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**Applying an Intercultural Approach to Chinese College  
Language Teaching**

**Shuoqian QIN**

**A Thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Education**

**November 2014**

## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to investigate how the integration of intercultural dimensions in an English as Foreign Language (EFL) syllabus can provide Chinese university students with opportunities to develop their intercultural communicative competence (ICC). It presents both theoretical and practical implications for constructing an ICC framework and intercultural methodology suitable for the EFL context in China.

An action research study was planned and carried out over a six-week Intercultural English Course (IEC) among multi-majored undergraduate students in China through an action research study. The qualitative data gathered provides evidence of the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and highlights learning and teaching practices that were effective in enhancing students' learning. The findings indicate that the teaching content and instructional methods contributed significantly to improvement in a number of key areas: cultural knowledge, strengthened positive attitudes toward other cultures, and enhanced intercultural communicative skills.

The theoretical conception of ICC represents a comprehensive set of criteria that provide both guidance and challenge. Application of such frameworks, past and future, ensures rigour in the design of intercultural language learning curricula and their associated learning objectives. This study argues that adoption of an ICC methodology together with use of relevant, contextualised content, will more effectively meet the needs of Chinese EFL learners. The intercultural approach arouses great curiosity amongst teachers and offers new perspectives for language learners. This study recommends the further development and implementation of contextualised ICC models that integrate culturally appropriate teaching materials and embrace creative student-centred learning strategies.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

AAC&U= Association of American Colleges & Universities

CCA = Critical Cultural Awareness

CLT = Communicative Language Teaching

EFL = English as a Foreign Language

ELT = English Language Teaching

IC = Intercultural Communication

ICC = Intercultural Communicative Competence

IEC = Intercultural English Course

ILT = English Language Teaching

PQ = Post-course Questionnaire

PRC = the People's Republic of China

TS = Teaching Session

WTO = World Trade Organisation

## **Declaration**

This thesis is my own work and no part of the work contained in it has been submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Context of the study**

In the last few decades or so, China has experienced rapid economic development and an explosion in commercial and cultural exchanges with other parts of the world. This process has been encouraged by the country's Opening and Reform Policy together with the opportunities provided as a result of joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001.

#### English Fever

Along with the current cultural and political background in China, the language of English has been gaining importance at an accelerated rate and English proficiency has been recognized as a prestigious symbol (Wu, 2001) which represents a gatekeeper to better economic gains and higher social status. English is perceived as a key to promoting international exchange, acquiring scientific knowledge and technological expertise, fostering economic progress, and participating in international competition (Ross, 1992). In response to this ever-increasing fever for English is an incredible commitment to the teaching and learning of the language from government, teachers, students, parents and society at large (Boyle, 2000; S. Chen, 1988; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). English education has even become a prevalent phenomenon in the Chinese kindergarten as parents tend to use the ability of English language teaching as important criteria in evaluating preschool education.

#### English Language Teaching in China

English Language Teaching (ELT) has become a national enterprise in China and there is a massive drive to expand and improve it. As one of the most populous

countries in the world, China has one of the largest populations of English learners and a history of over seven decades of English teaching and learning. Given its immense scale, ELT in the PRC is rightly regarded as the most ambitious language-learning campaign in history. Consequently, ELT in China is facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities for further development.

### Traditional EFL pedagogy

Traditional EFL education in China is dominated by a teacher-centred, book-centred, grammar-translation method and an emphasis on language knowledge. Millions of English language learners take regular English courses, 4 class hours a week, 18 weeks a term, for 12 terms in high school and 4-8 terms at university during their formal education. For those not majoring in English, the pragmatic goal is to perform smoothly in English at work, but only a small number of college graduates have developed the necessary competence. In fact, after years' of tedious English study, the students might have learned how to use words to make up sentences, how to analyse sentence structures and how to translate paragraphs, but they remain at a loss when they are required to make an intercultural contact with English-speakers.

### Reforms

To address this problem, there has been a top-down movement to reform ELT in China since late 1970s and at the same time language teachers have become increasingly aware of the need to develop their pedagogy. In a field previously dominated by the grammar-translation approach, these thirty years have witnessed intense changes. A significant component of this reform has been an effort to implement communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in the Chinese language educational context.

However, this teaching methodology has failed to make the expected positive impact on learners' achievement. CLT is a pedagogy, which aims to develop learners' communicative competence and it is designed for enhance learners' practical and skill-based learning outcomes. Teachers are too concerned with the

instrumental purposes of language teaching for communicative abilities in order to attract students who are seeking practical skills in the study of foreign language.

### Constraints

Because of this lack of results, CLT has not received widespread support and the traditional approach still dominates language classrooms. A variety of constraints have inhibited the adoption of CLT in the Chinese context. These include lack of necessary resources, large class sizes, limited instructional time, teachers' lack of language proficiency and sociolinguistic competence, examination pressure, and cultural factors (Hu, 2002). All these obstacles are in the meanwhile related to the deeply-rooted Chinese culture of teaching and learning. Hence, there has been growing skepticism about introducing drastic changes in the classroom and uncritically adopting pedagogies that have been developed in totally different social, cultural and economic milieux (Chen, 1988; Coleman, 1996).

### Further Problems

It is not reasonable to simply lay all the blame on the English teaching pedagogy such as CLT because of shortcomings of current language education strategies in China. In my view, the reason why China has not achieved expected outcomes is that it has imported a completely new pedagogy into a different educational environment and has not critically judged its suitability. It is counterproductive to take an 'autonomous' attitude, rather than an 'ideological' one, to pedagogical innovations developed in a different sociocultural milieu (Hu, 2002). Does this mean that we have to stick to the traditional teaching and learning style and resist any use of new methodology in the English classroom, as occurred when the CLT was adopted?

Furthermore, is there an EFL approach that can both satisfy the goals of language teaching and meanwhile be smoothly implemented in the Chinese educational environment? Here we face two key problems. One is to choose a fully-informed and well-developed EFL pedagogy which is systematically theorized and tested

by experts and teachers for the language classrooms; the other is to cautiously and critically reconcile this methodology with the Chinese sociocultural environment and educational context. In the following section, these two aspects will be discussed.

## **1.2 Empirical research**

As an ELT practitioner, I have taught English in a Chinese university for ten years. Based on my knowledge, many EFL teachers, especially in tertiary education, have shown an increasing interest in and a will to introduce cultural dimensions in their classes. They have implemented numerous strategies aimed at providing students with opportunities to experience target cultures. Their attempts are either impelled by the guidelines related to improving college students' intercultural competence proposed in College English Curriculum Requirement (2004, 2007) issued by the Ministry of Higher Education, or motivated by these EFL teachers' own desire to innovate and improve their teaching practices. No matter what the reasons, teachers are glad to introduce cultural studies in their language teaching, and are keen to develop their cultural awareness. The main obstacles for them is how to realize their intentional ideas in the practical language classroom, i.e. what kind of teaching approaches they should use in order to achieve their teaching objectives. The answer for them is the teaching approach proposed for this study – Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT) approach.

### Intercultural Language Teaching Approach

The intercultural language teaching approach is an expanded and more fully developed ELT pedagogy that increases opportunities for language learners to develop their intercultural communicative competence. It aims to assist language learners from different cultural backgrounds to communicate successfully through acquiring a second language and eventually leading them to achieve intercultural competence.

Based on this objective, methodological researchers firstly recognized the fundamental difference or revolution of the ILT from other pedagogies. That is,

‘interculturality’, according to Alred et al. (2003), is a way to help people question basic assumptions about themselves and others, and to adopt new ways of looking at themselves and their world. Rather than persist on following the native speakers’ ideas and target culture, they are obliged to doubt the domination and thinking of their own.

The value of an intercultural approach centres on a shift, from the concept of language learning as just acquiring skills in a language accompanied by some factual knowledge about a country where the language is spoken, to the critical tolerance and appreciation of both self-own and target cultures. This radical change can also be represented in the following way: it is a vision of language teaching and learning that can guide their learners to emphasize the intercultural awareness, which enables them to successfully interact with people of different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, it is to provide learners with intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence, to prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures, to enable them to understand people from other cultures and accept them as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviours, and to help them realize that intercultural contact is an enriching experience for them.

### Challenges

In spite of the prominent features shown in ILT, a number of challenges still exist in the further application of the intercultural language teaching approach in the college English classrooms. First, the current tertiary English education in China is inevitably examination-oriented and students have to take part in the College English Test at the end of their learning programmes. Only when they pass the exam can they obtain an academic degree through higher education. In this case, teachers generally accept that they attach much more importance to the teaching of the language knowledge itself than to the cultural aspects.

In addition, most teachers have not reached the level of grasping the deeper meaning of intercultural competence and limit their understanding about the cultural contents to issues like traditions and customs, history, geography or

political conditions (Han, 2011). Few are able to fully understand other significant aspects more closely connected to intercultural communicative competence such as: developing attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures, promoting the ability to handle intercultural contact situations, promoting reflection on cultural differences, or promoting increased understanding of the students' own culture (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). This imbalance is partially due to the lack of relevant empirical studies on intercultural language teaching, and the precious and limited opportunities for systematic pedagogical training of EFL teachers. It is evident that much remains to be done.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The FL classroom has long been considered an ideal place for promoting cultural awareness in the process of acquiring another language. For the past decade, it has also been common to indicate learners' intercultural development through the language curriculum (Liddicoat, 2005; Sercu, 2004). However, at present there is very little literature on actual pedagogical practice that is related to integrating cultural dimensions into the foreign language education, or about its combination with the language curriculum. At EFL conferences in China, the ways to present the intercultural dimension in the language teaching to enhance learners' intercultural competence is seldom touched on. So it is high time for more studies that are especially originated from English classrooms conducted to fill the gap. In spite of the fact that English is considered as a lingua franca in a wide variety of very diverse contexts, it is not the focus in this thesis.

In order to check whether the ILT approach can be smoothly implemented in the Chinese EFL classrooms, an action research study was devised carefully for this thesis. This empirical case study was to explore the questioning of the current ELT in China from the researcher's own observation and teaching experiences. So the research question brought forward is 'How can an intercultural language teaching approach facilitate the development of Chinese college EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence?'

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether an intercultural approach applied in an EFL classroom can improve learners' intercultural communicative competence, and if the answer is yes, to what extent can the approach assist, and what aspects of learners' ICC can the teaching improve. The intended implications of the thesis is to provide suggestions to ILT approach that is suitable for the Chinese EFL context regarding ICC models, syllabus design and teaching techniques. The next section illustrates the structure of this thesis.

#### **1.4 Organization of the study**

After this introductory chapter which has set out the origins and purpose of the study, the thesis begins by providing the theoretical background by reviewing existing literature closely related to the research field (Chapter two). The chapter mainly deals with four concepts: culture dimension in language education, intercultural communicative competence, Byram's ICC savoirs and intercultural language teaching approach. The final section discusses the culture pedagogy in the Chinese EFL context.

Following the literature review, Chapter three presents the framework of the empirical study. It discusses the nature of Action Research and its usefulness as a means of conducting research in the teacher's own classroom. All the details of the research procedures including research field (EFL classroom, teacher-researcher, participants), data collection tools (questionnaires, learners' learning process worksheet, teacher's reflective journal etc.) and data analysis stages are explained. The limitations of the study are also discussed.

Chapter four presents the detailed illustration of an intercultural language course specifically designed for this action research titled 'Intercultural English Course' (IEC). The conceptual ICC model and teaching philosophy are discussed from the teacher's point of view. This chapter also outlines IEC learners' situation before taking the course, including their previous English learning experiences, their expectations of the IEC, and their self-evaluation of intercultural competence.

Chapter five and six present IEC learners' ICC development as research findings. In chapter five, the development is constructed in the frame of Byram's ICC savoirs and all the learners' representative instances are identified and analysed in detail. Chapter six presents additional ICC themes identified as learners' improvement beyond Byram's savoirs.

Chapter seven focuses on the teacher and teaching aspects. Two parts are included – the first discusses the relationship between learners' ICC development and the teaching strategies, and the second illustrates learners' reflection of the IEC programme. This chapter intends to seek the key features in the IEC syllabus that can effectively enhance learners' ICC.

Chapter eight presents the final discussion of the study and sums up the findings. An ICC theoretical model that is more appropriate for the Chinese EFL teaching context is suggested, and useful instructional method and teaching techniques in the ILT are also recommended.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Literature Review**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter revolves around two theoretical frameworks namely the conception of Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and the Intercultural language teaching (ILT) approach. It begins with illustrating the conception of culture in the foreign language teaching considering ‘culture’ as the central theme of ‘intercultural competence’ and followed by investigating the relationship between language and culture. The relevant conceptions of ‘intercultural communicative competence’ are also discussed as the fundamental objective for ‘intercultural’ teaching and learning. The succeeding section brings forward Byram’s (1997) ICC approach with savoir illustration. In the last section, the development of culture dimension in the language education history is explored, features of intercultural language teaching approaches are highlighted and the cultural pedagogy in the Chinese context is illustrated.

### **2.1 Culture in language teaching and learning**

It is commonly accepted that the process of acquiring a foreign language is always accompanied by learning its culture. Since language provides people with a ‘form of life’ (Wittgenstein, 1994: 11), so it can never be ‘culture-free’ and language always ‘carries’ culture (Thiong’o, 1995: 290). Kramersch (1993) argues that a foreign language learner inevitably becomes a learner of the target culture, and Valdes (1986) claims that language learning is intrinsically ‘bound’ to cultural learning.

Relevant studies have focused on the relationship between language teaching and teaching the target culture (Alptekin, 1993, Kramersch, 1993), and also expanded to a transferable ‘intercultural’ dimension, which aims to equip learners with adequate skills and attitudes towards other cultures (Byram, 1997, Corbett, 2003).

These transferable skills and attitudes are essential for foreign language users to successfully create a 'third place' as competent 'intercultural speakers' (Byram, 1997, Kramersch, 1998b) in intercultural interactions.

As to cultural dimension integrated in foreign language education, diverse theoretical frameworks have been expanded since 1990s, for instance, the works of Byram (1994, 1997, 2008), Kramersch (1993, 1995), Bennett et al (1999), Corbett (2003, 2010), Pulverness (2003), Seelye (1994) and Phipps (2004). These researchers generally consent to incorporate culture as either an implicit or explicit section in the foreign language syllabus. Whether the core stance from these conceptual models that are formed in European or American contexts are beneficial and constructive in a wider context like EFL teaching in Chinese tertiary education is the issue I deal with later. Before deeper investigation into this argument, the definition of culture and the relationship between language and culture will be analyzed first.

### **2.1.1 The definition of culture**

To obtain a clear picture of the relationship between language and culture, it is indispensable to explore the conception of culture. There were numerous attempts in conceptual evolution of 'culture' from diversified perspectives of theoretical understanding and in this thesis, I will consider the definition mainly from the anthropological point of view in order to highlight its pertinence with EFL educational context.

From an anthropological stance, culture is generally perceived in the context of large groups of people and what they share in common i.e. their history, language and worldview. Keesing (1974) identified three main tendencies in analyzing meaning-oriented dimensions of culture among anthropologists up to 1970s: cognitive anthropology, structuralist anthropology and symbolic anthropology.

Researchers who advocated cognitive anthropology considered culture as knowledge of 'abstracted from actual behaviour and practice' and they focused on

‘learned behaviours – that is behaviour based on cultural knowledge’ (Roberts et al, 2001: 50). Goodenough is the main representative of this cognitive group, and the following is his definition of culture:

‘A society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term.’ (Goodenough, 1964: 36)

In Goodenough’s definition (1964: 36), he also emphasised that culture is ‘not a material phenomenon and it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions’; rather it is ‘an organisation of these things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them’. This idea has closely associated with sociological perspective, which claims that culture consists of interrelated material and non-material cultural aspects.

The structural approach to the study of culture was prevalent from the 1960s to the early 1980s and dominated by Claude Levi-Strauss, whose theory originated from the opposite camp to cognitive anthropology. Levi-Strauss specifically used the concept for symbolic, communicative systems and viewed culture as ‘a whole made up of symbolic systems’ (Levi-Strauss, 1966: XIX). He also proposed that all these systems aim to express ‘certain aspects of physical reality and social reality’ and, furthermore, ‘the relations that these two types of reality maintain between each other and that the symbolic systems themselves maintain between themselves’ (ibid). Therefore, his conception emphasized the universal laws of human thought that yield similar patterns in different cultures. Keesing (1974) considers Levis-Strauss’s theory as more concerned with culture in a general sense, which ‘transcends the boundaries of language and custom that divide different people’ (p. 79).

An interpretive concept of culture, as referred to as ‘symbolic anthropology’ in Keesing’s (1974) term was mainly developed by Clifford Geertz and prevalent

between 1960s and 1980s. Geertz claims that the core of cultures lies in social action formed as ‘an acted document’ with complicated meaning, and in order to understand the embedded message, literary interpretation is necessary: ‘the concept of culture I espouse ... is essentially a semiotic one... the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning’ (Geertz, 1973: 5).

Compared with cognitive anthropology, which advocates an abstract concept of the individual, Geertz’ theory is highly ‘particularist’ in his orientation (Risager, 2006). He brings forward ‘thick description’ to interpret the particularities in the culture-as-text social action for potential values and structures it conceals. So the interpretative concept of culture or symbolic anthropology is closely related with literary interpretation and hermeneutics.

From the 1980s up till now, a more critical perspective of culture has been taken on top of the descriptive and interpretive anthropology and other disciplines. Roberts et al (2001: 52-54) maintained that cognitive and symbolic ways of approaching culture were superseded by an active critical view of culture. This tendency is represented in various disciplines under many different slogans, such as ‘practice’, ‘resistance’, ‘history’ and ‘politics’ (Sewell, 1999: 44). The advocates, who emphasize the dimension of practice in understanding culture, presume that the cultural symbols are created and recreated in the meaning transferring interaction between people, and they also consider that the emphasis should be placed on ‘the procedural, social and conflictual aspects of the ascription of meaning’ (Risager, 2006: 49).

Raymond Williams (1976), defines culture as a constitutive social process with ‘a whole way of life’, containing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions and the whole range of cultural practices which includes artistic forms, texts, canons, architecture, commodities and so on. This definition of ‘culture’ that deals with different facets of life is also the most cited one for Cultural Studies. In this regard, rather than what Williams focuses is the range of practices, what Geertz did was to show how to interpret those practices.

The extensive criticism of cognitive views of culture is that they portray culture as static, uniform and coherent. However, critics argue that cultural groups are internally heterogeneous groups, and the members hold diversified practices that change, interact and are influenced by others all the time. Barrett et al (2013) clarifies the constantly changing characteristics of culture in the following way:

All cultures are dynamic and constantly change over time as a result of political, economic and historical events and developments, and as a result of interactions with and influences from other cultures. Cultures also change over time because of their members' internal contestation of the meanings, norms, values and practices of the group. (p. 5)

For highlighting this prominent feature of culture, Barrett et al (2013) defined culture in three distinctive dimensions namely material, social, subjective aspects: material culture consists of 'physical artefacts which are commonly used by the members of a cultural group'; social culture 'the social institutions of the group', and subjective culture 'the beliefs, norms, collective memories, attitudes, values, discourses and practices which group members commonly use as a frame of reference for thinking about, making sense of and relating to the world' (ibid: 5). And culture itself is 'a composite formed from all three aspects – it consists of a network of material, social and subjective resources' (ibid: 5). Barrett et al.'s conception of culture is most persuasive, since it highlights the fact that cultural identities are not fixed, but interact and change constantly and, meanwhile cultural affiliations are fluid and dynamic.

Defining 'culture' in this way represents the cultural complexity view facilitated by the identification of meaningful differences between one's own world and the others. Though it is not proper to simply base our understanding on the dichotomy of 'the essentialist view of culture' vs. 'the complexity view of culture', this viewpoint sheds light on exploring other important concepts such as intercultural competence (will be discussed later in this chapter), and thereby helps to broaden the cultural and intercultural dimensions of foreign language teaching (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993, 1998a, 1998b; Pulverness, 2004).

## Summary

The concept of culture has had an extremely varied history based on different anthropological approaches, and it is the tendency closely related with cultural studies and postmodern thought that is more appropriate and applicable as to analyzing the relationship between language and culture.

### **2.1.2 Relationship between language and culture**

Researchers' interest in the connection between language and culture has been intensified with the development of socio-linguistics and cultural studies (Klein, 2004; Risager, 2006). As Kramsch (1995: 83) indicates, because culture is inseparable from society, the term 'cultural' has always been potentially associated with 'social'. The connotation of 'socio-cultural' is also widely applied to highlight the comprehensive connections of these two aspects. Moreover, it has been commonly accepted that language and culture are fundamentally inseparable (Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984). The analysis of this inextricable connection has been expounded mainly via two explanation viewpoints: language and culture are interdependent; language and culture interact and are mutually promoted.

As to the former 'interdependent' facet, Brown (1994: 165) states that 'language is a part of a culture and culture is a part of language: the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture'. Goodenough (1964: 37) explains this as a 'part-whole' association: 'a society's language is an aspect of its culture' and the relationship of language to culture is that of 'part to whole'. Regarding the latter view of 'interacting' dimension, an influential theory was expounded by American linguists Sapir (1949) and Whorf (1956). The widely known 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' emphasizes the cultural foundation of language and argues that the language one speaks determines one's perception of the world (Garner, 2004). The penetrating connotation sheds light on the investigation of the cultural dimension of language teaching and learning.

