ICC theory, incorporating moral philosophy into the assessment system of ICC, and revealing the dialectical relationship of “the vessel carrying the way” in the cultivation of communicative ability. This framework not only provides localized theoretical tools for ICC research in the context of collectivist culture, but also realizes the philosophical dialogue of intercultural communication theory by comparing the differences between the West’s emphasis on immediate communication effects and the East’s emphasis on lifelong personality cultivation. This theoretical reconstruction not only absorbs the technical advantages of Western communication theories but also integrates the humanistic care of Eastern philosophy, offering a new perspective on the study of intercultural communication.

However, concept of Gao’s (2006, p. 39) study is highly abstract and lacks actionable measurement indicators. Moreover, this theory is mainly based on philosophical speculation and lacks support from large-scale intercultural empirical data. For instance, how it is reflected in specific communication situations have not yet been systematically tested. This theory, based on Confucian ethics, may underestimate the value of individual autonomy in an individualistic culture.

The importance of native culture in ICC has attracted more and more attention from scholars in recent years. Liu and Liao (2015) believed that intercultural communication is a communication in which people with different cultural backgrounds share their respective

thoughts, feelings and information. Zhou (2019) pointed out that native cultural literacy is an important element of ICC, and learning English not only means understanding the culture of English-speaking countries, but also undertaking the task of spreading native culture in intercultural communication. Zhang and Zhao (2021) proposed that the knowledge dimension refers to the knowledge of the target language, the native language, and the world culture, among which world cultural knowledge refers to the cultural literacy of countries, including their social norms, values, customs and traditions, history, geography, art, religion, etc.

Gu (2021) summarized the sub-dimensions of intercultural communication knowledge, attitude and skills in high education context of China based on (Spielberg & Cupach, 1984). He believed the knowledge dimension refers to target language cultural knowledge, learner's national and local cultural knowledge, and world cultural knowledge. Attitude dimension contains lingua-cultural awareness, cultural relativism, and global mindset, lingua-cultural awareness describes a speaker's understanding of the connections between language and culture; cultural relativism contains awareness of a human community with a shared future, insight into cultural diversity and equality, being aware of one's own ethnic and cultural identity, and being aware of a human society with a shared destiny. Skills dimension includes the ability to apply language rules to complete tasks of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating; the ability to establish and maintain relationships and deal with intercultural conflicts; the ability to use target language to explain and promote one's native culture.

Gu's (2021) study represents a significant contribution to intercultural communication theory from a Chinese scholarly perspective in the globalized era. Moving

beyond the limitations of unidirectional cultural adaptation in traditional ICC models, this study pioneers the concept of reciprocal cultural dialogue, addressing China's foreign language education mandate to "tell China's stories well". The framework demonstrates dual theoretical innovation: it preserves core ICC elements recognized by international academia while incorporating indigenous Chinese concepts, such as ethnic cultural identity, thereby providing an explanatory model for Chinese learners' intercultural identity negotiation practices. This synthesis has yielded a culturally targeted, policy-relevant, and pedagogically actionable framework that has been successfully piloted in numerous Chinese universities, with preliminary empirical validation of its dimensional structure.

The above research demonstrates that the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC proposed by Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) has gained widespread acceptance among scholars internationally. Chinese scholar Gu (2021) has also proposed sub-dimensions of knowledge, attitude, and skills based on the Chinese context. Therefore, the present study uses the knowledge, attitude, and skills provided by the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC as a conceptual framework to define, measure, and analyze the ICC level of Chinese English major students, supplemented by the sub-dimensions proposed by Gu (2021) as detailed concepts.

The choice of the Three-Dimensional Theory of Spielberg and Cupach (1984) as the framework for this study is mainly based on three considerations: first, while proposed in 1984, this Three-Dimensional Theory has remained a cornerstone in ICC research due to its parsimonious yet robust conceptualization of the core components of ICC. Its longevity in academic discourse (cited and validated by subsequent scholars such as Chen & Starosta, 1996; Collier, 1989) demonstrates that it is not obsolete but rather a classic foundational

framework that continues to inform contemporary studies. Its enduring influence lies in capturing the essential dimensions of ICC that transcend contextual shifts, providing a stable anchor for theoretical extension—including Gu’s (2021) localized adaptation, which itself builds explicitly on this model.

Second, its clear, operable structure (knowledge, attitude, skills derived from the three dimensions) offers a straightforward yet comprehensive basis for measurement, which is critical for this study’s focus on quantifying and analyzing ICC levels among Chinese English majors. Importantly, Gu’s (2021) framework is not a more comprehensive alternative but a valuable extension: it enriches the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC by detailing context-specific sub-dimensions (e.g., indigenous concepts like “ethnic cultural identity” and “global mindset”) tailored to the Chinese higher education context.

By integrating Gu’s (2021) sub-dimensions into the broader three-dimensional structure, this study combines the model’s structural clarity with localized complexity, avoiding the risk of adopting a more context-specific framework (Gu, 2021) that, while detailed, lacks the same level of international recognition as a foundational reference—hindering intercultural comparability of results.

Spitzberg and Cupach’s model provides the validated, universally recognized theoretical skeleton, while Gu’s (2021) sub-dimensions add the culturally specific flesh. This approach ensures both theoretical rigor (rooted in a classic framework) and contextual relevance (enriched by local insights), making it more appropriate than relying solely on either the original model or the localized extension.

2.2.2 Intercultural Communication Competence Assessment

The assessment of ICC has evolved over six decades, encompassing varied research paradigms, methodological approaches, and subject populations. In recent years, some scholars have worked on a more microscopic aspect of ICC, such as intercultural communication motivation, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural awareness, and intercultural behavior effectiveness, and have developed corresponding scales, such as the Intercultural Communication Motivation Scale (Kupka et al., 2009), Global Competence Inventory (Hunter et al., 2014), Multicultural Identity Integration Scale (Yampolsky et al., 2022), Intercultural Awareness Scale (Saka & Asma, 2020), and Scale of Assessment of Intercultural Competence (Fantini, 2007).

Jiao (2017) analyzed 49 instruments on ICC assessment and divided them into five categories according to different classification criteria. As shown in Figure 2.2, the instruments can be divided into self-assessment and other's assessment (that is, assessment from their peer or teacher's perspectives) according to the subject conducting the assessment; according to the psychological characteristics of the evaluation, they can be divided into external behavioral evaluation and implicit attitude, awareness, and motivation. In terms of the communicative approach to evaluation, there is the evaluation of general ICC and the evaluation of nonverbal ICC.

The evaluated subjects encompass both individuals, such as teachers and students, and organizations, including schools and departments. When assessing organizational-level cultural competence—for instance, a school's effectiveness in cultivating intercultural awareness—the School Cultural Competence Observation Form is frequently employed as a measurement tool. Nevertheless, this instrument has limitations: it often suffers from

vagueness in operational definitions, with key concepts like “cultural responsiveness” and “inclusive practices” lacking clear, standardized criteria, which can result in inconsistent interpretations among different observers. Additionally, the tool has a limited scope, tending to focus predominantly on structural indicators, such as the presence of multicultural displays in classrooms or official policies related to intercultural education, rather than capturing dynamic, day-to-day interactions—like how teachers communicate with students from diverse cultural backgrounds or how students collaborate across cultural lines—thus failing to fully reflect the complexity and depth of an organization’s cultural competence. There are measurement instruments applicable to ICC in general and to different occupations in ICC. The following section critically examines the advantages and limitations of existing assessment tools.

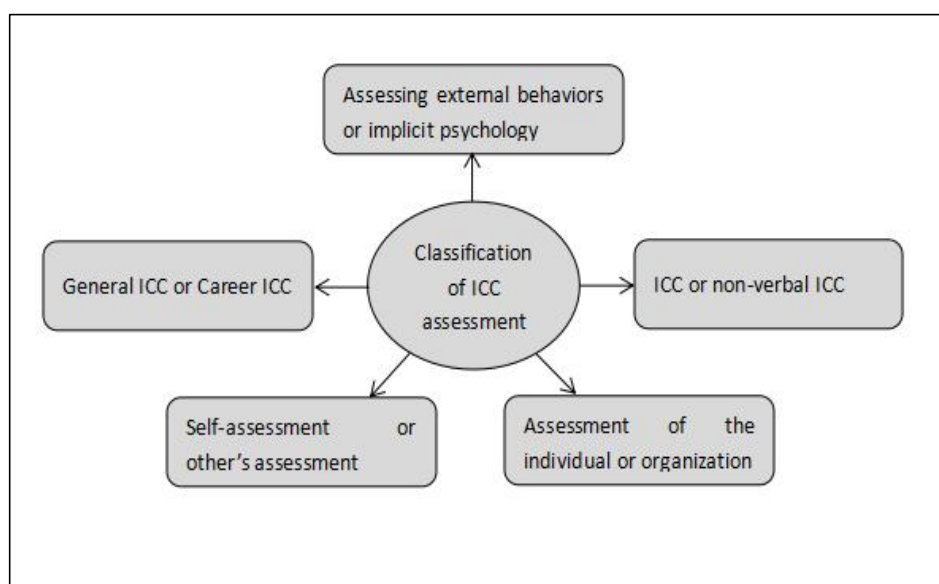


Figure 2.2: Classification of ICC Instruments (adapted from Jiao, 2017, p. 120)

There are three kinds of assessment methods, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. The quantitative method is the most popular evaluation method because it is time and effort efficient, well standardized, useful for undertaking large-scale research

investigation, and can be easily quantified and used as benchmark information that allows comparison between individuals, universities and countries (Creswell, 2007).

Nadeem et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between sensory seeking, various cultural attitudes, and Western-developed ICC frameworks through a quantitative study conducted in Malaysia. They found that sensory seeking and other cultural attitudes have a direct impact on ICC, and other cultural attitudes plays a mediating role in the relationship between sensory seeking and ICC. The results verified the general cultural nature of the variables in the context of Malaysia.

Rui (2016) conducted a quantitative survey on 190 English majors from three colleges and universities in developed regions of China. The results showed that although the overall level of the students' ICC was good, they lacked understanding of different cultures, had insufficient opportunities for practice, and were not able to change their identities in various cultural contexts flexibly. Dai (2016) assessed 113 students of the English major in China using a questionnaire; the results show that students are not confident enough in their intercultural communication skills, because they have fewer opportunities to practice in intercultural communication scenarios.

Hua (2020) assessed the intercultural sensitivity of English majors in China's ethnic minority higher education institutions through a quantitative survey, with results indicating inadequate academic intercultural sensitivity development. Li et al. (2025) collected data from 432 Chinese college students to explore the predictive effect of perceived foreign language ability on students' ICC. The research finds that perceiving foreign language ability has a significant predictive effect on students' ICC. The quality of intercultural interaction plays a mediating role between foreign language proficiency and ICC. These

findings highlight the importance of fostering meaningful intercultural interaction in foreign language education and offer valuable insights for strengthening the teaching practice of ICC.

These quantitative assessments exhibit significant methodological limitations, as they tend to reduce complex intercultural competence into quantifiable metrics, resulting in fragmented measurements of cultural capabilities. ICC is inherently contextual and developmental in nature, yet quantitative approaches lack temporal dimensions—single-point testing fails to capture the dynamic developmental trajectory of ICC. These methodological shortcomings collectively prevent existing studies from comprehensively reflecting the complexity and context-dependent nature of students' ICC, particularly manifesting in inadequate measurement of behavioral dimensions and cultural adaptation strategies. Oppositely, qualitative evaluation methods include the portfolio assessment method, self-report, critical text analysis, interview, and reflective modeling method. Qualitative evaluation methods are time-consuming, labor-intensive, and not easily implemented on a large scale, but they can provide more detailed and personalized information.

Zhou and Burhanudeen (2023) conducted a qualitative design with self-reports and focus group interviews as instruments to measure EFL undergraduates' ICC in China during the post-pandemic era, and found that the challenges that EFL undergraduates encounter in intercultural communication were scant English proficiency, insufficient intercultural experience, and limited intercultural practice. Yang et al. (2025) conducted a study on the personal intercultural communication experiences of 22 Chinese international students in a multicultural classroom environment at a university in the Netherlands using

qualitative self-reported data and interpretive phenomenological analysis methods. Participants summarized the challenges and inspirations they felt, as well as their reactions, in their respective contexts. Data showed that the reactions of these Chinese students were closely related to the environment in which they were and their feelings at that time.

According to Deardorff (2005), researchers generally agreed that it was best to use multiple evaluation methods to assess ICC, with qualitative methods receiving the most respect, case studies and interviews were found to be the two techniques that were most widely accepted, with narrative log analysis, self-assessment reporting tools, observation coming in second and third. It was reported in Deardorff 's (2005) study that 95% of the insiders agreed on the need to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to measure ICC. Fantini (2006) and Straffon (2003) held a similar opinion with Deardorff (2005) and advocated the use of mixed methods to assess ICC, which represented a new research paradigm that allows different research methods to build on their strengths and avoid their weaknesses.

Both quantitative and qualitative method of assessing ICC have made use of the self-report method (Luo & Chan, 2022). According to Deardorff (2016), the majority of the more than 100 assessment instruments already in use were self-report instruments, which means incomplete of the measurement results. Altshuler (2003) argued that there was a discrepancy between subjects' perceptions of their self-competence and their actual competence. The appropriateness of behavior and communication, which can only be judged from viewpoints other than self-report, is typically overlooked in assessments of ICC. Matsumoto et. al. (2001) regretted the predominance of retrospective self-report measures and draw attention to the dearth of study on ICC from the reciprocal cultural

perspective of the persons involved. They suggested an interactive model that uses behavioral observation method to investigate ICC by seeing how people behave in real-world scenarios or by having other participants fill out surveys.

Fantini (2017) suggested that ICC assessment was multidimensional, multi-method, multi-perspectives, ongoing and integrated. It should take into account both self-assessment and other's assessment, and other's assessment includes peer assessment, teacher assessment and host assessment. According to a ICC assessment project that adopts multi-methods and multi-perspective to collect data, Fantini (2016) reported target language proficiency was indeed fundamental to ICC and people changed in positive ways through intercultural communication experience, and he suggested that as a fundamental component of ICC, the development of second language ability, measured in proficiency term, was required.

The purpose of the ICC assessment is to determine the gap between students' ICC level and the ICC cultivation aims (Deardroff, 2016). ICC cultivation aims are a specific set of expectations about student learning and performance, and their teacher, who knows best whether the students' ICC is meeting those expectations and the gaps from those expectations. Therefore, combining self-assessment with peer assessment, teacher assessment and host assessment can successfully overcome the drawbacks of self-assessment being overly subjective and vulnerable to social expectation bias. The Intercultural Communication Motivation Scale (Kupka, 2009), the Intercultural Adaptation Potential Scale (Matsumoto, 2001), and the Cultural Intelligence Scale (Dyne et al., 2007) all use a combination of self-assessment, peer assessment, facilitator assessment, or supervisor assessment, effectively enhancing the comprehensiveness of the evaluation.

Yu and Zhang (2019) utilized quantitative and qualitative method to collect data at one Australian university to investigate Chinese international students' ICC. They found that student groups were quite positive about language and cultural differences but struggle with comprehension problems and low-quality interactions. However, being restricted by intercultural practices and norms, students are not able to fully utilize communication techniques to fulfil this need.

Due to the complexity, multi-faceted nature and dynamics of this capability, research on ICC assessment is still far from sufficient (Gu, 2021). The researcher of the present study have not identified studies that use qualitative other-assessment methods to examine students' ICC from their teacher's perspective. If ICC is acknowledged as one of the goals of a foreign language course, ICC assessment from different perspectives has to be done in order to improve learners' motivation and give feedback on how effectiveness of the teaching is working. Teachers are the agents that can facilitate a language learning environment to promote students' ICC, their experience can provide many insights into how to develop students' ICC (Bal, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to further examine students' ICC and the factors influencing their ICC development from the perspective of teachers.

2.2.3 Intercultural Communication Competence Cultivation Model

The field of ICC research has undergone substantial theoretical progress in recent years, exhibiting growing methodological diversity. Based on different understandings of the dimensions of ICC, scholars have constructed a variety of ICC cultivation models. Models that have recently gained influence in EFL education are proposed by Calloway and Deardorff (2017), and Byram (2021).

Calloway and Deardorff (2017) proposed the Empathy Model for Intercultural Communication Competence (EMICC), which is based on the earlier framework of ICC but places greater emphasis on the emotional and relational dimensions, especially empathy, as a key solution to the lack of sufficient understanding of different cultures, gives priority to emotional connections and continuous learning in different environments. It involves cognitive empathy (understanding others' perspectives) and affective empathy (emotional connection). The model offers valuable stages for teachers to assess the development of empathy in their learners over time. It aligns with recent developments emphasizing emotional intelligence's importance in social and intercultural interactions (MacCann et al., 2020). While valuable for education, business, and conflict resolution, critics note that empathy alone may not address systemic barriers, and measuring empathy in intercultural contexts can be subjective.

From the standpoint of language teaching, Byram (2021) updated his ICC Cultural Teaching Model, which consists of three dimensions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and five interconnected parts make up the model, which are linked and mutually supportive. Despite being extensively accepted and utilized in language instruction, Byram's model has also drawn criticism from some academics for a variety of reasons. It has been observed that the paradigm ignores the cultural relativity of the learners' own culture and instead concentrates mostly on the cultural differences between the learners and the target culture.

The Empathy Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (EMICC) proposed by Calloway and Deardorff (2017) represents a notable development, emphasizing the crucial role of emotional connection and lifelong learning in intercultural

contexts. This innovative framework, which distinguishes between cognitive and affective empathy dimensions, offers valuable pedagogical implications for intercultural education, though it has drawn some criticism regarding the subjective nature of empathy measurement in intercultural settings.

Equally important is the Integrated Model of Intercultural Communication Competence (IMICC) proposed by Arasaratnam (2010), which adopts a culture-general approach incorporating five key variables, including sensation seeking and ethnocentrism. However, subsequent empirical validation studies (Nadeem et al., 2020) have revealed certain limitations, particularly the lack of significant mediating effects for some proposed relationships, suggesting the need for further refinement of the model.

While these theoretical contributions have substantially enriched ICC scholarship, their predominantly Western-centric orientation has attracted scholarly critique (Martin & Nakayama, 2015). In response, Chinese researchers, such as Gu (2021), have advocated for more culturally inclusive frameworks that simultaneously preserve local cultural identities while facilitating effective intercultural exchange. This call for balance between universal applicability and cultural specificity reflects current research priorities, particularly the need for greater theoretical innovation and validation in non-Western contexts.

The divergent approaches to intercultural education in different regions underscore this theoretical imperative. Whereas European frameworks (Council of Europe, 2011) emphasize the development of European citizenship, China's intercultural education paradigm prioritizes cultural identity maintenance, international cultural dissemination, and participation in equitable global communities through intercultural dialogue. These contrasting priorities highlight the pressing need for ICC models that transcend Western

epistemological boundaries while addressing both universal competencies and culture-specific requirements (Gu, 2021). Future research directions should focus on developing more inclusive theoretical frameworks that account for these diverse cultural and educational contexts.

Due to cultural bias of the elements of the mentioned models, in order to improve the intercultural adaptability of models and seek culture-generic components in the understanding of ICC among people of different cultural backgrounds, some researchers have emphasized revisiting concepts derived from the West to test similar constructs in Asian cultural contexts (Arasaratnam, 2006; 2010).

Chinese scholars (Gu, 2017; Xu & Sun, 2016; Zhang & Yao, 2020) have also proposed ICC models applicable for EFL education. Gao (2002) indicated ICC models can be divided into behavior-centered model and knowledge-centered model according to the different emphasis in the cultivation process. The behavior-centered model focuses on the cultivation practice of ICC and attaches importance to the effectiveness of communicative behaviors, which generally includes individual adaptation, interpersonal interaction, and task completion in intercultural situations. This model is more suitable for short-term training of overseas personnel. The knowledge-centered model, which focuses on cultivating ICC cognition, is popular in the school context and currently plays a dominant role in EFL education in China.

Xu and Sun (2016) proposed a progressive interaction-based cultivation model that divides ICC development into three stages: surface interaction, negotiation transition, and deep integration. This model emphasizes the gradual progression from managing cultural differences to establishing emotional resonance, with its innovation lying in situating the

entire cultivation process within a globalized context.

Gu's (2017) process model, developed specifically for China's foreign language education context, constructs a closed-loop system of instructional input, practical experience and reflective iteration, concretely comprising five phases: attitude development, knowledge construction, communicative exploration, reflective evaluation, and adaptive adjustment. While this model's linear developmental assumptions and cultural adaptability have faced some questioning, its structured pedagogical intervention approach holds significant value.

Zhang and Yao (2020) further advanced the Integrated Model for Chinese Students' ICC Development (IMCSICD), which innovatively integrates three dimensions (cognition, affection, and behavior) and two contexts (daily life and professional settings). This model particularly emphasizes combining Chinese cultural identity with the cultivation of a global perspective, thereby overcoming the limitations of traditional behavior-centered or knowledge-centered approaches.

The models proposed by Xu and Sun (2016), Gu (2017), and Zhang and Yao (2020) collectively represent a pivotal shift in ICC cultivation research—from static comparisons to dynamic processes, from universal applicability to localized adaptation, and from unidirectional assimilation to bidirectional integration. Unlike previous Western paradigm-based ICC cultivation models, these frameworks demonstrate more substantial alignment with China's cultural and educational contexts, providing both theoretical foundations and practical guidance for developing ICC within the Chinese context.

Although these ICC cultivation models (Xu & Sun, 2016; Gu, 2017; Zhang & Yao, 2020) are more in line with China's cultural and educational context in terms of theoretical

framework and better respond to China's ICC talent cultivation goals, they are constructed through top-down deductive theoretical analysis rather than empirical validation, which has raised scholars' concerns about their scientific robustness. Specifically, their reliability and generalizability remain unproven, as they have not been systematically tested in diverse cultural and institutional contexts. More importantly, there is a disconnection between these models and the teaching practice system of Chinese colleges and universities, lacking a transformation path "from theory to classroom". These models mainly focus on macro frameworks but fail to elaborate on specific implementation strategies for teaching links. This makes it difficult for teachers to transform the models into operable teaching behaviors when faced with practical constraints such as "limited class hours and large differences in students' proficiency levels". Such a separation between theory and teaching practice leads teachers only to understand the models at the theoretical level, lacking the ability and confidence to translate them into teaching practice, which is precisely the most prominent obstacle in the teaching reform of local colleges and universities in China (Li & Wang, 2022).

Current researches on ICC cultivation models present a distinct paradox: on the one hand, the construction of theoretical models is constantly emerging, from the EMICC by Calloway and Deardorff (2017) to the cultural universal model by Byram (2021), with various conceptual frameworks constantly being updated. On the other hand, the transformation of these theoretical models into classroom teaching practice has lagged far behind, resulting in a "disconnection" phenomenon between theory and practice (Baker & Fang, 2021).

Future research urgently needs to make breakthroughs in ICLT innovation. To achieve a substantive breakthrough in ICC cultivation, the academic community needs to shift from “model construction” to “teaching transformation”, establish a collaborative community of theoretical researchers and front-line teachers, and jointly develop specific ICLT implementation plans. Only by transforming the abstract ICC dimensions into concrete classroom practices can intercultural education be truly achieved.

2.2.4 Intercultural Language Teaching in English as Foreign Language Teaching

A more adaptable constructivist framework for enhancing EFL instruction that incorporates real interaction with meaning-making in cultural contexts can be provided by ICLT. This method allows EFL students to study English in a meaningful, experiential, and personal way that can have a lasting effect on their intercultural understanding and abilities. Intercultural exposure is considered an effective way to improve learners' ICC. The majority of intercultural experiential learning activities center on making direct contact with people from different cultural backgrounds (Yang, 2017; Silla et al., 2023). However, despite higher education institutions' effort to offer students more opportunities, many financial and environmental barriers still hinder direct intercultural communication among students and people from different cultures (Almeida et al., 2019). Therefore, developing ICLT strategies in EFL context are necessary.

Despite the increasing recognition of ICC as a critical component of effective language learning, the existing researches reveal a persistent lack of attention to ICLT in EFL teaching (Khan et al., 2023). This is partly due to the current teaching approach, which views language as a set of discrete norms and skills rather than as a tool for intercultural communication in the nation's multilingual environment. Grammar is the

primary focus of English instruction in classroom, with little to no utilization of authentic learning materials to promote student participation (Bradford, 2018; Byram, 2020; Manan, 2014; Oranje & Smith, 2017).

The first concern in ICLT is the relationship between culture and language teaching (Byram, 2020; Kramsch & Zhu, 2016), which impacts how to teach ICC in the EFL context. Language teaching is responsible for preparing learners for interaction with people of other cultural backgrounds. In Risager's study (2007), the word *linguacultural* highlights the connection between language and culture. The author suggests that the national paradigm should be replaced with a transnational one, highlighting the intricacy of language use and the movement of *linguacultural* over national borders. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) examined various approaches to cultural analysis and contend that incorporating them into language education is essential. They depict a continuum where culture is most pronounced in people's conduct at one end and language's ability to convey cultural meanings at the other.

Scholars have proposed different teaching principles for ICLT from different perspectives. The principle proposed by Liddicoat et al. (2003) lays the foundation for the development of ICLT. They believed that ICLT can be regarded as four interrelated processes, namely attention, comparison, reflection and interaction; comparing and contrasting their experiences in language and culture is the most fundamental operation that students can perform; comparing similarities and differences is a tool for reflection and an important part of the classroom process. Liu (2020) explored the application of these ICLT principles in EFL teaching in China and found it was effective in developing students' comprehensive competence.

Scarino (2013) proposed five principles for ICLT of active construction: making connections, social interaction, reflection, and responsibility. Active construction involves meaningful knowledge construction in a sociocultural context that enables learners to develop personal and intercultural spaces from their perspectives. Making connections involves a constructive analysis of the similarities and differences between the linguistic and cultural family and the target language and culture. Social interaction refers to communication that crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries and engages new conceptual systems through language. Reflection indicates the underlying process of conscious awareness and consideration. Finally, responsibility encourages learners to participate in successful communication across languages and cultures in order to develop intercultural awareness. The five ICLT principles represent a complete model or a holistic approach to intercultural language learning and teaching in acquisition, processing, practice, reflection, and awareness raising. These principles are suitable for intercultural language learning because they emphasize the active participation of learners through social interaction and critical reference.

Newton (2016) proposed five principles for ICLT, namely balance of cultural and linguistic focus in language lessons; integrate both implicit and explicit with clearly states intercultural outcomes; foster learners' acquiring and learning process; take into account the diversity of learners and contexts with a variety of intercultural language activities; and focus on developing learners' ICC rather than native speaker competence. These principles provide guidelines for ICLT in EFL context.

In term of teaching interventions, culture-oriented teaching materials, classroom activities, teaching strategies and intercultural integrated curriculum are the main teaching

interventions in ICLT. He's (2014) investigation into ICLT classroom practices among Chinese English majors revealed that culture-based instructional materials—particularly contemporary English-language films and literary texts exerted a positive influence on learners' ICC development. Some scholars found the effectiveness of developing students' ICC by incorporating comprehensive teaching strategies such as a reflective learning model (Williams, 2017) and flipped classroom teaching model (Gowindasamy, 2017). Learners' ICC could be enhanced through integrated intercultural programs such as an intensive intercultural service-learning program and civic engagement experiences (Liu, 2018).

Tran and Duong (2018) established an ICLT model through a survey of 47 learners at an EFL teaching center in Vietnam to promote the development of ICC among English learners. In this model, language, culture, and ICC are systematically integrated through input, notice, practice, and output. Their research demonstrates how the ICLT model can provide ICC for students, enabling them to become intercultural speakers proficient in a second language and capable of acting appropriately and effectively in a globalized context.

Sun (2016) proposed five ICC development concepts: conceptualizing, implementing, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating; similarly, Gu (2017) put forward a five-phase ICC teaching process encompassing adjustment, reflection and evaluation, exploration through communication, attitude development, and knowledge construction. However, these contributions remain largely as theoretical ideas or proposed frameworks—neither Sun (2016) nor Gu (2017) conducted empirical studies to test the validity or effectiveness of their models in practical teaching contexts.

According to Gu (2021), before entering into intercultural communication experiments, ICC teaching begins with attitude development with the goal of fostering learners' positive cultural awareness and motivation. The knowledge construction stage comes next, during which the instructor helps students create new understandings of language, culture, communication, and other subjects by facilitating ongoing discussions in which they negotiate meaning across the diverse points of view held by participants and by continuously practicing a variety of intercultural skills. In the reflective and evaluative stage, teachers guide learners to reflect and evaluate their progress and shortcomings in previous performance where they modify, compare, and synthesize their intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skill perspectives. In the adjustment stage, learners adjust and modify the ICC system in the new communication situation according to their own reflection, through which learners experience the continuous development of ICC.

Deardroff (2023) summarized the feasible strategies for implementing the ICLT paradigm in higher education. She pointed out that intervention measures for developing intercultural abilities in foreign education can use ethnographic questioning techniques, be guided by experiential learning, or follow the theory of transformative learning. Vromans et al. (2025) hold that the factors promoting learning include teaching tools, intercultural contact (teamwork, multicultural classrooms, cultural informants), motivational factors and intercultural experiences. Learning is carried out through experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization and experimentation. Learning dilemmas occur in adaptation and stereotypes.

Byram's ICLT model (1997; 2021) systematically integrated cultural learning with language instruction through four core dimensions: cultural knowledge, interpretive skills,

attitudinal openness, and autonomous learning strategies. While theoretically robust, the model faces significant implementation challenges, as evidenced by Oranje and Smith's (2017) study in New Zealand, which revealed that most teachers remain unfamiliar with the framework and often reduce intercultural teaching to superficial cultural elements. The findings demonstrated a notable mismatch between teachers' expressed beliefs and their actual practices, with teachers supporting the theoretical aspects of ICLT while failing to implement its approaches in their classroom practice.

Liao (2020) investigated the ICLT teaching practices of EFL teachers in China and found that teachers usually teach using language material driven or intercultural topic driven, or a mixture of both approaches. By choosing the sections of the materials that were pertinent to different cultures, the instructors employed the tactic of making the most out of the materials they had created for teaching languages. This allowed them to teach ICC. Intercultural theme driving refers to the teacher's strategy of organizing teaching around an intercultural theme, which includes up-to date news that arouse heated discussion in media, and topics that the teachers considered as profound.

Liao (2020) pointed out that ICLT strategies can be broadly categorized into two types based on differences in teaching objectives and implementation approaches: skill-oriented instruction, which primarily emphasizes the development of specific intercultural communication skills, and consciousness-oriented instruction, which mainly aims to enhance learners' cultural awareness and reflective capabilities. The establishment of this classification system holds significant theoretical value. It not only clarifies the differentiated orientations in ICLT teaching practice but also provides an operational analytical framework for subsequent research, enabling researchers to more accurately

assess the actual impact of different teaching strategies on the development of students' ICC.

Compared with the rich research results on ICC theory and cultivation models, studies on ICLT remain relatively scarce, and this scarcity is particularly evident in two critical areas: the lack of empirical investigations and the lack of qualitative research.

First, there is a notable deficit in empirical studies that systematically test ICLT practices and their impact. Current publications on ICLT has predominantly focused on theoretical discussions of principles and teaching interventions, with limited attention to teachers' actual classroom practices. This gap is problematic because theoretical frameworks alone cannot address the complexities of real-world implementation. For instance, despite strong teacher awareness of intercultural teaching aims (Chau, 2019), studies show that teachers rarely integrate ICLT activities into lessons, often narrowing their focus to a subset of ICC dimensions (Zhang & Zhou, 2019)—even though these dimensions are interdependent and mutually reinforcing (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2019). Practically, teachers' ICLT efforts tend to prioritize factual cultural knowledge (e.g., cultural products) over behavioral practice or value-based learning (Qian, 2022); yet, there is little empirical evidence to explain why this imbalance persists or how to address it.

Compounding this issue, even the limited empirical research often lacks rigor. Comparative experimental studies, although sometimes spanning one to two semesters, suffer from vague methodological descriptions and insufficient reliability and validity (Wen, 2019), failing to provide actionable data for other researchers. This dearth of robust empirical inquiry leaves critical questions unanswered, such as how to effectively implement ICLT in Chinese EFL contexts to meet students' ICC development needs (Du,

2021; Fu & Gu, 2015).

Second, qualitative research is severely underrepresented in ICLT studies, with non-empirical work and quantitative methods dominating the field (Wang & Pan, 2019; Wen, 2019). Quantitative approaches, often relying on SPSS for data analysis, and controlled experiments have their place. However, they are ill-suited to capture the nuanced, context-dependent dynamics of ICLT, such as why teachers struggle to integrate intercultural content into lessons (Tran & Duong, 2018) or how their misunderstandings of ICC (e.g., reducing it to knowledge transmission; Megawati et al., 2020; Safa & Tofighi, 2022) shape their practice. Qualitative methods, which could illuminate these complexities, are largely absent. This is particularly striking given the pressing need to understand how teachers navigate challenges like limited contextual support (Smskova & Paulsrud, 2020) or inadequate training in integrating ICC into language instruction (Hieu, 2019). Without qualitative inquiry, there is little insight into the lived experiences of teachers implementing ICLT, hindering the development of targeted support for their professional growth and the design of approaches that foster students' holistic ICC development (Guo, 2022).

Against this backdrop, the urgency of qualitative empirical research becomes clear. Such studies could, for example, explore how teachers interpret and enact ICLT amid contextual constraints (e.g., the absence of an English-language environment; Wang, 2016) or how to design role-play and communicative scenarios that bridge theoretical ideals with classroom realities. Addressing both the lack of empirical rigor and the shortage of qualitative approaches is essential to advancing ICLT research and practice.

2.3 Performed Cultural Approach

The core of PCA is to reconstruct language learning as a process of cultural behavior acquisition. This pedagogy organically integrates anthropological performance theory, sociocultural theory, and situational learning theory through intercultural communication scenarios (such as cultural scriptwriting and role-playing), emphasizing the role of personal experience, performance practice and immediate application in foreign language learning. PCA has obvious characteristics of ICLT (Yu, 2020). This pedagogy emphasizes the importance of close integration of ICC with language and culture, and has formed a set of unique and effective teaching methods to guide teachers' ICLT teaching practice (Yu, 2020).

2.3.1 Performed Cultural Approach in Chinese as Foreign Language Teaching

PCA is mainly used in Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) teaching in America and China. Research shows that PCA can effectively bridge the gap of students' insufficient intercultural behavioral skills in CFL teaching, especially excelling in cultivating behavioral skills such as non-verbal communication and social norms. This teaching approach provides a fresh perspective on how to develop the oral competence of a foreign language and ICC of learners and has achieved remarkable outcomes in the field of CFL teaching in America and China in recent years (Guo, 2018; Qu & Pan, 2010; Yu, 2020).

Walker (1993) first proposed the basic concepts and assumptions of PCA in CFL teaching in his book *Performance culture: Learning to participate in another culture*, and further elaborated on the approach in 1996. In 2000, Walker published *Remembering the future: compiling knowledge of another culture* with Atsushi Noda, in this book, they detail

the core idea of the PCA: to learn a foreign language is to learn another culture. They argued that culture was the basis of meaning and that language was constructed within culture and is inseparable from behavior. Walker (2010) summarizes the core elements of PCA as follows:

Firstly, teaching cultural knowledge of the target language through “cultural stories”. Cultural stories are given communication events happens in aim language context that related to culture. PCA believes that learning a foreign language is experiencing and practicing the culture of the foreign language. PCA defines culture as how people behave (Walker & Noda, 2010). Culture can be divided into three categories: achievement culture, information culture, and behavior culture. Achievement culture refers to literature, art, food, etc.; informational culture includes significant and relevant knowledge about a civilization or society, such as historical facts; and behavioral culture pertains to the habitual behaviors and interpersonal manners of native speakers in their daily lives (Hammerly, 1986).

PCA suggests that culture can be divided into revealed culture, hidden culture, and suppressed culture. The culture that native speakers talk about with foreigners is the revealed culture; the culture that native speakers take for granted without realizing it is the hidden culture; and the culture that native speakers do not want to disclose to foreigners is the suppressed culture (Walker & Noda, 2010). According to PCA, the hidden culture, should be the primary emphasis of foreign language teaching, while the suppressed culture can be experienced by the learners after their proficiency has reached a higher level. This differentiation perspective analyze culture by placing speech acts in the context of intercultural communication between people through the methods of anthropology and psychology, which not only represents an academic breakthrough in the field of foreign

language but also makes a contribution to the field of anthropology and studies on intercultural communication (Yu, 2020).

PCA redefines the relationship between culture and language by placing culture at the forefront of language teaching, and claimed that culture is deeply experienced and understood through performance activities and emotional experience.

Secondly, taking performance activity as the main classroom activity. In PCA class, students experience and understand culture deeply by performing intercultural communication activities. PCA promotes the concept of “unity of knowing and doing” and affirms the importance of intercultural communication function of language in language learning. It tries to change the traditional teaching model of filling the classroom and emphasizes that language teaching is not only the transmission of knowledge, but also the training of skills. In this teaching method, the classroom is a place of practice for students, who practice intercultural communication skills, enhance intercultural communication emotion, and acquire intercultural communication cognition by simulating scenarios of the target language and culture, acting out cultural stories through performance activities.

PCA suggests conducting performance activities in classroom to address the issue of neglecting the cultivation of ICC skills in ICLT. In simple terms, it is to enable learners to experience the behavioral patterns in different cultures immersively in class (Yu, 2020). In teaching activities in CFL, teachers design realistic and operable scripts around the language and cultural content of characteristics, and students experience the script content, characters, background, culture, and so on through live performances, so as to gradually improve the proficiency and accuracy of language communication.

Yu (2020) pointed out that in the past, foreign language teaching emphasized achievement culture and information culture while neglecting the cultivation of behavioral culture, while PCA focuses on behavioral culture in teaching and pays attention to the value orientation behind the behavioral habits of native speakers. The performance activities simulate the situational elements in real contexts, enabling learners to gradually acquire the skills to successfully interact with native speakers.