In addition to the stances illustrated above, Risager's (2006, 2007) work implements a new scientific analysis of the relationship between language and culture in a 'global, world-historical' context. Risager (2006) further explores Friedrich (1989) and Agar's (1994) discussion on the concept of 'languaculture' from the perspective of a poststructuralist combined with sociolinguistic and culture-oriented versions. She analyzes the 'languaculture' in both a generic and a differential sense and divides the latter into three dimensions namely the semantic-pragmatic, the poetic and the identity. According to Risager's understanding, neither of Friedrich and Agar's works links sociolinguistic research into their concept, notwithstanding the fact that language and identity are the essential issues in contemporary cultural analysis. She argues from the sociological perspective that a language can be associated with a new culture e.g. English has become the bearer of cultures other than those of, say Britain or the USA. Due to this inadequacy, Risager (2006) applies a reduction to the all-inclusive 'language and culture inseparability' concept but claims a view of "the inseparability of 'language' and 'languaculture' for the person who speaks the language as a first language or early second language (p. 115)".

In summary, the inseparable relationship of language and culture has been broadly asserted by scholars with diversified means of investigation. On top of this, Risager's (2006, 2007) understanding of 'languaculture' in a macro-global context bears significant implications for the pedagogical development in culture and language education. In a globalized world with intensified intercommunication, it is particularly necessary to make inquiries about our first language and languaculture influence in the process of foreign or second language acquisition.

All the research looking into the language and culture relationship is meaningful to the exploration of cultural dimension in language education, and the next section will discuss the implication for the cultural aspects in the foreign language education.

### **2.1.3 Cultural dimension in language education**

Once the culture concept and the relationship between language and culture are settled, their implications for the foreign or second language teaching are brought forward. Essentially, culture is the context for language use and language is affected and embodied by culture. Seelye (1976) claimed that a word has no meaning without a cultural context. Likewise, according to Morgan and Cain's (2000: 7) understanding, a cultural context 'polices' the language.

In this view, teaching language cannot be confined to merely improving learners' linguistic competence, as indicated from Chomsky (1957, 1965)'s perspective that any consideration of social factors was outside the domain of linguistics. Dell Hymes (1972) coined the term 'communicative competence' as a response to Chomsky's work, and argued that in addition to linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence (the rules for using language appropriately in context) should also be included to account for language acquisition and language use. On top of Hymes' terminology and perspective, applied linguists added more components to elaborate the model that is supposed useful for language teachers in their teaching and evaluating practice. These supplementary aspects included strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980), discourse competence (Canale, 1983) and actional competence (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995). Along with these developments, socio-cultural competence was remarkably highlighted and in the earlier models it was understood as cultural background knowledge needed to interpret and use a language effectively.

When teaching used the native-speaker as a model for learners, earlier teaching models that solely concentrated on 'isolated and static cultural artefacts' (Brooks, 1975; Nostrand, 1974) were constantly criticized due to their simplified understanding of surface level of behaviours. And this perspective has been gradually replaced by conceptions of cultural aspects that are dynamic and inherently accompanied with social practices and ideological values. With the world's unprecedentedly globalizing scale, culture teaching in the language classroom goes far beyond merely seeking for the literal meaning from the verbal

forms and non-verbal codes. Exploring the concealed ideological meanings underneath the language surface via teaching language in socio-cultural context is highlighted in recent teaching models (e.g. Kramsch, 1993; Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco, 1999).

Furthermore, scholars including van Ek and Byram transcended inherent disciplinary restraint and proposed significant dimensions in order to accomplish the teaching objectives for competent communicators. van Ek (1986) proposed social competence as a notable aspect in his model of foreign language teaching and learning objective, which included ‘both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self confidence, empathy and the ability to handle social situations’ (ibid: 65). He argued that solely training in communication skills is not sufficient in the foreign language teaching, and should include the personal and social development of the learner as an individual (ibid: 33-65, in Byram, 1997: 9).

Byram (1994, 1997) brought forward intercultural (communicative) competence on stage and claimed that in addition to gaining ‘deep learning’ with both target and one’s own cultures, foreign language learners are also expected to gain competence of analysis and criticism through cultural studies in the foreign language classroom. In his widely quoted work (1997) with five ICC savoirs explicated, he explained that the aims of teaching languages for intercultural competence should include linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence in language, combined with intercultural competences in the discovery, analysis, comparison and critique of cultures. In this view, both comparative analysis and critique of cultural issues are highlighted. Hence, it is significant to create social and cultural space in the foreign language classroom, to facilitate learners’ process of critically comparing and analysing cultural topics, and accordingly to enhance their intercultural competence.

Pioneered by Byram’s (1988, 1997) theoretical perspective, constructing a framework for the intercultural dimension in the language classroom was widely accepted and explored in relative studies. Being intercultural is considered as the ability to reflect upon, analyse and have better understanding of cultural

differences (Risager, 2006, 2007; Corbett, 2003; Bredella, 2003). In the language classroom, it is critical for learners to obtain opportunities to investigate the otherness via reflecting upon their own self. Similarly, by way of examining other cultures, learners' understanding of their own cultural stances can also be reinforced. It is through this process that intercultural competence can be enhanced.

This perspective was enriched by Bhabha's (1990, 1994) proposal of the 'third space' and 'in-betweeness', and Kramsch's (1993, 1998a) emphasis in finding 'third places' in the language classroom. This 'inter' space is significant for language learners because it is there that the meanings of the learner's own culture and others' are reinterpreted. From analysing differences, they can cross boundaries, develop their critical cultural analysis and become efficient intercultural speakers. It is generally believed that foreign language teaching should assist students to become successful mediators between their own as well as other cultures via appropriate understanding of cultural facts (Byram, 1997; Byram & Zarate, 1997; Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco, 1999). In this regard, Byram (1997) specifically proposed five *savoirs* namely attitudes, knowledge, skills (two facets) and critical cultural awareness acting as approaches in guiding and evaluating learners' (language learners, in particular) intercultural communicative abilities. These five *savoirs* will be fully discussed in the next section.

## **2.2 Intercultural communicative competence and Byram's ICC *savoirs***

In the last two to three decades, there has been growing interest in developing the learners' intercultural competence particularly in the foreign language education context. However, until now there seems no consensus of finalised definition, not to say the teaching content, general curriculum standard, and assessment methods. Deardorff's (2004) project 'The identification and assessment of intercultural competence at institutions of higher education in the United States' assembled a panel of international intercultural experts and has claimed progress regarding the definition of intercultural competence. The panel mainly agreed with Byram's conception and defined ICC as 'the ability to communicate effectively and

appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes' (cited in Deardorff, 2004: 194). They also summarized specific components of intercultural communication in the development of ICC, namely Knowledge & Comprehension, Skills/Ability, and Attitudes.

In a recent overview of developments in language teaching, Masli (2011: 26) states that: 'One often-cited approach on which intercultural communication, as a discourse of tolerance and flexibility, is grounded has been offered by Byram (1997). (...) Byram's (1997) approach to intercultural communication has indeed offered greater insights into the study of language and culture'. Bearing in mind that no model can be perfect, the researcher did careful critique of the model before using it in this study. After critically analysing the pros and cons, the researcher finally decided to use Byram's ICC approach in this study as informing the teaching practice and directing the course design of the IEC programme, and framing the criteria of research data analysis. The following section will then explore the definition of ICC and investigate Byram's ICC approach, which is important in foreign language education.

## **2.2.1 Intercultural communicative competence**

In order to define intercultural communicative competence (ICC), it is necessary to address three concepts namely culture, inter- and competence, as well as the relationship between language and culture. The theoretical framework regarding culture (2.1.1) and the relationship between language and culture (2.1.2) are explicated in the previous sections, and the following part will first investigate the concept of 'inter-' and 'competence' respectively, then discuss the term in a holistic way.

### **2.2.1.1 'Competence' in ICC**

The word 'competence' has long been criticized by some educationists as equal to 'skills that can be acquired through repetitive activities' because they claim that 'education is a matter of values, of development of the individual' rather than

simply focusing on training skills. Fleming (2009) argues that in the context of intercultural assessment, the term of ‘competence’ goes beyond aspects of skill and performance and embraces ‘deeper notions of disposition, intention, motive and personal identity’. Likewise, Byram (2011) explains the competence as ‘reflection and criticality’, similar with his notion of ‘critical cultural awareness’ (*savoir s’engager*). He distinguishes them into ‘surface skills’ and ‘deep capabilities for understanding’ and illustrated meanings to the teaching and assessment.

Rollin and Harrap (2005) also identified the distinctive features between ‘skills’ and ‘competence’ and defined the former as ‘the ability in listening, reading, speaking and writing’ whereas the latter as ‘the ability to put these skills to use in transmitting and receiving information accurately and meaningfully’ (p. 3). Based on this view, they define ICC as the ‘capacity to function in another culture’, which includes ‘reflecting on one’s own culture and identity, recognizing patterns and attitudes and eliciting their meanings and connotations’ (*ibid.*). This concept appears to echo what Byram claims as ‘deep capabilities for understanding’.

#### **2.2.1.2 ‘inter-’ aligning with ‘inter-culturality’**

The core of ‘intercultural competence’ is distinct from ‘communicative competence’ since it criticizes the native speaker model and replaces it with ‘intercultural speaker’ standard. Thereafter, the comprehension of ‘inter-’ aligning with ‘inter-culturality’ as in both ‘intercultural competence’ and ‘intercultural speaker’ is significant for understanding the whole term.

‘Inter-’ in inter-culturality is not simply an ‘in-between’ position while facing different cultures and one’s own. For example, in a foreign language classroom, while learners are provided with opportunities for exploring ‘otherness’, their personal reflection upon ‘self’ is also activated. In the process of contrasting and comparing between different positions, a new cultural space that is greater than the combination of two has to be constructed. According to language educators such as Byram, Kramsch and Lo Bianco, this space is where learners can see

differences, mediate and articulate their own voice or thinking. Certain terms have been coined in order to diagnose this space, including ‘the third place’ (Kramersch, 1993), ‘a negotiation zone’ (Crozet, Liddicoat & Lo Bianco, 1999), ‘the third space’ (Bhabha, 1990) and ‘intercultural speaker’ (Byram, 1997).

Byram and Zarate (1997) point out that an intercultural speaker is able to cross the frontier and to some extent carry cultural property and values back and forth over the frontier. Byram (2006) further elaborates on intercultural speakers’ features as ‘competences which enable them to mediate/interpret the values, beliefs and behaviours (the ‘cultures’) of themselves and of others and to ‘stand on the bridge’ or indeed ‘be the bridge’ between people of different languages and cultures’ (p. 12). In this regard, foreign language learners are supposed to reflect upon cultural difference, analyse critically and speak out their viewpoints. Therefore, the native speaker norm is no longer the ultimate goal for foreign language learning (Byram, 1997; Kramersch, 1993, 1998a).

Hence, interculturality is the core position for language learners to explore the boundary between cultures, and then gain critical cultural awareness. Fantini (2000) cites the following commonly used attributes to describe the intercultural speaker: ‘respect, empathy, flexibility, patience, interest, curiosity, openness, motivation, a sense of humour, tolerance for ambiguity, and a willingness to suspend judgment’ (p. 28). These features are also essential dimensions for intercultural communicative competence, which will be further discussed in 2.2.1.3.

The next part will discuss ‘intercultural communicative competence’ based on the combination of previously explained terms including inter-, culture, competence and the relationship between language and culture.

### **2.2.1.3 Intercultural communicative competence**

Scholars have defined intercultural competence in different ways and have referred to it by terms like cross-cultural competence, cultural competence

(Bennett et al, 1999; Byram, 1997; Fantini, 2000; Paige, 1993; Samovar and Porter, 2000). Different researchers tend to conceptualize the notion of 'intercultural competence' from different perspectives, but this research will investigate the conception of IC mainly for *education* purposes. On top of this, the term ICC has been coined by Byram (1997) to indicate the combination of linguistic competence with IC that brought the concept into foreign language education context, and developed the previously prevalent target of 'communicative competence'.

Wiseman (2003) explains that ICC involves 'the knowledge, motivation, and skills to interact effectively and appropriately with members of different cultures' (p. 192). Deardorff (2006) claims the common elements that are persistent in the definition of ICC are 'awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences, experiencing other cultures, and self-awareness of one's own culture' (p. 247). Likewise, Fleming (2009) argues that the key aspects of the holistic concept of intercultural competence include empathy, openness, tolerance of ambiguity, readiness to decentre, and willingness to engage with others and to try anything new. It is commonly accepted by these researchers that intercultural competence consists of three dimensions namely the affective perspective (attitudes), the cognitive perspective (knowledge) and the behavioural perspective (skills).

Fantini (2000) presents a general characterization of ICC that involves three domains of ability: '1) the ability to develop and maintain relationships; 2) the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with minimal loss or distortion; and 3) the ability to attain compliance and obtain cooperation with others' (p. 27). According to Bennett and Bennett (2004), ICC refers to 'the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts' (p. 5). These scholars suggest that being inter-culturally competent requires effective communication with members of other cultures. And in order to maintain this effectiveness, foreign language learners are supposed to have adequate cultural knowledge (values, beliefs) and communication skills (verbal and non-verbal) to implement conversation, and to show a willingness to mediate differences.

In the recent work for the European Council, Barrett et al (2013) clarify the definition of IC emphasizing the component of *action*, which particularly echoes Byram's (2008) supplementary element of 'action orientation' in his ICC theory that focuses on bringing about social changes (further investigated in section 'Intercultural citizenship'):

Intercultural competence is therefore a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enable one, either singly or together with others, to:

- understand and respect people who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from oneself
- respond appropriately, effectively and respectfully when interacting and communicating with such people
- establish positive and constructive relationships with such people
- understand oneself and one's own multiple cultural affiliations through encounters with cultural 'difference'. (Barrett et al., 2013 p. 7)

However, it is necessary to notice that the resulting definition of IC/ICC uses 'a western-centric view on intercultural competence, a view in which such competence resides largely within the individual' (Deardorff, 2006: 245). Parmenter (2003) checked this tendency of westernized way of thinking and finalized a re-conceptualization of ICC from a non-European perspective. From the perspective of Asian culture scholars, the definition of ICC is inclined to focus on the group interpersonal relationships (Miyahara, 1992; Yum, 1994, as cited in Deardorff, 2006). But, it is also necessary to point out that Miike's (2003) work that takes an Asiacentric approach to intercultural communication is also been criticized for being 'centric'. Hence, the core concept of ICC can be applied to guide and inform the research from a universal stance rather than an essentialist perspective, and it is feasible to be integrated with this study.

## **2.2.2 Byram's ICC approach**

### **2.2.2.1 Byram's ICC model**

There are many models of intercultural competence, summarized for example by Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009). Among those Byram's ICC model (1997) has been very influential in intercultural language learning and continues to be used in research into intercultural competence (e.g. Belz, 2003, 2007; Sercu, 2004). Byram's (1997) ICC model is initially proposed for the purpose of foreign language education for secondary school students to acquire ICC. The explication of the five *savoirs* in the model allows foreign language teachers to design their syllabus and plan their teaching. The notion of ICC in the model originates from qualities that sojourners should acquire in an intercultural contact. However, its emphasis on achieving an 'intercultural speaker' (ibid: 32) makes it different from models that is solely based on communicative competence. In practice, this model is very influential in foreign language education and intercultural training.

However, Byram's ICC model is not without criticism. First, as Coperias Aguilier (2002) suggests that teachers may face challenges from how to apply the ICC model to actual teaching, because some aspects of ICC cannot be taught in the classroom (p. 97). As to this issue, the researcher admits that some dimensions of the *savoirs* are abstract and not easily achieved in a short length of time of teaching. However, this can be solved via purposeful and effective syllabus design. For instance, when the *savoirs* are used to construct the learning objectives, the teacher can clarify them in a simpler way for students to understand.

Then, Byram's concept of culture embedded in the ICC model has been suggested as based on 'essentialist' and 'nationalist' views – Belz, for instance, stated that 'Byram (1997: 20, 32, 36, 39-40) appears to equate the concept of culture with that of 'nation' (2007: 129). However, if sufficient attention is paid to the fundamental purpose of the 1997 book, this doubt can be removed. Both teachers and curriculum designers need the concise framework including simplified conception of culture and systematic pedagogical and evaluation method

illustrations. This is appropriate from a pedagogical perspective and particularly suitable for the early stage learners, who are meant to be elevated from the beginning to higher levels.

In addition, Byram (1997) also warns that the successful teaching and assessing of ICC is to be contextualized, which means that one should take into consideration the specific variables that are involved in the FL teaching such as ‘learners’ origins as well as the languages, cultures they are learning’ (p. 4). In this view, when applying Byram’s ICC approach into the Chinese tertiary EFL context, context-sensitive points should be noted and reviewed purposefully and extensively either before or after the study. Notwithstanding some objectives in ICC *savoirs* are demanding being directly imported to the Chinese EFL classroom, they nail down the basic knowledge and competence crucial for a competent intercultural speaker, which is essential for developing an intercultural language programme.

As Byram (1997) indicates, it is impossible to define a general syllabus to teach ICC only listing the guidelines to design a specific syllabus. Rather, evaluation and teaching should be closely interrelated with detailed objectives. Byram’s model of ICC was used as a comprehensive framework to design the IEC (Chapter four) syllabus, inform the teaching practice, to lead the research question construction, and scaffold the data analysis in this study. After reviewing ICC conceptions in the current literature, the researcher finds Byram’s theoretical framework the most useful for this action research study. Next, I will discuss the *savoirs* as components of his ICC model.

#### **2.2.2.2 ICC *savoirs***

According to the literature review on culture and language learning and intercultural studies written by Byram and Feng (2004), they distinguish ‘what is’ and ‘what ought to be’ types of research. Byram’s ICC model is an example of the later type, which presents an ideal prototype on how to develop and assess intercultural communicative competence in the foreign language education. The

author's framework of five *savoirs* intends to explain ICC aspects a foreign language learner should acquire in order to mediate between differences. Byram (2009) showed his preference for using 'approach' rather than 'model' in order to emphasize his views that list of *savoirs* is not intended to be an exclusive one, but a descriptive one, with its specific focus on the 'critical cultural awareness' among the five capabilities. So, in this work the author will purposefully apply 'approach' indicating Byram's ICC perspective and model.

These five *savoirs*, according to Corbett (2003: 31), are presently 'the most fully worked-out specification of intercultural competence, which involves the kinds of knowledge and skills needed to mediate between cultures'. The framework consists of five separate but interdependent components: knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction, accompanied by critical cultural awareness. The objectives Byram (1997) set for the five *savoirs* serve as guiding criteria to develop and evaluate learners' intercultural competence particularly in the foreign language education context. Definitions of these categorized objectives can be found in Appendix 1, and along with presenting the research findings in Chapter five and six, more detailed analysis of these *savoirs* will also be discussed.

Among the five *savoirs*, Byram (1997) distinguishes '*savoir s'engager*' or 'critical cultural awareness' (CCA) as the most crucial. He claims it as 'a rational and explicit standpoint from which to evaluate' (p. 54). CCA has been given much more treatment in terms of the idea of 'taking action' (Byram, 2008) and in notion of responsibility and ethical and moral action/communication (e.g. in the citizenship literature, and in more recent critiques of the term 'competence' including critiques of 'intercultural competence').

The dimension of 'critical cultural awareness' or 'political education' in ICC intentionally emphasizes the 'social' and 'political' domains in language awareness (James and Garrett, 1992), and these two are particularly important for critically analyzing and evaluating cultural viewpoints. The *savoir s'engager* is regarded as the core of the ICC and the developed outcome of the other four *savoirs*. In addition to relating, interpreting and analyzing cultural differences,

intercultural speakers should also be competent to generate their own critical opinions based on logical criteria from their own and other cultures. According to Byram (1997: 103), critical cultural awareness not only enhances the transferability of skill and attitudes but also function as ‘a basis for study of other cultures and languages or for coping with interaction in other culture and linguistic environments’.

Pulverness (2004) maintains that the foreign language classroom is the proper place where critical cultural awareness can be developed. And this critical dimension in the EFL education can be extended to facilitate learners’ global scholarship in general education as well. As Guilherme (2002) maintains, critical cultural awareness development is crucial for students to be trained as responsible and global citizens in this intercultural world.

### **2.2.2.3 Intercultural citizenship**

Byram (2008) proposed a theory of ‘intercultural citizenship’, which combines the aims of language teaching with the aims of citizenship education, but modifies and improves both. And in his recent work (2013), he argued that the strength of education for intercultural competence in a foreign language lies in the critical comparative analysis of ‘other’ cultures and ‘ours’ and weakness is the lack of focus on action in the world. On top of this, Barrett (2013:10) listed five necessary components for intercultural competence, namely attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and *actions*. It is important to put the former four components altogether into practice through *action* during intercultural encounters. He particularly pointed out that intercultural competence has strong ‘active, interactive and participative’ dimensions, which is required for ‘democratic citizenship within a culturally diverse world’ (ibid: 11).

As recent development of Byram’s work (2012), he organized a transnational project that involved a network of teachers in secondary schools and higher education in seven countries. The foreign language learners are guided by the project leader (foreign language teacher mostly) to investigate social issues in

ethnographic approaches and relate with each other in counterpart via the Internet, with a strong focus on developing an interactive and respectful understanding of the event.

The next part will investigate the development of culture pedagogy in the history of language education followed by detailed illustration on intercultural language teaching (ILT) approach.

## **2.3 Culture pedagogy and intercultural language teaching**

### **2.3.1 Culture pedagogy**

According to Risager (2007), a cultural dimension has been widely embedded in language teaching since the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in relation to literary education in earlier times. Risager (2007: 8-10) divided the cultural dimension of language teaching into three types: content, context and poetic. The content dimension deals with knowledge of the target-language countries; the context dimension focuses on the cultural context of the use of language; the poetic dimension concerns about the aesthetic use of language. She also stated a shift of focus from on teaching materials in terms of thematic content to on cultural learning process with an interest in the students' both cognitive and affective development, and to on intercultural approach to compare cultures to reach an understanding of other cultures.

The content-oriented approach concentrated on the knowledge acquisition of the target culture and scholars like Brooks (1968) and Morain (1983) make distinction between 'Culture' (cultural aspects such as literature, fine arts, history and geography) and 'culture' (patterns of daily life, and value systems of community). Nostrand (1974) has devised an 'emergent model' that aims to help learners grasp a specific culture more effectively. Undoubtedly, this cultural information-centred teaching methodology encountered broad criticism by researchers. First, it fails to help learners deal with an unknown cultural situation and behave appropriately. Then, taking this approach requires teachers to be sufficiently knowledgeable to

interpret diverse cultural topics.

The context-oriented approach aims to develop learners' communicative competence through maintaining the relationship between linguistic practice and the cultural connotations' (Risager, 2007). The wide designation of 'communicative competence' suggested in this methodology is considered as an extension of linguistic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). 'Communicative competence' is stated as an 'ability to process language in real situations' and 'to respond meaningfully in appropriate ways' (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 2006: 33) and the communicative language teaching approach in is still prevalent in some countries.

Crawford-Lange and Lange (1984) advocate that culture should be acquired as a gathering of cultural information in a changing process and therefore taught as a process. Based on Wright's (2000) result in the process- and student-centered culture study, the outcomes of the process-approach can help students present and appreciate positive attitudes to different cultures. So, learning culture as a process is valuable to enhance students' understanding of culture, and raise their appreciation and positive attitudes to other cultures via highlighting their comments. The intercultural teaching approach that is recommended in this study is taking this perspective.

### **2.3.2 Intercultural language teaching**

With intensified internationalisation, the 1990s witnessed a new cultural turn in FLT. The intercultural dimension of foreign language learning implies the exploration of learners' own and target culture, as well as the difference between them, aiming at developing learners' intercultural communicative competence. An approach to teaching language and culture together in the framework of ILT involves opportunities to reflect on one's own culture, to experiment with the new culture and to decide how one wishes to respond to cultural differences (Liddicoat, 2005).

Intercultural language teaching and learning refocuses the goal of learning by shifting away from a narrower focus on linguistic or communicative competence, and towards a more holistic goal of intercultural competence. The highlighted objective is the development of ‘interculturality’ with ‘intercultural speakers’, by which the ‘linguistic and cultural competence in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how’ (Council of Europe, 2001: 43).

Corbett (2003) highlighted that an intercultural ELT approach prioritizes the need for a critical, multicultural curriculum which actively educates and facilitates the construction of learners’ personal and social identities in the process of developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills (p.1). One of the most widely applied teaching and assessing frameworks regarding ICC development is Byram’s (1997) model. The intercultural approach has not been completely divorced from its predecessors. For instance, Byram’s work originated from the concept of ‘communicative competence’ and he indicated that it is not a fundamental change to the teaching approach, but a supplementary aspect.

To improve the awareness of ‘interculturality’ or intercultural awareness in the foreign language education, scholars such as Byram and Fleming (1998) and Kramsch (1998a) bring forward ‘socio-cultural diversity’ in the class through various literacy means such as readings, videos and scenarios, and ‘a critical approach’ that uses ethnographies, dramas, discussions, role-plays and communication technologies.

Learning activities such as identification of stereotypes, discussion of different cultural values, and explanation of cultural misunderstanding require certain level of tolerance, patience, and willingness to reflect critically about prejudices and assumptions. In these activities, students should be encouraged to reflect on their own cultural beliefs from an outside perspective, and begin to accept and embrace differences including their own culture. Teachers are recommended being facilitators in supporting learners accomplishing their self-culture discovery and reflection process.

Next, I will discuss the situation of cultural dimension education in the Chinese EFL context.

### **2.3.3 Culture dimension of EFL teaching in China**

Han (2011) lists typical works completed by scholars regarding discussions about the cultural aspects introduced into language education in the Chinese context, for example Cheng (1992), Zhao (1992), Hu (1994) and Shu and Zhuang (1996). And she concludes that these scholars approach the cultural contents ‘mainly through linguistic competence’ and seldom touch upon ‘the relationship with communicative competence’ (ibid: 90).

Cultural knowledge in EFL classrooms at the tertiary level in China remains largely peripheral to language learning (Han, 2011; Qian, 2011). It is acquired by students incidentally and is rarely a focus for its own sake. In this regard, cultural teaching should not be limited to simple references to cultural artefacts. However, Cao (1998) conducted a study of the course implementation in the Chinese universities regarding teaching objectives, cultural content and teaching methods and summarized that the cultural-fact based teaching content and information loaded approach is prevalent.

The attainments for cultural teaching are mainly about cultural knowledge (Han, 2011). In this regard, cultural competence is viewed as a body of knowledge about a country, and descriptions of cultural practices and values. It omits key elements of knowledge that are important for intercultural communication, such as deep level value systems, cultural variability within target language communities, the role of the individual as a creator of culture and the ways in which language and culture interact in the creation of meaning (Lange and Paige, 2003).

Cultural instruction in the EFL classroom should not just happen incidentally or be based on knowledge-facts. Instead, it should be integrated with a language syllabus. A well-designed course syllabus can provide a useful reference. Such a course design including teaching content and instructional techniques not only suggests criteria for selecting socio-cultural topics but also demonstrates how an

intercultural syllabus can be implemented in a university language classroom. Chapter four 'Intercultural English Course' in this thesis presents how a language class can be integrated with intercultural dimensions so as to facilitate learners' ICC development.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This empirical case study is designed to explore the questioning of the current English language teaching (ELT) in the tertiary education in China from the standpoint of my own observation and teaching experience. The intention of the study is to analyse an intercultural approach to the teaching of English to college students in a coastal city of China. The intercultural teaching and learning strategies aim to improve students' intercultural competence as well as their language proficiency through particular teaching and learning processes.

In order to develop an appropriate model for a college English language syllabus integrated with cultural and intercultural dimensions, the core research question is proposed as: 'How can an intercultural language teaching approach facilitate the development of Chinese college EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence?'

### **3.2 Research Paradigm and Method**

After the research questions are presented, we are faced with the choice of suitable research paradigm and methodological approaches. This section illustrates the reasons for choosing the appropriate methodologies for this study.

#### **3.2.1 Research Paradigm**

The choices of research paradigms are fundamentally determined by the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality and the function of knowledge (Holliday, 2002). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) contrast quantitative with qualitative research designs by making the distinction between those who assume

that reality is fixed, that knowledge consists of explanation and prediction, and that the goal of research should be the verification of outcomes. These researchers will be attracted to the quantitative paradigm and its associated designs – experimentation, survey analysis, standardized observational research, and simulation models. In contrast, ethnography, case study analysis and similar qualitative approaches appeal to those who assume that reality is ever changing, that knowledge consists of understanding, and that the goal of research is the examination of process (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993:46).

As a researcher, I believe that neither culture nor society is static and that they are constructed and reconstructed by people living in it. So the knowledge of the social world should include the description and analysis of the ever-changing meanings of people's inner world. The purpose of this study is to make sense of Chinese students' learning experiences and progress with the intervention of an intercultural language teaching approach. It is concerned with investigating participants' learning development in terms of attitudes, knowledge, skills and critical awareness of their own perspectives.

In view of the interpretative and exploratory nature of this study, it is vital for the researcher to collect time-and-context-sensitive data from the teaching and learning process. The researcher needs to observe both the teacher and students' interactions in the language classroom, collect the data that can reflect learners' own understanding of their development in the intercultural competence, and provide appropriate explanation and analysis of their feedback. Only in this way can the researcher capture the dynamic meanings given in the students' learning experience and examine their intercultural understanding development. Therefore, the research, which applies qualitative research techniques, is more desirable to match the researcher's philosophy of knowledge and the nature of this study. It might be also asked why I have not included objective testing of the students' learning by for example before and after tests. I address this kind of question next.

## **3.2.2 Action Research**

### **3.2.2.1 Why not experiment?**

In the field of language teaching and learning research, seeking an appropriate research method for testing the research question might lead to consideration of pure or quasi-experimental projects. This is partially because the pure experimental approach may be ‘specially designed to enable the researcher to extrapolate the outcomes of the research from the sample to the broader population’ (Nunan, 1992: 49). Experimental projects are originated from quantitative research, which is aimed at ‘assessing the strength of relationships between variables’ and based on ‘control and manipulate’ (Nunan, 2004: 516).

In the initial stage of designing this research project, I considered taking the experimental research method in my study. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), an experiment involves making a change in the value of one variable (treatment or intervention) – called the independent variable – and observing the effect of that change on another variable – called the dependent variable. Since the purpose of my research project is to develop students’ intercultural competence with the intervention of a comparatively new language teaching approach, it could be regarded as matching the characteristics of an experimental research project. In other words, by applying an experiment in the language class, I can realize the straightforward results of the cause-and-effect relationship between the ILT approach (the independent variable) and the learners’ intercultural competence (the dependent variable).

However, to apply the experiment in the language teaching and learning context is not as simple as I have just suggested. The use of the experimental method for research on language teaching and learning involves a long and complex causal chain involving many conditions. Experiments are designed to provide answers to precise question under strict circumstances and they generally emphasize the outcome but not the process. Bearing in mind that my research revolves around learners’ intercultural development accompanied with their language learning, this development is definitely an important process in their understanding. For the

above reasons I considered experimental research less suitable for my study since attempting to analyse the specific learning process of the language learner would lead to a simplification of the reality of teaching and learning processes, especially when trying to incorporate and measure the development of cultural aspects and competences.

Moreover, language classrooms are by their nature dynamic, complex and a miniature of society (Burns, 1999; Holliday, 2002). The researcher cannot isolate the language classroom, as in a laboratory approach, with all the interactions between teachers and learners closely defined prior to the experiment. Similarly, I considered it very difficult to be able to investigate all the complex social interactions in a language-teaching environment using an experimental research method because of the ever-changing and complex characteristics found there.

If the experimental research method is not appropriate, which one can be more effectively applied to this study? Action research is the approach I pursued and the justifications for this choice are given below.

### **3.2.2.2 Why action research?**

Action research was initiated by one of the most influential social psychologists Kurt Lewin, who coined the term ‘action research’ in 1948 and explained it as a process of a self-reflective spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Action research is characterized by spiralling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and finally problem redefinition (ibid.).

McNiff and Whitehead (2002) further illustrated the education philosophy that action research involves learning in and through action and reflection; the process of action research involves a practitioner presenting a specific philosophy or purpose in their teaching and then engaging a cyclical course of events to show that this can be put into operation with the desired results. In terms of my programme, the initial stage of action research will be applied and analysed with

additional cycles being implemented after the thesis. I argue that this approach will lead to a sustainable model of research and evaluation that will be effective in underpinning and helping to secure the development of learners' intercultural communicative competence.

Moreover, in the action research project, the linking of 'action' and 'research' highlights the essential features of this method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about or improving curriculum, teaching, and learning (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). Consistent with the statement above, action research is suitable for my study as I am attempting to develop an 'intercultural language teaching approach' in my teaching practice as a means of increasing students' intercultural knowledge and improving their intercultural competence.

For Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), action research is the small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention. This principle is best applied to my study for it is initiated in the Chinese EFL educational context, and concerned with how the ILT pedagogy embodied in educational philosophy can be implemented in a real world classroom – my own language teaching class. Just as McDonough and McDonough (1997) argued, 'teacher-initiated research is in essence action research' and, action research provides insights for improvement in the teaching practice from a teacher's perspective, and can form the basis for further research including experimental research or large scale survey later.

### **3.2.3 Main features of action research study**

Action research highlights the design and operation of the study instead of solely concentrating on demonstrating the teacher's instruction in terms of input and output. Indeed, action research can strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills to best help their students with their educational practice. As a further step I will discuss the prominent characteristics of action research. These include two key areas that have assisted me in undertaking my study and are concerned with being

*reflective and leading to change and improvement.*

### **Reflective**

Hopkins (1993: 9) conceives of research conducted by teachers as ‘systematic self-conscious enquiry with the purpose of understanding and improving their practice’. Nunan (1989: 17) also illustrates that ‘it sharpens teachers’ critical awareness through observation, recording and analysis of classroom events’. The action research method provides teachers with an opportunity to study their own practices as well as the proficiencies of these practices with an eye towards what has been done and what has not.

Burns (2010) indicates that ‘action research’ aims to include a critical dimension that involves reflecting on the social structures and orders, which surround classrooms. Self-reflection by the practitioner is a fundamental element of the action research process. It can provide valuable opportunities for teachers to properly examine their own teaching in a structured manner and investigate what effects their teaching practices have had on students. With regard to the action research project that is the focus of this study, the researcher conducted class observation field notes analyzing teaching and learning strategies, and also wrote a teaching diary after each teaching session in the language course, with the intention of being critically self-reflective. First-hand results from these projects will be analysed in order to arrive at deeper understanding.

### **Leading to change and improvement**

According to Johnson’s (1995) statement, the reason for performing action research is to chart the effects of implementation of a curriculum or strategy, and to study student learning and responses. It falls into three categories: to promote personal and professional growth, to improve practice in order to enhance student learning, and to advance the teaching profession. I fully agree with Johnson’s argument and the three categories are in perfect conformity with my research purposes and objectives.

As both the researcher for this study and an ELT practitioner in China, the researcher has taught English in a Chinese university for ten years. The selection of an action research approach was influenced by her position as the teacher of an English course, working in an environment, with her own students, on problems that affect her directly. She is at the place where research and practice intersect and real change and improvement can occur during and after the research. For the researcher, the research is not about learning why she applies a new teaching approach, but rather how she can change her instruction to improve students' learning and encourage their development.

The starting point of this research project is the teacher's willingness to invest time in efforts associated with change. This kind of research allows teachers to grow and gain confidence in their work as it involves working to improve their own skills, techniques, and strategies. Action research projects influence attitudes toward the process of change, thinking skills, sense of efficacy, and willingness to communicate. Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, and can determine ways to continually improve. In short, this action research project is the first round of the researcher's spiral cycle and is intended to inform a solid base for continued improvement.

### **3.2.4 Teacher-researcher and reflective practitioner**

#### Teacher-researcher

According to Burns (2000: 450), there are dangers in the 'outsider' or 'consultant' or 'facilitator' role, even by a researcher committed to the action-research philosophy. Dangers, for example, may include issues related to sponsorship of the consultant or to the credibility of the researcher. The combination of a teacher with researcher therefore seems a useful way to develop an action-research approach, since the successful teacher is continually seeking to understand what is taking place in the classroom and why. Consequently, the teacher-researcher may be in the best position to make effective learning provision for students through appropriate interventions and to evaluate the teacher's own performance.

To implement this action research project, I have attempted to create a bridge between the two roles of researcher and teaching practitioner through the research implementation. In my view, classroom ‘research’ is not only something that is done ‘on’ teachers, but is also an undertaking in which teachers can themselves be actively involved. The combined role of teacher and researcher may ‘bridge the gap between understanding and action’ (Beasley and Riordan, quoted in Nunan, 1989: 17-18). Although there are many similarities between classes, each learning group has its own particular features. The successful teaching practice requires the recognition of this uniqueness. Being a teacher-researcher facilitates the construction of an appropriate action research approach and provides opportunities to make timely modifications to the planning and operation of learning programmes in response to data gathered including unexpected situational changes.

### **Reflective practitioner**

Schon (1983) develops his seminal term of the ‘reflective practitioner’ in his book of the same name. His theory has been influential in the construction of the teacher-researcher paradigm because it lies at the root of the idea that reflection is much more than just ‘thinking about’. The teacher-researcher’s self-reflection can be rigorously conceptualized to provide firm and appropriate research principles that are in tune with the teacher’s reality.

Schon (1983) suggests the transfer of professionals from knowing-in-action to an explicit reflection-in-action, so that ‘when someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context’ (p. 68). This is another illustration where doing and thinking are interwoven. There are parallels with Giroux’s (1988) view of the teacher as a ‘transformative intellectual’, a participant engaged in critical thinking: he argues strongly in favor of ‘theory’ to ‘enable teachers to see what they are seeing’.

### **3.2.5 The Participants**

The participants in this study were 32 multi-majored undergraduate students, including International Business, Tourism Management, Accounting and English majors, who have studied English for at least eight years. These students can be regarded as performing at the upper-intermediate or intermediate level in the target language. The programme entitled Intercultural English Course (IEC), consisted of six 100-minute teaching sessions delivered in the autumn of 2011. Different from other undergraduate English courses it is characterized by intercultural elements infused within the teaching and learning interaction. The curriculum for this course has been influenced by this action research study and integrates linguistic and intercultural communication skills and knowledge.

Before the participant enrolment, the researcher organised an induction session to introduce the learning objectives, teaching content and approach to all student participants. The students who then agreed to voluntarily participate in the study signed the consent form. The final number of students participating was 32, and this was considered to be a reasonable number for an action research project, bearing in mind the demands generated by data collection and analysis.

### **3.2.6 The Teacher**

Since this is an action research project, the teacher of the Intercultural English Course is also the researcher in this study. In this case, it is important to reveal her previous teaching experiences, including, for example, the kind of educational system she teaches in, and the country, culture, and socio-economic context where her teaching occurs. All the related information is essential for a teacher to construct her own teaching methodology. Details of my empirical teaching experiences have already been provided in chapter one (1.1.2) and my language teaching philosophy will be further explored in chapter four (4.2.1).

### **3.3 Research Techniques for Data Collection**

The data collection instruments used in this study contains students' pre-course and post-course questionnaires (Appendix 2), students' learning process worksheets, the teacher's reflective journal based on her teaching reflection, and the supplementary focus group interviews. The exact steps for the research data collection are illustrated in a table entitled 'Data collection stages' in Appendix 3. The following sections provide a rationale for the use of the instruments applied in this study.

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaire**

In the initial stage of planning the study, the researcher intended to use student interviews as the main data collection instrument. However, after careful consideration, the researcher finally chose two sets of structured questionnaires with open questions implemented in the project. Questionnaires that ask specific questions about aspects of the classroom, curriculum or teaching method are a quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich information from students. According to Berg (2001), there are advantages and disadvantages in choosing this type of questionnaires. The advantage is that the participants can supply detailed information in their answers and they can express their opinions. A disadvantage is that 'qualitative research takes much longer, requires greater clarity of goals during design stages, and cannot be analyzed by running computer programs' (p. 2). From my point of view, the extensive preparation of the questionnaire questions enabled me to further clarify the research purposes and study design, which was extremely beneficial for the whole research project.

The objective of the pre-course questionnaire was to identify learners' previous English learning experience, their expectation of the course and their knowledge of intercultural communication. The questions were designed purposefully for this research project and developed with reference to the Chinese tertiary EFL education context. The pre-questionnaire included 12 questions divided into the

following four categories:

1. Personal information
2. Previous English learning experiences
3. Expectations for the Intercultural English Course: reasons for taking the course, expected improvements, and suggestions of cultural topics to include in the class discussions.
4. Self-evaluation of their intercultural communication knowledge: learners' definition of intercultural communicative competence.

(This question was removed during the data analysis phase because it turned out to be meaningless for the research findings.)

The objectives of the post-course questionnaire were to assess whether the learners' learning objectives were met, and to identify their newly developed intercultural knowledge, skills, or change of attitudes after the course. The post questionnaire included 9 questions that were divided into two categories, namely course evaluation and self-evaluation.

### **3.3.2 Learners' Learning Process Worksheet**

Students completed learning process worksheets before and after each teaching session of the IEC. The worksheets had two functions: one was to check and record learners' reflection on their developed ICC including intercultural communicative knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical cultural awareness; the other, their evaluation of the IEC teaching contents and instructional methods. So the worksheets have a pedagogical function as well as a research function. The questions presented in the learning process worksheet were in two categories: perceived ICC development and evaluation of the course.

As to learners' perceived ICC development, sub-questions in the worksheets were designed purposefully to guide learners' reflection and encourage them to illustrate their enhanced ICC knowledge, skills and attitudes. These self-reflection questions originated from the following aspects: cultural knowledge of

English-speaking cultures, stereotypes of English speakers and how learners felt about discussing about these stereotypes, identification of the similarities and differences between their own culture and English-speaking cultures, explanation of misunderstandings across cultures, and suggestions to improve interaction with English speakers.

The course evaluation sub-questions aimed to analyze the teacher's teaching in more detail. They were also designed to aid detection of particular instructional methods that were effective in arousing learners' interest and/or enabled the achievement of the programme's learning outcomes.