Base on the traditional Chinese Confucian “the unity of knowing and doing” educational ideology, PCA combines the subject knowledge of Western cognition, culture, and performance, through immersive performance activity and thorough courses that closely integrate language teaching and cultural teaching (Jiang, 2021). As a result, language learners can not only master language skills but also acquire intercultural communication skills to effectively and appropriately communicate with native speakers. Intercultural communicators believe that in order to enhance students’ ICC capabilities, students should explore and study cultural topics on their own. In this process, teachers should not instill cultural knowledge into students, but guide them to discover, analyze and evaluate the materials and information they have collected (Byram, 1994; Furstenberg, 2010). In PCA, the role of the teacher is no longer that of a disseminator but that of a guide and facilitator, and students are no longer passive recipients but active participants and practitioners. Furthermore, PCA has established a rigorous mechanism of performance evaluation, whereby students receive timely feedback from teachers on each performance activity. A four-point grading scale reflects different levels of performance activities, providing students with an accurate assessment. Walker (2010) pointed out that performance evaluation could motivate learners and help them take responsibility for their own learning and preparation.

2.3.2 Performed Culture Approach in English as Foreign Language Teaching

Around 2015, with the success of PCA in CEL teaching, a small number of college and university English teachers in China incorporated it into EFL teaching (Lou & Qin, 2015). Current research on PCA in EFL mainly focuses on two aspects. On the one hand, scholars adopt the literature analysis method to analyze the teaching concept of PCA and sort out its theoretical basis. On the other hand, teachers use the comparative teaching experiment method to verify the teaching effect of PCA by comparing students' English academic performance before and after the experiment.

Chen (2015) holds that the two-way communication between the target language culture and the mother tongue culture should be emphasized in EFL teaching in China. She conducted an experimental study, which confirmed that by strengthening students' performance, evaluation, and Comparison of national culture and target language culture in English teaching, PCA can not only effectively cultivate students' target language cultural competence but also effectively develop their ability to disseminate Chinese culture to the outside world.

Chen's (2015) study has valuable theoretical and practical significance in China's EFL research. It transforms the teaching concept of PCA from learning to participate in another culture to the two-way communication of culture, and makes PCA more in line with the ICC cultivation objectives in the EFL context of China. As stated in the background of this thesis, Chinese education sector attaches great importance to the cultivation of students' ability to spread Chinese culture, and her study provided a new way of thinking about the application of PCA in English programs of Chinese colleges and universities.

Some teachers explore the teaching effectiveness of PCA in EFL teaching of China. Liu (2016) conducted a test-comparison study on the application of PCA and traditional translation methods in college foreign English teaching in China using a comparative experimental method and collected students' pre-test and post-test English academic scores. The results of the data revealed that the students' English performance in the experimental class applying PCA was much better than that of the comparison group. Li (2021) verified the positive effects of PCA on junior high school students' English listening comprehension and intercultural sensitivity by comparative teaching experiment and interview, claiming that both teachers and students held positive attitudes towards PCA, and suggesting the evaluation method of PCA should be optimized in the future research.

Against the backdrop of EFL teaching in China, Xin and Yang (2018) constructed a PCA model under the flipped classroom using a non-empirical literature analysis method. In this model, teachers guide students to create a collaborative learning environment through an online platform and input cultural and linguistic knowledge to them through self-learning. Students read articles, watch videos, and look for information on the internet before class to determine the content of the group performance activity. During the class, students present performance activities, summarize, and build up their cultural memory with the teacher's feedback. suggested that teachers should integrate the content of teaching materials when using PCA, monitor students' learning through online platforms, make sure students have enough "input" before class, and ensure effective "output" through effective organization in class.

Chen and Wen (2022) constructed a flipped classroom speaking teaching model based on PCA, and they believed that the use of this model in speaking classes could

improve the quality of teaching and learning. These two models are derived from the researcher's EFL teaching practice and experience, which can give teachers some guidance in teaching. However, both models focus on developing students' English language proficiency and do not pay special attention to the cultivation of ICC.

The research on PCA in EFL is still in its preliminary stage, with a dearth of thorough studies, whether in theoretical interpretation or practical application (Jiang, 2021). In terms of research content, previous studies (Li, 2021; Liu, 2016; Xin & Yang, 2018) mainly focus on the teaching effectiveness of PCA in promoting students' English academic performance, while lacking research on its impact on ICC cultivation; in terms of research methodology, these studies primarily adopt comparative experimental research methods, with a lack of qualitative case study investigations. Additionally, in terms of research subjects, there is insufficient understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions toward PCA.

Teachers' support is considered a key factor in determining the success of teaching approach reform (Yin & Ma, 2008), and students' development is considered as the ultimate measure of instructional effectiveness. Therefore, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the impact of PCA in ICC cultivation and promote the implementation of PCA in China's EFL teaching, it is necessary to adopt a case study to explore teachers' and students' perceptions of PCA from their respective perspectives.

2.3.3 Performed Culture Approach and Communication Language Teaching

A fundamental difference between PCA and CLT is that they treat language and culture differently in foreign language classes. According to CLT, the goal of foreign language teaching is communication competence, the core of CLT pedagogy has three

points: (1) the purpose of language teaching is to cultivate communicative competence (2) the content of teaching should be in line with the communicative needs of students; (3) the teaching process should be communicative (Zhang, 2003). Apparently, ICC and cultural teaching have been neglected in CLT.

PCA is a kind of ICLT approach that integrates behavioral and cultural teaching into language teaching, and cultivates learners' ICC through "performance" target language cultural activities and practical exercises. The subject matter of instruction of PCA has changed from imparting knowledge of the linguistic structure to fostering a culture of behavior. In the classroom, accumulating "cultural stories" is the main teaching content, "performance" serves as the primary teaching method, and the roles and responsibilities of teachers and students are newly defined, making it possible to develop students' ICC in the classroom. It achieves three transformations: shifting from a language-centered to a culture-centered perspective, shifting from a lecture-centered to a performance-acting perspective and shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered (Yu, 2020). PCA's teaching philosophy and pedagogy make it possible to develop students' ICC, especially their intercultural communication skills in the classroom.

However, according to Walker (2010), the purpose of learning a foreign language is to enable learners to fulfil the goal of "participating in another culture" and to communicate effectively and appropriately with native speakers. Foreign languages are seen as tools for social interaction and learning a foreign language means following the rules of the target language. The problem with this is that learners are easily assimilated into the culture of the target language, while their own culture is ignored and devalued. As a result, learners gradually lose their cultural identity.

In the context of globalization, culture is an open, changing and evolving system. Byram (2018) suggested it was necessary to cultivate an intercultural speaker rather than a native speaker in EFL. Language is not only for conveying information but also for negotiating, reconstructing, and maintaining its own cultural identity (Byram, 2008; Corbett, 2003). Learning a language means being able to use the language creatively and increase one's cultural awareness. China's Ministry of Education (2018) proposed to cultivate talents with both Chinese cultural identity and international perspectives. Students should understand the basic characteristics and similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures; and be able to communicate effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Obviously, PCA in CFL focuses on cultivating students' ability to communicate using appropriate target language cultural norms in target language communities, while the goal of ICLT in China is to cultivate talents with an international perspective within a multicultural framework while maintaining their own cultural identity. Due to these differences in cultivation objectives, their teaching goals, designs, and contents are inevitably different. Therefore, when implementing PCA in China, full consideration should be given to the two-way communication between the target language culture and the native culture, so as to avoid students' loss of cultural identity.

2.4 Impact of Performed Cultural Approach

2.4.1 Evaluation Criteria for the Impact of the Teaching Program

In the context of educational research, impact refers to observable and systematic changes in students' learning processes or outcomes resulting from a particular teaching method, typically evaluated through quantitative or qualitative indicators. According to the

theory of student subjectivity, students are the subjects of learning, and teachers' teaching cannot replace students' learning. There is a growing awareness that good education should take into account students' subjectivity and initiative, maximizing their learning abilities and achieving the all-round growth of each student as an individual (Shi & Wang, 2022). Scholars generally agree that the investigation of teaching impact should be conducted from multiple perspectives, especially not neglecting the cognition of both teachers and students (Chen, 2016).

Today's educational field tends to evaluate the success of the entire teaching and learning process. For instance, Cheng and Wei (2012) proposed educational quality standards based on two dimensions: the degree of achieving agreed-upon standards and student satisfaction. The degree of achieving agreed standards refers to the extent to which teaching quality meets the predetermined teaching standards, and satisfaction refers to students' satisfaction with teaching. Biesta (2020) opposed simplifying impact to test scores and advocates focusing on education's contribution to aspects such as citizenship. Hattie (2009) proposed the Visible Learning Theory, which defines the impact of teaching methods as the quantified changes in student achievement, measured through effect size, encompassing cognitive, behavioral, and emotional dimensions. Guskey (2000) defined three levels of teaching method impact as teacher practice → student learning → school improvement, emphasizing the assessment of long-term impact. Lombardi et. al. (2021) proposed a theoretical framework for active learning, distinguishing its short-term (memory) and long-term (critical thinking) impacts.

Johnson, D. W., and Johnson, R. T. (2018) analyzed the impact of cooperative learning on increasing classroom interaction frequency; Krajcik and Shin (2022) argued

that PBL significantly enhances knowledge retention and problem-solving abilities, such as career-related skills. Means et. al. (2023) confirmed the positive impact of blended learning on long-term academic performance (such as college enrollment rates). Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2015) distinguished between output (short-term results, such as exam scores) and impact (long-term changes, such as career abilities), providing a framework for evaluating the impact of educational innovations. Maxwell (2012) proposed that in qualitative research, impact can be defined through process tracing and participant narratives, such as how students perceive the impact of teaching methods on their identity.

It can be seen that the core dimensions for evaluating the impact of teaching methods include: cognitive impact (knowledge acquisition, achievement improvement, higher-order thinking, such as critical thinking and creativity, etc.); behavioral impact (learning engagement, skill application ability, etc.); emotional and social impact (learning motivation, self-efficacy, cooperation awareness, etc.); long-term impact (knowledge retention rate, career development relevance, etc.). Evaluating the impact of teaching methods is a complex process, that aims to determine the advantages and disadvantages of teaching plans or pedagogy. Comprehensive information about the subjects of the teaching plan or pedagogy should be collected, analyzed, and presented, and the results can be used for the teaching decisions of stakeholders (Akpur et al., 2016).

2.4.2 CIPP evaluation model

An example of consensus comprehensive model is the CIPP evaluation model proposed by Stufflebeam in 1966. The CIPP evaluation model is an educational programme evaluation model which is made to establish the achievement of program

objectives and to provide recommendations for teaching improvements. CIPP is the abbreviation of the four letters referring to context, input, process, and product respectively. Stufflebeam first summarized the CIPP evaluation model in 1971 in his book Educational Evaluation and Decision Making. In 1985, Stufflebeam and Shinkfield systematized and simplified the CIPP evaluation model, and in 2000, he expanded to and provided a more extensive interpretation of the concept, referring to it as a “comprehensive structure for implementing and reporting on evaluation”. He made additional revisions to several of its procedures, strategies, and supplemental charts in 2003.

The CIPP evaluation model states that decision-makers, administrators, instructors, policy boards, and other stakeholders in an organization should receive accurate and reliable information on the teaching from the evaluation. It is more focused on improvement than proof, and its practical goal is to identify the variables that influence success or failure (Stufflebeam, 2003). Thus, the CIPP evaluation model serves as a guide for a comprehensive as well as for a practical evaluation and it gives way to improve the teaching (Akpur et al., 2016).

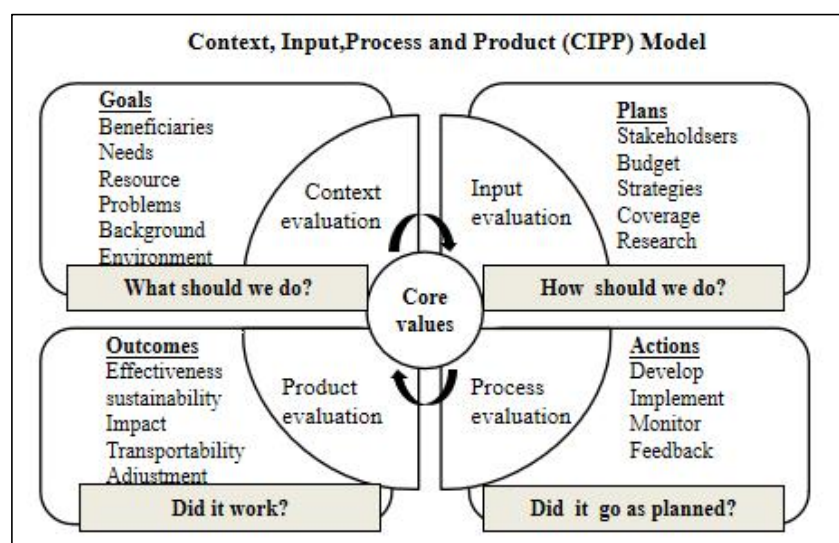


Figure 2.3: CIPP Evaluation Model (adapted from Stufflebeam, 2000)

As shown in Figure 2.3, CIPP evaluation model defines context evaluation as the appraisal of needs, issues, supportive circumstances, and opportunities in a specific setting. To put it another way, the context of the teaching program implementation organization is established, the evaluation targets and their needs are clarified, the opportunities to meet the needs are found, the fundamental issues that must be resolved are found, and it is determined whether the objectives have taken these needs into account.

In other words, context evaluation is about determining the background of the organization in which the teaching program is to be implemented, identifying needs of the target group, and judging whether the objectives of the program are in line with the development needs of the target group (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). Input evaluation evaluates the operability of the teaching program, including whether the budget, strategy, and coverage can support the demands of program implementation (Gredler, 1996). Process evaluation is a process of continuous monitoring of programme achievement, focusing on describing the actual process of teaching program implementation and identifying or predicting problems in the plan itself or in the implementation process, thus providing decision makers with effective information on how to modify the teaching plan. Product evaluation measures the extent to which the results of program implementation fulfil the needs of the target group. It takes into account the effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the program (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2000)

CIPP evaluation model focuses on the role of the evaluation in providing information to improve the quality of decisions made by stakeholders (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). The advantage of this model is, evaluators can determine lots of questions for each component of the CIPP evaluation model. The CIPP evaluation model places strong

emphasis on process evaluation, with the purpose of examining all assessment methods and components to determine whether the evaluation design is being implemented as planned, identify potential problematic areas along with their solutions, and explore more effective approaches for data collection (Gilchrist & Roberts, 1974). According to Tokmak et. al. (2013), the model defined participants' demands in terms of context, strategy, plans, activities, interactions, and assessments. This leads them to assume that the model is founded on program evaluation and redesign. Apart from these rationales, its comprehensiveness in evaluation dimensions is another factor contributing to its widespread usage.

Hakan and Seval (2011) verified the reliability and validity of four factors, namely context, input, process and product of the CIPP evaluation scale in English courses and suggested that the CIPP evaluation scale could be applied to the field of education. CIPP evaluation model has been widely used in education evaluation. Some scholars (Agustina & Mukhtaruddin, 2019; Akpur et al., 2016; Famularsih et al., 2024; Muhmood & Rehman, 2018; Xiao & Wang, 2024) have used it to evaluate the implementation of various English teaching programs and methods, found the factors that hinder the successful implementation of the programs and methods, and put forward suggestions for improvement.

In previous researches on the impact of PCA, students' English performance is the only measurable criterion. However, no review to date has focused exclusively on PCA to examine its impact comprehensively and systematically from context, input, process, and product. Therefore, the present study used the CIPP evaluation model to explore teachers' and students' perceptions of the impact of PCA in ICC cultivation using CIPP evaluation

model. Context evaluation examined whether the instructional goals of PCA were aligned with students' ICC developmental needs; input evaluation examined the feasibility of PCA for English program in China; process evaluation examined students' learning interest, attitude, and classroom participation in PCA, and product evaluation examined students' ICC development in the PCA .

2.5 Teachers' Intention to Use Performed Cultural Approach

Given that PCA represents an innovative ICLT approach and is closely tied to the ongoing reform of English language teaching, a comprehensive literature review focusing on teachers' intention to adopt pedagogical reforms was conducted. Through a systematic comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical frameworks employed in previous studies to measure behavioral intentions — such as TPB (Ajzen, 1991; 2006), the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980) or Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), an optimal theoretical framework was selected to guide the present investigation.

2.5.1 Factors Influencing Teachers' Intention

Intention is central to the concept of voluntary action (Lau & Rogers, 2004). Davidson (1963) gave a reductive theory of intention with which as syncategorematic, the phrase does not refer to an event or state of the agent, but is a way of redescribing what she is doing in terms of a primary reason, where this is understood as a pro-attitude towards actions having some feature, along with the belief about the action.

In The present study, intention refers to the willingness of teachers toward the use of PCA among English programs in China. Examining teachers' intention to implement PCA is necessary. It is generally acknowledged that teachers' ability to modify their ideas

and methods of instruction to conform to the reform is essential to the implementation of teaching reforms successfully and sustainably (Wyss et al., 2016).

Teachers are the designers, organizers and evaluators of teaching, and as the main body of teaching, their intention to use PCA is a critical issue that is key to the successful implementation of PCA in EFL contexts of China. Indeed, the direct participants of the programme are none other than teachers, but the important role of teachers has not been properly assessed (Le, 2020). However, transforming teaching practices is a complex process that is influenced by various factors (Fullan, 2001; Thurlings et al., 2015). Policy makers need to understand what factors influence teachers' intentions towards pedagogical change in order to make appropriate changes and adjustments to policies and environments.

Thurlings et. al. (2015) developed a preliminary model of teacher innovation behavior that took into account organizational, individual and demographic characteristics that influence teacher innovation behavior. The demographic factors include years of education and teaching experience, job functions as a teacher. individual factors include the views, attitudes, and self-efficacy of teachers. Colleagues, organizational factors include company culture, infrastructure, and resources.

According to some scholars, contextual factors do not directly affect teachers' conduct as much as individual factors do. According to Thurlings et. al. (2016, p. 461), "proximal factors, such as motivation and traits, are more closely related to behavior." Distal elements, such the surroundings and organizational influences are mediated by proximal variables and act at a greater distance from action. Nine elements that affect the implementation of curriculum innovation were derived by Fullan (2001). They fall into

three categories: local characteristics (district, principal, teacher), external characteristics (need, clarity, complexity, practicality), and characteristics of transformation.

2.5.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

Previous research on behavioral intentions or decision-making generally adopts TRA, TPB or TAM as analytical frameworks (Montano & Kasprzyk, 2015). TRA summarizes the influencing factors of individuals' conscious behaviors as the combination of subjective norms and behavioral attitudes. Its advantage lies in being the first to systematically integrate the impact of attitudes and social norms on behavioral intentions, providing a basic framework for understanding the formation mechanism of conscious behaviors. However, its core limitation is that it assumes behaviors are completely driven by intentions, ignoring individuals' actual ability to control behaviors. When behaviors are restricted by external resources, skills, etc., its explanatory power decreases significantly.

TAM identifies two main variables: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Its advantage is that it is concise and highly targeted, especially suitable for evaluating the acceptance of new technologies or tools, and can effectively explain differences in intentions among different groups in technology use (Benbasat & Barki, 2012); however, its scope of application is relatively narrow, as it mainly targets technical contexts, does not incorporate social factors such as subjective norms, and fails to consider individuals' sense of control over behaviors.

TPB adds the key variable of perceived behavioral control to TRA. It not only retains attention to behavioral attitudes and subjective norms but also incorporates individuals' perception of their ability to perform behaviors. Its advantage is that it more comprehensively covers the core factors affecting behavioral intentions, considering both

individuals' internal attitudes towards behaviors and the external influence of social environments, while also taking into account individuals' judgments on the controllability of behaviors, thus making up for the defects of TRA (which ignores control factors) and TAM (which has a limited scope of application).

The previous studies on the intention to use teaching methods or new technologies in teaching reform are primarily analyzed by TPB to investigate the relationship between several variables (Liu, 2022). TPB (Ajzen, 1991; 2006) holds that behavioral intentions are not exactly equivalent to behavior, but that behavioral intentions directly influence behavior and are influenced by three variables, namely attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. TPB postulates these three conceptually independent determinants of intention and gives these three factors: attitude toward the behaviors, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control comprehensive treatment.

As shown in Figure 2.4, according to TPB, attitude toward the behavior is defined as the personal orientation towards performing the behavior and that orientation often contains two components, emotional and instrumental attitude. The emotional attitude incorporates feelings or emotions arising from the prospect of performing the behavior; while instrumental attitude carries an appraisal of the consequences of performing the behavior. Subjective norms are the opinions of the more important people or groups of people around the individual as to whether he or she should perform the act or not. Perceived behavioral control is the perception of the degree to which an individual will be able to control a behavior when he or she is about to perform it, i.e., how easy or difficult it is to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 2006).

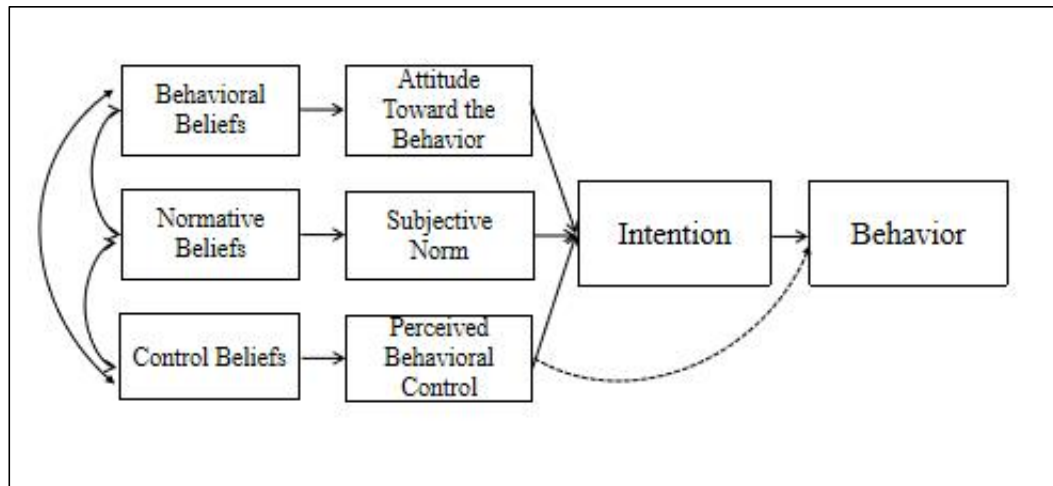


Figure 2.4: Theory of Planned Behavior (adapted from Aizen, 2006)

The effectiveness of TPB in explaining teachers' reactions to teaching reforms has been examined in some studies (Lin & Williams, 2016). Orafi and Borg (2008) examined teachers' implementation of a new communicative English language curriculum in Libyan secondary schools and find that the inconsistency between the students' level of English, the teachers' understanding and competence, and the examination and teaching objectives lead to the teachers' intention to implement the reform of the communicative curriculum. This study provides evidence of the manner in which the uptake of an educational innovation can be limited if they are not in line with and don't account for the contextual and cognitive reality of teachers' work. Teo and Lee (2010) used TPB to examine pre-service teachers' intention to use a new technology in teaching, and found that behavioral intention to use technology is significantly influenced by attitudes toward computer use and subjective norms. It implies that TPB is a reasonably effective model for predicting pre-service teachers' behavioral intention to use technology in Singapore.

Teo and Lee (2010), Dunn, Hattie and Bowles (2018), Do et. al. (2021) verified the significant role of attitude toward the behavior, perceived behavioral control, subjective

norms and other factors in predicting teachers' intentions. Some studies, such as Yan and Cheng (2015), especially emphasized the importance of Instrumental attitude and self-efficacy, while others (Jiang et al., 2022; Teo & Lee, 2010; Yan & Sin, 2013) emphasized the significant role of subjective norms. In addition, Do et. al. (2021) suggested perceived autonomy should be added to predicate teachers' intention as it play an significant role in predicate teachers' intention, and Kahveci et. al. (2017) explained the influence of teacher characteristics, such as age and career development planning, on teachers' intention. Zhao et. al. (2019) proposed to extend the TPB framework by including teachers' comprehension of the reform concepts to promote its application in order to exploring factors in reform context.

The previous researches suggest that the main factors associated with teachers' implementation of teaching reforms can be summarized as follows: personal factors including teachers' beliefs, attitudes and self-efficacy and environmental factors, such as school culture, cultivation support and resources (Zhao et al., 2019). These researches indicate that the TPB is more comprehensive and is more appropriate for measuring teachers' behavioral intentions towards teaching reform. Relevant studies have also revealed that, despite having positive attitudes, teachers may be unable to implement reform because of external circumstances including a lack of professional development, time, resources, and materials (Milner et al., 2012).

The researcher of the present study supports the notion that teachers' attitudes towards teaching reform directly influence their intention to teaching reform, while situational factors in the external environment influence teachers' intention by changing their beliefs, attitudes and knowledge. Therefore, TPB, which has been widely used to

explain and predict people's behavior through their beliefs, attitudes, intentions and perspectives of contextual factors, was used as a theoretical framework to examine teachers' intention to use PCA and factors influence their intentions to use it, including complex situational contextual factors and deeper psycho-perceptual elements. attitude toward the behavior in the present study refers to teachers' positive or negative evaluations of PCA; subjective norms refers to the opinions of important people or groups of people around them about teachers' implementation of PCA, and perceived behavioral control refer to teachers' perceptions of the ease or difficulty of implementing PCA.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The necessity of the present study stems from some gaps in the existing ICC cultivation research, especially in the EFL context of China. Firstly, most studies on students' ICC levels rely on quantitative self-assessment, with limited attention paid to qualitative methods (Luo & Chan, 2022). Secondly, research on PCA is still lacking, particularly regarding the perceived impact of PCA on teachers' and students' ICC cultivation. Additionally, there is a lack of research on teachers' intentions and the factors influencing their intention to use PCA, which is crucial for understanding PCA and implementing it in ICLT. Finally, the empirical data reviewed in this chapter identified the key elements and concepts guiding the research design.

Given these gaps, the present study adopts a multi-theoretical framework to provide a comprehensive examination of the role and application of PCA in the development of ICC. Three key theories/models form the basis of this framework: the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC proposed by Spielberg and Cupach (1984), the CIPP evaluation model developed by Stufflebeam (2003), and the TPB put forward by Ajzen (1991). These

theories/models are employed to systematically investigate students' ICC levels from their teachers' perspective, the perceived impact of PCA on ICC cultivation from both teachers' and students' viewpoints, and teachers' intentions to use PCA along with the influencing factors. Each theory or model contributes a distinct yet interconnected perspective, forming a cohesive analytical framework that guides the research design and interpretation of findings. The combination offers unique advantages that extend beyond the scope of any single theory.

As shown in Figure 2.5, the connections between the theories are clearly manifested: firstly, the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC, as proposed by Spielberg and Cupach (1984), serves as the foundational framework for assessing students' ICC levels from the teachers' perspective. This theory conceptualizes ICC as comprising three core concepts: knowledge, attitudes, and skills. By using these specific dimensions from Spielberg and Cupach's (1984) theory, the present study identifies students' strengths and weaknesses in ICC, thereby determining their developmental needs. This assessment forms the basis for the subsequent evaluation of PCA's impact in addressing these needs, creating a direct link between the initial diagnosis and the intervention evaluation.

Secondly, to explore PCA's impact on ICC from both teachers and students' perspectives, the present study adopts Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP evaluation model, which is built around four interrelated concepts: context (the needs and objectives of ICC instruction, closely aligned with the developmental needs identified via the Three-Dimensional Theory), input (the design and resources of PCA, including curriculum materials, teacher training, and pedagogical strategies), process (how PCA is implemented in the classroom, such as teaching methods, interaction patterns, and adaptation to student

needs), and product (the outcomes of PCA on students' ICC, measured against the knowledge, attitudes, and skills dimensions from the Three-Dimensional Theory). By applying the CIPP evaluation model, the present study examines whether PCA effectively bridges the gaps identified through Spielberg and Cupach's (1984) framework. This connection ensures that the evaluation of PCA is not isolated but directly responds to the needs identified in the first step regarding the assessment of students' ICC levels. It determines whether PCA can compensate for students' ICC deficits and meet their developmental needs, thereby providing targeted empirical evidence for its pedagogical role.

Finally, Ajzen's (1991) TPB is employed to analyze teachers' intentions and the influencing factors, with its core concepts being attitude toward the behavior (teachers' positive or negative evaluations of PCA based on their perception of its impact, as explored via the CIPP Model), subjective norms (the influence of school leaders, peers, and educational policies on teachers' intention to use PCA), and perceived behavioral control (teachers' perceptions of the ease or difficulty of using PCA, considering factors such as training, resources, and classroom context, which are part of the input and process dimensions in the CIPP Model). By incorporating the TPB, the present study examines whether the impact of PCA (as shown in the CIPP evaluation model) and the identified ICC needs (derived from the Three-Dimensional Theory) influence teachers' willingness to integrate PCA into their teaching practices, and explores other internal or external influencing factors. This links the effectiveness of the intervention and the initial needs to the practical implementation potential, forming a holistic analytical chain.

The integration of these three models offers comprehensive and logically structured advantages that surpass the use of any single theory. Together, they form a sequential and interdependent chain: the Three-Dimensional Theory establishes the baseline ICC requirements, the CIPP evaluation model evaluates whether PCA meets those requirements, and TPB investigates the likelihood of teachers sustaining the application of PCA in real-world educational settings. This multi-theoretical framework ensures that the study not only diagnoses ICC learning gaps and tests an intervention but also considers the practical realities of implementing pedagogical innovations, providing a more nuanced and actionable understanding of ICC development than any single theory could achieve. These three components are logically interdependent and hierarchically sequential, with each step building upon the previous one, and the theories complementing each other to form a comprehensive research framework.

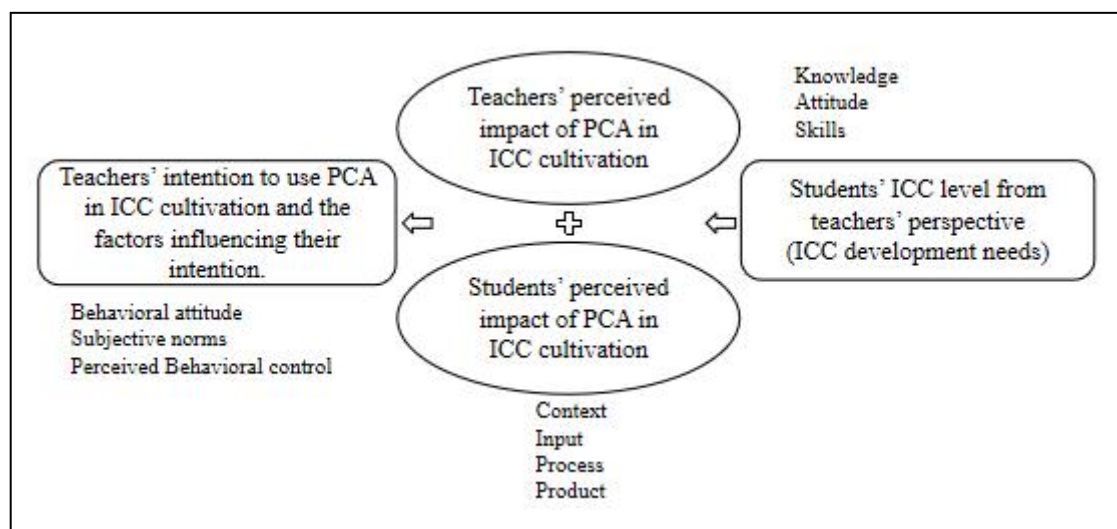


Figure 2.5: Conceptual Framework of the Present Study

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methods used in the present study. It explains the research paradigm and research design that guide the study, provides detailed information about participants and the selection procedure, explains the data collection and analysis method and procedures, and also elaborates on the theoretical considerations that determined the research design and methods used in data collection and analysis. As mentioned in Chapter One, the overall aim of the present study is to explore the cultivation of intercultural communication competence (ICC) using the Performed Culture Approach (PCA) among English majors in China from the perspectives of both the students and teachers concerned.

- i. To examine the students' ICC level from the teachers' perspective.
- ii. To explore teachers' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation.
- iii. To explore students' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation.
- iv. To determine teachers' intention to use PCA in ICC cultivation and the factors influencing their intention.

These objectives relate to the conceptual framework of ICC, impact and teacher's intention as discussed in Chapter Two. For example, objective 1 determined the students' ICC level from three dimensions, namely knowledge, attitude and skills from teachers'

perspectives. In the semi-structured interviews, the questions were phrased to assess students' intercultural communication knowledge, attitude and their skills in intercultural communication. As expected in a qualitative investigation, these connections are speculative and would be confirmed by the results of data collection and analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, employing qualitative methods to investigate intercultural competence development's complex, meaning-laden nature. The research focuses on understanding how participants construct meaning from their teaching and learning experiences - phenomena that are inherently contextual, dynamic, and resistant to quantification through standardized instruments like questionnaires. Such abstract cognitive processes, including perceptions, intentions, and evolving understandings, require methodological approaches that privilege depth over breadth, allowing for nuanced exploration of participants' lived experiences.

Qualitative inquiry is particularly suited to this investigation, as it emphasizes understanding the meanings individuals ascribe to their social realities (Creswell, 2018). The study captures rich, first-person accounts of intercultural teaching and learning processes through in-depth interviews, focusing on how participants interpret and make sense of their experiences. The inductive analytical approach identifies meaningful patterns and themes emerging directly from participants' narratives, rather than imposing predetermined categories. This methodology aligns with the interpretivist commitment to understanding social phenomena through the meanings that participants attribute to their experiences, particularly in the complex domain of intercultural competence development, where subjective understandings are paramount.

Qualitative research is widely recognized as one of the most effective methods for evaluating ICC, as it can better capture the authentic manifestations of research objects and delve deeper into the thoughts of interviewees within specific contexts (Fantini, 2017). Quantitative questionnaires are currently widely used to measure ICC (Dyne, 2007; Matsumoto, 2003). Such quantitative methods are time- and effort-efficient, highly standardized, and facilitate large-scale surveys. However, some scholars have raised concerns about quantitative methods based on self-assessment. Altshuler (2003) argues that there exists a discrepancy between subjects' perceptions of their intercultural awareness and sensitivity and their actual abilities. In contrast, adopting a qualitative approach to assess students' ICC from their teachers' perspectives can effectively avoid the drawbacks of overly subjective self-evaluation.

Interpretivism, as a worldview, helps people to understand the subjective meanings of their experiences that they developed over time and are formed through interaction with others and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. The core of interpretivism is to engage with subjective meanings that already exist in social life, to acknowledge, reconstruct, and understand their existence without distorting them. (Goldkuhl, 2012). The interpretivist paradigm emphasizes that social interaction is the basis of knowledge, which is mutually negotiated by researchers and participants in a natural context through the use of social skill (O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 9). Interpretivist researchers tend to rely on participants' perceptions of the conditions being studied (Creswell, 2013) and distinguish the impact of their contexts and understandings on the research. The importance of gaining insights into meanings outweighs the evaluation of research structures. Importantly, research is conducted in a natural setting, allowing researchers to engage with participants and observe how they interact with others.

In the process of interpreting meanings in the present study, individual and situational factors that influence participants' perspectives are taken into account. This is consistent with the prevalent approach in teaching perspective research, which is more comprehensive as it considers multiple aspects of teachers, learners, and the context. While there have been several studies on the application of PCA in EFL teaching in China, there is little direct qualitative reporting of teachers and students perspective on the application of PCA in ICC cultivation for English majors in China. The present study aimed to provide these teachers and students opportunities to explore their experiences and voice their perspectives on this topic.

A case study is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded-system or multiple bound-systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisuals material, documents and report) and reports a case description and case theme (Cresswell, 2013). Yin (2018) believes that case studies are appropriate for revealing or study a particular phenomenon and answer the “how” and “why” research questions. The purpose of case study is not only to generalize the general phenomenon, but also to expand the theoretical propositions (Yin, 1994). The case study is considered suitable to investigate the teaching practice because as stated by Careless (1998), case study enables information to be collected from a number of sources and over a period of time.

The objects of case study are generally people, organizations, events, issues, or other social phenomena with boundaries (Yin, 2018). The purpose of the present study is to deeply study the issue of application of PCA in English majors in China, the task of the

present study is to reveal the characteristics, rules and significance of the formation and change of the perspectives of teachers and students, as well as various factors affecting the development and change of their perspectives, which is suited to the characteristic of case study. In the present study, multiple case study was used to obtain detailed information from two group of participants, teachers and students who are using or have ever used PCA in English programs.

Qualitative case study uses a variety of data collection methods to comprehensively explore social phenomena in natural situations, attempt to capture people's own meanings for their everyday behavior in specific contexts (Creswell, 2018). Each kind of research method has its own characteristics and different application conditions and scope. In order to form a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the complex and diversified status quo of teaching and learning status, a comprehensive application of multi-measure methods incorporating both direct evidence and indirect evidence is naturally required to collect data from different perspectives.

The present study collected data through individual interviews with teacher and student participants. Interview is an activity in which researchers communication with respondents (Chen, 2000), and it is an important data collection method in humanities and social sciences research. Advocates of qualitative research argue that interviews allow researchers to gain an in-depth and rich understanding of participants' feelings and perceptions. The present study primarily employs semi-structured individual interviews. The individual interview format can mitigate the impact of group pressure on participants' expressions, making it particularly suitable for exploring subjective content — such as

teachers' attitudes toward teaching methods and their personal teaching experiences—and helping participants more freely reveal their true thoughts and situational feelings.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview format is based on a pre-designed framework of core questions while retaining a certain degree of flexibility. During interviews, researchers can follow up, guide, or adjust the order of questions according to participants' responses. This not only ensures the directionality of data collection but also leaves room for capturing participants' unspecified in-depth thoughts. Such an approach facilitates the acquisition of rich, specific, and individually unique qualitative data while maintaining the research focus, thereby enabling a more accurate understanding of the internal logic and complex contexts underlying participants' use of PCA.

At present, scholars have mostly used quantitative self-assessment to measure students' ICC and lacking qualitative teacher's assessment. Due to the complexity of ICC, quantitative self-assessment alone is obviously insufficient. Spielberg (2000) pointed that it is imperative to measure students' ICC from teachers' perspective. As ICC is defined as a complex of abilities needed to perform “effectively” and “appropriately” when dealing with others of a different language culture background (Johnson et al., 2006a, 2006b; Trejo et al., 2015). It requires an outsider to make an assessment based on other cultures to judge the effective and appropriate. This perspective is essential for balanced, accurate, and complete competence assessment.

Fantini (2017) also pointed out that competence refers to an abstraction and it cannot be directly viewed. Competences are inferred by observing “performance”, that is, how one behaves, what ones says and what one does. Whether using this particular distinction or not, a degree of interpretation is involved when analyzing the data obtained

and making sense of the evidence observed. However, few researchers have evaluated ICC from the perspective of others (Fantini, 2017). For English majors, their ICC is best understood by their professional course teachers, including foreign teachers of course.

Consistent with Yin's (2018) emphasis on situating case study phenomena in their real-world context, the present research takes in-depth interviews as the primary data source, while using on-site observations to capture contextual information of the naturally occurring phenomenon being studied. The transcripts of in-depth interviews undergo rigorous coding and thematic analysis procedures. Brief on-site observations assisted researchers in familiarizing themselves with the physical environments and interaction patterns described in the interviews.

Photographic records, including environmental layouts, seating arrangements, and classroom interactions, served solely as visual aids to present the actual learning environments and interaction dynamics concretely. This facilitated accurate recall and interpretation of the interview data, with these photographic notes functioning purely as memory tools to better contextualize the interview content within its physical setting.

Similarly, we reviewed relevant documents accumulated by the university and teachers (including lesson plans, teaching materials, university course guides, and campus promotional materials) to verify factual details mentioned in the interviews (such as course structures). These documents helped researchers grasp the case's background, providing a more transparent reference framework for understanding respondents' descriptions of teaching practices and classroom scenarios, thereby enhancing the credibility of the interpretation of interview data.

Observation and document materials do not constitute formal research data or undergo systematic analysis. This aligns with both standard qualitative practices and Yin's (2018) contextualization requirements: they act as supplementary references for teaching scenarios (grounding the research in context) without serving as independent evidence. Maintaining this boundary between primary interview data (analyzed systematically) and secondary supports (for contextual clarification) ensures methodological rigor and strengthens accurate interpretation of participants' descriptions.

3.3 Research Site

Patton (1990) pointed out that, in line with the research purpose and needs, the criterion of typicality should be followed, and cases that can provide the most information regarding the research problem should be selected as research subjects. The criterion of typicality stands as one of the core principles for case selection in qualitative research, whose essence lies in the ability of the selected case to centrally embody the key characteristics, essential attributes, and universally existing contradictions and laws of a specific type of phenomenon or problem.

In other words, although a case possesses uniqueness, it can serve as a microcosm or representative of similar phenomena. Following this principle, the present study selects University H and University Y in S district as research cases. The specific selection criteria will be elaborated upon after introducing the detailed information of the cases. Upon the recommendation of a PCA expert, the researcher contacted the head of a department of S district education system and got his strong support, and was allowed to enter the site.

3.3.1 Overview of the Case

S district is located in a provincial capital city in southwest China, and its unique

natural landscapes and cultural customs have made it an internationally renowned tourist destination. The province where S district is situated is one of the regions in China with the highest proportion of ethnic minorities, home to 49 ethnic groups including the Han, Miao and Buyi, with ethnic minorities accounting for approximately 40% of the population. The rich ethnic languages, festivals, and clothing cultures provide natural local case resources for ICC teaching. The coexistence of multiple languages (such as local dialects and Miao language), dietary cultures, and religious beliefs in daily life in S district reflects a phenomenon of multicultural coexistence, which is highly relevant to the theme of “cultural adaptation” in ICLT.

Affected by urbanization, educational policies, and ethnic identity, Mandarin Chinese occupies a dominant position in S district, while other ethnic minority languages coexist, presenting a situation of multilingual coexistence and notable intergenerational differences. The Miao and Buyi languages are only used among some middle-aged and elderly Miao and Buyi residents in rural areas. The younger generation of Miao and Buyi residents living in urban areas and rural areas generally use Chinese. Their proficiency in Miao and Buyi languages has deteriorated significantly, and they can only understand simple words or festival expressions. In particular, among young people under the age of 35, Mandarin Chinese has become their daily language for communication.

S district boasts abundant tourism resources and attracts a large number of international tourists every year. Tourism practitioners in this area frequently encounter intercultural communication issues (such as differences in etiquette and religious taboos). As a result, English programs in local universities focus on practical directions such as “tourism English” and “foreign-related services”, which align well with the application

scenarios of PCA. S district also faces the conflict between the protection of traditional culture and globalization, such as the issue of cultural interpretation rights in the digital promotion of Miao embroidery. This tension provides real issues for PCA project design (such as ethnic cultural promotion plans). The education department of S district has implemented the policy of “introducing ethnic cultures into schools”, and some universities (such as University Y) have incorporated “English translation of minority cultures” into Intercultural Communication courses. Therefore, the PCA projects of University Y often involve practical activities, such as interviews with inheritors of intangible cultural heritage.

The multi-ethnic culture, tourism-oriented economy, and policy experimental nature of S district collectively reflect the unique background of intercultural communication education in western China, responding to the research demand for “non-universal but information-rich” cases.

There are 10 general public undergraduate colleges and universities in the district, six of which offer English majors. In order to vigorously develop the foreign tourism industry, the district pays attention to cultivating students’ ICC in the teaching of English majors. Around 2010, the English program of University Y in S district introduced PCA for teaching reform, and has significantly improved students’ ICC. Inspired by this experience, English programs in colleges and universities in S district began to join the reform. However, the situation of teachers implementing PCA teaching reform is not the same. Over the past fifteen years, some teachers have continued to use PCA, while others have gradually reduced its frequency of use or even abandoned it entirely.

The English program of University Y is a national first-class undergraduate program and a provincial key discipline, and it has a master's degree authorization point for the first-level discipline of foreign language and literature. Eighty percent of the graduates from this program engage in translation and foreign-related business handling work. The English program teachers of University Y took the lead in using the process writing approach in English teaching and have achieved fruitful teaching results.

Similar to University Y, the English program of University H is also a national first-class undergraduate program, and the Translation and ICC Innovation Research Center is one of its university-level research centers. Science and technology English is a characteristic of this major, which focuses on cultivating students' abilities in knowledge application, innovation, adaptability, and ICC. The employment directions of students are in industries such as science and technology, foreign affairs, economy and trade, tourism, and culture. More than eighty percent of the graduates are engaged in work related to science and technology English translation, foreign business processing, and foreign customer reception.

Since 2016, the Intercultural Communication course of University H has been reduced from the original 70 class hours to 48 class hours, but the corresponding teaching content has not been reduced. In this case, several teachers of this university began to use PCA for English teaching. This situation is inconsistent with the relevant information found by the researchers in the previous literature review, which found that PCA is not suitable for curriculum with heavy teaching tasks. This has aroused great interest of the researchers and is one of the main reasons why teachers from University H were chosen as the participants in the present study, that is to explore how teachers effectively use PCA in

the classroom with heavy teaching tasks.

The social, political issues, and physical environment of Y and University H were identical. They are all located in the same region, under the jurisdiction of the same government, and there is no difference in teaching resources and environmental conditions. The subject strength, teaching quality and teacher resources of the two universities are in the middle level among the 678 universities offering English majors in China (China University Evaluation Research Report, 2021).

3.3.2 Typicality of the Case

The core basis for this selection lies in the fact that S district, within the research theme of “implementing PCA in ICC cultivation in China’s EFL context”, centrally embodies the key characteristics and common logic of similar regions. At the regional level, its orientation of English teaching policies, the structure of the teaching staff, the intercultural cognitive foundation of the student groups, and the level of teaching resource allocation are highly consistent with the background conditions faced by most similar regions in China when promoting PCA. These can reflect common contexts, such as policy implementation and resource coordination, that generally exist in such practices.

In addition, S district has a rich ethnic cultural background, and this unique regional cultural feature provides a natural “testing ground” and abundant material support for the implementation of PCA. By tracking the implementation process of PCA in this region, it is possible to more intuitively and comprehensively capture its actual impact on promoting multicultural understanding and improving the ability to compare and analyze local culture and foreign cultures. Thus, it can maximize the demonstration of the promoting effect of PCA in the cultural dimension and provide a typical example for

understanding the in-depth connection between PCA and culture.

At the practical level, the specific models presented in the implementation of PCA in S district (such as the localized adjustment of classroom teaching strategies), typical problems (such as the difficulty in balancing intercultural teaching goals and examination-oriented needs), and phased effect characteristics are all representative of “promoting PCA in ICC cultivation in China”. Its experiences and challenges can be regarded as a microcosm of similar practices.

The core basis for selecting University Y and University H in S district as specific cases lies in the following: First, both universities are located in the highly typical research field of S district, which centrally embodies the key characteristics of ICC cultivation in China’s EFL context. The orientation of English teaching policies, the structure of teaching staff, the intercultural cognitive foundation of student groups, and the level of teaching resource allocation in these two universities are highly consistent with the background conditions faced by most similar regions in China when promoting PCA, and thus can reflect the common contexts such as policy implementation and resource coordination that generally exist in such practices.

Second, as one of the earliest universities in China to introduce PCA for teaching reform, University Y has accumulated mature experience in applying PCA to ICC cultivation. Its model and effects can be regarded as a typical example of the “standardized implementation” of PCA in similar universities, and can reveal the practical logic of PCA in contexts with sufficient resources and in-depth reform. University H, on the other hand, demonstrates a special typicality in PCA practice: the hours of its Intercultural Communication courses have been reduced, while the content remains unchanged; yet,

teachers still promote PCA in this context. Such contrasts with the existing perception that “PCA is not suitable for courses with heavy teaching tasks”, providing a unique sample for exploring the adaptability of PCA in real-world scenarios characterized by “high teaching pressure and strong resource constraints”, and can supplement the practical laws of PCA under complex teaching conditions.

Third, both universities are located in S district, sharing the same social, political, and geographical environment, as well as a similar foundation of teaching resources. They are both public undergraduate institutions offering English programs, with their disciplinary strength at a medium level nationwide, thus featuring “homology”. This commonality can reduce variable interference and provide a controlled perspective for accurately comparing and analyzing the impact of different teaching conditions (such as course hours and program focus) on the implementation effect of PCA.

3.4 Research Participants

In contrast to quantitative studies, qualitative method adopts small sample size. A sample is a group or set of people who have been particularly selected by the researcher for specific reasons relating to the research question. There are numerous factors that can affect a sample size in qualitative studies. Cresswell (2013) suggests a sample of five to 25 participants depending on the purpose of the study while Morse (1994) suggests a sample size of at least six to 21 participants. The participants of the present study were teachers and students who had more than one year’s practice experience in PCA in public undergraduate English majors in S district.

The selection of participants adhered to the principle of representative and the principle of maximum variation sampling (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 1990). By following the

principle of representativeness, the selected samples are ensured to comprehensively and accurately reflect the key characteristics and diversity of the target population, thereby guaranteeing the external validity of the research findings. By following the principle of maximum variation sampling, samples are selected that have significantly different characteristics or experiences, allowing for the exploration of how the phenomenon manifests across diverse contexts and the identification of common patterns or critical influencing factors.

Students and teachers emerge as two different entities in the same context, in this case. The present study divided the participants into two sub-groups: teachers and student participants, to explore their various perspectives on the implication of PCA in ICC cultivation. To better understand the long-term impact of PCA on students, such as knowledge retention rate, career development relevance, and to explore the views of students with different intercultural communication experiences on the impact of PCA, the present study divided the students into the graduate group and the undergraduate group. There are obvious differences in intercultural communication experiences between the undergraduate group and the graduate group: the graduate group often communicates with people from different countries in international exchange work and has accumulated rich intercultural communication experience, while the undergraduate group, apart from interacting with foreign teachers at the university, has almost no other intercultural communication experiences to speak of. Due to different work and intercultural communication experiences, these two groups may have some different opinions on the impact of PCA.

3.4.1 Teacher Participants

Initially, a total of 14 teachers who met the participant criteria were identified through purposive sample. The selection process involved two primary sources: first, the academic affairs offices of University Y and University H provided lists of English program teachers with more than one year of experience in implementing PCA in Intercultural Communication courses; second, verification through the universities' internal websites and course syllabi confirmed the teachers participation in PCA-related teaching reforms and ensured alignment with the study's focus on ICC cultivation practices.

Of these 14 teachers, one was male and 13 were female. However, prior to being formally interviewed, the only male teacher, who had obtained a teaching position in the United States, withdrew from the study due to the change in job and residence place. In order to minimize the effect of variability between the different sampling strata, the study then adopted stratified sampling method by grouping the eligible teachers according to professional title, teaching experience and age, and drawing a certain number of individuals from each subgroup according to a certain proportion to ensure that the samples drawn were representative of the characteristics of the different subgroups.

After stratified sampling, 10 teachers were selected as participants from the 13 teachers to provide detailed data for the present study. All participants have a minimum of one year of teaching practice with PCA and are expected to provide detailed information on how they perceive PCA in ICC cultivation and what the factors are that influence the implementation of PCA. According to the position of teachers, the selected teachers include subject leaders, director of teaching and research section and ordinary teachers.

According to teachers' years of service, drawing on Huberman (1989), their teaching careers were divided into six stages: entry (0-3 years), beginning (4-7 years), advanced (8-15 years), adjustment (16-23 years), maturity (24-30 years) and senior (more than 31 years). The selected teachers held different professional titles: lecturer, associate professor, and professor.

During data collection, the principle of theoretical saturation was strictly adhered to in determining the final sample size. By the eighth interview, a systematic review of the coded data revealed that no new themes or theoretical dimensions had emerged — all core concepts (e.g., factors influencing PCA adoption, contextual adaptations of PCA, and challenges in teaching practice) had been sufficiently saturated, with consistent repetition of key patterns across the interviews. Given that theoretical saturation indicates that additional data would not enhance the depth or breadth of the analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the research team made a deliberate decision to terminate further data collection at this stage.

Among the initially identified teachers, the remaining teachers were not included in the final sample not because they were “dropped” due to inadequacy, but because the saturation point was reached before their interviews could be scheduled. This approach ensured that the final sample of eight teachers (four from University H and four from University Y) was both theoretically sufficient and representative, covering the full range of teaching experience stages (entry to senior) and PCA implementation contexts (as elaborated in 3.3.2), thus meeting the rigorous requirements of qualitative case study methodology.

A profile of the teacher and student participants was drawn from their demographic information and other previous experience in teaching and learning English. The profile provides a context for the emerging themes and issues pertaining to the participants' experiences in the programme. Name codes are substituted for their real names to protect the participants from disclosure.

As shown in Table 3.1, teacher participants' ages, professional titles, and length of teaching experience varied greatly. All eight teachers hold a college teaching certificate in English. Seven of them are native Chinese speakers, and one is a native English speaker from the Philippines who could not speak Chinese. Because of different cultural backgrounds, the Filipino teacher may have different experience and perception on students' ICC and PCA. Therefore, the present study included this teacher in the research to examine students' ICC and PCA from different cultural perspectives. The Chinese teachers have tenure at the university while the Filipino teacher have a five-year personnel contract with University H and she has been working in University H for three years now. Teacher participants are paid by the S district's government based on their professional title, teaching experience, and academic qualifications.

Despite the fact that they all held master's degrees in literature, their fields of study and interest varied, ranging from literary analysis to English teaching methods. The eight teachers have mostly taught one or two of the same courses every year since they began their careers. Sometimes the courses they teach change, depending on the college's work schedule. One teacher holds the title of professor, four hold the title of associate professor, and another three are lecturer. In the context of Chinese higher education, these academic titles represent distinct ranks within the faculty hierarchy, typically differentiated by

criteria such as research output, teaching experience, academic influence, and professional achievements.

Among the eight teachers, T1 serves as the head of the English subject and the chairman of the labor union, T5 serves as the director of the teaching and research section. The other six teachers do not hold any administrative positions in the department. T1, T2, T3, and T4 from University Y, while T5, T6, T7, and T8 from University H.

T1 is the only professor among the eight participants and possesses the most extensive teaching experience, with a professional career spanning 33 years. She majored in Applied Linguistics during her master's studies and has long served as an instructor for courses such as Intercultural Communication and Tourism English. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, T1 holds the position of head of the English discipline and serves as the chairperson of the trade union, overseeing professional teaching affairs within the college. She was previously dispatched by University H to Ohio, USA, to participate in a one-month PCA training program and was subsequently responsible for organizing and implementing the PCA project within the Tourism English major. Beyond actively promoting PCA-based instruction, T1 has integrated PCA practical teaching with academic research, led university-and provincial-level PCA teaching reform initiatives, and published a related article in a CSSCI-indexed journal.

T2 is a senior lecturer at University Y who earned a master's degree in Comparative Literature. During her postgraduate studies, she spent one year in New Zealand as an exchange student. Since completing her master's degree, she has taught courses on British and American literature and accumulated 13 years of teaching experience. Following the introduction of the PCA project at University Y, she completed

a one-month intensive training program at a PCA training centre in China and developed a foundational understanding of the PCA framework.

T3 is an associate professor at University Y with a master's degree in British and American Literature. She has consistently taught courses such as British and American Literature and Intercultural Communication. Similar to T1, she was previously sent by University H to Ohio, USA, for a one-month PCA training program. Subsequently, she became a core member involved in the implementation of the PCA project and participated in T1's PCA teaching reform initiative, co-authoring related research publications.

T4 is an associate professor at University Y who holds a master's degree in Applied Linguistics. Since entering the teaching profession, she has taught courses such as Advanced English and Applied Linguistics. Like T2, she completed a one-month intensive training program at a PCA training centre in China.

T5 is an associate professor at University H with a master's degree in English Teaching. She has a strong interest in pedagogical innovation and has undertaken multiple teaching reform projects since beginning her academic career. She is responsible for teaching Applied Linguistics, Intercultural Communication, and Oral English courses for English majors. In addition to his teaching duties, T5 serves as the director of the Teaching and Research Section, overseeing academic instruction and related administrative tasks.

T6, an associate professor at University H, has 21 years of experience teaching English. She majored in British and American Literature during her master's studies and has taught courses such as Advanced English and British and American Literature since entering the profession.

T7 is a lecturer at University H who specialized in Translation Studies during her master's studies. Since becoming an educator, she has taught courses including Interpretation and Advanced English Translation. T7 frequently travels to the United States, European countries, and Southeast Asia at her own expense, accumulating substantial intercultural communication experience.

T8 is the only foreign teacher among the eight participants. She earned a master of Arts degree in Malaysia and later joined the University H in China as an instructor for Oral English courses. As a Filipino national, T8 possesses the most extensive intercultural communication experience among the participants. She resided in Malaysia for two years and regularly travels to other Southeast Asian countries.

Table 3.1: Information of Teacher Participants

Name Code	Nationality	Age	Years in Service	Teaching Careers Stage	Professional Title	University
T1	China	57	33	Senior	Professor	Y
T2	China	40	13	Advanced	Lecturer	Y
T3	China	40	14	Advanced	Associate	Y
T4	China	39	12	Advanced	Associate	Y
T5	China	43	18	Adjustment	Associate	H
T6	China	44	21	Adjustment	Associate	H
T7	China	36	10	Advanced	Lecturer	H
T8	Philippines	32	3	Entry	Lecturer	H

Notes: T stand for teacher.

3.4.2 Student Participants

The same sampling methods were used to select student participants to ensure the confidence of the data source. Purposive sampling was used in the first step to sample English major graduates who have been taught with PCA and English major

undergraduates who are teaching with PCA in University H and Y. Stratified sampling was used in the second step to categorize each group of students first according to their gender and then according to their English academic performance, and equal amounts were drawn from each category to form the total sample. Sixteen student participants were selected to participate in the interviews according to the principle of purposive sampling, stratified sampling and maximum variation strategy.

Both groups of students passed the National College Entrance Examination organized by China's Ministry of Education after graduating from high school, and were admitted to the English major of university on the basis of their comprehensive scores in Chinese, mathematics, English and other subjects, as well as their individual professional volunteers. The participants' backgrounds with PCA are nearly identical. Prior to being introduced to PCA in their universities, none of them had any prior knowledge of this pedagogy.

After determining the initial pool of potential student participants, the termination point for interview data collection was established based on the principle of information saturation. Interviews were conducted sequentially, with the research team analyzing data iteratively after each session to identify emerging insights, patterns, and themes related to PCA implementation and ICC cultivation. Data collection ceased when saturation was reached: by the twelfth interview, no new themes or theoretical dimensions had emerged, and all critical concepts (e.g., student perceptions of PCA effectiveness, challenges in intercultural practice) had been sufficiently covered (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process resulted in a final sample of 12 students, divided into two distinct groups to ensure diversity in educational stage: six graduates and six undergraduates. The sample also

maintained an equal gender distribution, with six male and six female students, ensuring balanced representation across demographic characteristics.

The student participants' profiles were drawn from their demographic information and previous experiences in English learning. The profile provided context for the participants on topics related to their perceptions of PCA. Although there were certain commonalities, the experiences with intercultural communication varied between undergraduate and graduate group. These two groups may have some different insights due to their different intercultural communication experience, particularly with regard to the impact of their intercultural experience on the perception of PCA.

The native language of the students in both groups was Chinese. The undergraduate students are in the process of obtaining a bachelor's degree. The six undergraduate participants are denoted as U1 to U6, and the six graduate participants as G1 to G6. As shown in Table 3.2, undergraduate participants are all third-year university students majoring in English, with ages ranging from 20 to 22. Although they are major in English, they rarely use English to communicate in their daily lives. English is used only in the EFL classroom. Unless the teachers specifically asked them to speak English, students rarely had the chance to use English outside of the classroom, and even while they were in class, they usually speak Chinese to communicate with their classmates. U1-U6 indicated that apart from classroom communication with foreign teachers, they have never had the experience of traveling abroad or communicating with other foreigners.

The age range of the six individuals in the graduate group was 28 to 32 years old, with the oldest having held a bachelor's degree for nine years and the youngest for five. After obtaining their bachelor's degrees, all six participants began to engage in jobs such

as English translators, foreign trade managers, and English teachers. They dealt with partners from all over the world almost daily due to work requirements, and they had accumulated a wealth of experience in intercultural communication.

For instance, G1 has nine years of experience in foreign trade and needs to interact with partners from all over the world across cultures almost every day. This high-frequency and real professional scenario has enabled him to accumulate rich practical experience in handling complex situations such as business negotiations, daily communication, and cultural differences and conflicts. After graduating, G3 worked as a business translator, deeply involved in the role of a bridge in intercultural communication. Whether it is interpretation (for meetings and negotiations) or translation (for contracts and documents), it is required to accurately understand and transform the cultural connotations behind the language and handle cultural barriers. The experience is accumulated in solving specific intercultural transmission problems. Other graduates also have many years of professional experience in intercultural communication, which makes G1-G6 proficient practitioners of intercultural communication.

Since professional academic achievement level is recognized as an important factor related with teacher's teaching efficacy (Goddard, 2000), the research of the study considered the participants' English achievement level and used this to explore differences in students' perceptions of PCA across academic levels. As shown in Table 3.2, student participants' English academic achievement was categorized into three different strata: above average, average and below average based on their scores in TEM4. TEM4 is an English proficiency test for English majors organized by the Ministry of Education of China and is one of the most authoritative English proficiency tests in China.

Table 3.2: Information of Student Participants

No.	Name Code	Gander/Age	Grade	English Academic Achievement
1	U1	Female/22	Junior (undergraduate)	Above average
2	U2	Female/20	Junior (undergraduate)	Average
3	U3	Female/22	Junior (undergraduate)	Below average
4	U4	Male/21	Junior (undergraduate)	Above average
5	U5	Male/22	Junior (undergraduate)	Average
6	U6	Male/22	Junior (undergraduate)	Below average
7	G1	Female/32	Graduate	Above average
8	G2	Female/32	Graduate	Average
9	G3	Female/30	Graduate	Below average
10	G4	Male/31	Graduate	Above average
11	G5	Male/31	Graduate	Average
12	G6	Male/28	Graduate	Below average

Notes: U stand for undergraduate student, while G stand for graduate student; U1= undergraduate student 1; G1= graduate student 1

3.5 Instruments

The interview instruments used in the present study were adapted from existing tools developed by other researchers, with particular attention to ensuring alignment between their underlying conceptual framework and that of the current study. The Objective 1 of the present study aims to determine students' ICC through teachers' perspective. The conceptual framework of objective 1 was knowledge, attitude and skills from three dimensional theoretical model. Interview questions were adapted from Fantini's (2007) scale of Assessment of Intercultural Competence after considering various measurement tools, as it aligns with the conceptual framework, purpose, methodology, and project objectives of ICC for the present study.

The instrument has been adapted primarily in the following aspects: firstly, contextual localization. The original scale predominantly addressed Western cultural contexts (e.g., “attitudes toward immigrant cultures”). In the present study, such items were modified to align with the experiences of Chinese students (e.g., “students’ behaviors in handling cultural conflicts during intercultural communication with foreigners”). Additionally, the assessment of Chinese cultural knowledge was incorporated into the intercultural communication framework, emphasizing the significance of local culture in ICC.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Chinese Ministry of Education’s emphasis on fostering “cultural confidence”, items evaluating students’ national cultural identity and ability to disseminate Chinese culture were introduced, thereby supplementing the original scale with a localized dimension. Secondly, structural optimization. To enhance clarity and precision, composite questions in the original instrument (e.g., those assessing both knowledge and skills simultaneously) were disaggregated into distinct items. This restructuring ensures that each question targets a single dimension of ICC, thereby improving the instrument’s focus and validity.

As shown in Appendix 3.4, part one of interview questions of Objective 1 collected the basic demographic information of the participants such as age, gender, nationality, education background, seniority, and professional title. Part two contained a total of ten descriptive questions for the interview outline in order to understand the teachers’ assessment of students’ ICC levels; the first three questions related to the overall level of students’ ICC, the next seven questions related to the three dimensions of students’ ICC: knowledge, attitude and skills, including students’ knowledge about Chinese culture and

other countries' culture, their attitude toward different cultures, as well as their skills to deal with intercultural conflicts. For example, the participants were asked to describe their students' behaviors in dealing with culture conflicts when engaging in intercultural communication with the foreigner, and to provide concrete examples.

Objective 2 explores teachers' perceived impact of PCA in ICC cultivation based on the conceptual framework in four sections, including context, input, output, and product evaluation. The interview questions were adapted according to Questions Guiding Application of the CIPP Model (Stufflebeam, 2003).

The instrument has been adapted primarily in the following aspects: firstly, structured adaptation of the theoretical framework. The core dimensions of CIPP are retained, and directly strictly following the original model's division of context, input, process, and product to ensure theoretical integrity. For example, background evaluation (Q1-3): focuses on the foundation and goal alignment of ICC cultivation before the implementation of PCA . Input evaluation (Q4): assesses the teaching environment and resource conditions.

Secondly, strengthening the association with ICC. Each dimension's questions are embedded with ICC cultivation goals (e.g., Q7 "Do you think PCA is useful in improving students' ICC proficiency?"), while the original model did not explicitly associate with ICC. Notably, this semi-structured approach diverges from the original model's more rigid structure: by embedding open-ended questions within structured dimensions, the adapted instruments balances theoretical consistency with the depth of exploration critical to capturing the complexity of PCA and ICC practices in real teaching contexts.

Thirdly, localize and reconstruct the interview questions in combination with China's educational background. For example, in Q4, variables such as "social background, educational system" are added (the original model only mentioned "resources") to reflect the particularity of the Chinese education system. Finally, transform closed-ended questions into open-ended ones, for instance, the original model mostly used Yes/No questions, the present study changed them to descriptive questions (such as Q7 "Do you think PCA is useful in improving students' ICC proficiency? Please explain how and why") to obtain in-depth qualitative data.

As shown in Appendix 3.5, the instrument of objective 2 collects the basic demographic information of the participants such as age, gender, nationality, education background, seniority and professional title. It consisted of eight descriptive questions about teacher's previous experience in dealing with ICC teaching, their ICC cultivation goals, instructional practices regarding PCA, teaching environment and facilities, students' learning interesting and participation in PCA class, and their opinions about PCA's impact in developing students' ICC. For example, participants were asked how and why students' ICC improved in PCA class. Participants provided detailed information about the role of PCA's instructional teaching activities in deepening students' understanding of intercultural communication knowledge and honing their intercultural communication skills.

Objective 3 primarily examines students' perceived impact of PCA on ICC cultivation. Consistent with objective 2, the conceptual framework is grounded in the CIPP model, but the interview design here is explicitly semi-structured, intentionally balancing structured core questions with open-ended questions. The interview questions were

adapted from the Questions Guiding Application of the CIPP evaluation model but revised to incorporate flexibility.

As shown in Appendix 3.6, part one collects basic demographic information (age, gender, nationality, educational background, and English proficiency) through brief, structured questions. Part two includes 12 questions, but these are not strictly descriptive; instead, they serve as starting points for deeper exploration. For example, the first three questions begin with structured prompts about learning motivation and values related to ICC, but are immediately followed by open-ended probes: “Could you share a specific experience that shaped this motivation? How did you feel at the time?” This design encourages participants to move beyond surface-level responses and share stories, emotions, or unexpected insights.

Similarly, questions examining students’ attitudes toward PCA, their emotional experiences, engagement, and perceived impacts on ICC development are designed with built-in flexibility. For instance, a question about engagement might start with: “How would you describe your level of engagement in PCA class?” and continue with: “Can you think of a class activity where you felt particularly engaged? What made that moment stand out to you?” These probes focus on qualitative depth, capturing the “how” and “why” behind perceptions, rather than just the “what” that was perceived.

Objective 4 aims to examine teacher’s intention to use PCA and the factors influencing their intention, the interview outline was adapted from Yan and Cheng’s (2015) Teachers’ perceptions of formative assessment questionnaire, which was developed following Ajzen’s TPB theory. The scale has been adapted primarily in the following aspects: firstly, the measurement paradigm is transformed from a closed five-point Likert

scale question to a semi-open-ended question, guiding respondents to provide in-depth descriptions and explanations, thereby enhancing the interpretability of the data. Secondly, organizational context is embedded, incorporating unique institutional variables such as academic titles and rewards and punishments in Chinese universities; for instance, “Could you describe how your experience with PCA has influenced your promotion to a higher academic title?” Thirdly, a dynamic supplementary mechanism is added, allowing for real-time follow-up questions in three layers based on respondents’ answers (behavioral description → reason explanation → situational impact). For example, the basic question is: “Did your colleagues support your use of PCA?” The follow-up question is: “How did this support/opposition specifically affect your teaching design?”.

The interview questions for the present study extracted items from that questionnaire, combined with previous literature on teachers’ intention, and negotiated and discussed with supervisors of the present study, resulting in 10 interview questions. As shown in Appendix 3.7 According to the conceptual framework of intention in the present study, an interview outline was compiled from three aspects: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms and perceived behavior control, in order to assess teachers’ intention to use PCA, and to explore the internal and external factors influencing their intention. As shown in Appendix 3.7, the first three questions aim to explore teachers’ teaching motivation and their cognition of ICC, question four to ten focus on the factors promote or prevent the use of PCA, including the university policy, their leader and colleagues’ attitude, the difficulties they faced, the time and energy they put in implementing PCA and their material or moral rewards in using PCA.

During the interview, in addition to asking questions according to the proposed interview outline, some open ended questions were raised according to the participants' answers to offer opportunities for the teachers to express concerns beyond the dimensions reflect in the theoretical framework of the present study. For example, for objective 4, the open ended question "*Do you gain material or moral rewards from the implementation of PCA?*" was asked to explore the motivation factors including their personal development, professional image, professional title appraisal, salary, and sense of achievement that influencing teachers' intention to use PCA.

3.6 Pilot Study

To enhance the credibility of the research instruments, this study adopted a rigorous validation process involving supervisor review and pilot testing. Two supervisors conducted a rigorous two-stage review for the instrument validation. They focused on content relevance, logical consistency, and alignment with research objectives, and based on this, made substantial revisions to question wording, structural flow, and terminology standardization. They used Straus et al.'s (2009) 4-point scale to evaluate question relevance, examined question sequencing against DeVellis' (2016) scale design principles, and verified conceptual expressions against the study's theoretical framework (the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC, CIPP model, and TPB). Their independent evaluations resulted in 17 substantial revisions, including: eliminating five questions failing to meet Straus et al.'s (2009) relevance criteria during content analysis; improvements to question sequencing based on cognitive pre-testing principles to refine structure; and the standardization of all terminology.

For instance, the first two questions in the original interview outline for objective 4 were: “Could you talk about your pursuits and goals in teaching?” and “What do you think the positions and roles of teachers and students should be in the classroom?” After content analysis evaluation, these two questions were found to have weak relevance to PCA usage intention and thus were removed from the formal interview outline.

A pilot study was conducted in S district, China, from September 3 to September 8, 2023, to refine the instruments further. The teacher interview questions were tested by an experienced EFL instructor with fifteen years of teaching experience and specialized knowledge of PCA. The interview questions were piloted with an undergraduate student who had prior exposure to PCA. The pilot sessions, lasting approximately three hours, identified ambiguities in question wording and structural weaknesses in sequencing. Based on participant feedback, problematic items were rephrased for clarity, and the question order was adjusted to improve logical progression.

For example, the third question in the original interview outline of objective 1 was: Which is the best aspect of their ICC? And which aspect is the worst? After the pilot study, the colleague suggested that the three dimensions of ICC should be defined using the terms: knowledge, attitudes, and skills based on the conceptual framework of the present study to avoid participants use different terms during the interviews. The researcher of the present study accepted the suggestion and adapted the questions as: Which aspect is best and which is worst among the intercultural communication knowledge, attitude and skills of students?

Neither pilot participant was included in the formal study sample to mitigate practice effects and response bias. All modifications were documented through annotated

drafts and supervisor feedback records, ensuring a transparent audit trail of instrument development.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The participants were studied over two academic semesters, spanning approximately six months. The following sub-sections elaborate on the data collection procedures, including in-depth interviews as the primary data source (undergoing systematic analysis), and the collection of observational materials and documents solely to provide contextual background for understanding the research setting.

3.1 Interview Data Collection Procedures

With their consent, all these teacher participants were interviewed in two rounds of individual interviews, the first of which was used to find out their perceptions of their students' ICC, and the second of which was used to interview them about their perspectives of impact of PCA and intention to use PCA. One round of individual interviews was conducted with each of the 12 student participants to examine the impact of PCA.

Within the interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is regarded as co-constructed through social interaction and contextual understanding. Therefore, significant emphasis is placed on building trust and rapport as the foundation for meaningful data collection. During the pre-data collection phase, the researcher engaged in continuous, informal social interactions, including repeated visits to university campuses over four weeks, participation in daily activities such as faculty meetings, departmental seminars, and casual gatherings (e.g., having lunch in staff canteens or engaging in after-class discussions). These interactions were intentionally unstructured and initially focused on topics unrelated to the

research, such as institutional culture, teaching challenges, and the personal experiences of educators.

Through these ongoing exchanges, the researcher aimed to develop a shared understanding with University H leaders and teachers: by actively listening to their narratives, acknowledging their perspectives, and reflecting on their concerns, the researcher gradually transitioned from an outsider to a more trusted insider-participant. This process is crucial to the interpretivist focus on capturing subjective meanings: as relationships deepened, participants began to voluntarily share nuanced experiences, emotions, and tacit knowledge — such as unspoken institutional pressures or personal struggles in policy implementation — that might not have emerged in a formal, detached setting.

This social engagement was not merely a precursor to data collection but an integral part of the interpretive process, ensuring that the collected data were embedded in the lived contexts and subjective experiences of the individuals involved. The established rapport laid the foundation for the formal data collection phase, making participants more willing to open up in subsequent interactions and thereby reducing their wariness about the research purpose, creating favorable conditions for obtaining authentic and in-depth information.

The first round of teacher interviews was conducted between September and October 2023 to understand their assessments of student ICC levels. Most of the interviews took place in the participants' offices or in cafes on and off campus, in order to keep the participants in relax condition, tea, coffee and desserts were provided to the participants during the interviews. The second round of teacher interviews focused on their perception

of impact of PCA in ICC cultivation and their intention to use it. This round of interviews took place between September and November 2023. It was separated from the previous interview by about half a month to a month, which enabled the researcher of the present study to reflect on the data collected and identify trends in the views and opinions expressed through a systematic analysis of the interview transcripts (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Student participant interviews were conducted after teachers' interviews. These interviews took place between December 2023 and February 2024. Some of the graduate student interviews were conducted through telephone because they were located in different cities in China and were not convenient for face-to-face interviews. All interviews were audio-taped with the informed written consent of the participants. Researchers collect targeted data around specific research questions, while maintaining the openness and generation of interviews, so that the obtained information has a high credibility.

The interview questions in the present study were prepared in English. However, although the participants were all from English majors, in China, English is treated as a foreign language and people do not use English in their daily lives. Some of the participants were not very fluent in spoken English and were reluctant to use English for interviews. Therefore, Chinese was used as the interview language in some of the interviews in order to allow all participants to express their views fully and freely. After the interviews, the researcher of the present study translated these interview data into English and show the translation to the participants for verification and feedback.

In qualitative case studies, the presentation of data volume should correspond to the characteristics of the research methods. The interview transcripts had 72,125 words

(including 54,052 words contributed by teacher participants and 18,093 words by student participants). Firstly, from the perspective of the depth requirements of case studies, this data volume far exceeds the saturation point standard for qualitative interviews proposed by Guest et. al. (2006) (typically 12-15 interviews, approximately 30,000-50,000 words), conforming to Patton's (2015) emphasized "thick description" principle, providing sufficient textual density for understanding the phenomenon. Secondly, from the dimension of triangulation verification, the design of the data ratio from both teacher and student perspectives meets Stake's (1995) requirement for "mutual verification of multi-source data" in case studies. Teachers, as the implementers of PCA, provide systematic experience reflections, while students, as the recipients, present feedback on the practical effects. The tension between the two enhances the credibility of the research findings. Finally, in terms of the characteristics of interpretive research, this corpus can generate multi-level analytical frameworks. It can not only maintain the particularity of the case context but also support cross-case pattern recognition, perfectly aligning with Yin's (2018) requirement for "analytical generalization" in case studies.

This scale of data not only avoids the insufficiency of examples often encountered in small-scale case studies but also retains the rich detail typical of qualitative research, providing an ideal textual foundation for subsequent thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and contextual analysis.

3.2 Observation and Document Materials Collection Procedures

Observation materials (including classroom recordings with transcribed videos/audio, on-site notes, and reflective logs) are fundamental for documenting contextual details, aiming to capture group and individual behaviors and interactions in

natural settings (Yin, 1994) to deepen understanding of environmental complexity. Their documentation follows a dual-track principle: descriptive notes objectively record teaching events, environment, and atmosphere; reflective notes capture real-time contextual interpretations.

The researcher, acting as a non-participant observer, witnessed the practice of PCA in natural settings on-site. During most activities, she sat behind students at the back of the classroom, only occasionally moving between groups during discussions. Each observation lasted 100 minutes, covering a complete teaching unit, with the schedule aligned with teaching progress to capture the full cycle of PCA teaching from initiation, development, to deepening. The focus was on recording real-time teaching processes (including environment, facilities, atmosphere, performance activities, teacher-student interactions, and student engagement) to provide contextual background for understanding the research setting. Documentation methods included on-site notes, mapping, photography, audio recording, and document notes.