There were some identical questions in pre and post worksheets, and the objective of this was to compare learners' responses before and after the teaching session. In the pre-worksheet, learners were expected to provide superficial responses without a deeper reflection of culture. In the post-worksheet, however, learners were expected to provide responses that indicated the extent of development of their skills of interaction with English speakers. The differences identified in the pre and post responses were expected to provide evidence for the extent of achievement of the ICC learning objectives within the IEC.

### **3.3.3 Reflective journal**

Diaries, logs and journals are important introspective tools in the language teaching research. The teacher-researcher kept a reflective journal throughout the length of the course. This journal included a description of the lesson plans, observational notes on the teaching video made immediately after each teaching session, and a teaching reflection diary. The reflective teacher-researcher journal was considered as one of the most useful data-collection methods since it covered the teacher's thoughts and feelings about the class, the process of teaching, learners' reactions, activities, etc. All of these were important in the analysis of the data and the completion of the research report.

### **3.3.4 Focus group interview**

Since the data from the two sets of questionnaires might arouse the researcher's curiosity to explore course participants' opinions and specific issues in more depth, it was considered important to implement a supplementary interview after the first round of data analysis. Methodologically, the use of two questionnaires and an interview helped to obtain reliable and valid data.

The type of interview selected should be aligned with the strategy, purposes and the research questions, as Fontana and Frey (1994: 373) write: 'Clearly different types of interviewing are suited to different situations. If we are interested in opinions about a given product, a focus group interview will provide us with most efficient results.'

The type of interview selected will influence the practical aspects of the interview, and how we manage the process. The role of the researcher changes in a group interview, functioning more as a moderator or facilitator. The group interaction was directed by questions and topics supplied by the researcher. Morgan (1988: 12) points out that 'the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group'. The group situation can also encourage people to make explicit their views, perceptions, motives and reasons.

In a word, the data collection instruments applied in this study guaranteed a solid and rich information tank, and the following section will discuss the data analysis.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Two types of data analysis methods were used to investigate students' responses from both learners' learning process worksheet and post-course questionnaires for tracking their ICC development. First, thematic analysis was applied using the specific savoir objectives in Byram's (1997) ICC model as the pre-determined

themes. Byram's five *savoirs* provided a theoretical model for assessing intercultural competence in the classroom. The analysis was based on the *savoir* definition offered by Byram as discussed in chapter two. Instances representing *savoir* objectives were identified carefully and they showed the level of learners' increases in intercultural competence through or after the course.

Then, supplementary themes arising from the analysis of students' response were constructed in addition to Byram's *savoirs*. These subconscious themes, identified in students' feedback, were organized in categories with specific illustrations that supported the findings. Taken together these provided evidence, IEC learners' ICC development can be fully represented.

The major principles in my data analysis process are truth-value, consistency and transferability (Robson, 2011). Truth-value is strengthened by the use of peer examination and the disclosure of researcher bias. To ensure consistency, my final thesis will provide a clear account of the research process, including detailed descriptions of the informants, the context, and the research activities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability is whether the findings can be transferred smoothly to other contexts beyond the immediate study context. By following the researcher's detailed account of the study, the reader can assess the extent to which a specific research setting is applicable.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

The criticisms of action research are generally based on the grounds of bias and lack of objectivity. These views are often made from a positivist view that considers experiment and survey research are the only valid modes of scientific inquiry. In the previous section of this chapter (3.2.2), the reasons why the experimental approach is not suitable for this research project are illustrated, so next the validity and reliability for the qualitative research method will be discussed.

Validity is the touchstone of all types of educational research (Cohen, Manion &

Morrison, 2007) and it is interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomenon to which it refers (Hammersley, 1990: 57). Miles and Humbermans (1994: 277) stated that ‘qualitative studies take place in the real social world, and can have real consequences in people’s lives; that there is a reasonable view of ‘what happened’ in any particular situation’. In this regard, for validity of qualitative research, it is not a matter of arguing from a positivist position, but to reach common objectives about the research findings between the researcher and the reader. The key question is ‘truth value’, ‘Do the findings of the study make sense? Are they credible to the people we study and to our readers? Do we have an authentic portrait of what we are looking at?’ (Miles & Humberman, 1994: 278).

Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose a term ‘trustworthiness’ to indicate the comprehensive meaning identified from the concept of validity and reliability. They also suggested alternative criteria to internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, and suggest that in qualitative inquiry they are replaced by credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. In other words, it is regarded as the explicitness of the methodology and researching process employed in a study for the examiner or the reader. In this study, trustworthiness is realized by presenting a detailed and clear account of the researching methodology including various data collection tools and data analysis procedures.

### Triangulation

Elliot (1991) stated that triangulation involves synthesizing a tripartite series of views from three separate perspectives of a particular teaching situation. It indicates that the teacher’s position provides the best access to judge the students’ intentions in the classroom and students are in the best position to illustrate their responses to the teaching practices. As to this action research project, the researcher used triangulation to strengthen the data analysis by a diverse range of data sources such as course questionnaire, learning process worksheet, teaching reflective journal and focus group interview. This allows the researcher to look at the issues from more than one perspective, and guarantees the data analysis with

greater depth and credibility.

### **3.6 Ethics issues**

The central ethical consideration of conducting action research, as Burns (1999) points out is the questions of whether data gathered during the research compromise professional relationships or exploit colleagues and students who may be the subjects of research. Burns also puts forward three principle rules in the conduct of action research – responsibility, confidentiality and negotiation. In this research project, consent forms were distributed to confirm participants' complete understanding of the project and their willing to take part. As part of the data analysis process, reports of the findings were returned to participants in order that they would be fully aware of the information the researcher had collected, and have the opportunity to comment prior to a final reporting. It is important that participants have an opportunity to review data in order to determine whether their authenticity is sufficiently protected.

### **3.7 Limitations of the study**

The main limitation of this research is that the data was gathered from one college at one particular time. Although theoretical and pedagogical implications are suggested useful in broader language education context, no strong evidence has yet been collected to prove this feasibility. With regard to effects, an intercultural language course with longer length of time may allow learners' ICC development represent clearer. Hence, similar studies are suggested to be implemented in wider range of language educational contexts for more verification for the current research implications.

# **Chapter Four**

## **Intercultural English Course**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the context of the IEC program including students' expectations and the teacher's intended teaching objectives and syllabus planning. The first section describes the background information about the learners' group, their level of intercultural competence and their anticipations of the course before taking the IEC. The second gives the overview of IEC including the teacher's teaching philosophy and the intercultural facets in the IEC particularly represented by the teaching content and instruction methods. Finally a summary, as an illustration of the whole chapter, clarifies the relationship with the following chapters.

Two research questions are closely linked with this chapter's discussion:

1. 'What are learners' positions before they take the Intercultural English Course (IEC)?'
2. 'What kind of Intercultural Language Teaching approach was applied within the Intercultural English Course (IEC)?'

### **4.1 Student positions before the IEC (from the students' point of view)**

IEC learners were required to complete the pre-course questionnaires (Appendix 2), where the questions were presented in English. In the orientation session of the course, their answers to twelve questions are considered as the database in terms of their positions and perspectives before taking the course. The findings present IEC learners' circumstances in three facets as below:

1. Learners' previous learning experiences
2. Learners' expectations of the Intercultural English Course (IEC): reasons

for taking the Intercultural English Course, expected improvements, suggestions for cultural topics to be included in the teaching sessions

### 3. Learners' self-evaluation of previous intercultural knowledge and skills

The original sample number for this research project was 32 participants. Since the IEC was not compulsory and the final two teaching sessions overlapped with the university's examination weeks, seven students withdrew from the course in the middle, so the number of valid pre-questionnaires used for the data analysis process is 32 and the post-questionnaire 25 in total. The great majority of students' responses in the pre and post questionnaires were made in English, and I used the symbol < > for the teacher-researcher's further explanations in the context for the students' original answers where necessary. Given the relatively limited amount of feedback in Chinese, the symbol [ ] was applied for the English translation in the following sections.

#### **4.1.1 Learners' previous English learning experiences**

Questions number 1 to 3 in the pre-course questionnaire (Appendix 2) were to check learners' previous English language learning experiences including their most familiar English-speaking cultural topics (Pre-Question 1), level of knowledge about cultural differences (Pre-Question 2), and status of intercultural communication skills training in their previous language courses (Pre-Question 3).

All the students made a list of their most familiar English-speaking cultural topics, and several included specific names of countries in the answers to Pre-Question 1 (*'What aspects of English-speaking cultures are you familiar with? Please give some examples'*). The most frequent cultural topics included festivals (n=19), food (n=19), travelling (n=15) and history (n=14); and the countries mentioned focused on the United States and the United Kingdom.

As to Pre-Question 2 (*'Have you had any English classes where cultural aspects were discussed that are different from your culture (e.g. values, beliefs system etc.)*

If yes, what topics were addressed?), 8 out of 32 students answered ‘No’ without further explanations. 24 students responded that their previous English courses had incorporated some cultural aspects such as traditions, values and beliefs in English-speaking countries, among which 4 illustrated the detailed contrasts with their own culture (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Cultural aspects discussed in previous English courses

Participant	Pre-Question 2: <i>Have you had any English classes where cultural aspects were discussed that are different from your culture (e.g. values, beliefs system etc.) If yes, what topics were addressed?</i>
G1-7-MB	西方人有钱去旅行，中国人买房。 [Western people save money to travel; Chinese save to buy properties.]
G3-4-FE	Foreigners’ views are much more open than Chinese ones.
G3-7-FE	Western: individualism; Chinese: collectivism
G3-11-FA	外国人做事比较直接，开门见山；中国人比较含蓄。 [Foreigners are direct when they speak and act, and they come straight to the point; Chinese are reserved.]

About one third (11 out of 32) students admitted that no instructions on intercultural communication skills were illustrated in their previous English classes, reflected in their answers to Pre-Question 3 (*‘Have you been taught in your previous English classes how to interact with English speakers? (For example, use of gestures or facial expressions when talking with them)’*). For those stating yes (n=21), almost 80 percent (n=16) said the topics were restricted to skills in suitable ‘body languages’, for instance, ‘眼睛在说话时候直视对方。(G1-2-MB)’ [Look at the person in the eye whom you are talking to]. The rest of respondents (n=5) pointed out the specific items they were introduced to by their former English language teachers, like the taboos or rude enquiries initiated in a conversation with English-speakers. For instance, G2-4-MB illustrated that ‘don’t talk about age and income with foreigners’.

On the whole, students’ responses reveal an inadequacy of systematic treatment of intercultural communicative competence in their previous English language learning experiences. This deficiency stands in a sharp contrast with students’ great curiosity in English-speaking cultures, and their eagerness in seeking opportunities to implement a communicating dialogue with English-speakers.

Rather, the socio-cultural aspects learners were introduced to in their previous language learning experiences are mainly general cultural facts, and different cultural values or beliefs among which stereotyping images were unconsciously strengthened (instances in Table 4-1). The cultural knowledge and differences are perceived as the basic and preliminary stage in constructing learners' value systems so as to achieve intercultural communicative competence (ICC), however, if the teaching and training of the socio-cultural aspects in an EFL class stops with this stage, it would be dangerous for learners to rely on stereotyping ideas about 'the West'. Besides, what learners understand about the interaction skills is deficient in terms of finding the proper status between 'other' and 'self' as a qualified Intercultural Speaker (Byram, 2008) in chapter two. It is evident that a systematically treated socio-cultural aspect integrated into the language teaching and learning syllabus is badly needed in order to effectively train Chinese EFL learners' ICC.

#### **4.1.2 Learners' expectations of the Intercultural English Course (IEC)**

##### **4.1.2.1 Expected improvements**

Students' responses to Pre-Question 4 (*'What aspects of the language do you feel you need to improve?'*) reflected striking similarity where all the feedback can be classified as linguistic skills items. 'Speaking and listening' are two specific skills that were mentioned most (78%); 7 out of 32 students listed 'writing' and 'speaking' and 5 among them were preparing for IELTS, which is skills-based, while taking the IEC; another 2 students indicated 'vocabulary' as the most necessary part to be improved, which was not a shock to the researcher as quite a number of Chinese EFL learners put the blame for their language deficiency on a shortage of vocabulary.

Hence, basically there was no feedback regarding socio-cultural aspects of the language and all the expected improvements revolved around the pragmatic and concrete four skills language training. Undoubtedly, these students who were 'good survivors' of Gaokao (Chinese national entrance exam to university) were

used to establishing their language learning objectives focusing on the test requirements. Explicit features of language learning were presented in their previous classroom instructions within the Chinese examination-oriented context, including massive use of rote learning and memorization (Biggs and Watkins, 1996). Linguistic proficiency, notwithstanding being one of essential aims in acquiring a language, would lead the language learning into a dead end without taking into account other significant functions of intercultural communicative competence. So it is crucial for a course like IEC to broaden Chinese EFL learners' horizons and assist them to transcend from solely linguistic competence to intercultural communicative competence.

#### **4.1.2.2 Suggestions for cultural topics**

The most frequently recognized cultural-related topics learners suggested include 'eating habits, geography, sports, politics, history, educational system, communicative styles, value systems'. The majority of IEC learners suggested that cultural topics mentioned in the pre-course questionnaires were effectively integrated into the course syllabus. Since IEC learners were competent college students and the course teaching material was not predetermined or restricted to any curricula, allowing students to participate in choosing their interested topics can motivate them to expand their learning from a passive stance to an active one.

Several students intended to further their study abroad after their graduation from college and they were curious to know more about the living circumstances in their destination countries. One of them, G3-1-FT particularly explained her anxiety in knowing how to quickly adapt to the living in a foreign country and this is her exact response: '怎样更好, 更快地融入国外的学习, 生活, 工作。'(G3-1-FT) [How to get along well with foreigners when abroad. How can I better and more quickly adapt to the study, living and working life in a foreign country?]

Regarding this, the teacher intentionally allocated a lesson with the topic of 'Study in the UK' and it turned out to be a successful teaching session with quite

positive learner feedback in terms of ICC achievement (see Chapter five and six, students' ICC developments).

#### 4.1.2.3 Motivational factors and expectations for taking the Intercultural English Course (IEC)

As to Pre-Question 8 ('Why are you taking this course?') and Pre-Question 9 ('What are your expectations of this course?'), Table 4-2 lists all the corresponding categories and specific examples.

*Table 4-2 Students' motivational factors and expectations of IEC*

Categories in Students' motivational factors and expectations of IEC	Specific Examples with explanations
Curiosity in cultural knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>to learn English culture</i></li> <li>• <i>the interest in learning different cultures</i></li> <li>• <i>更多了解东西方差异 [to know more about the differences between East and West]</i></li> <li>• <i>I want to learn what they &lt;foreigners&gt; care about.</i></li> <li>• <i>Have a good understanding of western culture.</i></li> </ul>
Linguistic proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To improve my English</i></li> <li>• <i>To improve English (oral)</i></li> </ul>
Practical purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To improve the business communication in English &lt;this student is majored in International Business and he assumed that this course would benefit his professional career&gt;</i></li> <li>• <i>To go abroad for further study after graduation &lt;this student assumed this course would equip her with advantages while studying abroad&gt;</i></li> </ul>
Personal development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To learn how to communicate with foreigners better</i></li> <li>• <i>To learn intercultural communication knowledge</i></li> <li>• <i>To improve in intercultural communication skills</i></li> </ul>
Other motivation factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Never take this kind of class before</i></li> <li>• <i>I like Tina &lt;teacher-researcher's English name&gt;and she is a good teacher</i></li> </ul>

Four categories, namely curiosity in cultural knowledge, linguistic proficiency, practical purposes and personal development, were identified as learners' expectations for the IEC, and the researcher took these factors into account while designing the course syllabus, especially the teaching contents and instruction methods. It is evident that besides linguistic proficiency improvement, students also stated their anticipation in the '*improvement of intercultural communication skills*' with respect to personal development. This represented EFL learners' increasing demand for intercultural development through language learning, together with their curiosity about socio-cultural aspects of cultures different from their own. The following section looks at learners' status regarding their intercultural competence before taking IEC.

#### **4.1.3 Learners' self-evaluation of intercultural communication knowledge and skills**

##### **4.1.3.1 Previous interaction experiences with English speakers**

In response to Pre-Question 5 ("Do you practise English with native speakers? When? Who with? How often?"), 30 out of 32 (94%) students claimed that they had practised English with native speakers at least once a week in the last two years and their relevant communication experiences were the interactions with their foreign English teachers in their college EFL classes. In the context of Chinese tertiary EFL education, the frequency of English language communications these students engaged in was relatively high.

Concerning this point, it is necessary to present more illustration about the context of this study. The IEC case study took place in a Chinese comprehensive university located in the eastern part of China with a comparatively more developed economy and education. Besides, the students who participated in this course were from a college which encouraged and devoted more time to cultivating students' English proficiency. Different from other standard English curriculum settings of 6 teaching hours per week, students in this college have a privilege of 10 including a two-hour 'Communicative Oral English' session

taught by native English-speaking teachers. The intention is to provide students with numerous precious opportunities of interacting with native English-speakers through an intensive English curriculum so as to develop their intercultural competence. The fact is almost every student still finds difficulty in the practical interaction, an important area that will be considered further in the findings of Pre-Question 6.

For Pre-Question 6 (“Do you find you have difficulties when you interact with native English speakers?”), all the students, with no exception, responded, “YES”, which was such an unexpected response for the researcher because quite a few of these students were fluent English users with at least higher-intermediate linguistic proficiency. In spite of high marks achieved in their language examinations, these students seemed not very confident in their language using competence.

16 students (50%) explained their biggest difficulty as ‘inability to express their ideas properly’ in English. This response is comparatively common with Chinese EFL learners, and a majority of students simply do not know how to explain their ideas in English while communicating with foreigners. These students also illustrated the main causes of their incompetency in detail. 12 out of 32 students blamed their shortage of English vocabulary (language problems); one-fourth the lack of English-speaking cultural knowledge (specific cultural knowledge). Two students (G2-8-MB and G2-3-MB) responded that they ‘felt nervous and embarrassed’ when interacting with foreigners, and another two considered ‘finding a topic’ (G1-10-MB) and ‘starting a dialogue’ (G2-1-FB) as problems. On top of these, G3-2-FT commented that ‘Sometimes I am afraid to offend them (English-speakers)’. The aspects of communication obstacles in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills that students claimed were carefully analyzed while deciding on the IEC syllabus with an aim to assist learners’ ICC development more effectively.

Pre-Question 7 (“*Besides the formal language classes, what do you do to improve your English?*”) was expected to bring out a bigger picture displaying Chinese college students’ EFL learning strategies. Feedback concentrated on ‘watching

English movies' (25 out of 32 students mentioned this), 'reading English books' (10 out of 32), and 'listening to English songs or speeches' (7 out of 32). Another two students considered 'reciting English vocabulary' as the method in order to improve their English proficiency, and the responses echoed the findings in Pre-Question 4.

It is evident that 'popular culture' forms such as media images and words were greatly highlighted in students' concept of improving their English language proficiency. The researcher gave careful thought to learners' anticipation, and also evaluated comprehensively the usage of popular cultures in designing the IEC syllabus (for instance, detailed discussions can be found in 4.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2). As to the 'reciting vocabulary' reply, this is the 'classic' symptom left over by the traditional rote learning and memorization teaching approach in training Chinese EFL learners. This cruel reality strengthened the researcher's faith in implementing effective changes in current Chinese EFL teaching and learning.

#### **4.1.3.2 Previous intercultural misunderstanding experiences**

In Pre-Question 11, students were asked to describe one of their misunderstanding incidents in their former interaction experiences with English speakers. 26 students (81%) did not reply to this question, making it the question with the lowest response rate in the Pre-questionnaire. Given that these students can claim to have comparatively sufficient intercultural communication experiences (see Pre-Question 5), their reluctance in responding to this question could not be the consequence of lack of exposure to practical communication processes. Rather it was a significant display of their puzzled status while confronting the misinterpretations of understanding. Table 4-3 displays students' six specific misunderstanding examples and expected or implemented solutions by them.

Table 4-3 Students' misunderstanding experiences

Student	Misunderstanding Experiences	Solution
G1-7-MB	‘有一对西班牙夫妇问我峨眉山时，我误以为是梅里雪山。’ [A Spanish couple asked me about Mountain E'mei, and I mistook it for Meri Snow Mountain.]	‘另外一个中国人给我解释的。’ [Another Chinese guy explained it to me.]
G2-2-FB	‘When foreigners said ‘Don't you ...’, I always said the wrong answers.’	‘They explained it to me.’
G3-3-FE	‘How do you do? → How are you? (It is really stupid)’	‘At that time I was nervous, so I listened to it wrongly. Later I explained it.’
G2-4-MB	‘They don't understand what I say.’	‘Give up and speak out another topic.’
G2-1-FB	‘Foreigners always think Chinese girls are traditional and silent.’	‘When talking with them, be open-minded and outgoing.’
G3-7-FE	‘I forgot it (any).’	‘But when I got stuck into misunderstanding, maybe I could use body language to show what I want to express.’

The first three instances in table 4-3 (presented by G1-7-MB, G2-2-FB and G3-3-FE) were mainly due to lack of language proficiency in terms of speech speed, different communication styles, and/or the first language or emotional interference. In order to solve the misunderstanding, students applied strategies like ‘repetition of the message’, ‘further explanations’ (G1-7-MB, G2-2-FB and G3-3-FE) and ‘body language’ (G3-7-FE) to confirm the meanings in the interacting process. The misunderstanding incidents these four learners identified originated basically from the language barriers that prevented effective communication, and could hardly be categorized as evidence for intercultural communicative competence.