With participants' consent, the researcher collected photographic data to visually present classroom layout, student numbers, and performance processes, enriching the contextual description of the learning environment; some photos were not disclosed due to privacy concerns. With ethical approval, visual data (overhead shots of activities, close-ups of props, etc.) were archived under a three-level authorization system (public/research use/destroy) to protect participants' privacy.

After each observation cycle, observation materials were compiled into structured summaries, covering PCA classroom objectives, implementation strategies, processes, atmosphere, activities, interactions, and student participation, integrating

contextual details to ground the research in real-world settings. Photographic data were processed through descriptive techniques and integrated into on-site notes following observations. To ensure the reliability of contextual records, original notes were digitized and transcribed within two hours after observation, forming integrated archives through audio transcription, photo matching, and cross-verification of notes. After each observation round, key event records were verified by teaching staff, and notes were organized to distinguish critical details from trivial ones (Patton, 1990).

Document collection primarily included three aspects: first, obtaining faculty profiles, talent cultivation objectives, teacher training and performance incentive schemes, student sources, and employment directions through staff from the academic affairs office and administrative office; second, acquiring syllabi, lesson plans, students' annual ICC achievements, and teaching summaries through participating teachers; third, reviewing publicity materials (including news and posters) published on the university website and in teaching buildings.

Observation and document materials situate information within context, all aimed at enhancing the accuracy of contextual background rather than serving as analytical data. This rigorous documentation process supports the validity of contextual descriptions, providing a foundation for understanding the practice of PCA in teaching English majors in China.

3.8 Data Analysis Method

Qualitative research is conducted by coding, classifying and refining data, inducing theoretical explanations from the data through inductive and deductive methods, and analyzing the data while collecting them, sorting, structuring and giving meaning to

the large amount of unstructured data that has been collected (Yin, 2016), on the basis of which a framework is constructed to achieve the elaboration of the essence of the research data and the answer to the research question (Patton, 2015). Qualitative data analysis is a statement of the dimensions and structure of implicit and explicit meanings in linguistic or visual materials and what they represent (Flick, 2013), which focuses on the researcher himself as a research tool to understand and interpret the phenomenon through in-depth depiction and detailed elaboration (Cohen et al., 2017).

The present study adopts a two-stage data analysis approach to ensure the reliability and comprehensiveness of the research conclusions. In the first stage, researchers treat teachers and students as a complete analytical unit, aiming to establish an analysis framework with universal explanatory power for each unique case. The study initially presents the preliminary investigation results in the form of case studies, providing a summary analysis for each case. Notably, in the analysis of the student group, researchers further distinguish between the undergraduate group and the graduate group for comparative research, which effectively achieves the purpose of data triangulation verification.

In the second stage, the study employs a cross-case analysis strategy, conducting triangulation verification again by systematically comparing the data sets of teacher participants and student participants. This multi-level verification method follows the research principle proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which provides a more comprehensive and in-depth theoretical explanation by observing recurring patterns across multiple cases.

By combining within-case analysis with cross-case comparison, the research findings ensure both case-specificity and pattern universality. The dual triangulation verification strategy, which involves undergraduate students with graduates and cross-verifying teacher and student data significantly enhances the research validity. Adhering to the principle of iterative analysis in qualitative research, the theoretical construction process becomes more rigorous and systematic.

The interview data were analyzed by using the thematic analysis method combining induction and deduction. The presentation of the research results highlighted the depth of the interview themes. Thematic analysis is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data pool that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in detail, provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich, yet complex, account of data. Braun and Clarke (2006) summarized the six steps of a thematic analysis. Familiarizing with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing the report. Corbin and Strauss (2015) suggest that meaningful raw data can be initially coded; then the data is structured and conceptualized through initial coding to obtain broad themes; the core concepts of each theme are then extracted and linked to the research questions and conceptual frameworks in order to respond to the literature and to rely on the data to deepen understanding of the relevant theories.

Inductive thematic analyses were coded from the data based primarily on participants' experiences; deductive analyses drew on previous theoretical constructs to reveal issues not explicitly articulated by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The

combination of the two types of thematic analysis ensured that themes derived from the data were not missed. In the present study, objective 1 adopted three dimensional theoretical model as the conceptual framework to analysis students' ICC level, objective 2 and 3 adopted CIPP evaluation model to analysis impact of PCA from both teachers and students' perspectives, while objective 4 used TPB to analysis teachers' intention to use PCA and influence factors.

The interview data was processed and processed in four steps. Firstly, the researcher repeatedly read through all data to familiarize herself with the content, which involved jotting down initial impressions, key phrases, and potential focuses related to students' ICC. This stage aimed to immerse oneself in the data and avoid premature categorization.

Secondly, open coding was conducted after familiarization with the data. The researcher systematically coded the data descriptively, extracting all attributes directly related to students' ICC. For example, phrases like "willing to listen to foreign classmates' opinions" or "confused about cultural taboos in communication" were coded as discrete units. During this process, overlapping or semantically similar attributes were noted (e.g., "interested in other cultures" and "curious about different cultural practices" were identified as conceptually close). Instead of immediately organizing attributes by citation frequency, a preliminary cluster analysis was first applied to group these similar initial codes. For instance, the aforementioned two attributes were merged into a single initial code: "interest in other cultures."

Thirdly, the initial codes underwent several iterative coding cycles. Using the results of cluster analysis, the researcher refined and adjusted codes to explore potential

themes that reflected coherent patterns in the data. This involved elevating descriptive codes to more analytical categories. For example, initial codes such as “positive acceptance of cultural differences,” “willingness to try intercultural interactions,” and “openness to diverse perspectives” were grouped under the broader theme of “open attitude toward cultural diversity” due to their shared focus on dispositional characteristics in intercultural contexts.

Fourthly, the potential themes were rigorously reviewed. The researcher analyzed the logical connections between themes, retaining those directly related to students’ ICC levels and their core dimensions (knowledge, attitudes, skills, and deficits) while eliminating miscellaneous themes irrelevant to the research focus. For instance, a broad theme initially labeled “moderate ICC level” was split into a more specific sub-theme, “basic knowledge but limited skills,” better to capture the nuanced characteristics of students’ ICC.

Fifthly, four final themes were named, defined, and finalized through iterative analysis and validation (including member checking with a subset of participants). These themes were then used to structure the findings section of the report. To illustrate the process visually, examples of open coding, initial coding, and theme generation are provided in Appendix 3.1, Appendix 3.2, and Appendix 3.3.

King and Baxter’s (2005) Three-dimensional Developmental Trajectory of Intercultural Maturity conceptualizes intercultural maturity as a developmental continuum spanning three dimensions, which is divided into three stages: initial, intermediate, and mature. Notably, in the present study, the assessment of students’ ICC levels was derived from specific descriptions provided by teacher participants during interviews, and these

descriptions were systematically aligned with the characteristics of “moderate ICC level” in King and Baxter’s (2005) theoretical framework. For instance, in the cognitive dimension, teachers in the present study observed that students could recognize surface-level cultural differences (e.g., customs, etiquette) but struggled to grasp deeper structural or value-based disparities. This pattern of student performance aligns broadly with King and Baxter’s (2005) criteria for the “cognitive” dimension at the moderate level. Such consistency with theoretical standards ensures that the categorization of “moderate ICC level” is not arbitrary but rooted in established intercultural development frameworks, thereby enhancing the validity of the thematic analysis.

3.9 Trustworthiness

The present study ensures the credibility of the research through the following three core dimensions.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is key measure of study quality and research outcomes. Credibility in qualitative research refers to whether a particular research method is consistent across researchers and research projects, whether inferences made by researchers are supported by data and whether appropriate procedures are used to test the accuracy of research results. The credibility tests of this present study include strategies such as multi-case triangulation, peer examination, in-depth description, and so on (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015).

Firstly, this study conducted three rounds of interviews at the research site over six months, rather than implementing a one-time assessment. This phased interview approach can more comprehensively capture the dynamic changes of the research objects and deeply explore their behavioral patterns, cognitive transformations, and potential influencing

factors over time. Secondly, internal and external consistency verification of the researcher's coding was carried out. Researcher triangulation was achieved through methods such as peer review and member checking. The researcher frequently discussed with a colleague and two supervisors of the present study for peer review.

After the initial draft of the thesis was completed, the researcher of the present study invited the supervisors to test the credibility from June to August 2024, and clarified ambiguous issues, rearranged the interview outline, and revised the wording of the thesis based on their suggestions, making it easier for participants to understand and accept. During the data collection and analysis process, the supervisor also worked with the researcher to ensure the credibility of the study. The researcher also received valuable and crucial feedback from her audience (including scholars in the field) during several rounds of oral reports on her research design and findings. These methods enhanced the credibility of the study and ensured that the research results could be applied to other related studies.

Thirdly, the researchers of the present study maintained an objective and neutral stance when collecting data, creating a relaxed and private interview environment to encourage participants to express their true opinions. The principle of reflexivity was consistently adhered to throughout the research process. The researchers clarified their teaching philosophy tendencies by pre-establishing a "position statement" and recorded the evolution of value judgments in their daily field notes. During the data collection stage, non-directive questioning techniques were employed to stimulate participants to share their true narratives.

3.9.2 Confirmability

Confirmability is one of the core dimensions of trustworthiness in qualitative research, emphasizing that research conclusions must be rooted in data rather than the researcher's subjective preferences or biases. The value neutrality of research can be achieved through methodological design, meaning that conclusions should be driven solely by the original data and not influenced by the researcher's personal values, assumptions, or interests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Firstly, researchers maintain complete original data and detailed records of the analysis process, establishing a fully traceable chain of evidence. Third-party reviewers can use these materials to verify whether the conclusions are derived from the data itself. For instance, Appendixes 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 show the evolution path from initial coding to the final themes.

Secondly, researchers actively seek out cases or data that contradict the main conclusions and analyze whether they challenge or modify the existing conclusions. For example, the evaluation of Chinese students' cultural proficiency by Filipino teachers is significantly different from that of other Chinese teachers. Such differences need to be discussed in the context of cultural background to avoid selective neglect.

Thirdly, researchers keep a reflective journal to record their presuppositions, values, and power relations with the subjects of the study, and publicly declare them in the paper. While absolute value neutrality remains an epistemological ideal (Hammersley, 2013), these procedures satisfy Schwandt's (1996) criteria for methodological accountability in interpretive research.

3.10 Research Ethics

Research ethics are ethical norms that are consistent with accepted professional norms or practices in research. Any research must demonstrate a high level of concern for rigorous research ethics in terms of research objectives, design, methods, reporting, and results. Given the characteristics of qualitative research, the researcher needs to maintain frequent interactions with the research subjects in the process of understanding and exploring a phenomenon in depth based on the research questions, and thus necessarily involves many personal privacy of the research subjects and their related interests. In the present study, a series of measures were taken to strictly comply with research ethics throughout the research process and to protect the rights and interests of the research subjects.

Firstly, before starting data collection, the researcher of the present study sent an Information sheet to the academic committee of the university where she is studying, including the scope, manner, time and place of data collection such as interview questionnaires, observation forms and literature collection, and obtained ethical permission before entering the study site to collect data (Stake, 2022). Secondly, the principles of informed consent, safety, withdrawal and confidentiality of research subjects were followed (Byram, 2004; Cohen, Manion & Morrion, 2007). The investigators took the initiative to indicate the study intentions, contents, plans and related rights to the study subjects during the selection stage, fully respecting their willingness to participate in the study and ensuring that the principle of informed consent was followed. After screening and finalizing the subjects for the present study, the investigator signed an informed consent form with the study subjects, further informing them of the specific details of the study implementation, confirming confidentiality and participant checks.

During the study, the data collection methods and equipment used in the study were informed to the study subjects in advance and their permission was sought for implementation. When data was collected through interviews, the study participants were consulted beforehand about timing and where data was collected. Choose the time and data collection place that do not affect their normal life and teaching. After the data were transcribed, they were sent to the study subjects for checking and confirmation in a timely manner. The data were kept properly and not leaked. The names of the research subjects presented in the thesis are all pseudonyms, and any information that refers to their personal life, growth, and learning experience has been modified by pseudonyms. The researcher of the present study strictly adhered to the research ethics and any information that could locate their identity has been deleted in order to protect the participants from disclosure. Appendix 3.8 shows the Information sheet and consent form of the present study.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

Although the appropriateness of the method was fully considered in the design process of the present study, due to the limitations of the research paradigm and practical conditions, the following limitations still exist:

Firstly, the present study adopted a cross-sectional research design, with data collection concentrated over a six-month period. Although this design could deeply capture the beliefs, practical experiences, and ICC development characteristics of teachers and students within a specific stage, it was difficult to track the dynamic changes in participants' cognition and behavior. Compared with the ability of longitudinal studies to reveal the process mechanism, the findings of the present study more reflect the state at a "specific time point", which is an inherent limitation that the research design selection

needs to bear.

Secondly, the limited range of sample selection may affect the breadth of the research findings. The present study selected 12 students with PCA learning experience and eight teachers from S district as the research subjects through purple-sampling and stratified sampling. Although the homogeneity of the samples helps to deeply explore the patterns in specific situations, it also makes it difficult to directly extend the research findings to other contexts.

On the one hand, universities in different regions (such as the eastern coastal areas and the central and western regions) have differences in international resources and teaching concepts, and the implementation effect of PCA may present different characteristics. On the other hand, all the participants in the present study were native Chinese speakers, and the application mechanism of PCA in multilingual background learners (such as minority students and bilingual learners) has not yet been explored. All these constitute the boundaries of sample representativeness.

Thirdly, there is uniformity in the gender composition of the teacher sample. All eight teacher participants in the present study were female. Although this result is consistent with the reality that the proportion of female English teachers in Chinese universities is relatively high (data shows that female teachers account for more than 70%), and the research team had made every effort to contact male teachers who met the criteria during the sampling process, they were ultimately not included due to not meeting the conditions. This gender singularity may lead to the absence of a male teacher's perspective in the exploration of teacher cognition, the absence of this dimension may to some extent limit the complete presentation of the cognitive diversity of the teacher group.

The above-mentioned limitations are the balance issue that qualitative research needs to confront in the pursuit of “depth” and “contextualization”. The present study has made up for the limitations within its capacity by extending the field observation period, using multiple data sources, and adding triangulation validation (comparison of teacher and student cases). However, its existence still provides an improvement direction for subsequent research.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter covers the research paradigm that guided the study’s research design and methodology. To summarize, the present study employed a multiple-case study design to explore the perspectives of teachers and students on the application of PCA in ICC cultivation among English majors in China. Data were collected from individual interviews and were analyzed using thematic analysis to produce interpretations and propositions. The findings of the case study are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This section reports the results of the case study. The findings were based on the aim and objectives of the present study, which is to explore the cultivation of intercultural communication competence (ICC) using Performed Culture Approach (PCA) among English majors in China from the perspectives of both the students and teachers concerned. The specific objectives are: (a) To examine the students' ICC level from teachers' perspective. (b) To explore teachers' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation. (c) To explore students' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation. (d) To determine teachers' intention to use PCA in ICC cultivation and the factors influencing their intention.

4.2 Teacher Participants' Perspective

This section reports the teachers' perspectives about students' ICC level, teachers' perceived impact of PCA in ICC cultivation, teachers' intention to use PCA and factors influencing their intention.

4.2.1 Students' ICC Level

Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC was used as a theoretical framework for examining students' ICC level. Data were analyzed to provide information about (1) how teachers perceive the overall level of students' ICC, (2) what are the deficiencies of students' ICC?

A total of 16 codes were generated in the data, some of which share unifying features and reflect coherent and meaningful patterns in the data. These unified characteristics of the codes were grouped into four themes: intermediate ICC level, general intercultural communication knowledge, open attitude, and limited intercultural communication skills. These themes were interrelated, but do not overlap in concept. These codes provide a suitable framework for the four themes, allowing researchers of the present study to obtain sufficient descriptive evidence of students' ICC level. Some vivid and persuasive interview excerpts from the interview transcripts were extracted to support the codes. The excerpts were minimally edited for grammar to facilitate reading, but the essence of spoken language has been largely preserved.

4.2.1.1 Moderate Intercultural Communication Competence Level

Although the eight teachers used different expressions (such as average, moderate, neither too good nor too bad, not so high) to assess the students' ICC, their overall description of students' ICC exhibited a high degree of consistency. The students' ICC presented a contradictory overall picture, demonstrating both basic cultural cognition and an open mindset, as well as obvious deficiencies in practical skills.

From the perspective of teachers' academic backgrounds, teachers with different professional training backgrounds demonstrate unique assessment perspectives. Teachers with backgrounds in applied linguistics and intercultural communication (T1, T4, and T5) tend to adopt a more systematic assessment framework. Take T5 as an example. As an associate professor and the director of the teaching and research section at University H, she has long been responsible for developing the applied Linguistics and Intercultural Communication courses for the English major. Her assessment is influenced by

Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC, which emphasizes the imbalance development of students' ICC in the three dimensions of knowledge, attitude, and skills.

The students in T5's class came from all over the nation, including more impoverished rural areas and economically developed cities. Her students scored between 115 and 139 points in English exam (test students' listening, grammar, reading and writing skills) on the National College Entrance Exam six months ago, which was an outstanding performance. Despite the students' exemplary performance in the English exam, T5's assessment was neutral regarding ICC. She used "not too bad nor not too good" to describe students' ICC level. T5 believed that students possessed general cultural knowledge and fundamental cultural taboos; their attitude towards different cultures was also more tolerant. However, they had limited contact with foreigners and were unfamiliar with how to communicate with them.

In contrast, T2, who has an academic background in comparative literature and experience studying in New Zealand, is more sensitive to cultural stereotypes. She used the term "not high" to define students' ICC level. She believes that, although students have grasped the fundamentals of intercultural communication, their understanding of the subject is often limited to overly simplified cultural labels. There may be risks associated with this shallow thinking.

They only understand basic cultural conventions, such as Americans are very free-spirited, Germans are very rigorous, and the British are gentlemanly, and these basic cultural conventions can easily lead to cultural stereotypes. (T2)

This observation primarily stems from her particular focus on the depth of cultural cognition, which is closely tied to her academic training. As a discipline, comparative literature places special emphasis on power relations in cultural representation, enabling T2 to keenly recognize that students' so-called cultural knowledge is, in fact, a simplified and reified system of cultural signification. She emphasizes, "when students naturalize labels like 'British people are gentlemanly,' they overlook the diversity and complexity of British society."

The international experiences of the teachers directly influenced their judgement of students' ICC levels. As the sole foreign participant among the faculty members, T8 had signed a five-year employment contract with University H. With her multicultural educational background, T8 engaged in frequent intercultural interactions with Chinese students during daily teaching activities. Through these routine exchanges, T8 developed a profound understanding of students' ICC competencies. She characterized students' ICC level as moderate, an evaluation that aligned with the judgement made by her Chinese colleagues.

I think it is middle. ICC it's not so high, it's not so low ... but in terms of exposure in charge of interaction with foreigners, they don't have that opportunity. (T8)

T7, a lecturer from University H in her thirties. As a travel enthusiast, T7 has accumulated over 11 months of cross-border travel experience. She pays particular attention to the lack of practical experience among students and emphasizes the gap between intercultural indirect cognition and direct real communication. She claimed that students' ICC was "moderate" as they were able to grasp the basic concepts and theories of

intercultural communication, improved their overall intercultural awareness, engaged basic intercultural communication, and were conscious of their behavior and speech. However, over the past two years, foreign teachers' spoken English sessions were conducted exclusively online due to the effects of COVID-19, resulting in students having virtually no face-to-face encounters with people from different cultures. As a result, the students' exposure to intercultural communication was severely limited, which further hampered the development of their intercultural communication skills. This perception aligns with the university's course records, which indicate that during the epidemic, all foreign teacher courses were indeed conducted online.

Only T4, an associate professor who is about forty years old from University Y rated students' ICC level as "relatively good". This teacher stated that there were more ways to learn about different cultures today due to the development of the internet, which allows students to learn about the customs of many nations. This, in turn, subtly influenced their intercultural awareness and helped them to accept and value the diversity of cultures. However, T4 also expressed concerns about students' intercultural communication skills. She pointed out that students often overlook the importance of intercultural communication skills in their studies.

However, this cannot be blamed on the students; after all, they have not experienced practical work and should not yet be aware of the importance of intercultural communication skills. (T4)

Teachers' explanations of these terms indicated that teacher participants had consistent perceptions of students' ICC level as general intercultural communication knowledge and limited intercultural communication skills. The following section will

discuss in detail teacher participants' specifications of the three dimensions of students' intercultural communication: knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

4.2.1.2 General Intercultural Communication Knowledge

The theme “general intercultural communication knowledge” was formed by five codes clusters, namely “know little about cultures except mainstream countries”, “basic understanding of Chinese culture”, “general knowledge about British and American culture”, “lack of in-depth and comprehensive understanding of Chinese cultures”, and “basic knowledge of intercultural communication”.

The research found that teachers generally agreed that students had a basic understanding of the mainstream cultures of Britain and the United States; however, this understanding exhibited a distinct center-periphery asymmetry. Teachers reported that by comparing and contrasting the different aspects of their own culture with those of European and American cultures, students had the opportunity to realize that their cultural community was both different and similar to other societies. They observed the diverse values and perceptions of various communities. With increased knowledge of the subject, students can explain these differences in lifestyle and other aspects in more nuanced ways, making more informed evaluations. The exposure to the differences between their own and other cultures allows students to broaden their views on value systems.

Almost all teachers claim that students have “general knowledge about British and American culture”. Teachers reported that students learned about some of the cultures of developed countries, such as the UK and the USA, through indirect intercultural contact via social media on the internet, cultural products like TV programmes, and Intercultural

Communication courses. These indirect contacts are the easiest form for students to acquire intercultural communication knowledge. As T7 and T8 explained:

They know some cultural taboos of English culture, American culture, such as “split the bill” and “not prying into the privacy of other people’s lives” through the internet, social media, and other channels. (T8)

We often recommend classic European and American films to students, and some colleagues even show these films in class, which helps students understand different cultures. (T7)

However, teachers were explicit in describing how students lacked knowledge of other cultures outside of the mainstream countries and also explained how this knowledge limited students’ ICC. Teachers generally point out that students’ ICC levels are limited by their lack of understanding of non-mainstream national cultures. Students have a particular understanding of the cultures of mainstream English-speaking countries (such as festivals and etiquette). Still, they know very little about the cultures of regions such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This imbalance in their knowledge structure leads to communication barriers in honest intercultural communication due to cultural misinterpretation.

T8, as a foreign teacher, offers a unique perspective. She reveals the geopolitical dimension of cognitive imbalance. As she said:

Although China and the Philippines are neighbors, students know almost nothing about Philippine culture, such as food, religion, and social norms. (T8)

The Chinese teachers' opinions were compared with the Filipino teacher's perspective. The view of six Chinese teachers concurred with T8. They pointed out that, in terms of intercultural communication knowledge, students knew very little about the culture beyond the mainstream countries. Perspectives from teacher participants suggest that ICLT needs to move beyond the "Anglo-American center" and incorporate a broader range of cultural contexts. The neglect of non-mainstream culture by students precisely reflects the insufficiency of the "knowledge dimension".

The working experience of the head of the Tourism English discipline makes T1 more sensitive to the curriculum design. She is responsible for teaching the Intercultural Communication course to the juniors this semester. This course is one of two required courses in the English major that aims to cultivate students' intercultural knowledge and attitudes. Due to the content of the textbook and the limitation of class time, T1 reported that she did not have the opportunity to teach students about other cultures.

Textbook is all about British and American cultures ... the courses only last for 8 weeks, we don't have time to share other countries' cultures with the students. (T1)

The intercultural communication curriculum at the research sites reflects China's predominant pedagogical focus on Western cultural frameworks. This instructional orientation aligns with broader disciplinary trends documented in national syllabus guidelines (MOE, 2022), wherein Anglo-American cultural paradigms traditionally dominate foreign language education. Such contextual background helps interpret T2's remark, while clarifying why participants' interview responses frequently referenced Eurocentric cultural concepts.

The limitations of contact channels, contents, and course duration have resulted in students knowing little about cultures other than the mainstream culture, causing misunderstandings and conflicts in intercultural communication. As T8 said:

Students don't even take their shoes off when they enter my room. I know they didn't do it intentionally, but it really not a pleasant experience for me ... I was often visited by students in my office or dormitory without prior appointment. I am unaccustomed to it. But later the students apologized and said, they didn't know they had to make an appointment in advance. (T8)

Although the students realized afterwards that they had caused T8 unhappiness due to their lack of understanding of Philippine culture and apologized to T8, the fact remains that unhappiness from such cultural misunderstandings continues to occur and impact the outcome of intercultural encounters.

As for codes "basic understanding of Chinese culture" and "lack of in-depth and comprehensive understanding of Chinese cultures", although Chinese and Philippine teachers used different terms, they expressed similar views regarding students' Chinese cultural knowledge. All Chinese teachers believed students understand general cultural knowledge of China, as the English major programme currently emphasizes the teaching of Chinese native culture.

Meanwhile, T2, T3, and T6, who hold master's degrees in literature, noted that Chinese culture is profound and far-reaching, having made outstanding achievements in philosophy, thought, language, literature, and the arts, among other areas. Philosophy alone encompasses Taoism, Mohism, Legalism, Confucianism, and others, and it was far from enough for students to understand only the general content in terms of depth and breadth.

T1, a head of the Tourism English discipline with 33 years of teaching experience, pointed out from the perspective of curriculum reform that with the implementation of the new teaching syllabus, the English major has systematically strengthened the teaching of local culture and listed “Introduction to Chinese Culture” as a compulsory course. This institutional change has enabled students to establish a relatively comprehensive knowledge framework at the basic levels, including historical context and traditional customs. However, T1 particularly emphasized that this kind of general education is challenging to cover the deep structure of Chinese culture. She pointed out:

When it comes to the shaping of modern values by Confucian and Taoist thoughts or the philosophical implications in poetry, calligraphy and painting, students’ understanding seems inadequate. (T1)

The perspective of the Filipino teacher T8 adds an intercultural dimension to this discussion. As a teacher from a different culture, T8 believed that her students were very knowledgeable about Chinese culture because they always explained to her some Chinese cultural practices.

They always told me that China has a long history and is brilliant. When we ask them something, they always have answers about culture, dynasty, and past lives. If we ask them questions, for example, they told me that the phrase “to eat fish” means “to have good luck” in Chinese. (T8)

It can be clearly seen from the explanation of T8 that the communication between the students and her also shows that the students have a grasp of basic cultural symbols, but rarely touch upon deeper cultural contents such as traditional thoughts and their influence on Chinese culture.

As deep participants in the local culture, Chinese teachers' evaluations imply high-level expectations for cultural inheritance: not only requiring students to know "what it is", but also to understand "why" and "how to influence the present". As a receiver in intercultural communication, foreign teacher T8's evaluation is based on the need for basic information exchange. The student's superficial explanation can already meet her initial understanding of Chinese culture, so she does not notice the lack of deep understanding. This difference precisely confirms the superficial feature of students' cultural expression: in different contexts, students can demonstrate basic cultural knowledge, but they grasped the connection between deep thoughts and modern values, indicating their insufficient understanding of the core of Chinese culture.

4.2.1.3 Open Attitude

Regarding the students' intercultural communication attitude, the codes abstracted from interviews included "open-minded", "curious to different cultures", "respect for different cultures", "avoiding ethnocentrism", "tolerance of cultural differences", "culture stereotypes" and "strong sense of culture identity", which clustered together and formed the theme "open attitude". Students transcend their cultural position and show a greater sense of respect. They emphasized that people should look beyond their own culture and stressed the value of respect in intercultural interactions. Instead of evaluating others' cultures positively or negatively, students' neutral understanding of them rose noticeably, which appeared to demonstrate a more objective position among the students.

"Open-minded" was the most frequently mentioned trait by teachers as T2 reported that students, as the most receptive group, were able to accept different cultures with an open mind. She noted the progress in students' attitude changes through contact with other

cultures. This transformation trajectory indicates that contemporary students have developed relatively mature emotional processing mechanisms when confronted with cultural differences.

I think students nowadays are still very tolerant of different cultures. When they come into contact with different cultures, there will be a gradual change in their emotional process towards different cultures, and they are usually surprised at first, then they accept them, and finally they will respect different cultures. (T2)

Most teachers mentioned students' curiosity about different cultures and an interest in exploring cultural products and perspectives. As the subject head with 33 years of teaching experience, T1 particularly noticed the students' thirst for knowledge demonstrated in class discussions:

When we talk about different cultures, they always pay attention, listen and are interested during class. If I have a chance, I would incorporate culture lessons. They are interested, they are curious, and they are fast learning other cultures, so I think the students are eager to learn. (T1)

As for the codes "respect for different cultures", "tolerance of cultural differences" and "avoiding ethnocentrism", students were considered able to respect the cultures of foreign countries, and held a tolerant attitude toward different cultures, thereby reducing the negative influence of ethnocentrism on their understanding of multiculturalism and cultural differences. This means that students were willing to relativize their values, views and behaviors, were able to see their own culture from the perspective of an outsider with different values, beliefs and behaviors, and avoid the notion that their own culture is the

only viable or inherently right choice, and can move from a cultural assertion of their own culture to the acceptance of others' cultures. As T7 explained:

They are neither naive and conceited nor blindly inferior; they know that they should not measure the behavior of foreign teachers by Chinese concepts. (T7)

However, students lacked knowledge of cultures other than those from mainstream countries; therefore, establishing a multicultural worldview and framework seemed unlikely. Negative attitudes that limit effective intercultural communication persist, including the inability to comprehend other cultures and the perpetuation of cultural stereotypes.” Lack of understanding of other cultures” reflects the failure of one to understand, while “culture stereotypes” implies that oversimplification and generalization at the expense of individual differences and diversity.

T4 used to be responsible for training students to participate in the Intercultural Communication Skills Competition. During her preparation for the competition, she often shared her students' views on different cultures with them. She found that the students' attitudes towards other cultures over the years showed positive changes and tended to become increasingly neutral through her longitudinal comparison. They no longer unquestioningly worshipped European and American cultures and no longer thought that these cultures were superior to those of other countries, as they had in previous years. However, they sometimes still demonstrated a lack of understanding of the cultures of some economically underdeveloped countries. For example, they may think that some cultures are “barbaric”.

One student told me that he had seen a documents film about the Thai countryside. The inhabitants there often use all sorts of bugs as ingredients to cook with. They ate them while showing a satisfied expression, which looked so horrible that I couldn't understand why they would eat something so disgusting. (T4)

Some teachers indicated that students' cultural stereotypes create unfair and narrow impressions of individuals from certain cultures. For example, T1 argued that students had insufficient exposure to foreigners to dispel stereotypes about certain cultures, which were often based on popular anecdotes or standardized and simplified ideas about particular groups, rooted in preconceived notions.

Some students said that it was OK to get along with the French teacher as they wished, without caring about the details, because "the French are very casual". However, this was not the same as the French teacher I knew. He is a scholar, very serious in academic and in life. (T1)

Education with an international mindset should strive to dispel preconceptions and encourage students to view people as unique individuals rather than as belonging to a group that has certain stereotypes that are unfairly and narrowly applied to them. More frequent and long-lasting contacts are suitable to develop students' thinking and help them form complex and positive attitudes about people from different cultures.

It is worth noting that teachers of different teaching ages show intergenerational differences when evaluating students' open attitudes. Both the most senior T1 (with 33 years of teaching experience) and the relatively younger T7 (frequent cross-national travelers) have noticed the positive changes in students' attitudes, but their explanatory

frameworks differ. T1 places more emphasis on the effectiveness of teaching reform, while T7 attributes it to the natural growth of the younger generation in the context of globalization. This intergenerational perspective difference provides a richer analytical dimension for understanding the formation mechanism of an open attitude.

The research finds that students' cultural identity presents a dynamic construction process. All eight teachers indicated that students' identity is at a very high level as they were becoming more and more confident in their nation and national culture. Words such as "very proud of national culture", "strong sense of national identity", "culture confidence" and "clear self-identity" were mentioned frequently by the participants. Students became aware of how rooted they are in their culture, showing a strong interest in traditional Chinese culture and having a very strong motivation and willingness to learn.

T1, with 33 years of teaching experience, has noticed through long-term observation that the rise of Hanfu culture on campus is not merely a simple fashion trend, but rather embodies profound cultural awareness. She particularly pointed out:

There is now the phenomenon of great mass fervor of Hanfu (traditional Chinese clothes) on university campuses, and student organizations often hold Hanfu cultural activities, and it is also common to see students wearing Hanfu on campus. This reflects that students love their national culture very much. (T1)

This observation contrasts with her 33 year of teaching experience. In her early teaching career, it was rare to see such a large-scale revival of local culture. T1 linked this phenomenon to the development of the country, and this macroscopic perspective of

interpretation is closely related to his position as the chairperson of the college's trade union and the head of the discipline.

The comprehensive strength of our country has been increasing over the year ... Students are becoming more and more confident in our own culture.
(T1)

The positive attitude of Chinese college students towards Hanfu is reflected in the campus phenomenon of the popularity of Hanfu culture. During site visits, Hanfu cultural activities were notably visible across campus, with classrooms occasionally used as venues for traditional costume exhibitions (see Figure 4.1). These extracurricular scenes provided general context for understanding the cultural environment in which participants were situated. The image captures their genuine fascination as they examine the garments' intricate designs and traditional craftsmanship. This visual documentation aligns with T1's observation regarding contemporary Chinese youth's demonstrated interest in engaging with their cultural heritage through this sartorial medium. The Hanfu favour represents more than just a fashion trend; it suggests a potential cultural identity connection among China's younger generation.



Figure 4.1: Hanfu Show in the Classroom

Students are willing to talk about Chinese culture with foreign teachers. As a Filipino teacher, T8 has a deep expression about this experience. This kind of observation from the perspective of the “other” forms mutual evidence with the records of local teachers. The intercultural identity of T8 enables it to keenly detect the shift in stance of Chinese students in cultural dialogues, and this shift is particularly evident in the interaction between teachers and students in its oral English classes. She said that:

They are proud of their own culture, they always said to me China has a long and brilliant history. (T8)

Through cross-analysis of the interview data from teachers, it becomes apparent that the cultural identity of contemporary college students presents a feature of diversity in unity; they possess a strong sense of national identity while maintaining an open cultural attitude. While students respect and understand the perspectives and cultural experiences of others, they also remain true to their own beliefs and values.

4.2.1.4 Limited Intercultural Communication Skills

Intercultural communication skills were the most frequently mentioned term by teacher participants. The theme “limited intercultural communication skills” emerged from four codes: (1) empathy, (2) unable to accurately express themselves, (3) unable to accurately express Chinese culture, and (4) unable to deal with culture conflicts flexibly.

T8 noted that students were able to employ basic intercultural communication strategies, including empathy and cooperation. T8 described her experience with Chinese students and used the words “respected” and “considerate” to express her feelings. She believed that the students were able to take care of her feelings as a foreigner, change their

minds, and put themselves in her shoes, even though many times they do not understand the Filipino culture.

He (a student) is very considerate because he said that: “I don t know about culture of Philippine. But you can tell me which do you think is the most suitable like arrangement for you? What is more important in your culture because I want to consider that”. (T8)

They try to understand our position from our point of view, not as a Chinese.
(T8)

Teacher participants were asked to rank the three dimensions of ICC in order of proficiency. Although they ranked knowledge and attitudes differently, all eight teachers agreed that skills were at the lowest level of the three dimensions of ICC. Compared to the positive comments related to skills, negative attributes were mentioned frequently by teachers.

Knowledge is the best and skills is the worst ... but they do not have frequent intercultural communication opportunities to apply what they have learned; they are still a bit weaker in skills. (T2)

Attitude is the best, skills is the worst, as there were almost no foreign teachers in the school during the years of COVID-19, and the students seldom encountered people from different cultures in their normal study and life. (T3)

T2’s judgment is closely related to her study experience in New Zealand, enabling her to keenly compare the performance differences between Chinese and international

students in actual communication. It is worth noting that the pandemic factor is regarded by many teachers as an essential reason for exacerbating skill deficiencies.

Some negative and neutral codes, such as “unable to fully express,” “unable to accurately express Chinese culture,” and “cannot deal with culture conflicts flexibly,” were mentioned more frequently than the positive codes. Students can utilize basic communication skills to avoid religious and cultural taboos. However, they cannot fully express themselves and lack flexibility in dealing with cultural conflicts.

Regarding “unable to fully express” and “unable to accurately express Chinese culture”, the potential explanations proposed by T2, T5, T7, and T8 included “limited vocabulary”, “insufficient knowledge of Chinese culture”, “insufficient structural accuracy”, and “lack of western thinking”. As a translation teacher who frequently travels overseas, T7 has noticed that students have “expression disorders”:

Most students can basically express Chinese culture (in English) to their foreigner teachers, but if he is asked to go deeper, students will be limited by their vocabulary. (T7)

Sometimes they cannot express it clear. They often said “该怎么说呢”(Chinese characters, means “how should I say in English”) when they don’t know how to express themselves ... The foreign teacher come from France cannot understand them well as me because of the culture barriers. (T8)

All teachers found it necessary to raise awareness of students’ oral English proficiency in intercultural communication, pointing out that a broader definition of

intercultural communication skills includes oral English skills, which are essential for effectively interacting with people from various countries. Some teachers indicated that students' limited oral proficiency hindered their success in intercultural communication.

Language is a problem. These students identified a number of challenges, including their limited vocabulary and difficulty understanding foreign accents. The students could not express themselves fully in intercultural communication, often times, the foreign teacher needs to guess what they are really trying to say. (T6)

This pattern of partial expression - where students grasp cultural fundamentals but lack the linguistic precision to convey them fully - underscores the complex relationship between cultural literacy and language competence that the study explores. The classroom scenarios provide valuable situational context for interpreting the more systematic data collected through interviews, helping to ground the research in actual pedagogical practice without constituting primary evidence.

It was challenging for students with low oral English proficiency to articulate their thoughts and feelings clearly and concisely. They became frustrated and discouraged, and some gave up trying to communicate or express in intercultural communication. Similarly, they were unable to respond to foreigners since they were unable to find the appropriate words and phrases to convey their thoughts and opinions, as T1 described:

Students usually simply tell the tutor yes or no, and rarely explain clearly why yes, or why no. Once a student told me that she understands how it is, but she didn't know how to explain clearly, so she had to keep silent. (T1)

Indeed, limited oral English proficiency made students feel embarrassed in intercultural communication and proved to be a fundamental problem for many students.