Regarding the other two responses from G2-4-MB and G2-1-FB, the consequences from the way in which they solved the conflict would be even worse. G2-4-MB decided to terminate the unsolved problem and start another topic when he confronted communication obstacles. His avoidance in attitudes could easily hurt others' feelings and bring a smooth and successful communication dialogue to an end. This student's response symbolized a harmful stance compared with the characteristics of an intercultural speaker such as ‘positive, open-minded and curious’.

G2-1-FB illustrated a misinterpretation of the typical Chinese girl's image from a *foreigner's* point of view and her intended reaction as a means to remove the misconception. Instead of avoiding the conflicting ideas, she recognized the differences between cultures and actively sought for feasible ways in order to solve the misunderstanding. This is highly valuable in ICC, but whether her intended solution 'when talking with them, be open-minded and outgoing' could effectively clarify the misconceptions is still arguable. There are definitely alternative useful skills in assisting others to construct a more accurate understanding of Chinese girls, for instance discussing and interpreting notable figures in historical or current lives of China. G2-1-FB's reactions and strategies could affect conceptions of national identity and possibly weaken her confidence in future intercultural communication, especially if she bears in-born quiet and reserved characteristics rather than finding positive ways of challenging stereotypes.

From the analysis of students' intentional ways of solving intercultural misunderstandings, it is reasonable to conclude that these Chinese tertiary EFL learners are ill equipped with intercultural competences. This makes relevant action research projects that support the integration of intercultural components into language teaching extremely necessary in order to promote more fully developed ICC programs and learners' intercultural communicative competences.

#### **4.1.4 Summary**

Learners' previous language learning experiences were mainly linguistic proficiency oriented with limited specific cultural knowledge acquisition and insufficient intercultural competence training. Learners had gained some cultural knowledge from previous English courses and become aware of some cultural differences. Along with improving their English linguistic competence, learners also expressed their substantial anticipation in obtaining communicating opportunities with English-speakers so as to enhance their intercultural communicative competence. On top of this, the majority of the students were ill equipped with positive attitudes, adequate intercultural knowledge and

appropriate skills in terms of ICC, so an EFL course with intercultural aspects is highly appropriate.

Learners' feedback on their expected improvement after taking IEC, such as their most popular cultural topics were fundamental and helpful in finalizing the suitable teaching content and instruction methods for the course. The following section 'An intercultural approach in the IEC' presents an English language program, which was cautiously designed in the context of the researched student group, highlighting the enhancement of learners' ICC.

#### **4.2 An intercultural approach in the IEC (from teacher's point of view)**

From the section above 'Student positions before IEC', it is reasonable to conclude that learning a foreign language does not guarantee that students will be interculturally competent. The intercultural facets need to be clearly and systematically integrated into a language-teaching curriculum, and both proper teaching content and instructional methods should be designed carefully in order to provide learners with sufficient opportunities for enhancing their ICC. The following section describes the intercultural approach applied in the IEC, with the first part laying the groundwork by illustrating the teacher's teaching philosophy, and the second presents the Intercultural English Course (IEC) itself: the teaching content and instruction methods with correspondence to Byram's (1997) dimensions in the ICC Model.

##### **4.2.1 Teacher's language teaching philosophy**

All teachers have their own teaching philosophies, which will be intentionally brought into their teaching practice and substantially affect their teaching outcomes, so it is important for teachers to reflect on their own principles in order to make their purpose explicit to others. The teacher of the Intercultural English Course (IEC) is also the researcher in this study and as such it is significant to disclose what informs her teaching. Thus, a personal statement of teaching

philosophy follows and the first person is used to represent the voice of the teacher not the researcher.

#### **4.2.1.1 Lifelong learner and researcher**

As an EFL teacher, I stick to the belief that I am a lifelong learner and researcher, which was initiated from my previous experiences in action research projects, and on top of this, lifelong learning is the philosophy of both my teaching and learning. I believe that learning a foreign language is a lifelong process, particularly with an objective to achieve intercultural competence. To expect a language teacher to be familiar with every aspect of intercultural knowledge and skills is impossible. Good teachers are themselves students, and often look for channels to expand upon their existing knowledge and broaden their views. In China, we have a proverb called ‘jiao xue xiang zhang (教学相长)’, which means both the teacher and the student learn from each other, and students’ knowledge can also supplement and enhance teachers’. Teachers are lifelong learners in a continuous process of self-reflection and self-evaluation.

My background as an EFL teacher and a researcher in the field of intercultural studies allows me to blend intercultural facets into the language teaching practice and provides learners with opportunities to become acquainted with relationships between culture and language. In addition, my English language learning experiences in China and Britain facilitate my understanding about EFL students’ needs and interests. Cooper and Chattergy (1998:125) assert that if educators understand the complexity of their own experiences due to cultural influences and realize that they negotiate cultural complexity in their own lives, they can bring increasing awareness and cultural sensitivity to their instructional activities and their interactions with students. All the teaching and learning experiences inside and outside my own cultural background enforce and empower me to constantly reflect on my teaching practice as well as learners’ learning process. For me, a competent intercultural EFL teacher is concerned about a lifelong professional development. Similarly, the theoretical and practical aspects implemented in the

IEC are the outcome of my former decades of language learning and teaching practice.

#### **4.2.1.2 Teacher and learners' roles**

The IEC course intends to integrate an intercultural approach to foreign language education and this creates requirements for the specific roles that the teacher and learners take in the EFL classroom. Burns (2000:457) argues that the most appropriate type of classroom in which to operate the teacher-researcher strategy would be an 'informal' classroom. Here 'informal' means a relatively high degree of autonomy for students, a flexible approach towards time allocation in different areas of the curriculum and a relatively high priority given to work in which students interpret meaning and context in their own individual ways. The 'informal' classroom, which Burns proposes from an action research perspective, shares common features with that in an intercultural language teaching approach. The traditional roles of teacher and learner as merely providers and receivers of knowledge have been replaced by facilitators and active learners. The following paragraphs illustrate radical changes implemented in the IEC regarding teacher and learners' roles in the Chinese context of EFL teaching and learning.

Currently, the majority of EFL classrooms in China are still dominated by a teacher-centred, examination-oriented and linguistic-proficiency-based atmosphere. Students are trained for the most part in terms of making up sentences, reciting grammar rules and translating passages, but, after years of tedious learning even those who are considered top students are not sufficiently competent in intercultural communication practices. Hence EFL teachers are encouraged to allow learners abundant freedom in their learning in order to assist them in being transformed from 'slave of language' into 'master of language'. In an intercultural language classroom, students are not passive recipients of knowledge but should be greatly inspired and be active engagers in the learning process. McDevitt (2004:3) states that 'the end product of all education should be an independent learner'. Teachers therefore need to provide opportunities for students to transform from passive to active learning.

The EFL teaching profession increasingly emphasizes a student-centred approach, and the teacher's perceived role as facilitator or mediator is essential in facilitating learners' ICC development. It is necessary for the teacher to adopt a non-dictatorial post, while still providing necessary guidance when learners encounter problems. Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002: 13) say that 'the role of the language teacher is to develop skills, attitudes and awareness of values just as much as to develop knowledge of a particular culture or country'. Savignon and Sysoyev (2000: 358) also state that learning culture is not the mere study of 'isolated historical and geographical facts, holiday customs and food preferences' of target cultures. Therefore, a foreign language class is expected to be a place where sufficient opportunities are provided for learners to raise their awareness of cultural differences, reflect critically on misunderstanding cases caused by inherent stereotypical perceptions, and then gradually improve their intercultural communication competence. Further, Byram et al (2002: 16) further indicate that the teacher does not need to be an expert in the target culture. Instead, he or she should be able to design in-class activities such as discussions on comparative analysis between learner's own cultural values and the target ones.

In this regard, Pulverness (2004) maintains that the teacher has a vital role of being an intercultural mediator in a foreign language class. He or she is supposed to point out the cultural components or cultural connections overlooked or mis-conceptualized by the students. Byram (1997: 64) also recommends teachers to provide 'corners and edges' for the learners in order to assist them in completing 'the socio-cultural puzzle'. Hence the teacher's essential functions suggested here are guidance, facilitating and assistance.

Kubota (2002) too encourages teachers, as intellectuals, not merely to be 'technicians of learner-centeredness' and introduces the question of identity. That is to say, teachers are responsible for proposing broader perspectives about critical issues in the classroom. Particularly in the socio-cultural classroom, the identity of the learners does not remain fixed since their identity is influenced by the process of learning integrated with experiencing other ways of being and doing. For Risager (2006), the FL class creates culture and influences learners' identity. Due to scarcity of cultural knowledge or immature inferences, students easily step into

an ‘improper’ space. At that moment teachers are highly encouraged to provide necessary guidance for learners to renegotiate the socio-cultural meaning and contextualize their presence in a ‘correct and comfortable’ stance. This is what Kramsch (1993) describes as a ‘third place’, where one creates a unique personal identity that is entirely one’s own as a result of the intercultural competence development.

In short, different from the traditional, the main role of the language teacher in the intercultural language teaching approach is to develop intercultural skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness just as much as to develop cultural knowledge. The present challenge is how to construct a suitable syllabus in order to fulfil the teacher’s teaching philosophy step by step. The following section describes the *Intercultural English Course* (IEC) regarding its conceptual model, teaching contents and instruction methods, which is the enhancement of the EFL intercultural approach.

#### **4.2.2 Conceptual model of an intercultural curriculum**

The Intercultural English Course in this study is purposefully devised with its focus not only on learners’ linguistic competence, but also their intercultural competence. The ‘intercultural speaker’ model promoted by Byram and Zarate (1997), and Kramsch (1993), can be applied in the English language classroom, with the intention of progressively developing students’ knowledge of socio-cultural aspects of their own country and the interlocutor’s. In Byram’s (1997) ICC model the five *savoirs* are specifically illustrated as the component factors that formulate successful intercultural communication. And the competences in this ICC model are applied as a comprehensive theoretical framework in formulating the syllabus of the IEC course focused on in this study.

The teaching sessions in the IEC endeavoured to present learners with current socio-cultural issues in some English-speaking cultures through the use of authentic examples and case studies. The purpose this approach was to arouse learners’ interest in conducting critical analysis of the incidents and eventually provide learners with transferable intercultural attitudes and skills when

encountering otherness. The course took place during November and December of 2011 for six 100-minute teaching sessions, which involved various types of assignments including implementing analysis of texts after reading, reflecting on videos and discussion of intercultural topics.

Learners who attended the IEC had studied English for at least eight years and were upper-intermediate or advanced language speakers. The teaching objectives of the course were as follows:

1. To improve learners' linguistic proficiency including reading, writing, speaking and listening.
2. To develop learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC)
  - a) to gain knowledge of English-speaking cultures via reading authentic texts addressing different English-speaking cultures, and discuss issues in different disciplines
  - b) to find information about English-speaking cultures, compare or/and contrast them with similar aspects in Chinese culture, and explain the perspective and/or sources of misunderstanding
  - c) to gain curiosity and openness, via reflecting on their attitudes towards members of English-speaking countries
  - d) to acquire new knowledge of an English-speaking culture and cultural practices in various ways available
  - e) to achieve 'critical cultural awareness', an ability to evaluate critically, and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (Byram, 1997: 63)

Based upon the curriculum goals, teaching objectives and student abilities suggested in the previous section, the following two parts outline the course materials and instruction methods that are directed toward developing students' ICC.

#### **4.2.2.1 Course content**

When choosing language teaching materials, most Chinese EFL teachers place a high priority on matching the language level of the students and there is normally little concern about the socio-cultural facets of the materials or the students' intercultural level. According to Pulverness (1995), learning a foreign language not only enables one to gain access to a different way of seeing the world, but also to reconsider their worldview. Byram et al (2002:7) also claim that an intercultural speaker will succeed not only in 'communicating information but also in developing a human relationship with people of other languages and cultures'. It is therefore suggested teachers choose materials that enable students to find socio-cultural perspectives embedded both in the text and in their own socio-cultural context. And the content should include topics which require certain intercultural competences by encouraging students to consider their own socio-cultural knowledge and intercultural attitudes.

The findings from the pre-course questionnaire (4.1.2) in this research indicated that with regard to content and subject matter that may arouse their curiosity, students opted for most familiar experiences and popular culture. Common experiences that people share can provide a common base for selecting suitable topics. A selection of readings, pictures and video clips were used as the teaching materials in IEC and the topics were chosen mainly based on students' preferences. As Durant (1997:23) indicates, socio-cultural knowledge is drawn from many resources such as surveys, television programs, films etc., in which some of the texts are very useful in the foreign language classroom. Common human experiences that are most familiar and closely related to the students' own socio-cultural conditions empower them to make further enquiries about their own beliefs.

Hence, if possible, learners should be invited to participate in choosing some course content, even work on a negotiated syllabus. Allowing students to participate by providing topics that are interesting to them can help them transcend the limitation of the classroom and expand their learning from a passive stance to an active one. In the IEC programme studied here, the teacher attempted

to adopt some most relevant intercultural topics learners suggested following a collaborative methodology through discussion of feedback from the questionnaires.

#### **4.2.2.2 Instruction methods in accordance with the ICC model**

Williams (1989: 36) suggested that culture is not a possession; instead it is a process. That is to say, learning culture is a process rather than simply a consequence of instruction activities in classrooms. The intercultural dimensions of the IEC programme were penetrated in almost every corner with the process of culture teaching and learning. Varied instructional techniques (e.g. task-based group work, individual presentation, group discussion) were applied to arouse learners' attention and two in-class assignments namely 'reading analysis' and 'video reaction' discussed in the following section exemplify the typical illustration of ICC objectives enhanced by the IEC.

##### Reading analysis

Reading was an essential component of the IEC and the selected reading units presented a variety of topics and issues (culture, society, values, education etc.) from different English-speaking countries. The articles in each reading unit were combined with assorted in-class learning activities, for instance, attention to specific vocabulary, comprehension questions, discussion topics etc. Students read the articles, responded to the comprehension questions and had a discussion on the related topic with their group members. The aim of the reading materials in the IEC was to introduce students to a cultural topic, encourage them to recognize cultural issues, consider critically the content and finally result in a stance that Kramsch claims as 'paradoxical, irreducible confrontation that may change one in the process' (1993: 231).

The readings in the first teaching session revolved around the topic of *Culture Shock*, which included five sojourner students' diary entries which demonstrated their evidence of difficulties or 'cultural bumps' when they first lived abroad. The incidents shown in the diary aroused IEC students' great curiosity and the teacher

organized in-class group discussions on the related topics. When students expressed their opinions in groups, they were braver to express their thoughts of other cultures. After a group opinion was formed, group representatives reported their discussion results to the whole class, and the teacher initiated further digging of the critical issues where necessary and guided learners on a ‘right’ track.

In the last teaching session ‘Stereotyping people and culture bumps’, the five diary entries were once again used as in-class reading materials, which aimed at creating opportunities for students to utilize the intercultural attitudes and skills they developed in previous lessons and act as a competent mediator in imagined circumstances. Students were asked to provide their own opinions on how to solve the specific problems mentioned in the diary. Task-based learning via group discussion was implemented another time and every group member was required to make his or her contributions on the final outcome so as to ensure their ICC development.

The selected readings in the IEC were expected to foster learners’ critical evaluation skills on socio-cultural materials via reinvesting their existing cultural knowledge into the newly identified aspects. Thus, the reading tasks in the IEC classes address several learning objectives in Byram’s (1997) model, namely dimensions a) b) and c) under ‘skills of interpreting and relating’, and dimension b) under ‘critical cultural awareness’ (detailed illustration listed in Table 4-4).

*Table 4-4 ICC objectives addressed in reading analysis*

<b>Skills of interpreting and relating:</b> ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one’s own	a) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins
	b) identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present
	c) mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena
<b>Critical cultural awareness:</b> an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries.	b) make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refer socio-cultural to an explicit perspective and criteria.

### Video reactions

In order to timely obtain IEC learners' suggestions, students were required to answer questions regarding the teaching at the end of every teaching session in questionnaires called 'students' learning process worksheet'. Findings identified from these worksheets show that more than half of the IEC students considered watching video-clips as their favourite in-class teaching activities. In order to meet students' needs, the teacher used more visual material in the latter half of the course to support learners' comprehension in relevant cultural topics. It turned out those discussions of video-clips were an effective way to arouse students' curiosity, broaden their views and initiate discussions more critically about intercultural issues. Students were intrigued greatly by the video plots and energized in digging into the socio-cultural implications represented. Video reactions from IEC learners are a useful supplement to other instruction methods in the intercultural language class, for example, reading analysis.

Video reactions embodied a concentrated reflection in three teaching sessions of IEC, namely International Greetings, Food and Eating Habits, and Study in the UK. Because of the space limitation, the following paragraphs take 'Study in the UK' as an example for detailed illustration.

In the lead-in part of 'Study in the UK', the teacher presented two contrasting video clips, which exhibited the two extremes on pros and cons of studying in Britain from the international student perspectives. One video highlighted the advantages like beautiful scenery, while the other displayed the difficulties and unfavorable circumstances such as high living cost. The two contrasting video-clips intended to assist IEC students to identify the other side of the coin of an event, specifically here in dramatically contrasting UK life images. In class, students identified and commented on both the advantages and disadvantages of studying in the UK allowing learners' previous stereotyping conceptions to be challenged and encouraging them to operate out of their comfortable zones. The culture learning process elaborated by video reactions facilitated learners in constructing their own critical perspectives, including employing positive

attitudes and strategies when confronting conflicting otherness.

The video reactions in the IEC class also encouraged students' reflection on their own values and perspectives by contrasting them with those of others and it addressed several learning objectives in Byram's (1997) ICC model. For example, under the dimension of attitudes:

(c) willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's environment. The intercultural speaker actively seeks the other's perspective and evaluations of phenomena in the intercultural speakers' environment which are taken for granted, and take up the other's perspective in order to contrast and compare with the dominant evaluations in their own society (p.58).

### **4.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has the aim of answering the following two questions – 'what is the context of IEC teaching and learning' and 'what and how does the teacher plan to teach or achieve in the IEC'. Now that these issues have been addressed, the next two chapters show students' learning outcomes after taking IEC, formulated in Byram's (1997) five savoirs (Chapter five) and other additional themes in terms of their ICC development (Chapter six).

# **Chapter Five**

## **Students' ICC Development in Savoires**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter shows students' ICC development during and by the end of IEC, particularly formulated in Byram's (1997) ICC *savoirs* as a means of defining learning outcomes. Three sections are included – the first (5.1) sets forth an overview of students' identified ICC development with reference to the number and proportions of *savoir* instances; the second (5.2) analyzes IEC learners' ICC development in depth regarding five *savoirs* namely knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness, and the third (5.3) summarizes the content of 5.1 and 5.2.

This chapter intends to investigate whether the IEC course (Chapter four) designed as a socio-cultural syllabus along with intercultural approach, is able to enhance Chinese EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence. As discussed in Chapter two Literature Review, and Chapter three Research Methodology, Byram's (1997) five *savoirs* are applied as a model for assessing IEC learners' ICC achievement, and the following illustration puts forward the related evidence of students' developed ICC dimensions. The research question that is closely concerned with this chapter's discussion is 'What aspects of intercultural communicative competence have the IEC learners developed in terms of Byram's ICC *savoirs*?'

### **5.1 Overview of students' ICC development**

Evidence of students having met the learning objectives of IEC can be found in the students' learning process worksheets and post-course questionnaires. This evidence is identified as instances of students' development of their intercultural communicative competence, includes five dimensions, namely *knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating* (S1), *skills of discovery and*

*interaction (S2), and critical cultural awareness (CCA).*

A total of 194 instances are recognized from learners’ feedback as evidence of achieved Byram’s ICC learning objectives after taking *IEC* (Table 5-1). The *skills of discovery and interaction (S2)* dimension has the largest number of instances with 78 (40%), while the least one *critical cultural awareness* with virtually no strongly convincing evidence diagnosed. The dimensions *knowledge* and *attitude* contain similar amount of instances, 55 (29%) and 53 (27%) respectively. And the *skills of interpreting and relating (S1)* and *skills of discovery and interaction (S2)* are analyzed separately according to Byram’s (1997) original savoir categorization, but if combined into *skills* dimension, the evidence amount would be 86 in total (44%). Table 5-1 shows the number and percentage of IEC learners’ instances in terms of ICC savoirs recognized from their response. The following section (5.2) will explore students’ ICC progress in depth in relation to Byram’s (1997) ICC savoirs.

*Table 5-1 Instances of ICC learning objectives in students’ feedback*

<b>ICC Learning Objectives</b>	<b>Number of instances</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Knowledge	55	29%
Attitude	53	27%
Skills of interpreting and relating (S1)	8	4%
Skills of discovery and interaction (S2)	78	40%
Critical Cultural Awareness	0	0
Total	194	

## **5.2 Students’ ICC development in savoirs**

This section investigates IEC learners’ ICC development as formulated in Byram’s (1997) five savoirs, namely knowledge (5.2.1), attitudes (5.2.2), skills of interpreting and relating (5.2.3), skills of discovery and interaction (5.2.4) and critical cultural awareness (5.2.5). In each savoir, it begins with displaying learners’ identified examples, continues with illustrating identification process and analyzing the most and least addressed savoir dimensions. Along with

exploring learners' ICC achievement, aspects of IEC teaching practice are illustrated, and the implications of effective intercultural EFL teaching methodologies will be further explored in Chapter seven.