During one evening party, I could clearly hear a student explaining the “peacock dance” to her foreign teacher as “a dance that imitates an animal like a big cock”. The foreign teacher looked confused, and I couldn’t help but laugh my tummy off. (T2)

The “peacock dance misunderstanding” incident, recorded by T2, demonstrates the cultural misinterpretation that expression errors can cause. These findings echo the expression avoidance strategy observed by T7 in her translation teaching. When confronted with complex cultural concepts, students often simplify or avoid them rather than actively seek solutions.

T2 shared a story about her students’ intercultural experiences, explaining the students’ awkwardness and helplessness when facing cultural conflicts in intercultural communication.

My student told me that she met a foreigner while travelling on a bus. When they made eye contact, the foreigner smiled and said “Hi” to her. She was at a loss for words and did not respond, not even a smile. (T2)

Students froze on the bus because they didn’t know how to respond to a simple greeting from a foreigner. This kind of skill anxiety is quite common among students who lack a real intercultural environment. T2 explained that the student felt afterwards that she had been insulting. She knows that, unlike in Chinese culture, people in some countries

greet strangers in a friendly way. But at that moment, she didn't know whether or not to respond and how to respond.

These types of narratives expressed simplistic views and basic descriptions of students' skills. They demonstrated skills in empathy, listening, and the ability to understand cultural differences. On the other hand, their behaviors during intercultural communication were inflexible and could not fully or accurately convey Chinese culture, which prevented them from questioning assertions about cultural representation.

The difference between Chinese and Western ways of thinking was also deeply reflected in language. As learners do not understand the way of thinking of the target language countries, they tend to express themselves in their way of thinking, which often leads to negative transfer and transmission bias. As T5 explained:

Students can't freely switch between Chinese and Western ways of thinking. They (the student) are stuck in the middle with this half-baked feeling. That is, students are not very proficient in the culture and logical thinking of the East and the West. (T5)

This disconnection between cognition and behavior was repeatedly confirmed during T5's 18-year teaching observation. She particularly pointed out that "language is a problem", but the deeper reason lies in the difference in thinking patterns. T7, who has rich experience in translation teaching, also has a deep understanding of this. She has found that when students explain Chinese cultural concepts, they often fall into the trap of literal translation and lack the necessary cultural transcoding ability.

The following statements from the participants explained why students' skills were worst in three dimensions of ICC. Specifically, students' "lack of intercultural communication experience" and "lack of training in the classroom" were the main reasons for the low level of intercultural communication skills. It was evident that the university and social environments in which the students live provide them with few opportunities to interact directly with members of different cultures. It is rare for provincial capitals with an average level of economic development in China to attract foreigners from diverse countries and cultures to live there permanently, and it is even rarer for international students to be present at the university. The few intercultural communication experiences students have come from their foreign teachers, which is their only avenue of direct exposure to intercultural communication. As T4 and T7 noted:

Fewer than five English majors per year study abroad according to our department records(T4).

Most students' intercultural experiences are limited to textbook cases(T7).

This constrained exposure pattern aligns with broader challenges in China's regional universities, where international mobility rates typically range between 0.5%-2% for humanities students (MOE, 2022).

T5 believed that individual students' ICC would be better due to the "experience of foreign travel and short-term summer camps". What these narratives tended to emphasize was that students traveling or studying in foreign countries not only had the opportunity to gain firsthand experience of other cultures but also enhanced their skills through extensive direct interaction with foreigners.

However, only a small number of students have the opportunity to travel abroad or participate in international exchange programs. There was little difference in the ICC level of the students because “the channels through which they acquire ICC were the same, such as internet and the knowledge of cultural differences that was taught in the classroom”. As T7 explained:

This is because the cultivation and development of intercultural communication strategies and skills require personal hands-on experience and practice. But we lack that ... in terms of exposure in charge of interaction with foreigners, they don't have that opportunity. (T7)

Some teachers believed that “lack of classroom training” was one of the main reasons for students' low skills. The Intercultural Communication course had a short class time of only 12 weeks or less, and the teachers could only fulfill the teaching tasks stipulated by the universities, leaving them no time to train students' intercultural communication skills. This was one of the main reasons for their low skills.

To summarize the findings in this section, the data revealed that teachers perceived students' ICC to be generally at a moderate level, with a moderate level of intercultural communication knowledge, open attitudes, and limited skills.

The students' ICC shows a distinct imbalance development characteristic of the “knowledge-attitude-skill” framework. In the dimension of cultural knowledge, there is a cognitive bias of center-periphery, and the understanding of mainstream cultures in Britain and the United States is far superior to that of other cultures; it demonstrates openness in the attitude dimension that conforms to the characteristics of the globalized era and is capable of applying empathy strategies for intercultural adaptation at the basic level;

However, in the skill dimension, it reveals deficiencies in high-level communication skills such as cultural trans-coding, conflict management, and in-depth expression, especially the lack of the ability to explain Chinese culture in the target language, which leads to self-silence in intercultural interaction.

Through cross-analysis of the data of multiple teachers, it can be seen that the predicament of students' ICC is a multi-level structural problem. It not only includes surface language barriers but also involves profound differences in thinking patterns. It not only reflects the insufficiency of individual skills but also exposes the flaws of the teaching system. The diverse perspectives of teachers from different backgrounds provide rich analytical dimensions for understanding this complex issue. In particular, the observations of teachers with cross-border experience (such as T2, T3, T7, and T8) highlight the practical consequences of these ability deficiencies in a real intercultural environment.

4.2.2 Perceived Impact of Performed Culture Approach

This section reports on teachers' perceived impact of PCA in ICC cultivation. Data were clustered and analyzed to answer the question: How do teachers perceive the impact of PCA in ICC cultivation?

The process of analyzing the data followed a strict, step-by-step approach to thematic analysis, and themes were established according to the CIPP evaluation model, which examines four aspects: context, input, process, and product. As a result of coding of the data obtained at the end of this subsection, the following four themes were formed: (1) meet students' ICC developmental needs, (2) constrained implementation conditions, (3) improve students' participation in class, and (4) improve students' ICC. The research findings revealed the unique value of PCA in compensating for the structural deficiencies

of students' ICC. Analysis based on the CIPP evaluation model revealed that PCA effectively responds to the key demands of ICC cultivation across multiple dimensions through its unique, contextualized teaching mode.

4.2.2.1 Context: Meet Intercultural Communication Competence Developmental Needs

The context evaluation measured whether the instructional goals of the PCA were aligned with students' ICC developmental needs. According to the data analysis results of objective 1, the students' intercultural communication skills were lowest in the three dimensions of ICC, which were manifested as: unable to fully express themselves in intercultural communication; unable to accurately express Chinese culture; lack of flexibility in cultural conflicts; the reasons for this phenomenon lied in the lack of intercultural communication experience and classroom training.

The relevant codes determined the theme of "meet students' ICC development needs" were: (1) focus on cultivating students' intercultural communication skills (2) focus on cultivating students' oral English ability (3) sufficient classroom training and (4) focus on the communication between local culture and other cultures. These codes indicated that the PCA teaching model showed a deep alignment with ICC development needs of students.

Five teachers (T1, T2, T3, T5 and T7) reported that PCA was focused on cultivating students' intercultural communication skills. PCA's performance activities required students to consider the different behavioral habits and expressions of people from different cultures in communication, as well as the potential cultural conflicts that arise in intercultural communication. This dual role-playing creates a "mirror effect" in cultural cognition, prompting students to break through a single cultural stance.

As the project leader of PCA, T1, with 33 years of intercultural teaching experience, pointed out that traditional teaching has the problem of “unidirectionality of cultural input”. She reported that English teachers overly focus on the input of the target language culture and neglect Chinese culture. This imbalance directly leads to cultural aphasia among students in real communication. On the contrary, PCA effectively addresses this pain point through the design of bidirectional cultural performance.

In performance activities students are asked to play the roles of Chinese and foreigners to simulate the cultural conflicts that arise from the interaction between Chinese and foreign cultures ... not only focus on foreign cultures.
(T1)

The researcher noted that in the PCA classrooms, teachers typically engage students in designing intercultural dialogues that reflect the assigned roles’ cultural identities and backgrounds. Students work in groups to portray Chinese and foreign cultural perspectives, adopting behaviors and expressions aligned with each culture’s social norms. These performances often incorporate material drawn from popular media, including American, British, and Korean films and television programs, as well as social media content.

T3, who has an overseas training background, found that the context creation of PCA is particularly targeted at students’ weakest skill dimensions, such as conflict management ability and expression ability. This pedagogical focus aligns with patterns observed in classroom implementations of PCA, where cultural differences in conflict resolution styles often became apparent. For instance, when confronted with cultural conflicts, the restrained expression of emotions in S11 and the direct expression in S12

reflect the common tendencies of Chinese and American cultures in conflict management. These classroom occurrences serve to exemplify the cultural competencies PCA seeks to develop, provide situational understanding of how PCA's curriculum design translates into classroom practice, particularly in cultivating awareness of divergent cultural communication styles.

T5, who has an academic background in English teaching, believes that PCA tends to focus on cultivating clear intercultural skills, such as association, comparison, analysis, interaction, evaluation or mediation. She chose to use more examples of Chinese culture for comparison and contrastive exercises in PCA, and took "the students' own cultural background as teaching resources". She emphasized that students should deepen their understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures in PCA, taking "other cultures as a mirror to better understand themselves".

Three teachers reported that PCA focused on training of oral English proficiency. For example, T5 was more concerned about the long-term development of students. She believed that intercultural communication and oral English ability were critical practical application skills for English majors, since they would need to interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds in their future workplace. PCA focused on the cultivation of oral English proficiency, which meets the needs of students' long-term development.

Students have a need to develop their ICC and oral English ability, they don't quite understand the importance of this need now ... they will hit a wall later on in their future work ... it is my responsibility as a teacher to guide them. (T5)

These data reflect that PCA prioritizes active cultural practices over passive knowledge dissemination. This structural feature distinguishes principal component analysis from conventional English teaching methods in the Chinese context.

4.2.2.2 Input: Constrained Implementation Conditions

The input evaluation focuses on measuring the feasibility of PCA for English majors in China. The research findings reveal the deep-seated implementation predicaments faced by PCA in the context of Chinese universities, which reflect the contradiction between the allocation of higher education resources and the innovation of teaching methods. The constraints can be summarized into two interrelated aspects: “large class size” and “classroom layout and facilities”.

Data indicates that PCA faces challenges in terms of scale adaptability in the context of Chinese universities. Through interviews with eight teachers, it was found that an overly large class size (40-50 students) directly weakened the core advantages of PCA — personalized feedback and situational immersion, affecting the feasibility of implementing PCA in English majors in China. Five out of the eight teachers discussed the difficulties they encountered when implementing PCA in a large classroom setting.

For instance, the concepts of T3, who has received training at the PCA Project Centre in the United States, are highly enlightening. She believes that the small-class teaching in the United States (12-16 students) can ensure that each student receives adequate guidance. In comparison, large-class teaching in China (with more than 40 students) makes it difficult for teachers to supervise performance activities effectively. It cannot guarantee students’ participation, which affects the impact of PCA. She said:

The biggest problem is that it is not possible to have small classes. In the U.S., a class typically has 12 to 16 students at most. Our classes, however, often have over 40 students. Implementing this pedagogy is another significant issue. (T3)

According to T7, the implementation of PCA in large classes required more energy and patience on the part of the teacher, as well as a strong sense of responsibility, to ensure that students could recognize which aspects of their abilities needed to be strengthened and improved through performance activities. On the contrary, if students do not receive timely feedback from teachers, the pedagogical effect of PCA will be weakened. She said that:

I have to provide feedback on each students' performance ... The teacher must have a strong sense of responsibility because there are so many students in the class. (T7)

T4's teaching experience at University Y highlights how class size influences PCA implementation dynamics. As an instructor working with large (approximately 50 students) and small (around 25 students) English major classes, T4 noted distinct participation patterns, with smaller cohorts demonstrating more active engagement in PCA activities than their larger-class counterparts. This size-related variation in student involvement emerged as a notable factor shaping PCA's effectiveness across different classroom contexts at the institution. The observed correlation between participation levels and class scale reflects practical considerations in applying interactive teaching methodologies. While PCA maintained its pedagogical value across different group sizes, the natural constraints of larger classes affected the intensity of individual student involvement.

Class participation is affected by class size, think about it, a class of 50 students with only three or four students performing at the podium, then most of the students' attention won't be captured. with a class of 20 or so, that will definitely work well, students will feel that everyone is looking at me, I must prepare and perform well. (T4)

During the site visit, the researcher of the present study noticed that this phenomenon did exist. It was clear that students in large class seem to focus only on their own performance tasks and do not pay much attention to others.

When students were performing, the attention of most of the other students did not seem to be focused on the performers. Only one-third of the students were drawn to the performances on stage, and of the remaining two-thirds, some were silently preparing their performances, while others whispered about what the group had just done. However, no students engaged in any activities unrelated to the performance activities. Once in a while, the sound of the discussion was a little too loud, and T7 made a "shh" gesture to maintain the discipline. (Contextual excerpt 2-P12)

Despite the difficulties posed by large classes, teachers overcame them and implemented PCA to varying degrees through a variety of methods and approaches. As T1 explained:

Small class sizes are unachievable, but we can solve it by grouping students. Each group has 10-12 students and is given the same task. Each group has a leader ... I don't think there is a problem with this pedagogy, the problem comes from ourselves. (T1)

T6, on the other hand, combined PCA with flipped classroom, helping students to establish a collaborative learning environment through an online platform before class, and presenting the results and exchanging feedback during class to ensure the effectiveness of PCA implementation. Some teachers adopted a compromise proposal for implementing PCA. T2 asked all students to film videos of their group performance activities before class. She evaluated these performance activities before class and allowed students who received excellent grades to perform in class, adopting this approach to solve the problems associated with large classes.

As for the code of “classroom layout and facilities”, some teachers pointed out that a standard PCA classroom is laid out in a seminar format, with the classroom desks arranged in a circle and students seated around the round table. The tables and chairs are easy to move around, and the seating layout can be adjusted at any time according to the needs, which also facilitates communication among students. The classroom has sufficient space and advanced multimedia equipment for students to utilize during performance activities. Students can set up scenes as needed to make the performance more engaging.

However, at present, some classrooms in Chinese universities are still arranged in the traditional style, with student desks and chairs arranged in rows, a 30-centimeter-high, four-square-meter-sized podium at the very end of the classroom, and almost no other space utilized in the classroom except for the corridor and the podium. In a 56-square-meter standardized classroom, only nine square meters of the podium area is used for students’ performance activity. This spatial configuration loses the sense of immersion and coexistence that cultural performance should have.

The small class illustrates the potential for spatial reconstruction. There are 25 students in the T5 classroom. The equipment in the classroom is quite good, including a multimedia control console, a projector, and an electronic screen beside the podium. There are five round tables in the classroom, each of which can seat five to six students. The round table and podium can be moved around, facilitating communication among students and creating an equal, interactive space. The classroom is equipped with advanced multimedia facilities for students to use during performance activities. By providing digital situational prompts, the authenticity of the performance activities is enhanced.

4.2.2.3 Process: Improve Students' Participation in Class

Process evaluation measures the implementation of the PCA project. Students' actively participation seemed to be the most significance characteristic under PCA model as most of all teachers claimed an increased level of students' participation in classroom activities. The codes related to this theme were: "student activity oriented", "enhance learning interest", and "increased learning inputs".

T7 and T1 claimed that in a traditional classroom setting, students "listen" passively and teachers are unable to monitor their participation effectively. In contrast, in a PCA classroom, students took the initiative to "speak" in class and teachers devoted the majority of the classroom time to performance activities. This model ensured the participation of every student in the classroom. T1 said that:

Many students in a traditional classroom go into class without their brains, without their mouths, and with their ears ... PCA is different. Students must participate in the performance activities of each class, everyone has to go on stage to perform. This facilitates an increase in student involvement. (T1)

Performance activities integrate cultural scenarios into classroom activities, creating a relaxing and engaging learning environment, and addressing the problems of single resources, boring content, and dull methods of English learning in the past. This teaching method not only allows students to experience and practice various communication styles in different cultural contexts and perceive cultural differences in the classroom, but also stimulates students' curiosity about what they are learning through fascinating cultural themes, increases their interest in learning, and encourages them to participate enthusiastically in the classroom. As some teachers claimed:

In PCA classroom, the student is the protagonist, and his subjectivity comes out naturally as he does performance. (T3)

I think the teaching effect is quite good ... this kind of learning content can attract students. Students like this teaching mode, the classroom atmosphere is very active ... They find it very interesting, they are very happy. (T4)

The traditional English classroom is rather dull. Teacher speaks on the podium, the students are lost in thought and doze ... PCA's classroom activities are lively and interesting, it increases students' interest in learning. (T1)

The interview data revealed how the PCA enhances students' learning motivation and engagement through performance assessment and pre-class tasks. T1 believed that performance evaluation played a role in promoting students' learning input. In the PCA model, in each lesson, the teacher was required to provide feedback and grade each student's contribution, task completion, and participation in performance activities according to the grading criteria for performance activities. Grades were recorded in the

students' final exam results. To achieve high marks in feedback, students' motivation to study was fully utilized, and they invested more time in learning. T1 said that:

There is a wide gap between the grades of the same group. Out of 50 points, the students with the highest grades get 48 or 49 points, and the low ones only get 24 or 25 points. Students' motivation is swiftly sparked in this way.

(T1)

T1, who has 33 years of teaching experience, mentioned that the PCA class uses refined scoring criteria, which leads to significant differences in the performance of students within the same group (such as 48 points vs. 24 points). This differentiated assessment approach enables students to see their progress, thereby further strengthening their learning motivation.

T6 pointed out the role of pre-class tasks in motivating students' input to learning. In the PCA model, students need to collect and organize information, write scripts, and rehearse performance activities before class, which increases the time and energy devoted to learning. She said that:

I assign performance tasks to the students before class, so that they may complete the input of cultural and linguistic knowledge through self-study ... then students can discuss, present and do performance activities in class time. This is equivalent to pushing students to study before class. (T6)

PCA generated heightened student engagement, as reflected in observable behavioral patterns during classroom sessions. A visible manifestation of this engagement occurred during pre-performance preparation periods, where an unusual concentration of

students could be seen independently rehearsing their materials. Unlike typical college classroom interludes characterized by casual socializing or mobile phone use, these sessions featured students quietly whispering their lines in focused preparation. These observations provide contextual background for the “increased learning inputs” identified through other data sources, illustrating how PCA’s performance-based methodology manifested in classroom settings. As part of this qualitative research, these descriptive accounts of classroom scenarios help readers develop a more comprehensive understanding of the practical implementation of PCA and its observable impact on student learning behaviors.

4.2.2.4 Product: Improve Students’ Intercultural Communication Competence

The vast majority of teachers believed that PCA had been more beneficial in helping students develop their ICC. The codes “improve intercultural communication skills”, “improve oral communication skills”, and “mind expansion” determined the theme “improve students’ ICC”.

T1, who has 33 years of teaching experience, as the subject head, systematically integrated PCA into the tourism English program’s curriculum, and the effect was fully verified in practice at the internship base. T1 reported that after a six-month trial of PCA, students were able to flexibly apply the intercultural communication strategies they had learned in the PCA class when serving as foreign tour guides at folk cultural tourism attractions. For instance, they could adjust their explanation methods to accommodate the cultural backgrounds of tourists and effectively address communication issues arising from cultural differences. The rapid improvement of this ability is inseparable from the “cultural performance” emphasized by PCA. Through repeated practice in simulating real-world

scenarios, students transform their knowledge of intercultural communication into practical, operational skills. T1 declared with excitement that she was pretty happy with the outcome of this teaching approach. She said that:

Students' ICC and the ability to spread Chinese culture have experienced a surge in growth thanks to PCA. We have employed this pedagogy to pursue specialization and train interpreters of culture for ethnic areas. (T1)

It is worth noting that T1's recognition of PCA not only stems from the improvement of students' abilities, but also lies in the systematic nature of the method itself. Compared with traditional teaching, PCA has developed a comprehensive and standardized system, encompassing classroom organization, teaching design, assessment, and evaluation, making the cultivation of ICC no longer a matter of random attempts, but rather an operational and assessable teaching process. This transformation made T1 deeply feel the insufficiency of traditional teaching methods and the scientific nature of PCA's teaching design.

I feel ashamed for our previous teaching. It was too casual. Student participation and interaction were lacking in our previous teaching. We have a lot of teaching problems ... The teaching design of PCA is very fine, which has improved my teaching quality. (T1)

Institutional records from University Y offer contextual background that aligns with T1's pedagogical observations regarding PCA's implementation outcomes. The university's official publications document several developments coinciding with PCA's adoption: an apparent improvement in intercultural communication competencies within six months of program implementation, reflected in a 70% pass rate for the foreign tour guide

certification exam (notably higher than historical averages); national recognition as a pilot program for comprehensive undergraduate reform; and designation as a Ministry of Education characteristic specialty program. These administrative records indicate that the program's graduates primarily entered internationally-focused cultural tourism positions, facilitating intercultural exchange.

T2, who has an academic background in comparative literature, affirmed the value of PCA from the perspective of thinking development. She found that students progressively gained a more open cultural perspective and were able to comprehend the principles underlying various cultural practices through long-term cultural comparison and role-playing. The growth has a notable effect on students, changing their worldviews in addition to improving their language proficiency. However, T2 also pointed out that the effective implementation of PCA poses higher requirements for both teachers and students. Teachers need to carefully design each teaching link, while students need to complete the pre-class preparations conscientiously. The impact of PCA will be influenced by any formality. As T2 said:

The effects of performance activities will be very bad if the teacher and students simply go through the motions. (T2)

To sum up the findings in this section, the data revealed that PCA focused on cultivating students' intercultural communication skills and oral English proficiency, which was in line with the needs of Chinese students' ICC development; PCA aroused students' interest in learning, promoted students' learning input, improved students' participation in class and enhanced students' ICC. However, the PCA model had special requirements for teaching conditions, which were not suitable for implementing PCA in an environment

with large class sizes and poor teaching facilities. Additionally, student participation was lower in large classes compared to small classes.

4.2.3 Teachers' Intention and Factors Influencing Their Intention to Use Performed Culture Approach

Teachers expressed different intentions to use PCA. To illustrate the contrast between teachers with high and low intentions to use PCA, demographic profiles were described respectively.

As a professor with 33 years of teaching experience, head of the English department, and chairperson of the trade union, T1 possesses not only professional PCA training experience from Ohio State University but also extensive involvement in PCA localization practices. Her leadership roles included implementing the PCA project for Tourism English majors, overseeing provincial-level teaching reform initiatives, and publishing related research papers. This experience has enabled her to develop a systematic understanding of PCA's pedagogical value. Her statements reflected both the reform-oriented mission inherent to her administrative roles and the confidence derived from hands-on experience. As T1 noted:

In fact, I have an idea to implement this teaching method in all college English courses as well, and I don't want to let there be a rupture zone in the teaching of English major teaching and college English. (T1)

As the director of the teaching and research section, T5's core responsibilities include guiding the teaching reform of courses such as intercultural communication. This administrative role naturally places her in a position to promote innovation in teaching methods. The teaching requirements of the Intercultural Communication course she

undertakes are highly consistent with the concept of PCA, further strengthening her intention to take PCA as the main method.

Although T1 and T5 differ in age and professional title, their long-term teaching experience (both over 18 years) and the resource coordination ability granted by their administrative positions enable them to maintain a strong sense of perceived behavioral control when facing difficulties in the implementation of PCA. This sense of control comes not only from their ability to control the teaching pace but also from their say in the direction of reform.

Five teachers (T2, T3, T6, T7 and T8) indicated that PCA could be occasionally used in intercultural theme courses, while traditional teaching methods would remain the main approach. The ages of these five teachers range from 32 to 44, three hold the title of associate professor, and the other three are lecturers. None of them have administrative positions in their respective colleges, and thus they are not responsible for promoting systematic changes in teaching methods. Their attitudes are directly related to the limitations of their disciplinary positioning and role functions. The main courses taught in T2, T3, T6 and T7 are British and American Literature, Advanced English, Interpretation and other courses. The content of these courses focuses more on text analysis or skills training, and the traditional teaching methods are more in line with the logic of the discipline. Nevertheless, PCA's application scenarios are primarily restricted to particular modules, such as "intercultural communication". They found it challenging to use PCA as the primary approach due to the lack of disciplinary flexibility.

As a Filipino teacher, T8, due to her non-tenured contract status, is more inclined to maintain the stability of traditional teaching in oral English classes and only uses PCA as

an occasional means to regulate the classroom atmosphere. This reflects the dual influence of cultural background and job security on the choice of methods.

T4 from University Y expressed her unwillingness to use PCA. She is 39 years old this year. As an associate professor with a background in applied linguistics, she has long taught Advanced English and Applied Linguistics courses, and her teaching content is deeply rooted in traditional language analysis methods. Meanwhile, T4 has no administrative position and does not need to undertake teaching reform tasks, so she is more inclined to rely on familiar traditional teaching methods.

This finding indicates that there is a disparity in teachers' intention to implement PCA, and teachers holding subject teaching positions have a more active intention to use PCA.

A three-level coding analysis of the interview data resulted in four themes, which were (1) perceived behavioral control, (2) subjective norm, (3) attitude toward the behavior and (4) teacher's cognition of ICLT reform.

4.2.3.1 Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control refers to teachers' perceptions of the ease or difficulty of implementing PCA. Three sub-themes were determined for the theme of "perceived behavioral control", these were (i) resource facilitation conditions, (ii) self-efficacy, and (iii) operability of PCA.

The sub-theme "resource facilitation conditions" was identified from the codes "exam-oriented", "textbooks", and "the duration of intercultural communication curriculum". As for "exam-oriented", five teachers (T2, T3, T6, T7, and T8) who were

willing to use PCA occasionally pointed out that PCA could not be used in every class because the ICLT was not the focus of the current examination system. To help students pass various types of examinations, traditional teaching methods will remain the primary choice. Viewing “exam-oriented education” as the core obstacle restricting the use of PCA is directly linked to their role as frontline teachers. Teaching pressures make it hard for them to break free from the short-term evaluation framework of “exams first”; even if they recognize the value of PCA, they have to compromise between reform ideals and real-world assessments. As T3 said:

The most important thing is to ensure students’ pass rate in all kinds of examinations. ICLT are not the focus of the exams. We can’t change the examination system. What if it affects the passing rate of students? (T3)

T2 said that after use of PCA, she had to re-explain the grammatical knowledge and vocabulary again using the traditional teaching method so as not to miss the key points of the exam. T2 said that:

If you use PCA too frequently, it will waste time and delay students from learning the knowledge points of the exams. (T2)

In contrast, T1 believes this is due to “our own reasons”, and what mainly needs to change is “ourselves”. T1 has been deeply involved in the localization practice of PCA (responsible for PCA teaching reform and presiding over provincial teaching reform projects). This triple role enables her to understand teaching evaluation beyond the consideration of examination pass rates. As the director of the teaching and research section, T5 is tasked with guiding the Intercultural Communication course. Her administrative role gives her the initiative in course design, allowing her to assess the

teaching value from the perspective of students' long-term development. She believed that teachers should not be bound by the examination system. T5 said that:

If I only focus on the exams, when they (students) begin to work, they are going to hit a wall ... It is my responsibility as a teacher to guide them to learn for future. (T5)

T2, T4 and T6 felt that the textbooks brought great difficulties to them in implementing PCA. They mentioned that there was a gap between the ICLT content of textbooks and the real intercultural communication situations. Most textbooks employ Chinese thinking styles, language expression habits, and cultural rules to design intercultural communication dialogues, which do not meet the teaching design requirements of PCA. T2 and T6 said that:

We use the textbook that the university assigns us, you can't pick one on your own. This means only certain content in the textbook can be used in PCA approach. (T2)

We can't follow what is in the textbook when designing performance activities; we have to find our own material and design our own dialogues. (T6)

Teachers lack the authority to independently choose teaching materials and can only make limited modifications within the framework of the textbooks allocated by the university, which exposes the passivity of front-line teachers in the allocation of teaching resources.

As for the codes of “the duration of Intercultural Communication course”, three teachers (T3, T4 and T7) reported condensed learning hours of Intercultural Communication course limited their opportunity to use PCA. T7 said:

We only have 12 weeks to teach this course. I am completely unable to finish the teaching objectives if I use PCA. (T7)

T1 and T5 held a different opinion from most teachers. They believe that the use of PCA actually reduces classroom teaching tasks and makes more effective use of classroom time. T1 said that:

Less time in class means that it's more crucial to encourage students to take initiative and study independently before class. I guide students to complete knowledge learning by self-study before class, and students only need to output knowledge in class. (T1)

The sub-theme “self-efficacy” was identified in relation to codes “lack of professional capacity to use PCA” and “lack of confidence”. T6, T7 and T8 from University H expressed their concerns about their ability to teach with PCA. They had not received any training on PCA and felt increasingly overwhelmed with the implementation of PCA. In their view, the requirements of PCA teaching design were too complex for them to complete effectively on their own in the absence of training and teaching standards. As T6 admitted, due to a lack of relevant knowledge, she was unable to provide detailed guidance on the performance activities of students. As T6 and T7 said that:

I should say I am a bit scared to use PCA ... I have no experience of going abroad, and I have little experience in intercultural communication. (T6)

I don't have the confidence to do it without knowing much about it. (T7)

The sub-theme of “operability of PCA” was related to “difficulty in teaching design” and “excessive workload”. Apart from examination orientation, the most frequently cited influencing factors for teachers were the difficulty of teaching design and excessive workload. PCA was characterized by demanding and heavy teaching tasks that require a high degree of professionalism and sustained commitment from teachers. Although PCA enhances the quality of instruction, it also makes teaching more challenging. A higher-quality curriculum requires more time and effort on the part of teachers to develop and implement.

Six teachers (T1, T2, T4, T5, T7, and T8) reported that the instructional design of PCA was time-consuming and labor-intensive, and was more challenging than other pedagogies. The mismatch between the textbook and PCA has caused great difficulties in teaching design and added a great deal of extra workload. Teachers need to develop a syllabus, collect data on relevant intercultural topics, and write specialized lesson plans. T2 said that:

I often have to work overtime to design PCA lesson plans. The energy I spent is more than the traditional teaching method. (T2)

What particularly attracted the researcher's attention was that, like other teachers, T1 and T5 encountered the same difficulties in implementing PCA, and even undertook more arduous work. However, on the contrary, they expressed a more active intention to implement PCA than other teachers. The following data analysis further revealed the factors that promote teachers to implement PCA.

The data revealed that resource-facilitating conditions, such as exam-oriented textbooks and an Intercultural Communication course, as well as the operability of PCA, including difficulties in teaching design and excessive workload, affect teachers' intention to use PCA. Teachers lacked teaching resources to support their implementation of PCA, and some teachers still lacked systematic training, practical experience, and confidence in using PCA. Lack of systematic training often results in teachers' incomplete understanding of PCA, which affects their intention to try new methods.

The differences in teachers' perception of "resource convenience conditions" revealed the result of the combined effects of role positioning, the depth of PCA practice, and the disciplinary context. The high-intention groups (T1 and T5), leveraging the advantages of administrative authority and in-depth practice, regarded exam-oriented learning, teaching materials, and duration as modifiable variables. However, teachers in low intention groups, due to the passivity of their roles and the limitations of their practices, perceived it as an insurmountable constraint.

4.2.3.2 Subjective Norm

Subjective norms refer to the perceptions of important people or groups around them about teachers' implementation of PCA. The code determined that the theme of "subjective norm" was "incentives from leadership". The results showed that the teachers of University Y have received strong support from the university's leaders and faculty. Various measures have been taken by University Y to encourage teachers to implement PCA: some teachers were sent to America to participate in a one-month training programme about PCA; the dean organized seminars, training sessions, and demonstration

lessons of PCA; and textbooks on intercultural themes were prepared for teachers to use for PCA teaching.

These supportive policies have played an essential role in promoting teachers' implementation level of PCA. T1 has implemented teaching reforms using PCA, making comprehensive adjustments to the talent training objectives and curriculum of the English major in the college, and advancing PCA teaching to a deeper level. Similar to T1, T5 of University H has received positive feedback from leadership during the implementation of PCA. The president publicly praised her teaching reform and affirmed her teaching achievements. The positive feedback from her leader strengthened her confidence in implementing PCA. Yet not all of the teachers from University Y had an active intention to use PCA, as T1 stated:

The leadership of the college gave me great support, so I was able to use PCA for teaching reform. But not all teachers are willing to use PCA. Many teachers are still afraid of difficulties and unwilling to step out of their comfort zone. (T1)

These data confirmed that subjective norm, while contributing to teachers' intention to use PCA, was not a major factor influencing teachers' intention. The impact of "incentives from leaders" on teachers' intention to use PCA interacts in a complex manner with teachers' depth of reform participation, role authority, and disciplinary inertia. Teachers with experience in in-depth reform participation and administrative role authority benefit from leadership incentives to improve their performance in implementing PCA. In contrast, other teachers lack the internal motivation to translate external incentives into actions.

4.2.3.3 Attitude Toward the Behavior

Attitude toward the behaviors refers to teachers' positive or negative evaluations of PCA. Two sub-themes determined in relation to the theme "attitude toward the behavior" were "instrumental attitude to PCA" and "emotional attitude to PCA."

The sub-theme of "instrumental attitude to PCA" was formed from the concepts of "improving teaching quality" and "meeting the needs of professional development". T1 and T5 gave a positive evaluation on the role of PCA in improving teaching quality. They said that student-oriented classroom activities enhanced students' participation in class, stimulated students' interest in learning, and improved teaching quality. Students' language application ability and ICC have been rapidly developed. While the other teachers believed that PCA helped enhance the quality of teaching, it was not as high as expected, especially when implementing PCA in large classes, where it faced various problems.

As for code "meeting the needs of professional development", T1 and T5 reported they have applied for provincial teaching reform projects, published relevant research papers, or won prizes for coaching students to participate in professional competitions through the implementation of PCA, which played an indirect role in their personal professional development.

It revealed that T1 had a higher pursuit of professional development. As the subject leader, she shoulders the critical responsibility of developing the English major and guiding other teachers in carrying out teaching activities. Despite all the difficulties encountered in implementing PCA, T1 rose to the challenge and put in great patience and energy to overcome the problems and promote the implementation of PCA in the English major. Excerpted from the statement of T1:

This pedagogy is really troublesome to implement, but if I you spend more time and energy on it, you can still make a lot of achievements ... I like challenges, even if it's too much trouble for everyone else to do, I'm willing to do it as long as I can make achievements. (T1)

From University Y's official website, the researcher of the present study located a news report that focused on T1's PCA teaching reform. According to the report, T1 oversaw the implementation of the PCA-based teaching reform, modified the discipline development plan, updated the goals for talent cultivation, set up the professional curriculum, and effectively completed the objectives of the teaching reform. The report highly praised T1's efforts for teaching reform. As the report claimed:

In the past 33 years of teaching, T1 has been dedicated to her work. Her teaching methods have been continually improved, and she has successfully transitioned from language knowledge incultation to ICLT, which effectively enhances students' professionalism. (excerpt from University Y's website)

Through the active implementation of PCA-based teaching reform, T1 has achieved fruitful teaching reform achievements. She has presided over the provincial teaching reform projects and published more than 20 teaching reform papers, won the Prize of Excellent Achievement in Teaching and Research of Y Province. Similar to T1, T5 made great effort on the implementation of PCA. She tried to combine the flipped classroom with the PCA approach and explored the implementation of PCA in the case of reduced class time. During these five years, T5 has used PCA to develop students' intercultural communication competence and language abilities in her oral class, and has actively

guided students to participate in national and provincial professional competitions, winning one national award and two provincial awards. As T5 said:

These prizes are useful in applying for the title of associate professor. (T5)

Due to the management roles of T1 and T5 and their in-depth reform practices, they were able to integrate the PCA reform with the improvement of teaching quality and the realization of professional development, forming a positive evaluation. However, for other teachers, PCA is merely an optional teaching method rather than a tool for professional development, which makes it difficult for them to recognize its added value for their growth. This disparity reflects the gap between teachers' professional development needs.

During the interviews, the words “a sense of fulfillment” and “pleasure” were frequently mentioned by the seven teachers who were willing to continue using PCA, especially T1 and T5. Although teachers' salaries were unaffected by the quality of teaching, poorly taught classes left them bored and frustrated. The PCA model increased teaching quality, which made teachers feel a sense of personal worth. The following excerpts reflect the voice of teachers, as T5, T6, and T7 said:

If there are new ways to make teaching go on happily and effectively, then being a teacher will be very gratifying, and the sense of personal fulfillment will be much higher. (T7)

The greatest reward (of implementing PCA) is spiritual fulfillment. When I hear (positive) feedback from my students, my heart is satisfied. This spiritual reward was the motivation for me to continue to carry out pedagogical reforms. (T5)

Although the teaching quality doesn't affect our income, I will feel pretty down if no students listen to my class. I want to improve the quality of teaching. (T6)

T1 expressed their strong willingness to pursue a sense of personal worth. T1 pointed out that at one time her professional pursuit was to be assessed for the title of associate professor. However, after achieving this goal, being stuck in repetitive and inefficient lessons year after year left her confused and questioning her career pursuit. She then used PCA and discovered the joy of teaching again. These, rather than the title of associate professor, gave T1 a greater sense of worth in her role as a teacher. This confusion is a typical manifestation of "teacher burnout". She said that:

Year after year, teaching the same repetitive content and doing repetitive labor is driving me crazy. This pedagogy (PCA) gave me new inspiration and a way to escape from the repetitive work. As I did it, I saw more and more light. (T1)

The inspiration brought by PCA not only restructured T1's classroom but also changed her perception of the role of a teacher, transforming her from a mere knowledge transmitter to a creator of educational reform. This transformation is highly consistent with her role as a subject leader.

One notable characteristic of T1 and T5 was discovered through data analysis: a love of the teaching profession and a liking for challenges. Although they encountered difficulties during the implementation of PCA, they said, "There are ways to overcome them as long as you keep going". Repetitive phrases such as "love of teaching" and "duty" were used frequently during the interview. To some extent, this showed that T1 and T5 had

a strong sense of professional responsibility and a strong willingness to pursue personal value through teaching and professional development.

No teacher reported direct financial return from implementing PCA. Teachers' remuneration packages did not change according to the quality of teaching. In response, most teachers stated that this did not affect their intention to use PCA, as it was their "duty" to teach well. But this situation affected the intention of individual teachers to implement PCA. T4 was the only teacher who expressed her reluctance to continue using PCA. She stated that becoming an associate professor was her ultimate professional goal and that her prior teaching endeavors were likewise focused on achieving this goal. After being assessed as an associate professor, her attitude towards teaching changed. "Just get the job done", she said. The most important thing now was to "take care of myself and my family". As for the quality of teaching, she was not too concerned. She said that:

How well we are taught doesn't have much impact on us. Sometimes I wonder why I bother to try a new teaching method. There is not much incentive to do it. (T4)

This result indicated that the instrumental attitude and emotional attitude to PCA had effects on teachers' intention to use PCA. Although there was no direct economic return in implementing PCA, teachers with a high sense of professional responsibility were more inclined to use PCA in order to improve teaching quality. Teachers with a higher sense of personal worth and pursuit of professional development were also more willing to use PCA because they have met their spiritual needs and career development needs through its implementation.

The strong emotional identification of T1 and T5 with PCA (spiritual satisfaction, sense of personal value) stems from their professional roles and their high pursuit of personal value. PCA has become a vehicle for them to break through professional predicaments and achieve self-transcendence. The sense of achievement of the other five teachers (T2, T3, T6, T7, T8) who are willing to use PCA occasionally is more inclined towards the basic satisfaction of an effective classroom. This difference is related to the shallowness of their participation in the reform, and the pragmatism of their professional pursuit. The increase in student participation brought about by PCA meets their basic professional expectations. This kind of emotion is aimed at avoiding professional frustration rather than being an active pursuit of values.

As the only one who was unwilling to continue using PCA, T4's career pursuit was once highly focused on "becoming an associate professor", and all her teaching efforts were centred around this goal (such as publishing papers and completing teaching loads). After achieving this goal, due to the lack of new career pursuits, she eventually developed a negative attitude of "just doing the job done". For T4, PCA neither helped her achieve her already accomplished career goal nor was it incorporated into her new life focus (taking care of herself and her family). This attitude was not a denial of PCA itself, but an inevitable result of the shift in her personal career stage and value pursuit.

4.2.3.4 Additional Dimension: Teacher's Cognition of ICLT

In addition to the factors related to the three aspects of TPB: attitudes toward behavior, subject norms and perceived behavioral control, another important factor related to teachers' intention emerged from the data: teachers' cognition of ICLT, which does not reflect in TPB framework. Teachers' perceptions of the status of ICLT in the teaching of

English majors affect their intention to use PCA. Although the Chinese Ministry of Education emphasizes the importance of ICLT in EFL teaching, teachers' cognition on the state of ICLT continues to differ widely. T1 and T5, who have an active intention to use PCA, claimed that ICLT should be the main teaching model in EFL teaching, and the current teaching method urgently needs to be changed to ICLT. While the other six teachers believed that ICLT was important, they also thought it should not be the main teaching approach in EFL teaching. T1 said that:

PCA could effectively promote the teaching reform and change the existing problems in the teaching system, and what needed to be changed was mainly “ourselves”. (T1)

During her 33 years of teaching, T1 has witnessed a shift in her teaching objective from “language knowledge impartation” to “ICC cultivation”. The practice of PCA has enabled her to directly observe the positive impact of ICLT on students' language application and ICC. As the subject leader, T1's role is to lead the professional development of the discipline, and this role requirement makes her viewing ICLT as a way to break through the bottleneck of traditional teaching. Similarly, as the director of the teaching and research group, T5 has explored the implementation path of ICLT by combining the flipped classroom with PCA, which has strengthened her practical perception that ICC is the core goal of EFL teaching.

Other teachers (T2, T3, T4, T6, T7, T8) consider “ICLT important but not the main model”. This perception reflects their reliance on traditional teaching paradigms and the role of “shallow participation in teaching reform”. Due to the lack of role authority to

coordinate the professional system, their cognition remains at the course level rather than the system level.

The data showed that in the process of implementing PCA, teachers lacked the support of convenient resources, lacked of self-efficacy and endure high intensity teaching preparation. Due to factors such as exam orientation, teaching materials, length and content of Intercultural Communication courses, self-efficacy factors such as lack of training and lack of experience in intercultural teaching, difficulties in teaching design and heavy workload, most teachers showed a low intention to use PCA, and only a small number of teachers showed a positive intention to use it.

Teachers' instrumental and emotional attitudes towards PCA promoted their intentions to use PCA. Instrumental attitudes encompass teachers' perspectives on PCA in enhancing teaching quality, meeting students' developmental needs, and fulfilling personal and professional development requirements. Emotional attitudes include attitudes towards PCA in improving their sense of personal worth.

Although there is no direct financial return for implementing PCA, teachers with a high level of professional responsibility are more inclined to use PCA for the sake of student development and the improvement of teaching quality, and are less concerned about financial returns. Teachers with a strong sense of personal value and a willingness to engage in professional development showed a more positive intention to use PCA, and they enhanced their sense of personal value while promoting their professional development through the implementation of PCA.

In addition to the three dimensions of attitude toward behavior, subject norm, and perceived behavior control, the present study identified a dimension that affects teachers'

intention to use PCA but is not included in the TPB framework, namely teachers' cognition of ICLT. The teachers who believed that ICLT was the primary teaching task of English majors expressed a firm intention to use PCA, whereas the teachers who disagreed with the importance of ICLT showed a low intention to use PCA. Teachers who are willing to implement PCA actively possess the following characteristics: a strong sense of personal worth, a strong desire for professional development, and a deep understanding of ICC. The intention of teachers to implement PCA varied with the intensity of their professional worth and desire for professional development, as well as their perception of ICC cultivation. Table 4.1 summarizes the factors that influence teachers' intention to use PCA and provides an overview of the hierarchical relationships between the three coding stages, which allowed the researcher of the present study to make general assumptions regarding the participants' intention.

Table 4.1: Factors Influencing Teachers' Intention to Use PCA

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Perceived behavioral control	Resource facilitation conditions	Exam-oriented impact
		Short duration of Intercultural Communication courses
		Too little intercultural content in textbooks
	Self-efficacy	Lack of professional capacity to use PCA
		Lack confidence
	Operability of PCA	Difficulties in teaching design
		Excessive workload
Attitude toward the behavior	instrumental attitude to PCA	Improve teaching quality
		Meeting the needs of professional development
	emotional attitude to PCA	Enhance a sense of personal worth
Subjective norm		Leadership facilitates
Teacher's cognition of ICLT		ICLT should not be the main teaching model

To sum up, data drawn from teacher participants revealed that teachers described students' ICC in terms of (1) moderate ICC level, (2) general intercultural communication knowledge, (3) open attitude and (4) limited intercultural communication skills. Due to the lack of opportunities for intercultural communication practice and classroom exercises, the students' intercultural communication skills was the lowest in three dimensions of ICC. Students comprehend mainstream cultures like those of the United States and Britain well, but they had a weak grasp of the cultures of other nations. Students could use empathy strategies and explain Chinese cultural statutes to avoid misunderstandings in intercultural communication, but they could not fully express themselves in intercultural communication and cannot effectively avoid and flexibly deal with cultural conflicts. Students were inability to accurately express Chinese culture in intercultural communication due to limited vocabulary and insufficiently knowledge of Chinese culture. The findings of the present study indicated that the most important factors influencing their skills were limited intercultural communication experience and lack of classroom training.

Teacher claimed that PCA focused on developing students' intercultural communication skills and oral English capability, which was in line with students' ICC developmental needs; PCA promotes students' ICC development, which was manifested in the enhancement of intercultural communication skills, oral communication skills, the ability to spread Chinese culture and mind expansion; PCA had a good efficacy of facilitating learning, students' interest in learning was aroused, and their learning inputs was increased. However, the PCA model has special requirements for the teaching environment, the large class size and simple classroom facility limited the teaching effect of PCA, and the participation of students in large classes was lower than that in small classes.

Although teachers affirmed the pedagogical effectiveness of PCA in ICC cultivation, there were variations in teachers' intention to use it. Only a few teachers expressed their intention to use PCA, while others showed more concerns. Resource-facilitating conditions, the operability of PCA, and self-efficacy hurt teachers' intention to use PCA, posing significant difficulties for teachers to implement PCA in practice. Teachers were overworked and lacked resources to support them in implementing PCA; some teachers also lacked systematic training, practical experience, and confidence in using PCA.

Teachers who were willing to actively implement PCA have the following characteristics: a strong sense of personal worth and a strong desire for professional development, as well as a deep understanding of ICLT. The intention of teachers to implement PCA varied with the intensity of their professional worth and desire for professional development, as well as their perception of ICC cultivation.

4.3 Student Participants' Perspective

This section reports data from student interviews to examine student perceptions of the impact of PCA. The data sources were categorized into undergraduate and graduate groups to explore the similarities and differences in the perceptions of PCA among students with different work experiences and intercultural communication experiences. Similar to the previous section, which examined teachers' perspectives of the impact of PCA, the themes that emerging from the data in this section were analyzed using the CIPP model.

4.3.1 Perceived Impact of Performed Culture Approach

A total of 18 initial codes were obtained from the data in this section. The initial codes were categorized and generated; the relationship between codes was analyzed, and

three themes and seven sub-themes were formed through the comparison of similarities and dissimilarities among codes. The themes were (1) improvement of ICC, (2) learning promotion efficacy, and (3) individual development of students.

4.3.1.1 Improvement of Intercultural Communication Competence

Students responded positively to the teaching effectiveness of PCA in ICC cultivation. The graduate group had more positive comments than the undergraduate student group. Two sub-themes were found: (1) improvement of intercultural communication skills, (2) improvement of intercultural communication knowledge and awareness.

Sub-theme of “improvement of intercultural communication skills” was determined by “improved oral English proficiency”, “deal with misunderstandings and conflicts”, and “learned how to behave in different cultures”. The data showed that the most frequently mentioned positive changes for students in PCA were the “improved oral English proficiency”. Students reported that in the PCA model, they had the opportunity to perform on stage in every class; the opportunities for oral exercise were higher under the PCA model. The cultivation of oral English and culture was combined through the performance activities, and students’ oral English proficiency was improved. G2, a 32-year-old lady who works as an English translator in a Chinese traditional medicine export company, said that:

In this model, teacher combine the speaking and culture knowledge together.

We not only have to listen, but also express, and express accurately. (G2)

U1, U5 and G4 have mentioned that through frequent performance activities, their fluency in oral English and self-confidence have been significantly improved. U1, a 22-year-old junior female student, said that:

I think it is really better for exercising oral English. We learnt mute English before and were afraid to speak (in English). It's much better now, at least I can speak some common sentence patterns fluently. I have to performance in class every day, so my oral English has improved a lot. (U1)

U5, a 22-year-old junior male student, said that:

I have had the opportunity to practice speaking English in ways that I would not have been able to get in my previous classroom. (U5)

G4 is a 31-year-old program manager who works in a foreign-related company. He mentioned that his perception of PCA had changed over time. When he first came into contact with it, he felt sceptical about the teaching method and even somewhat resistant to it. When he went to the teaching practice base six months later and interacted with foreigners from other cultures, he discovered that, unbeknownst to him at the time, his oral English had improved, which altered his perspective on PCA. After graduation, he worked in a foreign-related enterprise, where he frequently interacted with people from different countries, and gradually gained a deeper understanding of the teaching effect of PCA in his work. G4 said that:

At the beginning, I felt that there was ineffective, it's like playing a game, quite childish ... Later on, I realized that at least my oral English have improved quite a lot (G4).

Some students reported that in PCA classes, teachers asked students to simulate intercultural communication scenarios by taking on the roles of people from different cultures, mimicking their communication styles, and communicating and demonstrating through performance activities how to deal with misunderstandings and conflicts arising from cultural differences. U5 believed that during performance activities, they played the role of people from different countries, imitated the communication style of people from different cultural statutes, and “learned how to behave in different cultures”.

As for “improved intercultural communication knowledge and awareness”, codes relation to this sub-theme were “be aware of different behavioral ways”, “realized differences between cultures” and “learned many knowledge of different cultures”. Two students illustrated how PCA encouraged them to value cultural diversity and allowed them to find their desire to discover many cultures. As G2 and G4 explained:

When I went abroad to study a few years later, I realized that activities are really useful, cultural differences and awareness can’t be experienced just by reading textbooks and materials (G2).

My undergraduate thesis was about culture shock in intercultural communication. it was through PCA program that I realized there were differences between cultures ... I realized that, oh, it turns out that Americans don’t think yellow is the color of respectability (G4).

The feedback from G2 and G4 indicates that PCA helped them develop a sense of cultural differences, which was verified in their subsequent study abroad and work experiences.

It is worth noting that PCA has also had a profound impact on students' cultural identity. The experiences of G3 and G5 demonstrate that PCA not only enhanced their communication skills but also reshaped their cultural cognition and career choices. G3 is a 30-year-old female who works as a translator in a foreign trade company. She explained that PCA focused on intercultural communication scenarios, integrating Chinese and English cultures into the classroom, and promoted intercultural awareness through classroom practice, which had a profound impact on her and even influenced her career choice. G3 said that:

(It) inspired my desire to spread Chinese culture to foreign friends. After graduation, I chose to be an interpreter, and when I first took on this job, I was conscious of promoting Chinese culture through foreign communication. (G3)

G5, a 31-year-old English translator expressed the same opinion as G3. He felt that the training in the PCA model had heightened his awareness of intercultural communication. He said that:

This experience had a great impact on me, and it was only from that time that I became aware of the importance of intercultural communication. Before that, I didn't even know that foreigners' cultures and ways of thinking were different from ours. (G5)

The effect of PCA exhibits phased characteristics. Undergraduate students (such as U1 and U5) tend to focus more on improving their language skills, while graduates (such as G2, G3, G4, and G5) place greater emphasis on the impact of cultural awareness and

career development. Student feedback reveals that the improvement of ICC requires time to accumulate. Short-term classroom effects may mainly be reflected at the language level, while deeper cultural understanding and identity construction require a more extended period of accumulation.

4.3.1.2 Individual Development of Students

The attitude of the graduate group towards “personality development” is more positive than that of undergraduate students. In addition to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the two groups of students also agreed highly on their individual development in PCA. Students reported that they had “developed courage to speak English”, “developed self-confidence”, “improved cooperation and coordination competence”, “improved courage to communicate”, “aroused competitive spirit”, “expansion of minds” and “broadened knowledge”. These codes could be generated into three sub-themes: (1) character development, (2) interpersonal communication development, and (3) cognition development, and categorized as one theme: “individual development of students”.

The sub-theme of “character development” was determined by codes “developed self-confidence” and “developed courage to speak English”. G1 a 32-year-old middle school English teacher explained that her original level of spoken English was relatively poor. Even though she was outgoing, her limited level of spoken English sapped her self-confidence in communicating with her classmates and the foreign teacher, she had to remain silent during class activities for quite a long time. This contradictory state is common among language learners. She reported that her self-confidence has improved after a period of training in the PCA model. As she said:

Even if you can't speak English well, you still need to participate in performance activities ... It helps to develop self-confidence, self-confidence in expression, self-confidence in communication, and gives me more courage to express myself. (G1)

For U3, an introverted 22-year-old female, the training in PCA model has boosted her courage to perform and speak English on stage. Some students claimed that their interpersonal communication development and cognitive development were enhanced in PCA. They said that:

Because I am more socially intimidated, I was reluctant to go on stage and communicate with others. But after a period of training, I became more courageous and was able to open my mouth to speak English in front of the whole class. (U3)

In terms of interpersonal communication skills, the experiences of G2 and U5 demonstrated how PCA promoted the development of their interpersonal communication and cognition.

The assignments are mostly teamwork, such as collect cultural material and writing scripts, we all go over and solve together, and any difficulties we encounter are solved with the group working together. I learn a lot from other people in the whole process ... exercise my coordination and cooperation skills. (G2)

There are more classroom activities to participate in ... has definitely improved my communication and social skills. (U5)

G1 and U3 situations demonstrate that developing courage and confidence takes regular training rather than being accomplished all at once. Simultaneously, the alterations in these personality qualities will foster the growth of ICC and language acquisition, creating a positive feedback circle. Student coursework from T5's PCA classes offers valuable insights into developmental patterns in intercultural learning. A review of comparative cultural research reports reveals noticeable progression in analytical competencies, particularly in assessments of perspective diversity and critical evaluation. These developmental trajectories appear most pronounced when examining longitudinal patterns, where the pedagogical approach demonstrates cumulative effects on learner attributes. It illustrates how sustained engagement with PCA's methodology cultivates gradual transformations in intercultural confidence - a developmental process consistent with established language and identity acquisition theories.

4.3.1.3 Learning Promotion Efficacy of Performed Culture Approach

There is no notable difference between the data of the two groups of students. The sub-themes in relation to the theme of "learning promotion efficacy of PCA" were (1) stimulating learning inputs, and (2) stimulating learning interesting. Most of the students believed that the PCA model increased their learning input and aroused their learning interesting.

The sub-theme of "stimulating learning inputs" were determined by codes "invested a lot of time and energy in learning", "do not dare to be lazy", "developing a positive attitude toward learning" and "concentrate more on studies". The most frequently mentioned learning promotion factor of PCA was teachers' performance evaluation. G1, G2, U1, U5 and U6 reported that the performance evaluation served as a motivator for them

and they put more energy and time to learn than before. U6, a 22-year-old male student explained that:

Teacher evaluates each group's performance every class, both verbally feedback as well as performance scores. The scores will be included in the overall grade of this course, thus motivating me to learn. I spend more time and energy to learn before class. (U6)

From the teacher's feedback of each lesson, I can know my own shortcomings and get the teacher's guidance, I learn more targeted and concentrate more on studies. (G1)

The feedback is timely, I am more motivated to learn and I don't dare to be lazy in every lesson. (G2)

Based on field observations of PCA classrooms, researchers noted that the performance evaluation system functions as a metacognitive development tool, demonstrating characteristics that combine multidimensional evaluation with formative feedback. Teachers employed assessment criteria encompassing three dimensions: linguistic accuracy (including phonological, lexical, and syntactic pragmatic norms), intercultural competence (identification and analysis of cultural conflicts), and performative quality (effectiveness of emotional expression and body language). By systematically integrating peer assessment mechanisms, this evaluation system transcended the limitations of traditional teacher-centered approaches.

The teachers implemented feedback with a well-defined operational framework. A typical procedure began with guided comparative analysis of group performances, where

instructors facilitated students' reflection on exemplary cases through structured questioning, with particular emphasis on contrasting communication patterns across cultural contexts (e.g., indirect expressions in Chinese social situations versus direct American communication styles). The feedback consistently comprised three key components: immediate error correction, metacognitive heuristic questioning, and constructive affirmation strategies.

This assessment system exhibited three interrelated pedagogical characteristics: first, it achieved continuous development through a “performance-feedback-reflection” cyclical mechanism; second, it enhanced teacher-student interaction quality by employing dialogic feedback to define competency standards explicitly; and third, it maintained learner engagement by balancing suggestions with positive reinforcement. This practice embodies the principle of the PCA assessment paradigm—transforming evaluation into a participatory learning process rather than merely a tool for outcome measurement.

G3, G4, and U5 felt that the facilitating effect of the pre-class tasks was the most pronounced, serving to encourage supervised learning. G3 mentioned that since they had to perform on stage in every class, they had to dedicate a lot of time and effort to learning before class to finish the pre-class task and give an excellent performance. They also needed to write the script, gather materials, and rehearse the performance. She put more effort into learning than before. G3 said that:

Pre-class tasks have pushed me to spend more time on my studies because every class has to be a performance on stage, if you're not well prepared before class, you may be very embarrassed in the next class and not know

what to say. In order to be able to not make a fool of yourself or even performance excellent, you must put in more effort. (G3)

The pre-class tasks of PCA have broken the traditional learning model of “in-class input and post-class consolidation”. The cultural knowledge input that was initially required to be completed in class has been advanced to allow students to complete it independently before class. For students, the classroom has evolved from a passive listening experience to one that involves the presentation and internalization of knowledge, thereby enhancing the sense of participation and depth in learning. A learning model of “independent exploration before class - internalization in class practice” has been formed. In pre-class tasks, students are not only learners but also collectors of materials, creators of scripts, and planners of performances. This role transformation prompts them to shift from recipients of knowledge to users of it.

The sub-theme of “stimulating learning interest” was identified from codes “learning while playing” and “improved learn enthusiasm”. The sub-theme was generated from students’ views about the degree of participation in performance activities. Four students showed great interest in the performance activities. They reported that the performance activities provided them an opportunity to practice speaking and experience cultural differences, which made the originally boring language learning fun and allowed them to “learn while playing” and their “improved learn enthusiasm”. The experiences of U5 and G4 reveal how PCA changes the emotional experience of learning through context reconstruction. As U5 said:

I just memorized words and learned grammar before PCA. I found learning English to be quite boring. It is much more interesting to experience the

culture than to learn grammar; it is like role-playing. I can learn while playing. (U5)

According to G4, students in the PCA method are required to physically enact stories set in various cultural contexts within the classroom, allowing them to become fully immersed in intercultural communication scenarios. The activities were novel, interesting and challenging, which attracted his attention more than other teaching methods, therefore, his enthusiasm to learn increased.

I am Interested in learning than before. We are significantly more engaged in this class than in English General Reading, English Listening, or Grammar. (G4)

PCA enhanced the positive emotional experience of learning through contextualized performance, transforming mechanical memory into immersive experience, making the originally abstract language knowledge and cultural differences perceptible and participatory. For language skills, oral practice is no longer limited to isolated sentence pattern training, but rather real expressions integrated into specific scenarios, making oral output more practical and effective. For cultural cognition, experiencing cultural differences through interpreting stories from different cultural backgrounds is more profound than merely explaining cultural knowledge, achieving the simultaneous cultivation of language learning and ICC.

It is worth noting that the differences in participants' backgrounds also affected the experiential effect of PCA. Graduates such as G3 and G4, due to their many years of practical experience in intercultural communication, are more likely to understand the actual value of the PCA task and thus have a more positive perception of the role of PCA.

In contrast, undergraduate students, such as those in U5 and U6, are more drawn to novel forms and peer interactions.

4.3.1.4 Attitude Toward the Use of Performed Culture Approach

According to Noddings' Concern Theory, students' emotional experiences during the learning process are key measure of the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Ensuring positive and active student responses in the classroom requires students to emotional identify with the value of the pedagogy (Noddings, 2002). Emotional experiences can be categorized into two types of positive and negative effects.

Five graduate students and five undergraduate students had a positive emotional experience in the PCA model. In contrast, one undergraduate student and one graduate reported negative emotions such as "fear, nervousness, anxiety, and embarrassment". The majority of students had a positive affective experience in the PCA model, reporting positive emotions such as "anticipation, excitement, and happiness" and an overall positive experience because "the classroom activities were lively and innovative, and much more interesting than listening to the teacher's lectures".

G3 exuded fond memories of this pedagogy. She said she was very satisfied with the teaching effect of PCA, and even though it has been nearly eight years since she graduated, she still remembers the class clearly and still keeps the photos taken during the class. She used words like "impressive", "fresh" and "looking forward to the class" to express her love for this teaching method.

I was very interested and happy and excited to take the class, I was looking forward to taking it. It was a very valuable experience. I have graduated almost ten years and I still often think of the scene of the class. (G3)

Two students expressed negative emotions such as “fear”, “nervousness”, “anxiety”, “embarrassment”. U3 said that:

I was very tired and exhausted in this kind of class, especially when I forgot my words and couldn't speak anything at the podium, it was very embarrassing. (U3)

However, the opinion on whether teachers should use PCA was mixed. Some students expressed support for teachers' use of PCA, but others were opposed. Positive reactions were higher among graduate students than among undergraduate students.

Five graduates and one undergraduate were very supportive of faculty implementation of PCA. The English proficiency of these six students was at three levels: above average, average, and below average, respectively. The reasons affecting their attitude in the program are as follows: (1) beneficial for intercultural communication after graduation, (2) helpful for my job, (3) to gain more practical skills. As a graduate student and an undergraduate student explained:

Because we could only learn some textbook knowledge before, this language knowledge may be more suitable for exams, but the effect in the real work is really weak, impractical. I am a translator ... The training I received in the PCA model is very helpful for my current job. (G6)

Some students learn English mainly to pass exams, But I think in order to gain more practical skills and a more international perspective, we should focus on the development of intercultural communication skills and speaking skills. (U2)

One graduate (G5) and four undergraduates did not support the frequent use of PCA by teachers. The English proficiency of these five students was at three levels: above average, average and below average respectively. They indicated that the primary motivation for learning English was to pass the exams. Moderated by this mediator, they preferred that teachers use teaching methods that effective in improving exam scores. U4 said that:

Although PCA is a good way to practice speaking and ICC, and the knowledge gained is interesting, it is almost useless in exams because the exams are still based on skills such as reading, vocabulary, grammar, and listening. (U4)

U3, U5 and U6 reported that in order to do the performance activities, they had to spend a lot of energy and time on preparation before class, which affected the preparation for the TEM-8 examination. As they said:

It's too much of a waste of time to rehearse performance activities over and over again ... the exams don't test intercultural communication skills, so you might as well just do some sets of test papers. (U3)

Taking time away from brushing up and memorizing vocabulary ... is not as efficient as brushing up more sets of test papers. (U5)

This model emphasizes oral communication, intercultural communication, etc., which is not used in the exam. Our main (task) now is to pass the exams. (U6)

G5 expressed that the factors influencing his negative attitude were personality factors, in addition to the teacher's undifferentiated rating of group members in the performance evaluation, which made him feel unfair. G5 said that:

I don't like this approach very much, mainly because I'm not fond of group activities. I am the kind of person who is a loner and prefers to do things independently. I find group activities to be very energy-consuming and exhausting to coordinate. Everyone has a different division of labor, and their efficiency varies; some finish tasks quickly, while others take longer, some contribute significantly, and others contribute little, but everyone receives the same score. I think it's unfair. (G5)

U5, a 22-year-old male student, was neutral on this point, believing that "it is due to the unreasonable examination system, and the content examined in the examination is out of touch with reality".

4.3.2 Comparative Analysis of Two Students Groups

The data from the undergraduate students (U1-U6) and the graduate students (G1-G6) reflected that PCA has both common and differentiated impacts on the two groups. From a common perspective, both groups of students generally recognized the value of PCA in improving oral English proficiency. This consistency revealed the training effect of PCA on language production skills. Whether it is the change from "dumb English"

mentioned by U1 or the perception of improvement in oral English ability after working in G4, they all reflect that repeated practice of performance activities can indeed overcome the problem of insufficient practice in traditional language classes. Furthermore, both sets of data reflected the positive impact of PCA on learning motivation, although the specific manifestations were different. The novel teaching forms attracted more undergraduate students, while graduates had a deep understanding of the practical value of PCA in their work.

However, the two sets of data showed differences in the cognitive dimension of ICC improvement. The feedback from the undergraduate group mainly focused on language skills and behavioral adaptation, such as U5's concern about "how to behave in different cultures". In contrast, the graduate group demonstrated a deeper reconstruction of cultural cognition. The study abroad experience of G2 and the career choice of G3 both indicated that they had begun to develop metacognitive cultural intelligence and were able to understand the systematic nature of cultural differences from a more macroscopic perspective.

In terms of personality development, the two sets of data also showed different emphases. For undergraduate students like U3, the emphasis was more on cultivating immediate courage and overcoming social phobia. At the same time, for graduates like G1, the feedback more reflected the establishment of professional confidence and recognition of professional identity. It is particularly worth noting that the graduate group generally mentioned the delayed manifestation effect of the influence of PCA. The cognitive transformation process of G4 from "feeling naive" to "belated realization" vividly interprets the long-term impact of PCA. From the perspective of learning promotion, there

were also differences in the perception of the advantages of PCA between the two groups. The undergraduate group placed more emphasis on immediate classroom feedback and score incentives, such as the evaluation system in U6, which aligned with the learning motivation model in traditional educational environments. The graduate group, on the other hand, was evaluated more from a long-term perspective of ability development.

There were also differences between the two groups of students in their attitudes toward teachers' use of PCA. The data revealed a significant phenomenon of group differentiation. The graduate group generally maintained a more positive and supportive attitude. As highlighted by G6 regarding the utility of PCA in "practical work," graduates were more likely to link learning outcomes to long-term career applications. Their focus on professional relevance aligned with PCA's ability to foster practical skills, making them more receptive to this teaching approach to enhance workplace competitiveness. In contrast, the undergraduate group showed diverse attitudes: one in favor, four opposed, and one neutral. The opposition among undergraduates was mainly reflected in the view of "being useless for exams" mentioned by students U4 and U5, which exposed the deep-seated contradiction between the traditional assessment system and the competency-oriented teaching method.

It is worth noting that the factor of English proficiency did not show a notable impact in either group, which forms a rather meaningful contrast with the conventional expectations. Whether it is students with a higher level of English proficiency (such as G6 who support PCA) or those with a lower level (such as U3 who oppose PCA), the difference in their attitudes was more driven by motivation rather than ability differences.

To sum up, the section has delineated the key findings of the subcase of students. The data indicated that PCA could effectively improve students' ICC, enhance intercultural communication skills, especially oral English capacity. PCA had a better learning facilitation effect, in which students' learning input was increased and their learning interesting was enhanced. The learning facilitation factors of PCA included performance evaluation, degree of participation in performance activities, and the facilitating effect of the pre-class tasks. The intercultural communication scenarios simulated by PCA help students grow in their interpersonal, personality, and cognitive domains. It also stimulated students' curiosity and improve their drive to learn. Students' opinions on the support and opposition to teachers' use of PCA are mixed. The majority of graduate students supported PCA, whereas the majority of undergraduate students held opposing opinions. This data showed that students' attitudes toward teachers' use of PCA were more influenced by learning motivation and less influenced by students' English proficiency, affective experiences, and personalities. Students who were motivated to learn by "learning for application" expressed more positive and supportive attitudes toward teachers' implementation of PCA. Students who were motivated to "learning for passing exams" expressed more negative attitudes toward teachers' implementation of PCA.

These data indicated that the evaluation of performance positively influenced the level of students' learning inputs in the pre-class task; that the level of learning inputs in the pre-class task determined the quality of the performance activities in class; and that the teacher's performance evaluation facilitated students' reflection on their performance activities. Students input intercultural communication knowledge through pre-class tasks, practice intercultural communication skills through classroom performance activities, and internalize ICC through performance evaluation. In this process, students completed the

input, output, and internalization of ICC. In this process, students completed the input, output, and internalization of ICC. Table 4.2 summarizes the themes and codes related to the teaching effectiveness of PCA emerging in this section, provides an overview of the hierarchical relationships between the three coding stages, and enables the researcher of the present study to make general assumptions regarding the students' perspectives on PCA.

Table 4.2: Themes of Impact of PCA from Students' Perspective

Codes	Sub-themes	Themes
improved oral English capacity	Improvement of skills	Improvement of ICC
deal with misunderstandings and conflicts		
learned how to behavior in different cultures		
be aware of difference in behavioral ways	Improvement of knowledge and awareness	
realized there were differences between cultures		
developed courage to speak English	Character development	Individual development of students
developed self-confidence		
improved coordinate and cooperate competence	Interpersonal communication development	
Improved courage to communicate		
aroused competitive spirit		
expansion of minds	Cognitive development	
Broadened knowledge		
invested a lot of time and energy in learning	Stimulating learning inputs	Learning promotion efficacy
do not dare to be lazy		
concentrated more on studies		
developed a positive attitude toward learning	Stimulating learning interesting	

Table 4.2 continued

increased learn enthusiasm		
learn while playing		

4.4 Cross-case Analysis of Teacher and Student Participants

This section presents a cross-case analysis of the findings from both sub-cases, including teachers and students. Convergent and divergent perspectives about PCA in ICC cultivation were produced from both teachers' and students' perceptions. Teachers and students, as core participants in teaching activities, share a consensus on PCA based on the essence of teaching, but also experience differences due to role positioning, demands, and situational constraints.

4.4.1 Convergent Perspectives

Teachers and students have expressed many similar views on the teaching role and intention to use PCA. Both teachers and students affirmed the role of PCA in “enhancing ICC” and “breaking through dumb English”. The formation of this consensus reflected the alignment of the goals of teaching and learning. The core demand of students was the improvement of practical ability. The characteristics of PCA, such as table evolution and contextualization, precisely respond to this need. Teachers (even occasional users) also recognized the training value of PCA in language production skills, and this recognition was based on a fundamental understanding of teaching laws.

Teachers and students expressed similar views on the intention to use PCA, with only a small number of teachers intending to use PCA actively, most teachers intending to use it occasionally in courses related to intercultural communication, and one teacher not

wanting to continue to use it; five graduates and one undergraduate were very supportive of the use of PCA by teachers, while one graduate and five undergraduates were not supportive of the use of PCA by teachers on a regular basis in their teaching.

This reflected the limited trust both sides have in PCA and indicated the result of the trade-off between the value and risk of PCA by teachers and students. For teachers, the intention of “occasional use” is a strategy to balance reform and teaching stability (especially for those without administrative positions). For students, whether they support PCA or not is directly related to their learning motivation orientation. Both teachers and students have been influenced by the factor that “ICC is not a key point of the exam”, and have formed a helpless consensus that “PCA is effective but dare not use it more often”.

4.4.2 Divergent Perspectives

According to the CIPP evaluation model, teaching effectiveness of pedagogy includes four aspects: context, input, process, and product. Although teacher participants and student participants were concerned about the impact of PCA in terms of product evaluation, the special angles differed. Students’ product evaluation of PCA extended to personal development (such as courage cultivation, cognitive expansion, etc.), which was an individual development perspective based on personal experience. Teachers’ product evaluations focused on the achievement of teaching objectives (such as the matching degree between ICC and course objectives), and were more inclined towards instrumental rational result judgments.

As the organizers and implementers of teaching activities, teachers paid more attention to the role of PCA in context and input evaluation. They expressed their own opinions on the adaptability and feasibility of PCA in the context of English majors in

China. Teachers' attention to the contextual adaptability of PCA (such as whether it aligns with the training objectives of the English major in China) and input conditions (class size, facilities, and teaching materials) stems from the role responsibility of the course designers, which was a cognitive blind spot that the student group has almost never touched.

Students' cognition focused on classroom experience, while neglecting macro factors such as context adaptability and resource conditions. Essentially, this was a natural tendency of the learner's role. They were more concerned about whether PCA can meet their own needs rather than whether PCA can be integrated into the teaching system.

Cross-case analysis between teachers and students revealed that the role of PCA in promoting language proficiency, enhancing ICC, increasing students' classroom participation, boosting learning motivation, and promoting individual development is consistent with the ICC development needs of students. However, due to the constraints of application scenarios and internal and external conditions of the teaching system, the role of PCA in EFL teaching in China has been affected. Through intra-case analysis and cross-case analysis, emerging themes and issues can be identified, including students' ICC development needs, the consistency between PCA and ICC development needs, and teachers' ambivalence about using PCA.

4.5 Discussion

The present study focuses on the application of PCA in the cultivation of ICC for English majors in China, with its core issue being the application of PCA in the cultivation of ICC for English majors in China. It is found that the role of PCA in promoting language ability, enhancing ICC, increasing students' classroom participation and learning motivation, and promoting individual development is deeply in line with the ICC

development needs of English majors in China. However, due to the constraints of application scenarios and internal and external conditions of the teaching system, the role of PCA in EFL teaching in China has been affected, and teachers' intentions to use PCA show apparent inconsistencies. The following text will discuss the research results in the context of EFL teaching in China in combination with the theoretical framework.

4.5.1 Students' Intercultural Communication Competence Level

This qualitative case study reveals that superficial language barriers, deep-seated cognitive disparities, individual skill deficits, and systemic teaching inadequacies constrain students' ICC. These deficits point to a structural contradiction in the development of ICC among Chinese university students. The comparison between the data of the present study and the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC of Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) and the sub-dimensions proposed by Gu (2021) highlights two key findings: Firstly, the foundational triad (knowledge, attitude, skill) effectively explains students' competency gaps, particularly the disconnect between dimensions, validating its intercultural applicability. Secondly, while Gu (2021) merely put forward a theoretical framework of ICC sub-dimensions (e.g., national cultural identity, bidirectional dialogue) without empirical data for verification, the findings of this study, based on in-depth analysis of interview, confirm the utility of these sub-dimensions in capturing the unique challenges faced by Chinese learners. At the same time, the study also exposes the hurdles in implementing these concepts within local contexts, thus providing solid empirical support for Gu's (2021) theoretical construction.

The results indicate that students primarily acquire knowledge of Anglo-American cultures through textbooks, social media, and films, leading to a notable "center-periphery"

asymmetry and “shallowness” in their ICC cognition. Gu’s (2021) framework emphasizes the integration of “target culture knowledge, national cultural knowledge, and world cultural knowledge” within the knowledge dimension, which starkly contrasts with the “center-periphery” imbalance observed in this present study, violating the systematicity requirement of this dimension.

This characteristic of student ICC can find room for response and expansion in relevant academic research. The findings align with Byram’s (2011) research on language learners’ intercultural competence, which posits that overemphasis on Western mainstream cultures in education systems leads to selective focus and exacerbates cognitive imbalances. However, our data further reveals a dual asymmetry: students not only lack understanding of global cultural diversity but also struggle to articulate their own cultural identities. This dual deficit has rarely been documented in studies of non-elite universities.

These findings are somewhat consistent with the concept of fragmented cognition proposed by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009). They believe that due to limited cultural exposure, students have developed symbolic memories of mainstream culture (such as festivals and cuisine) rather than a deeper value-based understanding. However, a critical distinction exists: while Spitzberg and Changnon’s (2009) participants from more internationalized institutions could partially rectify such fragmentation through interactions with international peers or short-term exchanges, students in this present study — from provincial Chinese cities with <1% study-abroad rates and minimal international residents — lack these corrective opportunities, entrenching their fragmented knowledge. As Gu (2016) pointed out regarding ICLT of China, ICC involved not just familiarity with facts or behaviors but also cultural identity, transformation, and meta-awareness. The abundance of

cultural products may paradoxically lead to unsystematic intercultural exposure, leaving students without the critical thinking skills to discern truth or falsehood (Zhou & Burhanudeen, 2023).