### 5.2.1 Knowledge

The cultural knowledge IEC learners mentioned in their response are generally Byram's (1997) ICC learning objective instances in *knowledge*: 'about social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction (p. 58)'. According to Byram, this objective is further divided into eleven dimensions, including Knowledge a) to k).

A total number of 55 knowledge instances are recognized from students' learning process worksheets and post-questionnaires, and the occurrence frequency of each dimension (from Knowledge a to Knowledge k) is displayed in Table 5-2. Because the content of *Knowledge d)* and *Knowledge e)* are closely related, and students' feedback around these two dimensions are intertwined, *Knowledge d-e)* is nominated as one dimension. Similarly *Knowledge f)* and *Knowledge g)* are combined into *Knowledge f-g)*. It is noticeable that some students' responses demonstrate features in two or more dimensions in *Knowledge* objective and they are analyzed with sufficient consideration so as to be categorized appropriately.

*Table 5-2 Knowledge instances from students' feedback*

Knowledge dimensions Ka - Kk	Number of instances	Percentage
Ka	N=1	2%
Kb	N=0	0
Kc	N=6	11%
Kd-e	N=1	2%
Kf-g	N=0	0
Kh	N=6	11%
Ki	N=0	0
Kj	N=8	15%
Kk	N=33	60%
Ka-k Total	N=55	

Table 5-2 represents two Knowledge dimensions with the largest amount of evidence recognized from students' feedback: *Knowledge k*) (with a 60% occurrence) and *Knowledge j*) (with a 15% occurrence). There are no examples identified as *Knowledge b*), *Knowledge f-g*) or *Knowledge i*). The result is understandable for *Knowledge b*) since it refers to the knowledge of interacting in a host country, and this is unattainable for IEC students in the study. The reason why students show no insight for *Knowledge f-g*), knowledge about regional space in either one's own country or interlocutor's country, and *Knowledge i*), knowledge about social distinctions either within one's own country or the interlocutor's, deserve further exploration and is discussed in the section 'Less frequently addressed knowledge dimensions' (5.2.1.3).

### 5.2.1.1 Knowledge instances

Table 5-3 displays representative examples of *Knowledge* dimensions a) to k) identified as IEC learners' development in ICC learning objectives. Due to the word limitation of this thesis, the full list of instances can be found in Appendix 4.

*Table 5-3 Representative instances of Knowledge as ICC objective from students' feedback*

KNOWLEDGE: Of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS	EVIDENCE
a) Historical and contemporary <b>relationships</b> between one's own and one's interlocutor  N=1 (TS*4)	'First of all, China has <b>more and more relationship with other countries</b> , and <b>English is used by most of official language</b> . It is a good opportunity to study in UK to know the world well.' (TS4, G4-6-MB*)
b) the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in	N=0

<p>proximity), of travel to and from, and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems</p>	
<p>c) The types of causes of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins</p> <p>N= 6 (PQ*)</p>	<p>‘I understand that <b>many cases which I recognize it as bias is just the difference of culture.</b>’ (PQ-1, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>‘I learnt that <b>due to the cultural difference, it can make the communication more difficult. Because we don’t understand each other.</b>’ (PQ-6, G1-4-FB)</p>
<p>d) The national memory of one’s own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries</p> <p>e) The national memory of one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on them from one’s own country</p> <p>N= 1 (TS4)</p>	<p>‘One of the reasons I want to further my study in UK is that <i>my favourite Sherlock Holmes was born in UK</i> &lt;Sherlock Holmes is my favourite novel character and it originated from UK&gt;.’ (TS4, G1-3-FB)</p>
<p>f) The national definitions of geographical space in one’s own country, and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries</p> <p>g) The national definitions of geographical space in one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on them from one’s own</p>	<p>N=0</p>

<p>h) The processes and institutions of <b>socialization</b> in one's own and the interlocutor's country</p> <p>N= 4 (TS1) + 2 (PQ) = 6</p>	<p><b>'I know what they like talking and playing.</b> I can make myself not special in foreign group.' (TS1, G2-3-MB)</p> <p><b>'The faith of British people</b> (is what I find lacking in this course). Because <b>most of them are religious believers and the religion has great influence on their life.</b>' (PQ-3, G1-1-MB)</p>
<p>i) Social distinctions and their principal markers, in one's own country and in their interlocutor's</p>	<p>N=0</p>
<p>j) <b>institutions and perceptions</b> of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them</p> <p>N = 8 (TS4)</p>	<p>'The reason why I want to go to UK furthering my study is that it has <b>high quality education with many chances, and quiet and beautiful scenery.</b>' (TS4, G2-1-FB)</p> <p>'Before college, I have already had an idea about studying abroad and never changed my idea. Because <b>the foreign culture is always attracting me, I want to know the different world and like the opening (open and free) feeling in western countries.</b>' (TS4, G2-2-FB)</p>
<p>k) The processes of social interaction in the interlocutor's country</p> <p>N=2(TS1) + 9 (TS2) +17(TS3) +5(PQ) = 33</p>	<p>'People from Western are <b>more able to accept physical contact than the Chinese.</b>' (TS1, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>'Different country has <b>different greeting culture.</b>' (TS2, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>'I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, <b>don't talk with your mouth full.</b>' (TS3, G1-1-MB)</p> <p>'I have known many <b>body languages</b> of foreign country.' (PQ-4, G1-2-MB)</p>

\*Note: N = Number of instances; TS = Teaching Session; G = Group; M=Male; F=Female; B=International Business (student major); T=International Trade (student major); A=Accounting (student major); E=English (student major); PQ = Post-questionnaire

### 5.2.1.2 More frequently addressed Knowledge dimensions

The more frequently addressed knowledge dimensions are *Knowledge j)* and *Knowledge k)*, with *Knowledge k)* (with occurrence percentage 60%) predominates. The next section will discuss these two dimensions respectively about their instance identifying processes, which intends to further investigate the most possible causes for learners' development.

#### Knowledge k)

As stated in Byram's (1997) ICC Model, *Knowledge k)* refers to the knowledge of/about:

The processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country: The intercultural speaker knows about levels of formality in the language and non-verbal behavior of interaction, about conventions of behaviour and beliefs and taboos in routine situations such as meals, different forms of public and private meeting, public behaviour such as use of transport etc. (p. 60)

Around one third of students' feedback on this dimension are concerned with 'non-verbal behaviour of interaction', with majority of instances are from TS2 'International Greetings' regarding 'addressing titles and names', 'greeting customs including how to shake hands' 'body languages' and 'eye contact'. The examples below are exact students' quotations with bold characters highlighting the most strongly voiced evidence with underlined phrases, reflecting students' eagerness for acquiring the relevant area of knowledge.

#### *Specific Instances:*

'People from Western <countries> are more able to accept **physical contact** than the Chinese.' (TS1, G2-5-MB)

‘Different places have different **styles of greetings**. It can help me well communicate with others.’ (TS2, G2-5-MB)

‘Nowadays more and more foreigners come to China and it is good for me to know different **styles of international greetings**. I learned from the class that in different country, there are **different ways to communicate with others**. The most impressive part (of the class) is **how to shake hands** with others.’ (TS2, G3-6-FT)

Further discussions about the correlation between learners’ ICC improvement regarding knowledge k) dimension and the teaching practice in IEC can be found in Chapter seven (7.2.1).

Another most commonly addressed aspect in *Knowledge k)* objective is ‘conventions of behaviour and beliefs and taboos in routine situations’. More than half instances (n=17) in *Knowledge k)* reflect learners’ understanding of western table manners, such as ‘don’t talk with your mouth full’, ‘finish what is on the plate’ and so on. Here are the specific examples:

‘I have known something about the **western table manners**, for example, **don’t talk with your mouth full and don’t play with your food.**’ (TS3, G1-3-FB)

‘I have known something about the **western table manners**, for example, **people should not take the plates up to their mouth; on different occasions, they should wear different kinds of clothes.**’ (TS3, G3-2-FT)

Furthermore, compared with TS2 and TS3, *Knowledge k)* instances recognized from learners’ post-questionnaires represent their development in a more comprehensive and multi-faceted way. Two specific examples below show learners’ mastery of the knowledge about ‘the interlocutor country’s (UK) conventional behaviors’.

‘They (English-speakers) pay attention to **polite, kind behaviors**. **Use more ways to show their thanks, such as saying ‘would you/could you ...’**’ (PQ-6,

G1-6-FB)

‘British people **like to talk about weather as a beginning (of conversation).**’  
(PQ-6, G2-2-FB)

### Knowledge j)

The second most addressed knowledge dimension is *Knowledge j)*, which is explained in Byram’s (1997) Model as the knowledge about/of:

Institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one’s own and one’s interlocutor’s country and which conduct and influence relationships between them: The intercultural speaker knows about public or private institutions which affect the living conditions of the individual in the two countries e.g. with respect to health, recreation, financial situation, access to information in the media, access to education. (p. 60)

All the examples (n=8) in this dimension are identified from TS4 ‘Study in the UK’. Students give justifications for whether or not to go to the UK for the purpose of furthering their studies. They also demonstrate their understanding of UK’s public and private institutions. Some examples, for instance, G4-10-FT also makes comparisons between the UK and China. The following are the exact quotations from students:

‘The reasons why I want to further my study in UK is because that ... c) the economy of UK is fast (TS4-Q2) and a) the time of (completing the study of a) master is shorter than other country; b) **the history of UK’s education is very long**; c) it doesn’t need the grade of GMAT or GRE; d) UK is **a developed country**; e) **UK has many famous universities** and f) **The diploma is very helpful for our occupational career.**’ (TS4, G2-7-MB)

‘It is **a developed country. Its education is of high quality. It is the only country that one can learn authentic English accent. I like the way they teach and I can have more options on deciding which lectures we want to**

**participate in.**' (TS4, G3-2-FT)

'For instance, as far as **China** is concerned, **there is not enough space for teenagers who just graduate from college to develop themselves**. And for **UK**, we must face too many issues that are obviously different from the environment we are used to, and **the tuition fees is very high**; society is also complicated.'  
(TS4, G4-10-FT)

With reference to students' most addressed knowledge instances, particularly knowledge k) and j), it is evident that IEC learners' knowledge dimension in ICC has been greatly enhanced. On top of that there are common features among students' feedback from the same teaching session, which is of great value in further pursuing the teaching implications.

### **5.2.1.3 Less frequently addressed Knowledge dimensions**

Five knowledge dimensions are less frequently addressed from IEC learners' feedback, among which *Knowledge b)*, *Knowledge f-g)* and *Knowledge i)* have no related instances, and *Knowledge a)* and *Knowledge d-e)* with one example identified respectively.

The result is understandable for *Knowledge b)* since it refers to the knowledge of interacting in a host country, and this is unattainable for IEC students in this study. The reasons why students show lack of insight into *Knowledge a)*, which is the knowledge of 'historical and contemporary relationships between one's own country and the interlocutor's', *Knowledge d-e)*, 'the national memory of one's own country and the interlocutor's', *Knowledge f-g)*, 'regional space in either one's own country or the interlocutor's', and *Knowledge i)*, 'social distinctions either within one's own country or the interlocutor's, deserve further exploration.

Firstly, learners' responses rarely disclose their capability in understanding their own country's dominant culture(s). The common features arising from Knowledge dimensions *d)* and *f)* is the relevant information about 'national

memory’, ‘national identity’, and ‘national definitions’ of one’s own country. Compared to their notification of other cultures, the instances that reflect learners’ comprehension of their own cultural aspects are not sufficient. Although some instances are recognized in TS4 ‘Studying in the UK’ that can embody learners’ awareness of their own cultural affiliation, the evidence is generally inadequate to show learners’ evidently manifested self-culture awareness. Further discussions regarding IEC learners’ awareness of their own culture can be found in Chapter six (6.1.1.3 Cultural Self-culture awareness).

Secondly, as to *Knowledge i)* – the knowledge of ‘social distinctions and their principle markers, in one’s own country and one’s interlocutor’s’, students’ feedback does not address this knowledge aspect. There are many examples which explain the cultural differences between the students’ country and the interlocutor’s, but there is not a single instance that represents learners’ understanding of social differences in an individual country. It appears to be more difficult for learners to successfully acquire the knowledge about the understanding of ‘socialization’ and ‘institutions’ in the *Knowledge* objective.

These cultural aspects are more complicated for EFL students to comprehend and appreciate; considering learners’ intermediate English linguistic proficiency, it is unrealistic to extend further exploration about social distinctions or institutional topics in a short course like IEC. However, in some teaching sessions like TS4 ‘Study in the UK’ there are materials that touch on the knowledge of ‘social distinctions and their principle markers’. It is reasonable to assume that students have acquired some related information, but because of the limited feedback space following the structured questions in the learning process worksheets and post-course questionnaires, students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to make their ideas evident. So this would be a valuable consideration for future development of the course curriculum.

The above discussions in ‘less addressed *Knowledge* instances’ represent IEC learners’ inadequate understanding concerning cultural knowledge aspects, in particular ‘cultural self-awareness’ and ‘social distinctions and their principle markers’. These findings are significant for the enhancement of both the ICC

models and instructional methodologies appropriate for Chinese EFL learners. The next section (5.2.2) will discuss students' development in ICC *Attitudes* dimensions.

### 5.2.2 Attitudes

The intercultural attitudes reflected from IEC learners' responses provide evidence of Byram's (1997) ICC learning objectives in *Attitudes*: 'curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (p. 57)'.

A total number of 53 *Attitudes* instances are recognized from students' responses in their learning process worksheets and post-course questionnaires after taking IEC. The occurrence frequency of each dimension is displayed in Table 5-4.

*Table 5-4 Attitudes instances from students' feedback*

Attitudes Dimension Aa-Ae	Number of instances	Percentage
Aa	N=16	30%
Ab	N=9	17%
Ac	N=2	4%
Ad	N=7	13%
Ae	N=19	36%
Aa-e	TN=53	

Table 5-4 shows that the Attitudes dimensions occurring most frequently from students' expressions are: *Attitude e)* (with occurrence percentage 36%), and *Attitude a)* (30%). It is noticeable that students' responses reflected *Attitudes* are highly concentrated on these two dimensions, with an accumulated percentage reached of approximately two thirds. Meanwhile, the relatively less addressed instance of *Attitude c)*, with an occurrence percentage 4%, is an unexpected outcome for this study. This issue, namely the main causes that lead to learners' lack of 'willingness to question one's own cultural values', deserves further exploration.

### 5.2.2.1 Attitudes instances

Table 5-5 displays representative examples of *Attitudes* dimensions a) to e) identified as IEC learners' development in ICC learning objectives. Due to the word limitation of this thesis, the full list of instances can be found in Appendix 5.

*Table 5-5 Representative instances of Attitudes as ICC objective from students' feedback*

ATTITUDES: CURIOSITY AND OPENNESS, READINESS TO SUSPEND DISBELIEF ABOUT OTHER CULTURES AND BELIEF ABOUT ONE'S OWN	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS	EVIDENCE
<p>a) Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to <b>engage with otherness</b> in a <b>relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic</b> or the profitable</p> <p>N= 6 (TS1) + 4 (TS3) + 5 (TS4) + 1 (PQ) =16</p>	<p>'We should <b>accept the different cultures based on the different environment.</b>' (TS1, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>'<b>Different countries have different customs</b> and we should <b>respect</b> each other.' (TS3, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>'I would like to go to UK. Actually, I <b>would like to understand any foreign country and foreign culture.</b>' (TS4, G1-10-MB)</p> <p>'Culture varies from country to country. When we are in a different country, we <b>should adapt ourselves to their culture.</b> Though we may experience a totally different culture, we should <b>respect</b> it.' (PQ-6, G3-3-FE)</p>
<p>b) Interest in discovering <b>other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena</b> both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices</p> <p>N= 6 (TS1) + 3 (TS4) = 9</p>	<p>'When teacher told us <b>the different thought of different country ...</b>, I feel impressive.' (TS1, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>'I want to know <b>the foreign culture and the different attitudes.</b>' (TS4, G2-2-FB)</p>
<p>c) Willingness to <b>question</b> the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in <b>one's own environment</b></p> <p>N=2 (TS4)</p>	<p>'In China, <u>no matter where social based on Chinese culture</u> (wherever we are, the environment is based on Chinese culture) and we can't know the European culture very well. Different culture can affect people very much. We can broaden our sight; we can change <u>our measure when we think</u> (mode of thinking).' (TS4, G4-9-FB)</p>
<p>d) <b>Readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation</b> to</p>	<p>'When we have a <b>culture shock</b>, we should <b>cope with it positively.</b>' (TS1, G1-4-FB)</p>

and interaction with another culture during a period of residence  N= 3 (TS1) + 4 (PQ) = 7	‘Yes, I am more aware of how culture impact communication. I know we must <b>go through different stages and frustration</b> (when there are cultural differences), but if we try to adapt, we will have a good life.’ (PQ-6, G2-4-MB)
e) Readiness to engage with the <b>conventions and rites</b> of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction  N= 4 (TS1) + 15 (TS2) = 19	‘ <b>For a foreigner</b> , we should <b>not be shy</b> , (should) <b>be confident</b> to talk with him (them) in regardless of the different thought. We should become <b>active and passionate to communicate with different people.</b> ’ (TS1, G1-9-FB)  ‘I am curious to know more about <b>different styles of international greetings</b> , because I want to <b>make friends with foreigners.</b> ’ (TS2, G1-1-MB)

### 5.2.2.2 More frequently addressed Attitudes dimensions

The more frequently addressed attitudes dimensions are *Attitudes a)* and *Attitudes e)*, with *Attitudes e)* (with occurrence percentage of 36%) predominates. The next section will discuss these two dimensions respectively, exploring the processes of identification and investigating possible reasons for learners’ development.

#### Attitude e)

Between the two more frequently addressed attitudes dimensions namely *Attitude a)*, and *Attitude e)*, *Attitude e)* with an occurrence percentage 36% takes one third of the examples. As stated in Byram’s (1997) ICC Model, *Attitude e)* refers to:

Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction: The intercultural speaker notes and adopts the behaviors specific to a social group in a way which they and the members of that group consider to be appropriate for an outsider; the intercultural speaker takes into consideration the expectations the others may have about appropriate behaviors from foreigners. (p. 58)

Due to the dominating position of *Attitude e)* and in order to investigate learners’

development in this dimension more clearly, all the related instances are categorized into two sub-divisions namely *Readiness to engage with other conventions* and *Willingness to adopt other appropriate behaviours*.

### **Readiness to engage with other conventions**

Among students' feedback represented as *Attitude e*), 16 examples (84%) among which fifteen are recognized from Teaching Session Two and one in Teaching Session One, are concerned with 'readiness to engage with another culture's conventions, both verbal and non-verbal'. The following table (Table 5-6) displays typical examples, which show learners' great enthusiasm in knowing more about greeting conventions different from their own culture, and eagerness to become involved in these practices. The listed examples are subcategorized into two groups according to the criteria, namely, the reasons why students are eager to acquire the conventions and the actions they plan to conduct if they want to investigate further on the topic.

*Table 5-6 Instances for Readiness to engage with other conventions*

Examples emphasizing Reasons
‘I am <b>curious to know</b> more about different styles of international greetings, because I want to <b>make friends with foreigner.</b> ’ (TS2, G1-1-MB)
‘I am <b>curious to know</b> more about different styles of international greetings, because it can be good for us to <b>improve our relationship.</b> ’ (TS2, G1-4-FB)
‘I am <b>curious to know</b> more about different styles of international greetings, because I <b>like talking to foreigner. A good greeting is important.</b> ’ (TS2, G2-9-FA)
‘I am <b>curious</b> , because knowing more about different styles of international greetings can help me to know <b>how to begin a conversation with foreign people.</b> ’ (TS2, G3-1-FT)
‘I am <b>definitely curious</b> to know more about different styles of international greetings, because it is of great importance for us to know the way of other country’s greetings in that we can <b>make good relationship with them.</b> ’ (TS2, G3-2-FT)
‘... it is <b>interesting</b> for me to know about the greetings especially it is <b>useful when I work or study abroad.</b> ’ (TS2, G3-2-FT)
‘I am <b>curious to know</b> more about different styles of international greetings, because it is good for <b>effective communication.</b> ’ (TS2, G3-5-ME)
Examples indicating Actions to be taken
‘I will <b>find out more</b> about different styles of international greetings and <b>classify it</b> according to these greetings.’ (TS2, G1-3-FB)
‘I will <b>watch movies or TV plays</b> made <produced> in foreign countries and <b>learn from them.</b> ’ (TS2, G2-9-FA)
‘(Post-W) I am getting more interested in this topic <international greetings> and I will <b>look up some information in the library.</b> ’ (TS2, G3-1-FT)
‘<I will> <b>search on the Internet</b> to find out the different styles of greetings about different countries.’ (TS2, G3-3-FE)

From students’ feedback in Table 5-6, it can be assumed that learners’ enthusiasm mainly derives from their strong willingness to seek opportunities to interact with English speakers. In order to achieve successful intercultural interaction, they are keen to pursue a variety of learning activities in support of this objective.

**Willingness to adopt other appropriate behaviors**

Three examples identified from the worksheets in Teaching Session One ‘Culture

Shock’ manifest that students have realized what another culture’s expectations might be for them to behave while interacting, and the kinds of attitudes and behaviors they plan to adopt based on their understandings of proper behaviors. Table 5-7 displays the specific examples for this subdivision.

*Table 5-7 Instances for Willingness to adopt other appropriate behaviors*

‘For a foreigner, we should **not be shy**, (should) **be confident** to talk with him (them) in regardless of the different thought. We should become **active and passionate** to communicate with different people.’ (TS1, G1-9-FB)

‘**Don’t be shy and afraid** when communicate with others (English speakers).’ (TS1, G2-2-FB)

‘Don’t be shy and **have confidence** facing stranger (English speakers). Be **more active**.’ (TS1, G4-5-FB)

It is interesting that all three female students shown in Table 5-7 instances have emphasized ‘shyness’ as their self-evaluation, and considered ‘confidence and passion’ as essential for a successful communication with speakers of English. This is a common understanding among Chinese EFL learners, and more discussion around this aspect will be expanded in chapter six ‘Additional ICC themes’.

In a general review of Attitude e), almost all the IEC learners are fully ready to adopt commonly accepted cultural conventions and behaviours. In terms of more specific conventions they are prepared to engage with, most of their responses are concentrated on the topics mentioned in the IEC course, for instance, the greeting conventions. This illustrates that students’ learning outcomes are largely determined by the content and guidance in the course instructions in the context of IEC. Hence, it is essential for the teacher to make the course content and teaching methods suitable for the learners’ circumstances in order to enhance their potential for ICC development. For example, specific aspects of the course may

relate to learners' linguistic level and their learning philosophy. More discussion of this issue will take place in chapter six 'Additional ICC themes'.

### **Attitude a)**

*Attitude a)* in which 16 examples recognized is considered as the second most frequently cited dimension with an occurrence percentage of 30%. As stated in Byram's (1997) ICC Model, *Attitude a)* refers to:

Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or the profitable: The intercultural speaker is interested in the *other's experience of daily life* in contexts not usually presented to outsiders through the media nor used to develop a commercial relationship with outsiders; is interested in *the daily experience* of a range of social groups within a society and not only that represented in the dominant culture. (p. 57)

The *Attitudes a)* instances are identified from three teaching sessions each with a similar number of examples – six in Teaching Session 'Culture Shock', four in 'Food and Eating Habits' and five in 'Study in the UK'. The majority of students' feedback identifies their willingness to engage with experience of daily life in other cultures, for example, G3-1-FT and G3-2-FT. Some teaching materials in the IEC apply UK as a typical instance to illustrate situations in English-speaking countries, so students mentioned UK's context quite often in their responses. However it can be assumed that their expected willingness relates to all the major English-speaking countries. Specific examples illustrating learners' achievement in *Attitude a)* are listed below with at least one instance from each designated teaching session respectively.

'Every culture has **their own beliefs or values. We cannot ignore it or push others accept us.** We should be open to them.' (TS1, G4-3-ME)

'Fantastic! **It (western food) is so different from Chinese food. I would like to try!**' (TS3, G2-1-FB)

‘I would like to go to UK. Actually, I **would like to understand any foreign country and foreign culture.**’ (TS4, G1-10-MB)

‘UK has lots of **different thoughts from China. And I am also interested in the culture and people.**’ (TS4, G3-6-FT)

Both *Attitude e)* and *Attitude a)* are the most frequently identified dimensions regarding IEC learners’ ICC development in Attitudes, which suggests learners are potentially open to interactions with culturally different others, and ready for change while encountering differences. However, in terms of initiating interactions with culturally different others involving suspending one’s original cultural beliefs and discovering different perspectives, the evidence of learners’ development is less adequate. The next section will discuss these ‘less frequently addressed Attitudes dimensions’.

### **5.2.2.3 Less frequently addressed Attitudes dimensions**

The less frequently addressed attitudes dimensions are *Attitude b)*, *Attitude c)* and *Attitude d)*, among which *Attitude c)* (with occurrence percentage 4%) is the least identified. This section will analyze the reasons regarding learners’ insufficient feedback on *Attitude c)*.

Although nine examples are recognized for *Attitude b)*, the evidence in students’ replies mainly revolves around discovering *other* perspectives on their *unfamiliar* cultural practices. According to Byram’s (1997) illustration, *Attitude b)* is the ‘interest in discovering *other* perspectives on interpretation of *familiar and unfamiliar* phenomena both *in one’s own and in other* cultures and cultural practices’. So the cultural perspectives identified include both familiar and unfamiliar phenomena, both in one’s own and other cultures.

However, IEC learners’ responses predominantly center on their unfamiliar phenomena in other cultures and cultural practices. This tendency echoes the

findings from *Attitude c*) – ‘willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products *in one’s own environment*’, in which merely two items of evidence (4%) are identified. The results suggest that students rarely take account of their own cultural practices and values, let alone investigate how others perceive their cultural values, and the majority are inclined to focus more on other cultures’ perspectives and unfamiliar phenomena.

It happens that there is a similar case in the *Knowledge* objective; *IEC* learners’ responses scarcely disclose understanding of their *own* country’s dominant culture(s), typically represented from the evidence in *Knowledge d) and f)*. This insufficient understanding and readiness reflected from *IEC* learners’ learning outcome both in *Knowledge* and *Attitudes* dimensions are essential in the recognition of learners’ *ICC* developmental status. The illustration of these inadequate aspects along with other additional *ICC* themes (Chapter six) will be helpful when constructing a future *ICC* program that is suitable for Chinese *EFL* learners. The following sections (5.2.3 and 5.2.4) will discuss students’ development in *ICC Skills* dimension.

### **5.2.3 Skills of interpreting and relating**

A total number of 8 *Skills of interpreting and relating* (*Skills-1*) instances are recognized from students’ responses in their learning process worksheets and post-course questionnaires. According to Byram’s (1997) illustration in the *ICC Model*, *Skills of interpreting and relating* refers to ‘ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one’s own’. Table 5-8 displays the number and occurrence frequency for each *Skills-1* dimension respectively.

Table 5-8 Number of Skills of Interpreting and Relating (S1) instances from students' feedback

Skills of Interpreting and Relating Dimension S1a-S1c	Number of instances	Percentage
S1a	N=4	50%
S1b	N=0	0
S1c	N=4	50%
S1a-c	TN=8	

It is evident that students' responses related to *Skills of interpreting and relating* are concentrated on dimensions a) and c), without a single example in dimension b). Based on Byram's (1997) ICC model, S1b is the ability to 'identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction *in an interaction* and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present'. Since *IEC* learners did not have opportunities to interact with English-speakers, it is considered as one of the most important reasons why this dimension is not addressed in this data set.

### 5.2.3.1 Skills of interpreting and relating instances

Table 5-9 displays representative examples of *Skills of interpreting and relating* dimensions a) to c) identified as *IEC* learners' development in ICC learning objectives. Due to the word limitation of this thesis, the full list of instances can be found in Appendix 6.

Table 5-9 Representative instances of Skills of interpreting and relating as ICC objective from students' feedback

SKILLS OF INTERPRETING AND RELATING: ABILITY TO INTERPRET A DOCUMENT OR EVENT FROM ANOTHER CULTURE, TO EXPLAIN IT AND RELATE IT TO DOCUMENTS OR EVENTS FROM ONE'S OWN	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS	EVIDENCE
a) identify <b>ethnocentric perspectives</b> in a document or event and <b>explain</b> their origins  N = 2 (TS1) + 1 (TS3) + 1 (TS4) = 4	===Teaching Session 1=== n=2  'Different country has their different culture, for example, a country love a thing, but another country all hate it. ... <b>Through some stories (Hong Kong students' diary, i.e. critical incidents), I know the differences between China's &lt;Chinese&gt; culture and other cultures.</b> And I know how to do when I meet that situation (conflict/cultural differences).' (TS1, G1-5-FB)  ===Teaching Session 3=== n=1

	<p>TS3-Q8: <i>What is your opinion on the Western food now after the class?</i></p> <p>‘The food they eat as lunch or supper are that we students called snacks. Typically it is not formal for us if we eat that food.’ (TS3, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>===Teaching Session 4=== n=1</p> <p>‘The class covers many aspects of international studies. Actually I don’t exactly stay with either UK or China. Every choice has some advantages and disadvantages that are worth of considering. For instance, <b>as far as China is concerned</b>, there is not enough space for teenagers who just graduate from college to develop themselves. And <b>for UK</b>, we must face too many issues that are obvious different from the environment we used to, and the tuition fees is very high; society is also complicated.’ (TS4, G4-10-FT)</p>
<p>b) <b>identify</b> areas of <b>misunderstanding</b> and dysfunction in an interaction <b>and explain</b> them in terms of each of the cultural systems present</p>	<p>N=0</p>
<p>c) <b>mediate</b> between <b>conflicting interpretations</b> of phenomena</p> <p>N=4 (TS3)</p>	<p>===Teaching Session 3=== n=5</p> <p><b>TS3-Q13:</b> <i>If one of your friends who is from America criticizes Chinese cuisine, what is your possible reaction to his comment?</i></p> <p>‘I will tell them <b>different countries have different customs</b>. We should <b>respect</b> each other.’ (TS3-Q13, G1-4-FB)</p>

### 5.2.3.2 The process of identifying Skills of interpreting and relating instances

Different from using students’ reflective journals or autobiography as the data source, students’ responses to the sequentially constructed questions in the questionnaires requires more explanations for their development as IEC learners. Moreover, the teacher-researcher is the one most familiar with the course objective, teaching content and the students’ positions and views on their ICC development (especially with some supplemented information from the

conversation with students in the focus groups interviews after the course), so the supplemented explanations are essential to accomplish and finalize comparatively more comprehensive and context-specific understanding. For example, the evidence for S1a ‘identify ethnocentric perspective in a document or event and explain their origins’ is not obvious from the superficial meaning of the data presented in Table 5-9, and in these circumstances, background information is vital for a more comprehensive understanding.

### **Skills of interpreting and relating a) (S1a)**

Learning objective dimension a) under *Skills of interpreting and relating* (S1) has 4 items (50%) identified from Teaching Session One ‘Culture Shock’ (n=2), Teaching Session Three ‘Food and Eating Habits’ (n=1) and Teaching Session Four ‘Study in the UK’ (n=1). According to Byram’s (1997) statement, S1a refers to:

(Ability to) identify *ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event* and explain their origins. The intercultural speaker can ‘read’ a document or event, analyzing its origins/sources e.g. in the media, in political speech or historical writing and the meanings and values which arise from a national or other ethnocentric perspective (stereotypes, historical connotations in texts) and which are presupposed and implicit, leading to conclusions which can be challenged from a different perspective. (p. 60)

Evident from the above illustration, both the ‘ethnocentric document/event’ and the ability to ‘identify and explain the ethnocentric perspectives’ are essential elements for this intercultural skill. In the case of IEC it is impossible to analyze students’ feedback in their learning process worksheets without bringing in the teaching context. For example, identifying what is meant by an ‘ethnocentric document/event’ in a particular teaching and learning context. So the procedure in analyzing learners’ achievement of S1a starts with what an ‘ethnocentric document/event’ meant at a phase in the *IEC*, then includes students’ responses that demonstrate their ability to analyze the ethnocentric perspectives. The following paragraphs will take instances from Teaching Session One ‘Culture

Shock’ and Teaching Session Four ‘Study in the UK’ as examples to illustrate students’ developed *Skills of interpreting and relating*.

In Teaching Session One ‘Culture Shock’, students are presented with five Hong Kong students’ diary entries, which describe the critical incidents during their sojourn experiences in the United Kingdom. After reading the story, students are asked to discuss the scenarios with their group members, followed by a whole-class presentation of the results from their group discussions. Throughout these steps, students are allowed sufficient time and space to identify and analyze the ethnocentric perspectives from the reading materials. In this light, the ethnocentric document is the culture shock scenarios. A typical instance is from G4-1-MB’s reply, ‘The English culture have different meanings from the Chinese culture. For example, **the travel rules are different** (England drives on the left)’, which shows that the student has drawn a comparison between the closely-related documents in the interlocutor’s and their own country’s, and identified different ethnocentric perspectives.

Similar ethnocentric event analysis is displayed in Teaching Session Four ‘Study in the UK’ via video-clips, which portray international students’ studying and living circumstances in the United Kingdom. After watching two clips with contradictory viewpoints, students are required to write down their own views explicitly regarding the comparison between studying in the UK and China. G4-10-FT explains that,

The class covers many aspects of international studies. Actually I don’t exactly stay with either UK or China. Every choice has some advantages and disadvantages that are worth of considering. For instance, **as far as China is concerned**, there is not enough space for teenagers who just graduate from college to develop themselves. And **for UK**, we must face too many issues that are obvious different from the environment we used to, and the tuition fees is very high; society is also complicated.

It is evident that G4-10-FT has compared the similar phenomena between two countries, identified the inherent differences and arrived at a conclusion based on

her way of information processing. And all the four instances identified in S1a) suggest that IEC learners have developed their abilities with regard to recognizing ethnocentric perspectives.

### **Skills of interpreting and relating c) (S1c)**

Learning objective c) under *Skills of interpreting and relating* (S1) is another most spotted dimension, with 4 examples (50%) recognized from students' feedback, and is elaborated in Byram's (1997) work as:

c) (Ability to) mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena. The intercultural speaker can use their explanations of sources of misunderstanding and dysfunction to help interlocutors overcome conflicting perspectives; can explain the perspective of each and the origins of those perspectives in terms accessible to the other; can help interlocutors to identify common ground and unresolvable difference. (p. 61)

Four S1c instances are recognized from students' feedback in Teaching Session Three 'Food and Eating Habits', when they answer the following question in their post-class worksheet 'If one of your friends who is from America criticizes Chinese cuisine, what is your possible reaction to his comment?' The intention of this question is to explore students' responses when they encounter misunderstandings of their own culture. Some students' answers are close to S1c indications, and the evidence identified demonstrates students' capability to 'mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena'. The following are the specific examples:

'**Explain** (that) every country has their own custom, and in the **neutral** standard (position). No side is wrong.' (TS3-Q13, G1-8-FB)

'**Explain the difference between their culture and mine.** Every one of us has the right to choose. *When we stay with others, try to avoid the sensitive culture.*' (TS3-Q13, G4-3-ME)

In both instances, when G1-8-FB and G4-3-ME face a completely different viewpoint of a phenomenon from their own culture, they, as a mediator, are willing to identify the common ground and help both sides to overcome the conflicting interpretations. Moreover, G4-3-ME further indicates that he is reluctant to take the initiative to delve into the core conflict (*'When we stay with others, try to avoid the sensitive culture'*), which represents the Chinese spiritual essence of Harmonious Society (this aspect will be further explored in the Chapter six 'Additional ICC Themes').

In summary, the above eight examples recognized as *Skills of interpreting and relating* evidence represent IEC learners' development both in dimension a) and dimension c). However, it is notable that S1 is the second least identified facet (4%) among the five ICC components. The causes of this insufficiency regarding teaching methodology and course design will be further explored in Chapter seven (Teacher and Teaching).

#### **5.2.4 Skills of discovery and interaction**

A total number of 78 *Skills of discovery and interaction* instances are recognized from students' responses in their learning process worksheets and post-course questionnaires. According to Byram's (1997) statement in the ICC Model, *Skills of discovery and interaction* refers to '(the) ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction' (p.61). Table 5-10 presents the specific evidence occurrence frequency for the dimensions (a) to (g) under *Skills of discovery and interaction* (S2).

Table 5-10 Number of Skills of discovery and interaction (S2) instances from students' feedback

<b>Skills of discovery and interaction Dimension S2a-S2g</b>	<b>Number of instances</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
S2a	N=0	0
S2b	N=0	0
S2c	N=66	85%
S2d	N=0	0
S2e	N=12	15%
S2f	N=0	0
S2g	N=0	0
S2a-g	TN=78	

It is noticeable that the *Skills of discovery and interaction* instances are concentrated in two S2 dimensions, S2c (85%) and S2e (15%). In contrast, there is not a single instance recognized in the dimensions S2a, S2b, S2d, S2f or S2g from students' responses. I will discuss the possible reasoning for these extreme outcomes next.

#### **5.2.4.1 Skills of discovery and interaction instances and the identification process**

This section illustrates the identification process of representative examples in *Skills of discovery and interaction* (S2) dimensions a) to g). Due to the word limitation of this thesis, the whole list of S2 instances is shown in Appendix 7. Because of the greater number of instances occurring in S2 compared to S1, the instances of S2a to S2g are displayed and illustrated respectively for the sake of clarity. I will begin with the more frequently addressed dimensions S2c) and S2e) (5.2.4.2), followed by the less frequently ones including S2a, S2b, S2d, S2f and S2g (5.2.4.3).

#### **5.2.4.2 More frequently addressed dimensions**

S2c (85%) and S2e (15%) are two more frequently addressed *Skills of discovery and interaction* dimensions, and S2c undoubtedly has the predominant role in this

ICC objective. So next I will first discuss learners' feedback and development regarding S2c, and then about S2e.

#### **5.2.4.2.1 Skills of discovery and interaction c)**

S2c is the most addressed *Skills of discovery and interaction* dimension with altogether 66 instances identified, which constitute 85% of all S2 examples. In order to undertake an extensive analysis of this most recognized dimension, this section will first discuss about learners' developed skills from the perspective of 'Three phases' in terms of S2c definition, then the viewpoint of instance identification process regarding two particular teaching sessions. As a basis for further examination, Table 5-11 displays the representative examples in this dimension, and the full list of instances is shown in Appendix 7.

Table 5-11 Representative instances of Skills of discovery and interaction c) as ICC objective from students' feedback

SKILLS OF DISCOVERY AND INTERACTION: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSION	EVIDENCE
<p>c) identify <b>similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal</b>, and <b>negotiate an appropriate use</b> of them in specific circumstances</p> <p>N= 9 (TS1)+30 (TS2) + 25 (TS3) + 2 (PQ) = 66</p> <p>a) n=6 b) n=38 c) n=22</p>	<p><b>a) identify the similar and dissimilar interaction as a preliminary (n=6)</b></p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 1== n=2</p> <p>‘For a foreigner, we should <b>not be shy</b>, (should) <b>be confident</b> to talk with him (them) <b>in regardless of the different thought.</b>’ (TS1, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 2== n=4</p> <p><b>Q4 (Pre-W) &amp; Q9 (Post-W): n=2</b> <i>If you are in a foreign country and people treat you with their social greeting custom (for example, in France, they hug and kiss on your cheeks), what will you do?</i></p> <p>‘(Pre-W) I will tell them <b>it is my greeting custom to shake hands.</b>’ (TS2-Q4&amp;9, G1-4-FB)</p> <p><b>Q5 (Pre-W) &amp; Q10 (Post-W): n=2</b> <i>If you don't like others' (especially foreigners') greeting style or body language, what will you do?</i></p> <p>‘(Pre-W) Tell others that their greeting custom is <b>different</b> from ours and that makes me feel uncomfortable.’ (TS2-Q5&amp;10, G1-8-FB)</p> <hr/> <p><b>b) identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and ‘accept’ the differences (n=38)</b></p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 1== n=3</p> <p>‘<b>Don't be shy and afraid</b> when communicate with others &lt;English speakers&gt;. ... We should <b>accept the different cultures</b> based on the different environment.’ (TS1, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 2== n=17</p> <p><b>Q4 (Pre-W) &amp; Q9 (Post-W): n=11</b> <i>If you are in a foreign country and people treat you with their social greeting custom (for example, in France, they hug and kiss on your</i></p>

	<p><i>cheeks), what will you do?</i></p> <p>‘(Pre-W) I may feel embarrassed and just shake hands. (Post-W) <b>Do it like them.</b>’ (TS2-Q4&amp;9, G1-3-FB)</p> <p><b>Q5 (Pre-W) &amp; Q10 (Post-W):</b> n=6  <i>If you don’t like others’ (especially foreigners’) greeting style or body language, what will you do?</i></p> <p>‘(Pre-W) At first I will accept it, <b>then</b> I will tell him/her I don’t like it and want him/her to correct it. (Post-W) I will <b>accept</b> it. Because it’s different among countries in culture and we should respect it.’ (TS2-Q5&amp;10, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 3== n=17</p> <p><b>TS3-Q6:</b> n=16  <i>Suppose you are an international student in a foreign country, what kinds of customs will you follow when you are abroad?</i></p> <p>‘We should bring some gifts if we were invited to a friend’s house. Maybe <b>some flowers or just a small gift.</b> Behave well. Sit up straight. Keep my elbows off the table. Ask permission before leave the table. Thank them for inviting me to their dinner.’ (TS3-Q6, G3-3-FE)</p> <p><b>TS3-Q12:</b> n=1  <i>If you are the student who is mentioned in the diary scenario, what is your planning to solve the different dining habit problem?</i></p> <p>‘I will talk to my host family and tell them what I think. Maybe I will <b>adapt to their customs.</b>’ (TS3-Q12, G2-4-MB)</p> <p>== Examples from Post-Questionnaires== n=1</p> <p>‘Yes, I think I can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. For example, if I was studying in England, my host family said ‘I love you’ to me, <b>I wouldn’t feel shy as before, and I would say ‘I love you’ as a response.</b>’ (PQ-8, G3-4-FE)</p> <hr/> <p><b>c) identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and negotiate a compromise (n=22)</b></p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 1== n=4</p> <p>‘For a foreigner, we should <b>not be shy,</b> (should) <b>be confident</b> to talk with him (them) in regardless of the different thought. We should become <b>active and passionate</b> to communicate with different</p>
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	<p>people.’ (TS1, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 2== n=9</p> <p><b>Q4 (Pre-W) &amp; Q9 (Post-W):</b> n=3  <i>If you are in a foreign country and people treat you with their social greeting custom (for example, in France, they hug and kiss on your cheeks), what will you do?</i></p> <p>(Pre-W) ‘I will treat them with their social greetings.’ (Post-W) ‘<b>First</b> I will treat them with their social greetings, and <b>then tell them about our social greetings.</b>’ (TS2-Q4&amp;9, G4-1-MB)</p> <p><b>Q5 (Pre-W) &amp; Q10 (Post-W):</b> n=6  <i>If you don’t like others’ (especially foreigners’) greeting style or body language, what will you do?</i></p> <p>‘I will <b>tell them reasons</b> and refuse their behaviors. <b>But then I may shake hands with them.</b>’ (TS2-Q5, G1-1-MB)</p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 3== n=8</p> <p><b>TS3-Q6:</b> n=2  <i>Suppose you are an international student in a foreign country, what kinds of customs will you follow when you are abroad?</i></p> <p>‘If I have a meal, I will wear comfortable clothes, bring flowers, and <b>follow the foreign customs. But maybe just say thank you after dinner.</b>’ (TS3-Q6, G1-8-FB)</p> <p><b>TS3-Q12:</b> n=6  <i>If you are the student who is mentioned in the diary scenario, what is your planning to solve the different dining habit problem?</i></p> <p>‘I will try to get used to it. <b>In addition, introduce traditional Chinese food to my host family.</b>’ (TS3-Q12, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>== Examples from Post-Questionnaires== n=1</p> <p>‘Yes, I won’t do anything that is <u>bad (inappropriate) for other country person</u> (from another cultural perspective).’ (PQ-6, G1-5-FB)</p>
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## From the perspective of Three Phases in S2c development

In order to present a clear overview of such a large amount of examples, three phases namely a) ‘identify the similar and dissimilar interaction *as a preliminary*’; b) ‘identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and ‘accept’ the differences’ and c) ‘identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and negotiate a compromise’ are introduced as categorizing criteria. As a prerequisite for the more detailed analysis, Table 5-12 displays the particular number and source of S2c examples under the three phases.