The findings of this present study indicate that the intercultural cognition of students exhibits characteristics of center-margin asymmetry and a shallowness phenomenon, which is consistent with the research conducted by Byram (2011) in his empirical study on language learners' ICC, in which he pointed out that the excessive inclination towards Western mainstream culture in the education system would lead to a selective focus in learners' cultural cognition, thereby exacerbating the cognitive imbalance of center-periphery. However, the present study reveals a double asymmetry: students not only lack an understanding of global cultural diversity but also struggle to express their own cultures. This dual defect has rarely been documented in previous studies on non-elite universities.

The results of the present study reveal that students demonstrated an open attitude towards cultural differences (for example, acknowledging different values), indicating a shift from a self-centered perspective to one that acknowledges the differences in values and cultural experiences among different social groups (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Students are prompted by cultural inquiry to examine cultural practices from various angles and to step outside their comfort zones. These traits align with intermediate-level ICC, as they demonstrate the capacity to think beyond cultural or environmental norms of learning and put themselves in other people's shoes (King & Bexter, 2005).

Students' open attitude toward cultural differences (e.g., acknowledging the diversity of values) aligns with the cultural relativism and global thinking proposed by Gu

(2021). It particularly corresponds to the theoretical framework in the dimensions of “a sense of a community with a shared future for mankind” and “recognition of cultural diversity”. Nevertheless, such an attitude has not been translated into cultural respect in practice. For instance, in intercultural conflicts, students often opt for avoidance instead of rational communication due to language barriers, which reflects the disjunction between their attitudes and behaviors. Due to the lack of genuine intercultural interaction in China, students are unable to apply interaction strategies in practice. This disconnection highlights a unique challenge in the context of limited intercultural resources in China. In the absence of intercultural communication opportunities, the growth of attitudes alone cannot guarantee the development of ICC.

Teachers’ views on students’ skills reveal their fundamental capacity for empathy, listening, and cultural awareness. On the other hand, the data indicates that students’ behaviors in intercultural communication lack flexibility and the ability to fully and accurately express Chinese culture, which hinders them from questioning the assertions of cultural representations. These findings align with those of Cai et al. (2022), who studied 10 Chinese college students and found that they tend to avoid confrontation and direct communication when facing intercultural conflicts. Additionally, the present study findings reveal a language-level issue: even students with a strong knowledge of Chinese culture lack translation skills. Students avoid confrontation not only because of cultural norms, but also because they are unable to defend their culture verbally or conceptually. This ICC deficiency of students contrasts sharply with the skill goal of “telling China’s story well” proposed by Gu (2021) for foreign language education in China.

The causes of the above problems can be explained from two aspects: environmental constraints and teaching deficiencies. The lack of intercultural opportunities and the misalignment of educational practices have jointly led to the imbalance development of students' ICC levels in various dimensions. Although Dai (2016), Zhou and Burhanudeen (2023) also noted the ICC deficiencies of students, their research results mainly emphasized the limitations at the individual level (for example, insufficient cultural knowledge).

The evidence from this present study, on the other hand, suggests that this outcome is a result of both teaching failure and personal talents, which highlights the distinctiveness of the research background. Due to a lack of compensatory resources (such as international exchanges and multicultural interactions), teaching shortcomings have more severely compounded the inadequacy of individual capacities in provincial universities with a lower degree of internationalization.

Consistent with the research of Popov et al. (2012), the present study demonstrates that foreign language anxiety can lead to students' passivity in intercultural interaction. The contextual variability of these reactions can explain certain behaviors of Chinese students, such as their passivity and silence in intercultural interactions. Furthermore, the data of this present study adds a crucial dimension: the lack of conflict resolution training in the classroom exacerbates this passivity. They deserve sufficient attention because they can influence the emotional experience and outcomes of intercultural interaction (Popov et al., 2012; Reid & Garson, 2017).

The uniqueness of the present study lies in revealing how limited resources magnify students' ICC deficiencies, thereby giving rise to phenomena not observed in

studies conducted by international institutions: dual cultural asymmetry, attitude-behavior disconnection, and the inability and avoidance of self-expression. These findings emphasize that the development of ICC is not merely a matter of individual skills cultivation but also requires systematic reforms, including diverse cultural contacts and practice-oriented curricula, to adapt to the unique challenges of a less internationalized environment.

4.5.2 Impact of Performed Culture Approach on Intercultural Communication Competence Cultivation

The results of this present study demonstrate the consistency between PCA and the ICC development needs of students. These findings partly support previous research by Chen (2015) and Xin and Yang (2018) on the effectiveness of PCA in EFL teaching in China, although their studies used different research methods. The present study, through a qualitative exploration of the practice of PCA in the cultivation of ICC for English majors in China, its uniqueness is not only reflected in the depth of research methods and discoveries, but also in the systematic interpretation of the localization practice of PCA, which forms a sharp contrast with previous related studies.

In terms of methodology, prior studies on the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation primarily relied on experimental designs, measuring effectiveness solely through pre- and post-test score changes. In contrast, the present study adopts the CIPP evaluation model to assess PCA's alignment with training objectives holistically, its suitability for the Chinese EFL context, and students' ICC development across four dimensions: context, input, process, and product. By qualitative individual interviews, it overcomes the limitations of traditional quantitative research. It more effectively captures PCA's real-world teaching impact, offering a significant methodological contribution to existing research.

In terms of the dimensions of ICC cultivation, previous studies have pointed out that an important limitation of ICC intervention is that they usually focus on a specific subset of the ICC dimensions in teaching, making it challenging to achieve systematic development of ICC (Deardorff et al., 2017; Zhang & Zhou, 2019). The present study found that PCA can encompass the three core dimensions of ICC, with a particular emphasis on cultivating intercultural communication skills—a dimension often overlooked by most teaching interventions.

Through performance activities, students transform language knowledge and cultural cognition into operational communication skills in real-world simulated scenarios, such as handling cultural conflicts and initiating dialogues, thereby completing the leap from “knowledge” to “action”. This finding aligns with Yu’s (2020) research on the role of PCA in developing behavioral skills. Meanwhile, the present study suggests that PCA does not function in isolation in cultivating behavioral skills; instead, it forms a coherent, closed loop with knowledge input and attitude internalization. The teaching of behavioral culture needs to be combined with the interpretation of local culture; otherwise, it will lead to the ambiguity of cultural identity. This finding is consistent with the view proposed by Phipps and Guilherme (2005) that intercultural communicators should possess bicultural negotiation ability, which supplements the limitation of insufficient attention to cultural identity in Yu’s (2020) research.

Both groups of students recognize the positive role of PCA in “improving oral English proficiency” and “stimulating learning motivation”. This similarity stems from the core mechanism of PCA — integrating language output with cultural experience through

“performance practice”, which meets the common demand of language learners for “practical opportunities” regardless of their learning stage.

The divergent attitudes toward PCA implementation between graduate and undergraduate students offer critical insights for selecting teaching methods, reflecting a tension between students’ learning orientations and competency-oriented pedagogy. Undergraduates’ attitudes are constrained by the “examination-oriented system”. As undergraduate education is often still tied to standardized testing (Biggs, 1999), it fosters a mindset where learning activities are primarily evaluated based on their direct contribution to exam performance. This aligns with surface learning approaches, focusing on meeting immediate assessment requirements rather than engaging deeply with skill development.

Such misalignment between PCA’s emphasis on competency development and undergraduates’ exam-centric priorities not only explains their resistance but also highlights a deeper structural conflict: rigidities in traditional assessment systems (Ewell, 2009) hinder the adoption of innovative, skill-oriented teaching methods among students focused on short-term academic success. In contrast, graduate students’ positive stance, rooted in perceptions of PCA’s relevance to professional practice, underscores how learners’ shifting priorities—from academic credentials to career readiness—create a more receptive context for competency-based approaches (Fullan, 2007).

Both teachers and students recognize PCA’s role in “enhancing ICC” and “breaking through dumb English”. This consensus arises from PCA’s essential attribute: it integrates language and culture teaching through “contextualized performance”. This attribute aligns with teachers’ understanding of pedagogical principles and satisfies students’ needs for

improving practical abilities, thus embodying the fundamental consistency between teaching and learning objectives in instructional activities.

An important finding of the present study is that PCA is a multi-factor collaborative teaching system. Previous studies (Chen, 2015; Xin & Yang, 2018) primarily focused on a specific aspect of PCA (such as performance activity), whereas the present study found, through qualitative data, that its impact on ICC depends on the synergy of performance evaluation, pre-class tasks, and performance activity. Students acquire knowledge through pre-class tasks, develop skills through performance activities, and then internalize their attitudes through teacher feedback and evaluation. The three support each other to form a complete learning chain, realizing the “input-output-internalization” of ICC. This finding reveals the deep-seated mechanism by which PCA functions, filling a deficiency in existing studies that analyze the interaction of its internal elements.

At the level of localization practice, the uniqueness of the present study is particularly prominent. The creator of PCA claims that learning a foreign language should lead to the acquisition of behavioral and communication skills consistent with the social and cultural norms of the target language, which implies a tendency towards assimilation of the target culture. Previous studies (Kramsch, 2006; Marx, 2002; Newton et al., 2015) have criticized this tendency, pointing out that the shift to the target culture does not imply that the ultimate goal is to develop abilities similar to those of native speakers (Newton & Yates, 2015). ICLT aims to enable learners to understand their own and others’ identities rather than replace their own (Byram, 1997; Marx, 2002); However, there are few empirical cases to illustrate how to balance “understanding others” and “maintaining oneself” in teaching.

The present study finds that the teacher participants in the research actively reconstruct the goal of PCA, transforming the one-way “imitation of the target culture” into a two-way “exchange between Chinese and Western cultures”. Students not only simulated the communication norms of the target language culture but also actively expounded on the connotations of Chinese culture, establishing a dynamic “third position” between familiar local practices and the target culture. This transformation not only echoes Byram’s (1997) theory that ICLT should maintain cultural identity, but also operationalizes it through specific teaching cases, providing concrete examples for Holliday’s (2016) abstract concept of dynamic negotiation space. It has enriched the theoretical depth of PCA localization research.

Additionally, the present study reveals the adaptive challenges of PCA in the context of large classes in Chinese universities. Through observing classes of 40 to 50 students, the present study finds that the class size weakens the advantages of personalized feedback and situational immersion of PCA. The situational learning theory of Lave and Wenger (2014) emphasizes that the physical configuration of the learning environment should align with the teaching objectives. Therefore, spatial sensitivity should be regarded as a key moderating variable for the localization implementation of PCA. This discovery challenges the universal assumption of PCA, emphasizing that its application in Chinese universities needs to be localized by class size rather than simply transplanting the experience of small-class teaching, which presents a novel, practical approach for implementing PCA under non-ideal conditions.

Based on the aforementioned research findings, the role of PCA in ICC culture is not the result of a single isolated impact but rather the outcome of the interaction of

multiple elements, including pre-class tasks, performance activities, and performance evaluation. Hence, the present study constructs an ICC cultivation model suitable for the context of English majors in China, responding to the localization needs of ICC development among Chinese students.

As shown in Figure 4.2, the arrow sequence of pre-class tasks (input) → performance activities (output) → evaluation/feedback (attitudinal internalization) illustrates the developmental cycle of ICC cultivation. Pre-class tasks (input) serve as the knowledge foundation, where students collect cultural information (such as comparing the Chinese Spring Festival and Western holiday traditions) and linguistic resources. Performance activities (output) transform this knowledge into communicative practice. Students apply the pre - class learning in simulated intercultural scenarios (for example, role - playing cross - cultural conflict mediation and interpreting the connotations of Chinese culture in English). This step turns “knowing” into “doing”.

Performance evaluation (attitudinal internalization) completes the cycle. Teacher feedback (such as assessing cultural confidence and the appropriateness of intercultural strategies) reshapes students’ internal attitudes toward ICC, shifting from “anxiety about cultural misunderstandings” to “active engagement in bicultural dialogue”. Students, with the teacher’s feedback, internalize knowledge and skills into personal values and beliefs regarding intercultural communication.

The bidirectional arrow (Chinese culture ↔ Other cultures) embodies reciprocal cultural interaction, a core innovation of this model. Instead of one-way “target culture assimilation”, the model emphasizes symmetrical cultural exchange. Students practice interactive communication between the local Chinese and the target cultures and compare

cultural congruences and differences. The bidirectional cultural interaction and evaluative feedback foster critical cultural awareness. Students learn to compare cultures (such as the value systems of China and the West), reflect on their cultural subjectivity, and avoid the bias of “target culture assimilation”. This two-way cultural comparison process helps students develop a dynamic cultural identity, enabling them to understand “the other” while preserving their own cultural identity.

The uniqueness of the ICC cultivation model based on PCA lies in the following aspects: firstly, previous cultivation models have primarily focused on the constituent elements or macro development paths of ICC, but they have limitations in integrating teaching links, adapting to local contexts, and promoting bi-cultural interaction. The advantage of this model precisely lies in its breakthrough of these limitations. Through the closed-loop design of “pre-class input - classroom practice - evaluation feedback”, the teaching factors of PCA are integrated throughout the process, providing a ICLT teaching plan for English major teachers in China. Secondly, previous ICC models have largely emphasized “adaptation to the target culture”, which tends to lead students from non-English-speaking countries into a state of “inability to express their native culture”. While the model based on PCA compensates for the deficiency of existing models in neglecting “the subjectivity of native culture” by strengthening “the interaction between Chinese culture and other cultures.”

As shown in Figure 4.2, with the facilitation of PCA’s performance evaluation, pre-class tasks, and performance activities, the three components of ICC are well balanced and integrated in the model through the interaction of Chinese culture with other cultures. Students will benefit from gaining a solid knowledge of different world cultures, and they

must also develop the critical cultural ability to compare and analyze their own native culture with other cultures, and critically evaluate the results of such comparisons (Byram, 2017).

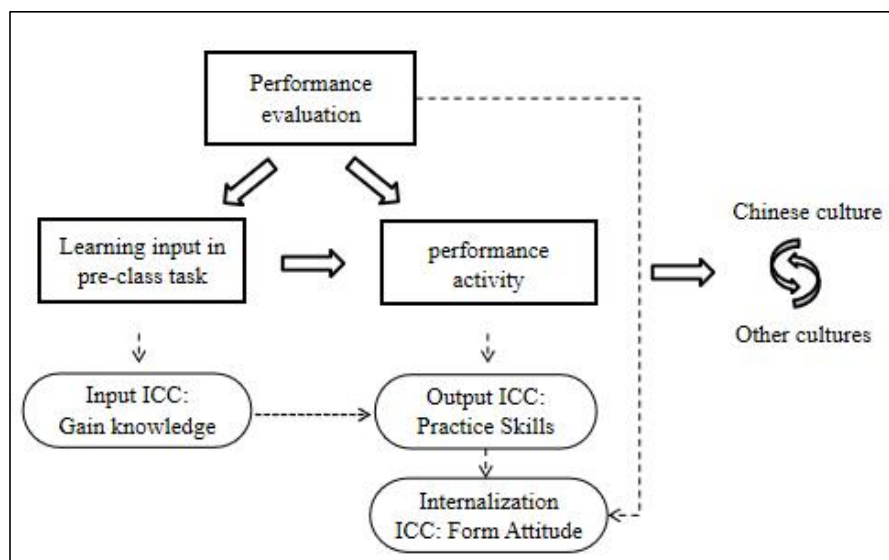


Figure 4.2: The ICC Cultivation Model Based on PCA

4.5.3 Teachers' Intention and Factors Influencing Their Intention to Use Performed Culture Approach

The data reveal that teachers' intention is the result of the combined effect of perceived behavioral control, attitude towards the behavior, and subjective norms. Meanwhile, teachers' cognition of ICLT serves as a key factor, influencing the action paths of each element of TPB. This discovery not only verifies the applicability of the TPB in non-Western educational contexts but also highlights the influence of the unique system and cultural context of higher education in China on teachers' teaching decisions.

TPB emphasizes that perceived behavioral control reflects an individual's judgment on whether they can perform their behavior smoothly (Ajzen, 1991). The present study finds that the perceived behavioral control of PCA by Chinese EFL teachers — their

confidence in successfully implementing this approach — is influenced by resource facilitation conditions, self-efficacy, and the operability of PCA. This finding forms interesting echoes and differences with international research when viewed through perceived behavioral control. For instance, it aligns with Harrison and Howard's (2009) observation that effective teaching practices depend on complex environments, as resource facilitation conditions directly shape teachers' perceptions of whether they have the necessary support to carry out PCA smoothly. It also resonates with Ali and Walker's (2014) note that overlooked teacher needs hinder curriculum implementation, which ties to how insufficient resources or unclear operability weaken teachers' perceived control over executing PCA.

The particularity of the Chinese context further clarifies its impact on teachers' perceived behavioral control. First, the lag in teaching materials (Suo, 2015; Zheng, 2018) —a product of universities' unified textbook procurement systems clashing with demands for intercultural language teaching innovation — reduces teachers' sense of control: outdated materials create uncertainty about whether they can effectively integrate PCA into lessons, directly undermining their judgment of smooth implementation.

Additionally, the exam-oriented education system prioritizes language skills over intercultural communication competence (Gu, 2021), strengthening teachers' risk-averse mentality. Unlike the marginalization of cultural teaching in other EFL contexts (Khan, 2023), China's examination system exerts stronger constraints, making teachers perceive less control over choosing PCA: they fear deviating from exam-focused content will hinder student performance, thus doubting their ability to implement PCA without negative consequences successfully. These contextual factors collectively shape Chinese EFL

teachers' perceived behavioral control over PCA, highlighting how external constraints and systemic pressures directly influence their judgment of whether they can execute the approach smoothly.

Both teachers and students share the contradictory mentality of recognizing PCA's effectiveness yet hesitating to use it frequently, but their underlying causes differ. Teachers' concerns stem from the trade-off between resource constraints and teaching stability, while students' hesitation arises from the conflict between exam-oriented tendencies and capacity development. This discrepancy reveals the distinct predicaments within the teaching system: teachers are constrained by institutional factors, whereas students are driven by their goals. Together, they reflect the profound constraints of "exam-oriented culture" on teaching practices in China's EFL context.

Teachers' self-efficacy is associated with the lack of intercultural training (Harper, 2020) and insufficient teaching experience in ICLT (Zia & Atefeh, 2018), confirming the assertion in TPB that low self-efficacy inhibits behavioral intentions. Unlike the research of Harper (2020) and Zia and Atefeh (2018), the evaluation-oriented approach in Chinese universities, which emphasizes research over teaching, enables teachers to achieve teaching development only through self-exploration (Thao, 2020), further exacerbating the obstacles to implementing PCA.

TPB holds that a positive attitude towards behavior will strengthen behavioral intention. In the present study, the attitude of teachers towards PCA shows a distinct imprint of Chinese culture. Teachers recognize the instrumental value of PCA in enhancing students' interest and teaching quality, which echoes the research in (Frideman, 2016) that teachers' expectations of self-expression through teaching are to meet the needs of altruism

(imparting knowledge, care, and giving friendship) and to provide the desires of narcissism (obtaining admiration, respect, and demonstrating leadership).

The findings of the present study show that PCA has not brought direct economic returns, but teachers' positive emotions (a sense of achievement, personal sense of value) still drive their intention to use it. This finding is consistent with the research results proposed by Arnon et al. (2013), which suggest that internal motivation takes precedence over external factors in teachers' career choices. However, it highlights the particularities of the Chinese context even more.

The moral expectation of selfless dedication for teachers in Chinese society (Wang & Zhou, 2017) and the professional ethics of "inner sage" (Jin & Ye, 2017, p108), this altruistic tendency enabled teachers to internalize spiritual rewards such as gaining students' respect and witnessing students' growth as core incentives, far exceeding the narcissistic desire mentioned by Frideman (2016). Compared with the direct pursuit of teaching effectiveness by Western teachers, Chinese teachers regard PCA more as a carrier for fulfilling the "mission of nurturing people". However, the imbalance between teaching input and economic returns weakens the motivation of some teachers, suggesting that Chinese universities need to establish a material reward mechanism that matches teaching innovation, in addition to spiritual incentives.

The subjective norm in TPB refers to an individual's perception of whether significant others support the behavior. Data shows that the administrative power structure of Chinese universities has profoundly shaped this norm. Leadership support plays a positive role in promoting high-intention teachers, but for the majority of teachers, this support becomes ineffective due to "lack of resource support and training". This finding

aligns with the view of Ali and Walker (2014), who argue that the needs of teachers have not been adequately recognized during the implementation of the curriculum. The demands of teachers are of great significance to any educational transformation. Although teachers have a clear understanding of PCA, implementing it is not feasible without appropriate support and guidance.

In the Chinese context, the cognitive of ICLT, as factor independent of TPB, affects teachers' behavioral intentions towards PCA. This discovery expands the applicable boundaries of TPB and is deeply related to the ICLT predicament in Chinese higher education. This finding is consistent with some previous studies on the ICLT reform in New Zealand, Vietnam, China and many other regions around the world (Oranje & Smith, 2017), providing a new analytical perspective for understanding teachers' behavioral intentions in the context of teaching reform.

The present study finds that most teachers regard ICLT as an accessory to language learning, which echoes the research of Gu (2021) and Liao and Li (2017) on ICLT in China, that is, the ICLT concept of teachers is disconnected from the requirements of the Ministry of Education, and teachers' understanding and implementation of effective ICLT methods have not yet been well established. The lack of such cognition and practice constitutes an obstacle to the advancement of reform.

The present study further reveals, through an in-depth description of the Chinese context, that this cognitive difference is not merely a misunderstanding or deviation, but rather reflects the localized cognitive contradiction in China's "exam-oriented - instrumental rationality" educational tradition. This finding is essentially different from the cognitive root of cultural alienation in contexts such as New Zealand and Vietnam. This

difference confirms Thao and Tham's (2018) judgment that the lack of systematic training leads to cognitive ambiguity. However, more importantly, it reveals how the long-standing tradition of language and cultural disconnection in Chinese teaching, as pointed out by Gao (2019), continues to have an impact through teachers' daily teaching decisions.

The present study, through an in-depth description of the context of higher education in China, confirms that TPB can effectively explain teachers' behavioral intentions in using PCA, but the "cognition of ICLT" must be included to enhance its explanatory power. From the perspective of the influence of internal and external factors, resource constraints and exam-oriented orientation constitute external obstacle factors, while teachers' pursuit of career development and personal sense of value, as well as their cognition of ICLT, are the key internal driving forces.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The findings of this chapter amplified the complexities of using PCA to develop ICC in English majors in China. The convergent and divergent perspectives on the emerging themes of the sub-case studies revealed several prevailing points about the topic. Firstly, students need to develop ICC, especially intercultural communication skills. Their identified strengths and weaknesses will inform ICC cultivation. The divergent attitudes toward PCA between graduates and current students further highlight the stage-specific differences in their needs: graduates tend to recognize the value of PCA from the perspective of professional application, focusing on its help in practical work; while the current student group, influenced by exam-oriented tendencies, shows diversified attitudes toward PCA. Some students hold reservations due to concerns about its insufficient

relevance to exams. This difference reflects the varying priorities of competency development at different learning stages.

Secondly, PCA helps enhance students' ICC, especially their behavioral skills. PCA was an instructional system comprised of multiple learning facilitators. The impact of PCA was highly dependent on the quality of performance evaluation, performance activities, and students' learning engagement in pre-class tasks. Thirdly, the implementation of PCA must take into account the teachers' contextualized needs and concepts. Teachers acknowledged it as an effective teaching method in ICC cultivation, but it was also seen as idealistic because of a number of limitations. Teachers' exposure to PCA and ICLT has not been sufficient for them to reconcile their cultural teaching philosophies and practices or to incorporate PCA into their teaching stance.

These findings provide real-world experiences for the application of PCA in ICC cultivation for English majors in China. Policy makers must take into account the perceptions and needs of students and teachers, while some outdated and anachronistic systems need to be changed. The significance of the study in its contribution to empirical research and knowledge in the field, as well as the potential for further research will be discussed in the final chapter of the thesis.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Related studies have highlighted that ICC comprises the core nine abilities of English majors; however, there is a lack of an appropriate ICLT approach to develop students' ICC. Although PCA is a kind of ICLT approach and has been claimed to be effective in ICC cultivation by previous studies, it has not yet been widely used in English teaching. Therefore, this present study focuses on cultivating ICC using PCA among English majors in China. The findings have important implications for the policy and practice of PCA in ICC cultivation within the EFL context of China. This chapter summarizes the study, outlining its aims and objectives, research design, key findings, implications, and concludes with recommendations for future research.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This present study aimed to explore the cultivation of ICC using PCA among English majors in China from the perspectives of both the students and teachers concerned. The special objectives of the study were to determine students' ICC from teachers' perspectives, to examine the impact of PCA from both teachers' and students' perspectives, to determine teachers' intention to use PCA, and to explore factors that influence teachers' intention. The study adopted an interpretivist approach within the qualitative research paradigm, employing a case study method (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994) to examine the perspectives of teachers and students.

The participants included eight English major teachers and twelve students, all with over one year of teaching or learning experience related to PCA. They participated in a series of in-depth interviews and were observed during their Oral English courses over two academic semesters. Guided by the Three-Dimensional Theory of ICC, the CIPP evaluation model, and TPB, the present study explored teachers' and students' views on the application of PCA in ICC cultivation. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, ultimately forming systematic responses to the research questions. The present study probed into students' ICC, the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation, and teachers' intention to use PCA, yielding key insights as follows:

Students' ICC stands at a moderate level, with an imbalanced development across knowledge, attitude, and skill dimensions. They show openness in attitude and basic empathy, but their cultural knowledge is skewed toward mainstream Western cultures, and they lack advanced communication skills—especially the ability to articulate Chinese culture in the target language, leading to silence in interactions. This imbalance stems from limited intercultural exposure and teaching practices that prioritize knowledge over skills.

Both teachers and students acknowledge PCA's positive role in boosting ICC, particularly in translating knowledge into skills through scenario simulation and task synergy. Localized adaptations of PCA have shifted from one-way cultural imitation to two-way dialogue, aiding students in balancing cultural understanding and identity preservation. However, its effectiveness is hindered by large classes, inadequate resources, and flawed evaluation systems, with graduates tending to emphasize PCA's professional applicability. At the same time, current students often express concerns about its alignment

with exam requirements.

Teachers' intention to use PCA varies despite recognizing its value. External barriers like resource conditions and poor operability, coupled with internal factors such as professional motivation and understanding of ICLT, shape their intentions. Those valuing ICLT as a core goal and driven by professional growth are more inclined to use PCA, highlighting the criticality of aligning teacher cognition with pedagogical reforms. These findings collectively outline the current state of students' ICC, PCA's potential and constraints, and the dynamics of teacher adoption, offering targeted implications for intercultural education.

5.3 Implications of the Study

This present study conducted an in-depth investigation into the implementation of PCA in cultivating ICC among English majors in China from both teachers' and students' perspectives. These findings carry multi-dimensional implications for intercultural education research and practice, which are elaborated as follows.

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this present study offer new insights for understanding ICC cultivation and PCA application in the Chinese EFL context, with implications for theoretical development in the field: firstly, through findings such as the imbalance development of students' ICC in cognition-attitude-skill, it reveals the structural contradictions in China's ICC cultivation, accurately captures the predicaments of ICC education in colleges and universities in less internationalized regions. These insights imply that existing frameworks for analyzing ICC development may need to be contextualized to account for regional disparities in educational resources and cultural

exposure, providing a revised theoretical lens to interpret the complexity of ICC cultivation in non-Western, less globalized contexts.

Secondly, this present study identified three core effective elements of PCA and constructed an ICC model based on PCA. This model makes up for the deficiency of existing models in insufficient attention to ICC skill training and responds to the practical predicament of “local cultural aphasia” in English teaching in China. These insights imply a need to expand theoretical attention to the dynamic, contextualized processes of PCA implementation, especially regarding skill training and the mitigation of “local cultural aphasia.” This PCA-based ICC cultivation model thus offers a theoretical reference for bridging the gap between Western-originated teaching methods and local educational realities in China.

Thirdly, the differences in attitudes toward teachers’ implementation of PCA between undergraduates and graduates hold significant theoretical implications for ICC research. Undergraduates’ contradictory mindset of “valuing both recognition and application” reflects the disconnection between academic guidance and workplace demands in China’s English teaching context. These differences emphasize the need to tailor PCA implementation to students’ specific stage-based needs and better align teaching objectives with assessment criteria to address undergraduates’ concerns, bridging the gap between competency development and exam performance. This finding expands the focus on the pedagogical impacts of PCA, including its validation in professional settings, and provides a new perspective for understanding the sustainable effects of teaching methods.

Fourthly, traditional PCA model emphasizes the situational authenticity of performance activities. However, this study, through dual-perspective data from teachers and students, finds that there is a transmission effect between the impact of teachers' "situational constraints" (such as outdated textbooks and limited class hours) and students' "situational constraints" (such as insufficient opportunities for intercultural practice) on PCA effectiveness. Teachers' simplifying the "bidirectional cultural performance" segment due to insufficient resources directly leads to students' "weak ability to express local culture". The discovery of this constraint mechanism adds a new dimension of "multi-agent situational interaction" to PCA.

Furthermore, The identified asymmetry between teacher and student perceptions regarding PCA effectiveness carries profound theoretical and practical implications for intercultural pedagogy. This perceptual divergence challenges conventional top-down curriculum evaluation models that privilege institutional perspectives over learner experiences. It necessitates the development of a dialectical framework that conceptualizes pedagogical effectiveness as emerging from the dynamic interplay between instructional design imperatives and learner subjectivities. The students' emphasis on affective engagement and personal transformation versus the teachers' focus on systemic integration reveals fundamental tensions between phenomenological and structural dimensions of learning that current ICC theories have insufficiently addressed. This suggests the need for expanded theoretical models that incorporate dual validity criteria, simultaneously accounting for curricular implementability and transformative learning potential.

Fifthly, identifying "cognition of ICLT" as a key factor shaping teachers' instructional intentions highlights the need to refine TPB when applied to non-Western

educational contexts. In China's unique tension between exam-oriented education and ICC cultivation, teachers' recognition of ICLT's core position directly influences their behavior. This finding implies that TPB's intercultural applicability requires incorporating context-specific cognitive factors, which enriches its theoretical explanatory power in educational reform research.

TPB focuses on "individual behavioral intentions", however, through the dual perspectives of teachers and students, this study finds that teachers' behavioral intentions are influenced by their cognition of ICLT and students' needs. Meanwhile, students' learning behaviors (such as their enthusiasm for participating in PCA) are also significantly affected by teachers' implementation methods. This "bidirectional regulatory effect" can only be identified through dual perspectives, indicating that TPB needs to incorporate the regulatory variable of "inter-subjective interaction" in educational research. The present study provides a new theoretical revision direction for its cross-cultural applicability.

5.3.2 Methodological Implications

This present study, through a qualitative research approach featuring multi-source data, multi-case triangulation, and contextualized in-depth description, has addressed the methodological limitations in existing studies—such as the emphasis on quantitative methods over qualitative ones and the focus on outcomes rather than processes—and offers implications for bridging the methodological gaps in existing ICC and PCA research:

Firstly, this study is the first to systematically examine students' ICC levels from teachers' viewpoints, which differs from existing studies limited by their reliance on students' self-report data. As observers and evaluators in the teaching process, teachers' judgments of students' ICC levels are more valuable for teaching practice, providing a new

perspective for ICC assessment. This shift toward incorporating teachers' perspectives alongside students' self-reports implies that multi-stakeholder data collection can enhance the validity of research findings. Drawing on both teacher and student perspectives, this methodological choice offers a practical approach for future research, aimed at capturing the complexity of educational practices from diverse angles.

Secondly, it breaks through the limitations of existing studies that solely relied on comparative experiments to validate the effectiveness of PCA. Adopting a qualitative case-study approach from four perspectives—context, input, process, and outcome—elucidates the role and mechanisms of PCA in fostering ICC among Chinese English majors. This methodology offers significant implications for future research: it advocates integrating quantitative analysis with qualitative investigation, using concrete cases to illustrate statistical findings vividly. The approach demonstrates the method's efficacy and reveals its operational dynamics, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding.

Thirdly, by incorporating the opinions of graduate groups and adopting a methodological design that tracks their workplace feedback, this study captures the differences in experiences between undergraduates and graduates. This “cross-stage comparison” method overcomes the limitation of traditional studies that only focus on “current students,” endowing the aforementioned theoretical findings (such as stage-specific demand differences and workplace transferability) with greater ecological validity. It provides a new analytical paradigm for connecting “education and career” in ICC and PCA research. This emphasis on a process-oriented approach—along with its ability to yield deeper insights—implies a need to balance methodological approaches in

the field, with greater attention to contextualized, in-depth descriptions of how teaching strategies interact with local constraints (e.g., class size, resource limitations).

5.5.3 Practical Implications

This present study has identified the key factors that hinder or facilitate teachers' implementation of PCA, providing an empirical foundation for addressing the challenges of ICLT reform. The findings offer direct implications for enhancing critical thinking skills and fostering an innovative thinking culture in China's higher education, while informing national policy formulation, institutional management, and classroom teaching practices.

Firstly, at the policy level, education authorities must implement concrete measures to bridge the gap between the current ICC cultivation system and students' developmental needs, while addressing systemic inefficiencies. The Ministry of Education should initiate curriculum and pedagogical reforms for ICLT, including increasing instructional hours for Intercultural Communication courses and incorporating an "intercultural communication skills" module into the national curriculum standards. This will ensure adequate time for teachers to organize and implement intercultural classroom activities. Furthermore, subject matter experts should be commissioned to develop teaching materials covering "non-mainstream national cultures" (e.g., Southeast Asian and African cultures) and "the international expression of Chinese culture," while establishing a digital repository of intercultural teaching cases accessible to higher education institutions nationwide to alleviate resource shortages in regional colleges and universities.

The national education administration should reform assessment mechanisms by revising examination syllabi to incorporate ICC evaluation components, such as case analyses of intercultural conflict mediation and tasks involving the international

presentation of Chinese culture, into standardized tests, including CET-4, CET-6, TEM-4, and TEM-8. Such reforms would help reconcile the tension between exam-oriented practices and genuine competency development.

Secondly, at the institutional level, universities should implement comprehensive ICLT and PCA training programs for faculty members, emphasizing reconstructing teachers' conceptual understanding of intercultural teaching. This can be achieved through pedagogical workshops featuring bicultural comparative case discussions and micro-teaching simulations of PCA techniques, enhancing instructors' awareness of intercultural teaching's central role and practical implementation capabilities. In collaboration with international offices, institutions should provide faculty with structured intercultural immersion opportunities, such as hosting international scholars or guiding international students through local cultural sites, to compensate for gaps in teachers' cross-cultural experiences.

Furthermore, universities must establish robust intercultural practice platforms for instructors and students. A recommended initiative would be organizing semesterly "Intercultural Drama Festivals" featuring two distinct tracks: a "Professional Scenario Track" (e.g., simulating conflict resolution in multinational team projects) and a "Cultural Interpretation Track" (e.g., performing the values underlying traditional Chinese festivals in English). Such platforms would effectively address identified deficiencies in students' bidirectional cultural expression while overcoming the inherent limitations of PCA implementation in large-class settings. These institutional measures collectively create an ecosystem supporting the development of authentic intercultural competencies beyond conventional classroom constraints.

Thirdly, at the level of teaching implementers, teachers must fundamentally reconceptualize PCA through the lens of cultural bidirectionality, moving beyond target-culture imitation to foster dynamic intercultural negotiation skills. A critical innovation involves integrating cultural trans-coding tasks into PCA implementation. These tasks require students to articulate Chinese cultural concepts in the target language while drawing meaningful connections to analogous phenomena in other cultures. For instance, students might analyze the cultural meanings embedded in Chinese ceremonial red envelopes (hongbao) while comparing them with Western gift-wrapping traditions when exploring gift-giving customs. This dual-focused approach simultaneously develops target language proficiency and cultural articulation skills, addressing the common deficiency in students' ability to express Chinese culture in intercultural contexts.

PCA proves particularly crucial in large-class environments typical of Chinese universities, where conventional whole-class performance models often fail to ensure meaningful participation. Practical adaptations include rotating small-group performances supplemented by digital platforms for extended interaction and feedback, thereby maintaining pedagogical effectiveness within spatial and temporal constraints.

The curricular design of PCA activities should consciously bridge academic and professional developmental phases. This involves a deliberate shift from knowledge accumulation to skill application, particularly cultivating students' capacity for bicultural mediation. Classroom practices might include structured cultural comparison exercises where students analyze parallel phenomena across cultures. Such activities develop linguistic competence and the meta-cognitive skills needed to navigate intercultural encounters in real-world settings.

The temporal dimension of PCA implementation warrants particular attention. Rather than treating cultural learning as discrete classroom events, teachers should design interconnected activity chains that span pre-class, in-class, and post-class phases. Pre-class preparations might involve researching cultural scenarios, while follow-up activities could include reflective journals documenting intercultural encounters in daily life. This extended timeframe helps students connect classroom learning with real-world application, particularly valuable for graduates transitioning to workplace environments where intercultural competence becomes immediately relevant.

Assessment methodologies require parallel innovations to match these pedagogical shifts. Rather than relying solely on linguistic accuracy metrics, evaluation rubrics should incorporate dimensions like cultural framing appropriateness, comparative analysis depth, and adaptive communication strategies. This comprehensive approach ensures that assessment practices align with the multidimensional nature of intercultural competence development.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

First, expanding the sampling scope to enhance the generalizability of findings is crucial. The participants of the present study are limited to universities in provincial capital cities, whose internationalization level and resource conditions differ significantly from those in first-tier cities or institutions in central and western China. Future research should adopt a comparative design to include diverse samples, such as top universities, local colleges, and institutions in eastern coastal versus western inland regions. By analyzing differences in students' ICC characteristics and the application effects of PCA across these contexts, researchers can identify how contextual variables (e.g., internationalization

resources, teaching philosophies) influence ICC development. This will help clarify the boundary conditions of the proposed PCA-based ICC cultivation model.

Second, conducting longitudinal tracking studies to capture dynamic changes is necessary to address the limitations of cross-sectional data. The current six-month qualitative study primarily reflects static states at specific time points, failing to reveal long-term mechanisms, for example, how prolonged use of PCA affects students' ICC development or how teachers' ICLT cognition evolves. Future research should design multi-wave data collection over an extended period (e.g., one – three years) to track the trajectory of teachers' ICLT cognitive formation, monitor the dynamic changes in students' ICC (including shifts in cultural identity and communication strategies), and explore the cumulative effects of PCA implementation. Such designs can complement the current study's lack of insight into “process mechanisms” and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the causal relationships between PCA practices and ICC development.

Third, validating and refining the PCA-based ICC cultivation model while developing EFL-specific guidelines is essential. The core propositions of the current model require further testing across more diverse educational contexts. Future studies should replicate the research in specialized English programs (e.g., Business English, Interpreting) and similar institutions to verify the stability and applicability of the model's effectiveness. Additionally, since PCA application in EFL teaching is still in its infancy — unlike its mature use in Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) with established standards — future research should focus on developing EFL-specific PCA teaching standards and curriculum designs. This includes creating context-adapted teaching frameworks, assessment tools, and training materials, which can provide practical guidance for teachers implementing

PCA in EFL classrooms and address the current lack of systematic operational guidelines.

5.5 Conclusions

This qualitative multi-case study project aims to respond to the call in the field of EFL teaching in China for effective use of ICLT to cultivate students' ICC. It provides empirical data and valuable new insights into the application of PCA in cultivating ICC for English majors in China. It reveals the complexity and highly contextualized nature of using PCA to cultivate ICC in English learners. Against the backdrop of the growing attention to ICLT, its findings are of great significance for the policy-making and practice of ICLT in China. Policy-makers must take into account the views and feedback of students and teachers, and promote the reform of specific institutional systems that are lagging behind the times, to make ICLT in China more adaptable to the demands of an era where globalization and localization are intertwined.

REFERENCES

- Agustina, N. Q., & Mukhtaruddin, F. (2019). The CIPP model-based evaluation on integrated English learning (IEL) program at language center. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 2(1), 22-31.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211.
- Ajzen, I. (2006). *Constructing a TPB questionnaire: conceptual and methodological considerations*. Citeseer. [online] Available at: <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=0574b20bd58130dd5a961f1a2db10fd1fcbae95d>.
- Ajzen, I. (2020). The Theory of Planned Behavior: Frequently asked questions. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(4), 314-324.
- Anh, V. T. K. (2018). Evaluation models in educational program: Strengths and weaknesses. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 34(2), 140-150.
- Arasaratnam, L. A., & Doerfel, M. L. (2005). ICC: Identifying key components from multicultural perspectives. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(2), 137–163.
- Arasaratnam, L. A. (2006). Further testing of a new model of ICC. *Communication Research Reports*, 23(2), 93–99.
- Arasaratnam, L. A. (2007). Research in ICC: Past perspectives and future directions. *Journal of International Communication*, 13(2), 66–73.

- Arasaratnam, L. A. (2009). The development of a new instrument of ICC. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 20, 2–22.
- Arasaratnam, L. A., Banerjee, S. C., & Dembek, K. (2010). The integrated model of ICC: Model test. *Australian Journal of Communication*, 37(3), 103–116.
- Arasaratnam, L. A., & Banerjee, S. C. (2011). Sensation seeking and ICC: A model test. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(2), 226–233.
- Arasaratnam, L. A. (2016). *Intercultural competence*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication (pp. 1–23).
- Baker, W. (2012). From cultural awareness to intercultural awareness: Culture in ELT. *English Language Teaching*, 6(6), 62-70.
- Baker, W. (2015). *Culture and identity through English as a lingua franca: Rethinking concepts and goals in intercultural communication*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Baker, W. (2016). English as an academic lingua franca and intercultural awareness: student mobility in the trans-cultural university. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 16(2), 437-451.
- Baker, W., & Fang, F. (2021). ‘So maybe I’m a global citizen’: developing intercultural citizenship in English medium education. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 34(1), 1-17.
- Bandura, A. (2012). On the functional properties of perceived self-efficacy revisited. *Journal of Management*, 38(1), 9-44.
- Barrett, M. (2013). *Intercultural competence: A distinctive hallmark of interculturalism*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Benbasat, I., & Barki, H. (2007). Quo vadis TAM?. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 8(4), 7-16.

- Bennett, J. M., & Bennett, M. J. (2004). Developing intercultural sensitivity: an integrative approach to global and domestic diversity. In D. Landis, J. M. Bennett, & M. J. Bennett (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training* (147–165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Borghetti, C. (2017). Is there really a need for assessing intercultural competence? *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 17(2), 1-15.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77–101.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology: Vol. 2. Research Designs*, 57-71.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Bristol, PA: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Byram, M., Gribkova, B. & Starkey. (2002). Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching, *A Practical Introduction for Teachers. A Critical Introduction*, (pp.121-135). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Byram, M., & Feng, A. (2008). Culture and language learning: teaching, research and scholarship. *Language Teaching*, 53(3), 149-168.
- Byram, M., Holmes, P., & Savvides, N. (2013). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education: Questions of theory, practice and research. *The Language Learning Journal*, 41(3), 251-253.
- Byram, M. (2014). Twenty-five years on—from cultural studies to intercultural citizenship. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 27(3), 209-225.
- Byram, M. (2020). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence: Revisited*. Multilingual matters.

- Cai, Y., Fang, F., Sun, H., & Jiang, L. (2022). Unpacking identity construction and negotiation: A case study of Chinese undergraduate students' social and academic experiences while studying abroad. *System, 110*, 102896.
- Chang, X., & Wang, Z. (2024). Assessing the development of primary English education based on CIPP model—a case study from primary schools in China. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, 1273860.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1996). ICC: A synthesis. *Annals of the International Intercultural Communication Association, 19*(1), 353-383.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (1997). A review of the concept of intercultural sensitivity. *Human Communication, 1*, 1–16.
- Chen, G. M., & Starosta, W. J. (2000). The development and validation of the intercultural communication sensitivity scale. *Human Communication, 3*, 1–15.
- Chen, G. M., (2005). A model of global communication competence. *China Media Research, vol. 1*, pp. 3-11.
- Chen, Y. H. (2016). Characteristic language teaching based on performed-culture approach. *Guizhou Ethnic Studies, 36*(2), 234-237.
- Chung, A. C. A., & Rimal, R. N. R. N. (2016). Social norms: a review. *Review of Communication Research, 4*, 01-28.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2016). Thematic analysis. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(3), 297–298.
- Corbett, J. (2022). An intercultural approach to English language teaching (Vol. 36). Multilingual Matters.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

- Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks. London
- Dalib, S., Harun, M., & Yusof, N. (2017). Student intercultural competence in a Malaysian campus: a phenomenological approach. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, 12(1), 42-62.
- Dai, X. D. (2019). Sixty years of intercultural competence theory: history and prospects (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language World*, 40(4), 58-66.
- Deardorff, D. K., Banta, T. W., & De Wit, H. (2015). *Demystifying outcomes assessment for international educators: A practical approach*. Routledge.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as an outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in Intercultural Education* 10 (3), 241-266.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2015). How to assess intercultural competence. In *Research methods in intercultural communication: A practical guide*, (pp. 120-134). Routledge.
- Deardorff, D. K., Arasaratnam, L. A., & Calloway-Thomas, C. (2017). *The role of empathy in fostering intercultural competence*. London: Routledge.
- Deardorff, D. K., & Arasaratnam, L. A. (2017). *Intercultural competence in higher education*. Taylor & Francis Group.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2023). Intercultural competence: a definition, model, and implications for education abroad. In *Developing intercultural competence and transformation* (pp. 32-52). Routledge.
- Devlin, M., & Samarawickrema, G. (2010). The criteria of effective teaching in a changing higher education context. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29(2), 111-124.

- Do, T. T., Hoang, K. C., Do, T., Trinh, T. P. T., Nguyen, D. N., Tran, T., ... & Nguyen, T. T. (2021). Factors influencing teachers' intentions to use realistic mathematics education in Vietnam: an extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior. *Journal on Mathematics Education*, 12(2), 331-348.
- Dunn, R., Hattie, J., & Bowles, T. (2018). Using the Theory of Planned Behavior to explore teachers' intentions to engage in ongoing teacher professional learning. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 59, 288-294.
- Erdogan, G., & Mede, E. (2021). Evaluating an English preparatory program using CIPP model and exploring the motivational beliefs for learning. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 8(1), 53-76.
- Fantini, A. E. (2000). A central concern: developing intercultural competence. *SIT Occasional Paper Series*, 1(1), 25-42.
- Fantini, A. E. (2007). *Exploring and assessing intercultural competence*. [online] Available at: https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1815&context=csd_research.
- Fantini, A. E. (2012). *Language: An essential component of intercultural communicative competence*. Handbook of language and intercultural communication (pp. 273-288). Routledge.
- Fantini, A. E. (2020). Reconceptualizing intercultural communicative competence: A multinational perspective. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 15(1), 52-61.
- Fullan, M. , (2015) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, 3rd ed.; Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA.

- Fullan, M. (2021). *The new meaning of educational change*, (3rd ed.); Teachers College Press: New York, NY, USA.
- Gao, X. C. (2014). Constructing a theoretical framework for the assessment system of Chinese university students' ICC. (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language World*, 35(4), 80-88.
- Goddard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Hoy, A. W. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(2), 479-507.
- Gong, J. J., & Zhang, L. P. (2025, February 14) Walker: Cultivate American students who understand China. *People's Daily Overseas Edition*.
- Gowindasamy, M. (2017). A case study on the implementation of Reflective Development Model in improving intercultural competence among business student in Stamford College. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(12), 168-174.
- Gu, X. L. (2015). Construction of ICC inventory for Chinese college students based on knowing-and-doing model. *Foreign Language in China*, 40(5), 14-21.
- Gu, X. L. (2016). Assessment of intercultural communicative competence in FL education: A survey on EFL teachers' perception and practice in China. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 44(2), 254-273.
- Gu, X. L. (2021). Integration of teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 44(6), 241-248.
- Gudykunst, W. B., Hammer, M. R., & Wiseman, R. L. (1977). An analysis of an integrated approach to cross-cultural training. *International Journals of Intercultural Relations*, 1(2), 99-110.

- Gudykunst, W. B., & Kim, Y. Y. (2003). *Communicating with strangers: an approach to intercultural communication*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Hakan, K., & Seval, F. (2011). CIPP evaluation model scale: development, reliability and validity. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 592-599.
- Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: the intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 421-443.
- Han, J., & Yin, H. (2016). Teacher motivation: definition, research development and implications for teachers. *Cogent education*, 3(1), 12-19.
- Han, X. H. (2014). Cultivating college students' intercultural communicative competence from the perspective of College English teachers. *Foreign Language Research*, 3(5), 106-110.
- Harrison, N., & Peacock, N. (2009). Interactions in the international classroom: The UK perspective. In *Internationalisation and the student voice* (pp. 151-168). Routledge.
- Hayes, D. (2010). Language learning, teaching and educational reform in rural Thailand: An English teacher's perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 30(3), 305-319.
- Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), 8.
- Hu, W. (2013). Intercultural communicative competence in foreign language teaching. *Foreign Language World*, 159(6), 2-7.
- Jiang, X. (2021). *A theoretical and empirical study of Performed Culture Approach based on the analysis of teaching behavior*. (Translated from Chinese). Soochow University Press.

- Jiao, J. (2017). Fifty years of foreign ICC assessment. (Translated from Chinese). *Academic Journal of Jinyang*, 38(5), 117-124.
- Kahveci, A., Kahveci, M., Mansour, N., & Alarfaj, M. M. (2018). Exploring science teachers' affective states: Pedagogical discontentment, self-efficacy, intentions to reform, and their relationships. *Research in Science Education*, 48, 1359-1386.
- Khan, I. U., Ahmed, A., & Saeed, K. (2023). Analyzing the models of intercultural communicative competence and constructivist EFL pedagogy: A review study. *Journal of Communication and Cultural Trends*, 5(1), 128-147.
- Kim, Y. Y. (1991). ICC: *A systems-theoretic view*. In S. Ting-Toomey, & F. Korzenny (Eds.).
- Kim, Y. Y., & Bhawuk, D. P. (2008). Globalization and diversity: Contributions from intercultural research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 301-304.
- Konukman, F., Filiz, B., Moghimehfar, F., Maghanoy, M. A., Graber, K., Richards, K. A., & Jinyu, G. S. (2024). Exploring Physical Education teachers' intention and Perceived constraints in Offering Online lessons using the theory of Planned Behavior: A multi-country analysis. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(4), 305.
- Kramsch, C. (2006). Preview article: The multilingual subject. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 16, 97–110.
- Kramsch, C. (2009). *The multilingual subject*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C., & Zhu, H. (2020). Translating culture in global times: An introduction. *Applied linguistics*, 41(1), 1-9.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2001). Toward a postmethod pedagogy. *TESOL quarterly*, 35(4), 537-560.

- Lau, H. C., Rogers, R. D., Haggard, P., & Passingham, R. E. (2004). Attention to intention. *Science*, 303(5661), 1208-1210.
- Le Thanh Thao & Le X. M. (2022) English language teaching reforms in Vietnam: EFL teachers' perceptions of their responses and the influential factors. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 16:1, 29-40.
- Li, J., Yuan, F.F., and Kulich (2025) Foreign language learners' self-perceived proficiency and intercultural competence: Mediating roles of quantity and quality of intercultural interactions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 107,102206
- Liao, J. H., & Li, Y. J. (2017) An empirical study of University English programme assessment and intercultural competence cultivation. (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language and Teaching*, 35(2), 18-25.
- Liddicoat, A. J., & Scarino, A. (2013). *Intercultural language teaching and learning*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Liu, L. P. (2016). A Study on the application of PCA in college English teaching. (Translated from Chinese). *Technology Outlook*, 26(16), 180-182.
- Loh, J., & Hu, G. (2021). Understanding middle leaders' concerns in curriculum change: A missing perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 41(4), 711-726.
- Lombardi, D., Shipley, T. F., & Astronomy Team, Biology Team, Chemistry Team, Engineering Team, Geography Team, Geoscience Team, and Physics Team. (2021). The curious construct of active learning. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 22(1), 8-43.
- Lu, B., Shao, X., Ge, L., & Wu, J. (2024). Challenges and opportunities in implementing intercultural education in higher education: the perceptions and practice of foreign

- language teachers in a Chinese university. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 24(11), 1-17.
- Luo., & Chan. (2022) Qualitative methods to assess intercultural competence in higher education research: A systematic review with practical implications *Educational Research Review*, 37(2), 81-88.
- Maass, K., Geiger, V., Ariza, M. R., & Goos, M. (2019). The role of mathematics in interdisciplinary STEM education. *Zdm*, 51, 869-884.
- MacDonald. (2022). Issues, controversies and difficult questions: Languages and intercultural communication, twenty years on. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 22(3), 253-265.
- Mai, T. T., Wiest, G. M., & Nguyen, N. D. (2020). Asynchronous video-based discussion for the enhancement of intercultural competence among Vietnamese non-English majors. *Computer-Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal*, 21(3), 159-174.
- Mahmud, S. N. D., & Osman, K. (2010). The determinants of recycling intention behavior among the Malaysian school students: An application of theory of planned behaviour. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 119-124.
- Makhmudov, K. (2020). Ways of forming intercultural communication in foreign language teaching. *Science and Education*, 1(4), 84-89.
- McCloskey, E. M. (2012). Global Teachers: A model for building teachers' intercultural competence online. *Comunicar (English edition)*, 19(38), 41-49.
- Means, B., et al. (2023). The effectiveness of blended learning in K-12 education: A longitudinal study. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 71(2), 567-589.

- Megawati, F., Mukminatien, N., Anugerahwati, M., Indrayani, N., & Unsiah, F. (2020). Critical Incidents: Exploring EFL prospective teachers' teaching experiences. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 9(3), 943-954.
- Milner IV, H. R. (2012). Beyond a test score: Explaining opportunity gaps in educational practice. *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(6), 693-718.
- Ministry of Education, China. (2010). *Plans and outlines of national mid-term and long-term education reform and development (2010-2020)*. Beijing: People's Press.
- Moeller, A. J., & Osborn, S. R. F. (2014). A pragmatist perspective on building intercultural communicative competency: From theory to classroom practice. *Foreign Language Annals*, 47(4), 669-683.
- Moeller, A. J., & Nugent, K. (2014). Building intercultural competence in the language classroom. In S. Dhonau (Ed.), *2014 report of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages* (pp. 1–18). Richmond, VA: Robert M. Terry.
- Muhamad, Umar & Nadeem. (2019). Retesting integrated model of ICC (IMICC) on international students from the Asian context of Malaysia. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 74(1), 17-29.
- Nadeem, M.U., Mohammed, R., & Dalib, S. (2017). A proposed model of ICC (ICC) in Malaysian context. *International Journal of Educational Research Review*, 2(2), 11–20.
- Nadeem M U, Mohammed R, Dalib S. (2020). Influence of sensation seeking on intercultural communication competence of international students in a Malaysian university: Attitude as a mediator. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 2020, 74: 30-41.

- Newton, J., Yates, E., Shearn, S., & Nowitzki, W. (2010). *An introduction to the concept of intercultural communicative language teaching and learning: A summary for teachers*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Education.
- Nichols, S. L., Schutz, P. A., Rodgers, K., & Bilica, K. (2017). Early career teachers' emotion and emerging teacher identities. *Teachers and teaching*, 23(4), 406-421.
- OECD (2015). *Handbook for Innovative Learning Environments*. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
- Orafi, S. M. S., & Borg, S. (2009). Intentions and realities in implementing communicative curriculum reform. *System*, 37(2), 243-253.
- Oranje, J., & Smith, L. F. (2018). Language teacher cognitions and intercultural language teaching: The New Zealand perspective. *Language Teaching Research*, 22(3), 310-329.
- Phuong, H. Y. (2017). Improving English language teaching in Vietnam: Voices from university teachers and students. *Current Politics and Economics of South, Southeastern, and Central Asia*, 26(3), 285-310.
- Porter, R. E., & Samovar, L. A. (1996). Cultural influences on emotional expression: Implications for intercultural communication. In *Handbook of communication and emotion* (pp. 451-472). Academic Press.
- Peng, R. Z., Zhu, C., & Wu, W. P. (2020). Visualizing the knowledge domain of intercultural competence research: A bibliometric analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 74, 58-68.
- Peng, R. Z., & Wu, W. P. (2016). A study of Chinese college students' intercultural contact paths in the perspective of intercultural competence. (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language World*, 37(1), 70-78.

- Perry, L. B., & Southwell, L. (2011). Developing intercultural understanding and skills: *Models and approaches. Intercultural Education, 22*(6), 453-466.
- Phinney, J. S., & Ong, A. D. (2007). Conceptualization and measurement of ethnic identity: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(3), 271.
- Qin, X. Z. (2017). *Understanding intercultural misunderstandings between Chinese and American culture: Applying the Performed Culture Approach*. Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Rahman, M. M., Pandian, A., & Kaur, M. (2018). Factors affecting teachers' implementation of communicative language teaching curriculum in secondary schools in Bangladesh. *The Qualitative Report, 23*(5), 1104-1126.
- Ryan, R. M. (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford: Guilford Publications.
- Safa, M. A., & Tofighi, S. (2022). Intercultural communicative competence beliefs and practices of Iranian pre-service and in-service EFL teachers. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 16*(2), 164-175.
- Sancar Tokmak, H., Baturay, H. M., & Fadde, P. (2013). Applying the context, input, process, product evaluation model for evaluation, research, and redesign of an online master's program. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 14*(3), 273-293.
- Smakova, K., & Paulsrud, B. (2020). Intercultural communicative competence in English language teaching in Kazakhstan. *Issues in Educational Research, 30*(2), 691-708.
- Sinicrope, C., Norris, J., & Watanabe, Y. (2007). Understanding and assessing intercultural competence: A summary of theory, research, and practice (technical report for the foreign language program evaluation project).

- Spitzberg, B. (2000). A Model of ICC. *Intercultural communication: A reader*, 9, 375-387.
- Spitzberg, B., & Cupach, W. (1984). *Interpersonal communication competence*. Beverly Hills.
- Spitzberg, B. H., & Hecht, M. L. (1989). A component model of relational competence. *Human Communication Research*, 10, 575-599.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2000). *The CIPP model for evaluation*. In Stufflebeam, D.L., Madaus, G. F. Kellaghan, T. (Eds). *Evaluation models. Viewpoints on educational and human service evaluation*. (pp. 279-317). (2nd ed). Boston: Kluwer Academic
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2007). *CIPP evaluation model checklist*. [online] Available at: <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists>.
- Stufflebeam, D. L., & Zhang, G. (2017). *The CIPP evaluation model: How to evaluate for improvement and accountability*. Guilford Publications.
- Stufflebeam, D. L., & Coryn, C. L. (2014). *Evaluation theory, models, and applications*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sun, Z. Y. (2016). The foreign and the cultivation of ICC. *Chinese English*, 129(3), 11-17.
- Suo, G. F., & Gu, L. X. (2015). An analytical evaluation of 30 years' intercultural communication textbooks in China (1985--2014). (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language World*, (45)3, 89-95.
- Teo, T., & Beng Lee, C. (2010). Explaining the intention to use technology among student teachers: An application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). *Campus-Wide Information Systems*, 27(2), 60-67.
- Thao, T. Q., & Tham, D. M. (2018). The difficulties in ESP reading comprehension encountered by English-majored students. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*,

34(2), 151-161.

- Thao, L. T., & Mai, L. X. (2022). English language teaching reforms in Vietnam: EFL teachers' perceptions of their responses and the influential factors. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 16*(1), 29-40.
- Thurlings, M., Evers, A. T., & Vermeulen, M. (2015). Toward a model of explaining teachers' innovative behavior: A literature review. *Review of Educational Research, 85*(3), 430-471.
- Toomey, S. (1993). Communicative resourcefulness: An identity negotiation perspective. In R. L. Wiseman, & J. Koester (Vol. Eds.), *ICC, 17*, 72–111. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Toomey, S., & Chung, L. C. (2005). *Understanding intercultural communication*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tran, T. Q., & Duong, T. M. (2018). The effectiveness of the intercultural language communicative teaching model for EFL learners. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, 3*(1), 6.
- Trejo, B. C., Richard, E. M., van Driel, M., & McDonald, D. P. (2015). Cross-cultural competence: The role of emotion regulation ability and optimism. *Military Psychology, 27*(5), 276-286.
- Underwood, P. R. Teacher beliefs and intentions regarding the instruction of English grammar under national curriculum reforms: A Theory of Planned Behaviour perspective. *Teach. Teach. Educ. 2012, 28*, 911–925.
- Walker, G. (2010). *The pedagogy of performing another culture*. Wuhan. Hubei Education Press.

- Wang & Kulich (2015). Does context count? Developing and assessing intercultural competence through an interview- and model-based domestic course design in China. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 48 (2015), 38–57.
- Wang. X.Y., & Pan.Y. L. (2019). Current situation and enlightenment of intercultural Foreign Language Research in China. (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language World*, 40(04), 76-84.
- Wang, Y. A. (2012). An analysis on intercultural teaching in college: Based on a survey from college English teachers' perspectives in Zhejiang Province. In X. Chen, & J. D. Guo (Eds.), *The theoretical exploration and practical innovation of foreign languages teaching in universities and colleges* (pp. 40–49). Zhejiang University Press.
- Wen, Q. F. (2022). Reflection on intercultural competence and the course on intercultural communication: the perspective of integrating model education into foreign language teaching. (Translated from Chinese). *Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education*, 204(2), 10-18.
- Wen, Q. F. (2023). Classifying innovative studies on foreign language classroom instruction and paper writing. (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language Education in China*, 6 (1), 3-10.
- Wharton, S. (2011). Critical text analysis: Linking language and cultural studies. *ELT Journal*, 65, 221-229.
- Widdowson, H. G. (2013). *Defining issues in English Language Teaching*. Shanghai: Foreign Language Education Press.
- William K. Gabrenya Jr., & Chen. (2021). In search of cross-cultural competence: a comprehensive review of five measurement instruments. *International Journal of*

Intercultural Relations, 82, 37-55.

- Xin, Y. Q., & Yang, Y. (2018). An exploration of the application of PCA teaching method in college English teaching under the Flipped Mode. (Translated from Chinese). *Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education*, 40(12), 46-51.
- Yang, C., Popov, V., Biemans, H. J. A., & Liu, J. (2025). Challenges of Chinese students in intercultural communication: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 25(1), 1-16.
- Yan, Z., & Sin, K. F. (2014). Inclusive education: teachers' intentions and behavior analyzed from the viewpoint of the theory of planned behavior. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(1), 72-85.
- Yan, Z., & Cheng, E. C. K. (2015). Primary teachers' attitudes, intentions and practices regarding formative assessment. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 45, 128-136.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). Designing case studies. *Qualitative Research Methods*, 5(14), 359-386.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications*. Sage Publication, Inc.
- Yu, L. (2020). The performed culture approach: intellectual history and core concepts. (Translated from Chinese). *Research on International Chinese Language Teaching*, 26(2), 41-47.
- Yu, H. (2012). A study of engineering students' intercultural competence and its implications for teaching. *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication*, 55(2), 185-201.
- Zhang, H. L. (2012). Foreign language teaching guided by intercultural education: past, present and future. (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language World*, 33(2), 2-7.
- Zhang, H. L., & Yao, C. Y. (2020). Constructing an integrated model of Chinese students' ICC development (Translated from Chinese). *Foreign Language World*, 41(4),

35-53.

Zhang, Y. (2017). A study on ESL teachers' ICC. *English Language Teaching*, 10 (11), 229-235.

Zhang, X., & Zhou, M. (2019). Interventions to promote learners' intercultural competence: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 71, 31-47.

Zhao, H. & Zhang, H. L. (2020). Exploring the theoretical construction and research path of intercultural competence localization. (Translated from Chinese). *Journal of Beijing University of Chemical Technology (social sciences edition)*, 20(3): 79-84.

Zhao, W., Mok, C., & Cao, Y. (2019). Factors influencing teachers' implementation of a reformed instructional model in China from the theory of planned behavior perspective: A multiple case study. *Sustainability*, 12 (1), 11-19.

Zhou, Y., & Burhanudeen, H. (2023). Sustaining intercultural contact: Developing the intercultural communicative competence of EFL undergraduates in China. *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, 23(4), 13-26.

APPENDICES

Appendix 3.1 Sample of open coding of data

Codes	Transcript
speaking skills has improved a lot	We learned mute English before, we didn't dare to open our mouths before, and now it's much better after participating in several activities, and I have to open my mouth every day in class, so my speaking skills has improved a lot.(U-A)
greatly improved reading and vocabulary	The performance material collection before class greatly improved my reading and vocabulary.(U-B)
language skills have improved	My language skills have improved, and after a few classroom activities, I can communicate with others more fluently in English.(U-C)
Speaking and listening have improved a lot	This activity was designed to be more informative and challenging. My speaking and listening have improved a lot.(G-A)
professional gains under the model are quite a lot	We used to learn English in separate classes, such as listening, grammar, and general reading. However, in this model, the teacher combines the listening, reading, writing and speaking of English together. We not only have to listen, but also express, and express accurately, so the professional gains under the model are quite a lot.(G-B)
awareness of cultural differences	My undergraduate thesis was about culture shock in IC, and it was through PCA program that I realized there were differences between cultures.(G-C)
internalizes intercultural awareness	This teaching mode integrates the local culture and the other cultures into the classroom, focuses on communicative scenarios, and internalizes intercultural awareness.(G-D)
help for cultural exchange and understanding.	I think it is a great promotion and help for cultural exchange and understanding. Whether it is traveling abroad afterward, it is helpful. (U-D)
train intercultural communication skills	We can learn about intercultural knowledge through the Internet or textbooks, but we don't have the opportunity to practice it, so this method of teaching helps us to train our intercultural communication skills.(G-A)
knowing what words to say in what contexts	I think it has improved my intercultural communication skills, understanding how to use the correct language in different cultural contexts.It giving us a scenario to use the language correctly.(G-E)

Appendix 3.1 continued

desire to spread our local culture	After learning a lot about the local culture and its English expressions, I had a desire to spread our local culture when I interacted with my foreign friends.(G-B)
fosters a way of thinking in different cultures	I was only exposed to this pedagogy for more than two months, but it touched me a lot. I had the opportunity to go abroad for a cross-border exchange program later, I realized that the PCA model fosters a way of thinking in different cultures.(G-C)
invested a lot of time and energy to learn	In order to do a good job in performance, I often work overtime and sometimes skip meals. Collecting materials, writing scripts, rehearsing and shooting videos and I invested a lot of time and energy, but I think it's very rewarding and it's a great workout.(G-D)
more interest in learning	The classes are very lively and practical. Activities are varied and challenging; there is more interest in learning than before. We are significantly more engaged in this class than we were in English General Reading, English Listening and Grammar.(G-F)
enthusiasm to learn has increased	We used to learn English by learning words, pronunciation, grammar or reading articles, and we felt boring. performance activities are very interesting, especially when you notice that people in different cultures behave very differently, this is very attractive. As a result, my enthusiasm to learn has increased.(G-A)
more motivated to learn.	Its evaluation method is also very special, the results of each group in each class will be counted into the final grade, and you can know your score in each class. (Teacher's) feedback is timely, so I am more motivated to learn, and I don't dare to be lazy.(G-B)
concentrate more on studies	The activity was fun and the different cultures were fascinating. So I can concentrate more on my studies in class.(G-C)
competitive spirit was aroused	Pre-class tasks have pushed me to spend more time on my studies because if you're not well prepared before class, you may be very embarrassed in the next class and not know what to say. my competitive spirit was aroused.(U-3)
courage to speak English has increased dramatically	My courage to speak English has increased dramatically. and I dare to speak up in class.(U-F)
improved courage to communicate	It has improved my courage to communicate with other people. I was reluctant to communicate with other people because I am sociopathic, but through classroom activity training, I became more courageous.(U-A)

Appendix 3.1 continued

developing my self-confidence	After each performance, the teacher would summarize and evaluate the performance in a timely manner, and often praised everyone, so I was greatly encouraged and boosted my self-confidence.(G-E)
ability to coordinate and cooperate	Assignments are mostly teamwork, such as collecting material, writing scripts, and discussing and solving problems. We can learn a lot from other people in the whole process. What I gained in this process is not only cultural knowledge and language vocabulary, but more importantly, my ability to coordinate and cooperate.(U-C)
broaden knowledge	In the process of completing the assignments, I need to learn and supplement the relevant knowledge by myself, so that I have a better understanding of the cultures of different countries and broaden my knowledge.(U-B)
expansion of minds	When we get together as a group to discuss a script, the discussion can get very heated. There will be a collision of ideas and expansion of everyone's minds(U-F).

Appendix 3.2 Sample of initial coding process for students' ICC level

Interview data: teacher's perspective on students' ICC level

Grouped the open coding that have the similar meanings together and generate initial code.

(1). lack opportunity to interaction with foreigners

have little opportunity to really experienced or encounter so many foreigners

limited intercultural communication experience

lack of opportunities to practice intercultural communication

lack of opportunities to interact with foreigners

fewer opportunities for intercultural communication

lack of first-hand experience and experience in intercultural communication

These can be grouped into an initial code:

lack intercultural communication opportunities

(2) know something about American culture and UK culture

basic knowledge about British and American culture

general cultural knowledge of America and British

These can be grouped into an initial code:

general cultural knowledge of America and British

(3) willing to try new cultures

positive acceptance of different cultures

inclusive

open to different cultures

These can be grouped into an initial code:

open-minded

(4) respect culture difference

respect foreigner's culture

respect for different cultures

respect foreigner's cultural convention

These can be grouped into an initial code:

respect cultural differences

(5) lack of fluency in expression

limited oral ability to express

limited language ability

don't know how to express themselves clear

These can be grouped into an initial code:

limited oral ability to express

(6) cannot express Chinese culture clearly in English

Inability to accurately express Chinese culture in English

cannot fully express Chinese culture in English

Lack of ability to translate Chinese culture in English

These can be grouped into an initial code:

Inability to accurately express Chinese culture in English

Appendix 3.3 Sample of Generating Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
Improvement of ICC	Improvement of skills	Improvement of oral English capacity
		deal with misunderstandings and conflicts
		learn how to behavior in different cultures
	improvement of knowledge and awareness	awareness of difference in behavioral ways
		realized there were differences between cultures
		Learn many knowledge of different cultures
Individual development of students	Character development	developed courage to speak English
		development of self-confidence
	Interpersonal communication development	Improved coordinate and cooperate competence
		Improved courage to communicate
		Competitive spirit was aroused
	cognitive development	Expansion of minds
		Broaden knowledge
Learning promotion efficacy	Stimulating learning inputs	Invested a lot of time and energy in learning
		Do not dare to be lazy
		Developing a positive attitude toward learning
		Concentrate more on studies
	Stimulating learning interesting	Enthusiasm to learn has increased
		learn while playing

Appendix 3.4 Items of Interview Questions about students' ICC level from teachers' perspective.

Part one: Demographic information

Name: Gender:

Age: Professional Title:

Highest education: Years of teaching:

Part two: Interview questions

What would you describe students' ICC?

Is there a wide variation in the level of ICC among the students you teach?

3. which aspect of their ICC is the best? Which aspect is the worst?

4. what kind of attitudes do they show toward different cultures?

5. How is their national cultural identity?

6. What is their level of knowledge of native Chinese culture?

7. What is their level of knowledge of other countries culture?

8. Do they have the ability to accurately express and disseminate Chinese native culture in intercultural communication?

9. What kind of behavior do they exhibit in intercultural communication?

Appendix 3.5 Items of Interview Questions about teachers' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation.

Part One: The demographic information

Name: Gender: Age:

Professional Title: Highest Education:

Teaching years:

Part two: interview questions

Interview questions adapted from CIPP model

1. What method do you use to cultivation ICC before PCA? Is it effectiveness?
2. Can you tell me how you use PCA to teach ICC in your English class?
3. Do you think PCA is useful in achieving ICC cultivation goals? (How,Why?)
4. Do you think the current teaching environment and conditions are suitable for the implementation of PCA?
- 5.What about the students' classroom participation in PCA?
- 6.What about their learning interesting in PCA?
7. Do you think PCA is useful in improving students' ICC proficiency?
8. From your experience, Can you give any suggestions for using PCA in ICC ?

Appendix 3.6 Items of Interview Questions about students' perceptions of the impact of PCA on ICC cultivation.

Part One: The demographic information

Name: Gender: Age:

English Academic achievement:

Part two: Interview questions

- 1.What is your purpose of learning ICC?
2. How do you learn ICC before PCA?
3. How do you feel when your teacher uses PCA to teach? What factors contributed to this experience?
4. What is your attitude towards PCA?
5. Are you satisfied with the teaching effectiveness of PCA?
6. How was your experience of the classroom learning activities organized by the teacher under the PCA model?
7. Under the PCA mode, how was your experience with the tasks assigned by the teacher after class?
8. Have you gained anything from this mode of teaching?
- 9.Which part of the PCA did you gain the most from?
- 10..Have you encountered any difficulties under this model?

Appendix 3.7 Items of Interview Questions about teachers' intention to use PCA in ICC cultivation and the factors influencing their intention.

Part One: The demographic information

Name: Gender: Age:

Professional Title: Highest Education:

Teaching years:

Part two: outline of interview

1. Would you please share what are your teaching pursuit and goals?
2. Do you think ICC is essential core competency for English majors? Why?
3. Do you think it is important to teach ICC to English majors?
4. Why do you choose PCA for teaching?
5. Does the university have policies that support your implementation of PCA?
6. What are the attitudes of your colleagues, leaders and students' attitude toward the implementation of PCA?
7. Do you gain material or moral rewards from the implementation of PCA?
8. Do you think it is worth to spend a lot of time and effort to improve teaching quality, and why?
9. Have you encountered any difficulties in implementing PCA? Were you able to overcome them?
10. Are you willing continue to use PCA, and Why?

Appendix 3.8 Information Sheet & Consent Form

INFORMATION SHEET

I would like to invite you to take part in the present study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the study is done and what you will need to do. Please take time to read this information. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask us.

Title of the study:

Toward the Cultivation of ICC Using Performed Culture Approach among English Majors in China

Purpose of the study:

The goal of foreign language teaching is cultivating intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Although Performed Culture Approach (PCA) has been used in teaching Chinese students who major in English as a foreign language, there is little information on its implementation and effect on ICC. Therefore, the present study aims to explore the implementation of PCA in ICC cultivation in English majors in China using multiple cases study.

Participants of the study:

You can participate in this study if you belong to any of the following groups: Teachers and students who have ever experienced PCA in ICC cultivation among English majors in China.

Study procedures:

Each participant will be interviewed for about 1 hour on a given topic. Individual interviews can be conducted once or a few times throughout the study, depending on the

information needed. The study requires access to relevant documents in the course such as students' written assignments, exam scripts, course syllabus, lesson plan, policy documents, and publicity materials.

Benefits to participants:

Participants will be offered feedback on their teaching and learning practices which may provide insights regarding PCA in ICC cultivation.

Participants rights:

Participation in the present study is voluntary; participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason, without prejudice in any way. In such cases, the study records will be destroyed. Participant confidentiality will be respected at all times. The researchers will have sole access to the data collected, and all data will be stored in a secure storage facility. The results of this research may be published, but without revealing the participants' identity. All data will be coded so as to preserve the identity and confidentiality of the participants.

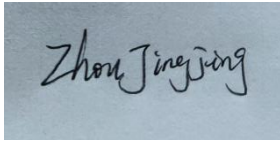
Further information about the present study can be obtained from any of the following research team members:

Zhou Jingjing	Researcher	154273776@qq.com
Dr. Florence Gilliam Kayad	Research Supervisor	kflorence@unimas.my
Dr. Vimala Govindaraju	Research Supervisor	gvimala@unimas.my

If you would like to take part in the present study, please read and sign the attached consent form.

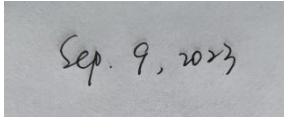
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully



Zhou Jingjing

Date:



The Human Research Ethics Committee at the University Malaysia Sarawak requires that all participants are informed that, if they have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher or, alternatively, to the Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee, Registrar's Office, University Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 KOTA SAMARAHAN (TEL:082-581000 FAX: 082-581818). All study participants will be provided with a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for their personal records.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of the study: Toward Cultivation of ICC Using Performed Culture Approach for English Majors in China

If you agree to participate in the study, please tick the boxes.

	Yes
1. I have read the information sheet September 9,2023 for this study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my legal rights being affected.	
3. I agree to the interview being audio/video recorded.	
4. I agree to the classroom observation being audio/video recorded.	
5. I understand that all data I provide will be kept confidential and stored securely at University Malaysia Sarawak. Only the researchers will have access to this.	
6. I understand that my data will remain anonymous at all times, including when the results of the study are disseminated in conferences, published articles, and/or research reports.	
7. I have been provided with details of whom I should contact about the study.	
8. I agree to take part in this study.	

Name of Participant

Date

Signature