*Table 5-12 Three phases in S2c instances*

Number in Phases	Number in Teaching Sessions	Number in Learning Worksheet Questions
Phase a) N= 6	TS1 n=2	
	TS2 n=4	Q4&9 n=2 Q5&10 n=2
Phase b) N= 38	TS1 n=3	
	TS2 n=17	Q4&9 n=11 Q5&10 n=6
	TS3 n=17	Q6 n=16 Q12 n=1
	PQ n=1	
Phase c) N= 22	TS1 n=4	
	TS2 n=9	Q4&9 n=3 Q5&10 n=6
	TS3 n=8	Q6 n=2 Q12 n=6
	PQ n=1	

According to Byram (1997), S2c is considered as:

c) (Ability to) **identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction**, verbal and non-verbal, and **negotiate an appropriate use of them** in specific circumstances. The intercultural speaker can use their knowledge of conventions of verbal and non-verbal interaction (of conversational structures; of formal communication such as presentations; of written correspondence; of business meetings; of informal gatherings, etc.) to **establish agreed**

**procedures on specific occasions**, which may be a combination of conventions from the different cultural systems present in the interaction.  
(p.61)

The S2c definition indicates three phases in achieving a successful intercultural interaction: in the first place, to recognize the similarities and differences between cultural conventions (phase *a*) in the table), then to be aware of the need to ‘change’ and ‘accept’ the differences (phase *b*) in the table), or to negotiate about a ‘compromise’ (phase *c*) in the table). In this light, phase *a*) can be regarded as the basic step, which is a preliminary, while phase *b*) is paralleled by phase *c*) in achieving proficient intercultural interaction. The following part explores learners’ development in S2c in relation to these three phases.

**a) Identify the similar and dissimilar interaction only**

The first phase ‘recognition of the similarities and differences’ is the premise in order to realize a mutually satisfied intercultural interaction. Essentially, all the examples identified as S2c show learners’ acknowledgement of the cultural similarities and/or differences, though some evidence is not explicitly revealed in the examples. The specific examples listed under phase *a*) ‘identify the similar and dissimilar interaction *as a preliminary*’ emphasize the initial stage at which students successfully recognize the different cultural conventions. A particular illustration of this phase is regarding *Greetings*: almost all the students have successfully identified the varying greeting customs different from their own. To be more specific, ‘hugging and kissing on the cheeks’ is considered as an extremely intimate gesture, while ‘nodding head and shaking hands’ is a more common greeting convention from the Chinese culture point of view. Here are two responses from students’ Pre-worksheets:

‘(Pre-W) I will tell them **it is my greeting custom to shake hands.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G1-4-FB)

‘(Pre-W) Tell others that their greeting custom is **different** from ours and that makes me feel uncomfortable.’ (TS2-Q5&10, G1-8-FB)

Meanwhile two students' feedback from Teaching Session One 'Culture Shock' show equal acknowledgement of the dissimilar processes of interaction between their own and the interlocutor culture. For example, G1-9-FB mentioned '... we should **not be shy**, (should) **be confident** to talk with him (them) **in regardless of the different thought.**' and G2-3-MB explained that '**I know what they like talking and playing.** I can make myself (don't be a) not special in foreign group'.

**b) Identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and 'accept' the differences**  
**& c) Identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and negotiate a compromise**

After having noticed what is similar and dissimilar, the intercultural speaker is supposed to realize the need to 'change' and 'accept' the differences, or to reach an agreement with the interlocutor for a mutually accepted compromise. A particular example of the former case, namely phase b) 'identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and 'accept' the differences' is from G3-3-FE's feedback in the Teaching Session 'Culture Shock' learning process worksheet: "The Brits have their own beliefs. We had learned some culture of Britain. Of course, some of them are **totally different from Chinese cultures**. Each country has its own culture. Just as the saying goes, '**When in Rome, do as the Romans do**'." G3-3-FE's application of the proverb '*When in Rome, do as the Romans do*' explicitly represents that she has been aware of the necessity for a change under conditions of different customs and beliefs, and the way she has selected is to 'accept' what Brits do.

As to the latter case 'to negotiate for an agreed compromise', namely phase c) 'identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and negotiate a compromise', students' responses to Questions 4 and 9 in Teaching Session Two 'International Greetings' set noteworthy examples. When learners are asked to describe their response facing a greeting custom which is greatly different from their own cultural conventions, two view categories are recognized: 'those which would accept' and 'those which would not' in the negotiation for a compromise. Though learners' reactions are diverse, they show their ability to take advantage of what they have known about the cultural conventions and establish agreed procedures

through negotiations. A good example for this case is ‘I will *accept it and do as they do*, but I will *refuse some beyond my acceptance* (TS2, G1-1-MB)’.

### **From the perspective of S2c instance identification process**

As a supplementary to the previous perspective of ‘Three phases’ in S2c development, this part explores S2c examples in view of their identification process within a frame of teaching sessions. Due to the dominating percentage of recognized instances, Teaching Session Two ‘International Greetings’ (with 45%) and Teaching Session Three ‘Food and Dining Habit’ (with 38%) are discussed in detail.

### **Examples identified from Teaching Session Two ‘International Greetings’**

Teaching Session ‘International Greetings’ aims to equip learners with basic non-verbal communication knowledge and awareness of the diverse interaction styles, cultivating their competence in establishing an agreed appropriate procedure of intercultural interaction. In order to obtain proper evaluation of students’ actual development after taking the lesson, Questions 4 & 5 in the Pre-class worksheet and Question 9 & 10 in the Post-class worksheet are the same. Students’ feedback in the post-class worksheet is expected to demonstrate more advanced intercultural communicative knowledge and skills, resulting from the intercultural teaching program, than they demonstrated before undertaking the course.

#### **TS2-Q4 (Pre-W) and Q9 (Post-W)**

*If you are in a foreign country and people treat you with their social greeting custom (for example, in France, they hug and kiss on your cheeks), what will you do?*

#### **TS2-Q5 (Pre-W) and Q10 (Post-W)**

*If you don’t like others’ (especially foreigners’) greeting style or body language, what will you do?*

In Questions 4 & 9, students are asked to describe their response when facing a greeting custom which is greatly different from their own culture, and Questions 5 & 10 are presented to investigate learners' reactions to a hypothetical case with unaccepted greeting styles. The majority of students show that they can accept and follow the greeting custom, including 6 instances that are identified in the pre-class feedback and 11 examples seen or after the lesson. In addition, 9 students illustrate changes in their behaviour and processes of adaptation. Table 5-13 displays the exact number of instances with specific examples.

*Table 5-13 Categorized examples from Teaching Session 2*

Subcategories	Sources	Specific Examples
ACCEPTANCE (n=6)	Q4&9 n=5 Q5&10 n=1	'I will <b>accept</b> them. I will treat them <b>in their social greeting custom.</b> ' (TS2-Q4&9, G1-8-FB)
CHANGE TO ACCEPTANCE (n=11)	Q4&9 n=6 Q5&10 n=5	'(Pre-W) I may feel embarrassed and just shake hands. (Post-W) <b>Do it like them.</b> ' (TS2-Q4&9, G1-3-FB)  '(Pre-W) I will tell them it is my greeting custom to shake hands. (Post-W) I will <b>accept</b> it. Because I could respect their custom.' (TS2-Q4&9, G1-4-FB)
ADAPTATION WITH MODIFICATION (n=9)	Q4&9 n=3 Q5&10 n=6	'I will accept it and do as they do, but I will <b>refuse some beyond my acceptance.</b> ' (TS2-Q4, G1-1-MB)  'If I don't like others' greeting style or body language, I will <b>tell him or her my own style of greeting.</b> ' (TS2-Q5&10, G2-5-MB)  'I think even though I don't like them, I also need to respect their greeting ways. So I would like to respond to their greeting ways <b>gently.</b> ' (TS2-Q5&10, G3-3-FE)  (Pre-W) 'I will treat them with their social greetings.' (Post-W) ' <b>First</b> I will treat them with their social greetings, and <b>then tell them about our social greetings.</b> ' (TS2-Q4&9, G4-1-MB)

### Examples identified from Teaching Session Three 'Food and Dining Habit'

**TS3-Q6:** *Suppose you are an international student in a foreign country, what kinds of customs will you follow when you are abroad?*

All the students (n=18) who participated in this teaching session answer that they would like to follow the interlocutor country's customs; moreover, particular evidence from students' responses indicates that they tend to make modifications with acknowledgement of different conventions. For example, G1-8-FB replies, 'If I have a meal, I will wear comfortable clothes, bring flowers, (and) follow the foreign customs. **But maybe just say thank you after dinner.**' According to G1-8-FB's understanding, it is necessary for her to accept the cultural practice of people in the sojourn country; meanwhile she would like to make adjustment based on her knowledge of both cultures.

**TS3-Q12:** *If you are the student who is mentioned in the diary scenario, what is your planning to solve the different dining habit problem?*

This question is supposed to explore students' problem-solving ability on a condition of an unresolved intercultural interaction circumstance. The diary scenario displayed in the lesson is:

I explained to my host mum that I felt awful sometimes when I eat too much fish'n chips, but she doesn't quite understand what I mean. It is the first time I felt that I couldn't quite communicate with her because of our cultural difference. Although she said she understand what I was saying, what she answered is to let it be; she said it would pass very soon. However, I want to tell her that in Chinese concept, it could not be combated; it is about one's inborn body, different people are genetically destined the amount they could accept before irritating the natural balance. I felt bad to explain all these to her as it seemed to me that she doesn't even understand, I couldn't actually translate the exact Chinese sayings to her even I could well chat with her.

In this critical intercultural incident described above, the sojourner could not get used to the English food in her home-stay family. Though she tried to explain her feelings to the host, there were still misunderstandings between them. *IEC* students' responses to this question revolve around their reactions when they face problems of misunderstanding. The students' feedback on this question shows

their intention to change and also they want to take actions to negotiate and solve the problem. Regarding the development of S2c, students' feedback shows their understanding of the difference between Chinese and English food, readiness to interpret their feelings to the host family and most importantly their effort in achieving the mutual understanding and avoiding unnecessary dysfunctions. Typical instances identified are as follows:

'Every time **eat a little. Show my respect** but I won't make myself feel uncomfortable.' (G2-9-FA)

'If I can't stand the eating habit, I would like to **eat less or I can cook something in Chinese cuisines by myself.**' (G3-2-FT)

'To **adapt to the dining habit in their country, and bring some fruits and vegetables to share with the family** and cook Chinese food for them at weekends.' (G3-6-FT)

It is notable that S2c (n=66) is the most spotted dimension not only in *Skills of discovery and interaction*, but also among all the ICC saviors. The extensive and thorough examination of the instance identification process from two distinctive perspectives including objective definition and teaching sessions, lays a solid foundation for the forthcoming discussion on the related teaching methodology and course design in Chapter seven of Teacher and Teaching.

#### **5.2.4.2.2 Skills of discovery and interaction e)**

S2e is the second most addressed *Skills of discovery and interaction* dimension with altogether 12 instances identified, which constitute 15% of all S2 examples. As a basis for further examination, Table 5-14 displays the representative examples in this dimension, and the full list of instances is shown in Appendix 7.

Table 5-14 Representative instances of Skills of discovery and interaction e) as ICC objective from students' feedback

SKILLS OF DISCOVERY AND INTERACTION: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSION	EVIDENCE
<p>e) identify <b>contemporary and past relationships</b> between one's own and the other culture and society</p> <p>N=1 (TS1) +11(TS3)=12</p>	<p>===Teaching Session 1=== n=1</p> <p>'In my view it is not enough to talk about western culture. It is better to recognize western values from their histories such as Revival of Learning in which individualism occurred. These factors influence their behaviors and in this way we can better comprehend the differences between Eastern cultures and Western cultures.' (TS1, G3-5-ME)</p> <p>===Teaching Session 3=== n=11</p> <p><b>TS3-Q11:</b> <i>What is your opinion on western fast food invasion and expansion to China?</i></p> <p>'As a cultural integration, it can enrich our daily life.' (TS3-Q11, G1-1-MB)</p>

Dimension e) under *Skills of Discovery and Interaction* is elaborated by Byram (1997) in his work as:

e) (Ability to) identify **contemporary and past relationships** between one's own and the other culture and society. The intercultural speaker **can use sources** (e.g. reference books, newspapers, histories, experts, lay informants) to understand both contemporary and historical political, economic and social relationships between cultures and societies and analyze the differing interpretations involved. (p. 63)

Altogether twelve instances akin to S2e are diagnosed from students' feedback, with one from Teaching Session One 'Culture Shock' and eleven in Teaching Session Three 'Food and Dining Habits'. G3-5-ME's reply in Teaching Session One worksheet shows his thorough understanding of the past relationship between cultures and societies, and his explanation is as follows:

‘In my view it is not enough to talk about western culture. It is better to recognize western values **from their histories** such as Revival of Learning in which individualism occurred. These factors influence their behaviors and in this way we can better comprehend the differences between Eastern cultures and Western cultures.’ (TS1, G3-5-ME)

In comparison to this, other examples from Teaching Session Three *Food and Dining Habits* Question 11 (*What is your opinion on western fast food invasion and expansion to China?*) demonstrate students’ understanding of the relationships in the contemporary world. As a reading assignment, students are exposed to an article on the topic of McDonald’s fast food expansion, and the question is assumed to look into their understanding of the relationships between cultures and societies. The realized learning outcome is that eleven out of eighteen students’ answers reflect their proper comprehension of the phenomenon with assistance of cultural knowledge. For instance, G1-1-MB indicates that ‘As a cultural integration, it can enrich our daily life’ and G1-4-FB along with G1-8-FB bring up the term ‘trending’ or ‘tendency’. In addition, G3-4-FE clarifies that ‘we should respect the variety of food. Western fast food coming into China promotes Chinese economy...’; G4-1-MB discloses his view as ‘报以欣赏的态度，西餐可以丰富我们的生活。’[I would like to treat the western food with attitude of appreciation; it may enrich our life]’.

The examples in S2e indicate that learners are capable of ‘identifying contemporary and past relationships between one’s own and the other culture and society’. However, it is also noteworthy that limited instances disclose learners’ potential to ‘use sources (e.g. reference books, newspapers, histories, experts, lay informants)’ in order to understand the different relationships and analyze the differing interpretations. The implications for this case will be discussed in Chapter seven ‘Teacher and Teaching’.

### **5.2.4.3 Less frequently addressed dimensions**

There is no evidence recognized as IEC learners' *Skills of discovery and interaction* development in S2a, S2b, S2d, S2f or S2g, and all the five aspects are categorized as the less frequently addressed dimension. Next I will consider learners' feedback regarding these dimensions respectively.

#### **5.2.4.3.1 Skills of discovery and interaction a)**

There is no evidence related to S2a found in *IEC* learners' feedback. Byram (1997) defines this ICC skill as the ability to:

a) elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena: The intercultural speaker can use a range of questioning techniques to elicit from informants the allusions, connotations and presuppositions of a document or event and their origins/sources, and can develop and test generalizations about shared meanings and values (by using them to interpret another document; by questioning another informant; by consulting appropriate literature) and establish links and relationships among them (logical relationships of hierarchy, of cause and effect, of conditions and consequence, etc.). (p. 61)

The definition of S2a indicates that there are three steps to achieve this intercultural communicative competence objective – to conduct an inquiry through the interlocutor in search of an implication; to make it into a general value; and to use the generalized concept to explain and understand similar circumstances. In an EFL course like *IEC*, students did not have the opportunity to interact with English-speakers, which is the main obstacle to achieve the goal of S2a skill.

Meanwhile, the apparent absence of examples of both S2a and S1a evidence

requires further investigation of the *IEC* course design. There can be three reasons for this lack: the inadequacy of the teaching materials; a defect in instructional methods that leads to the imperfections of learners' learning outcomes; and/or simply that this type of interaction is not possible in some teaching contexts. The implications of this issue will be discussed further in the forthcoming 'Teaching' and 'Conclusion' chapters.

#### **5.2.4.3.2 Skills of discovery and interaction b)**

From students' feedback there is no related evidence identified as S2b, which is the second dimension under *Skills of discovery and interaction* and stated by Byram (1997) as the ability to:

b) identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations: The intercultural speaker can **'read' a document or event for the implicit references to shared meanings and values** (of national memory, of concepts of space, of social distinction, etc.) particular to the culture of their interlocutor, or of international currency (arising for example from the dominance of western satellite television); in the latter case, the intercultural speaker can identify or elicit different interpretations and connotations and establish relationships of similarity and difference between them.

The crucial point in S2b is that 'the intercultural speaker can *read* a document or event for the implicit references to shared meanings and values', for instance, the ability to 'read' a film from Hollywood and understand its meaning in the USA. In the worksheets of Teaching Session Four 'Study in the UK', after watching the video-clips, the students' feedback do not show their ability to identify the designated references, but instead, put on view other additional common features. The reasons for the absence of S2b, but the presence of additional themes from learners' comments, are discussed in Chapter six (6.1.4.1).

#### 5.2.4.3.3 Skills of discovery and interaction d)

There is no evidence related to S2d found in students' feedback. Byram (1997) defines this ICC skill as the ability to:

d) use **in real-time** an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country, culture and language and the extent of difference between one's own and the other. The intercultural speaker is able to estimate their degree of proximity to the language and culture of their interlocutor (closely related cultures; cultures with little or no contact or little or no shared experience of international phenomena; cultures sharing the 'same' language; cultures with unrelated languages) and to draw accordingly on skills of interpreting, discovering, relating different assumptions and presuppositions or connotations in order to ensure understanding and avoid dysfunction. (p.62)

It is evident that the key precondition to achieve S2d is in 'real-time interaction'. Since the IEC students did not obtain opportunities to interact with English-speakers, it is considered as the most important cause leading to the absence of the related evidence. However, there are instances from students' feedback on their speculation about how they would react in an imagined interaction, and this part will be further explored in Chapter six 'Additional ICC themes'.

#### 5.2.4.3.4 Skills of discovery and interaction f)

Based on Byram's (1997) statements, S2f refers to the ability to:

f) identify and make use of public and private **institutions** which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures. The intercultural speaker can use their general knowledge of institutions facilitating contact to identify specific institutions (consulates, cultural institutes etc.) to establish and maintain contacts over a period of time.

The key phrase in the illustration is ‘public and private **institutions**’ (Michael Byram, personal communication), which refers to, for example, British Council or Confucius Institutes. There is no evidence for S2f identified from the students’ feedback during or after the course and the result is not surprising because learners did not have any opportunities for utilizing such functional organizations to build up contacts during IEC. However, in today’s world of the ‘global village’, there can be numerous ways institutions can facilitate contact with other countries and cultures, for instance, via the Internet. This issue as a supplemented entry to the ICC Model, will be discussed in more detail later in Chapter six ‘Additional ICC Themes’.

#### **5.2.4.3.5 Skills of discovery and interaction g)**

In Byram’s (1997) ICC Model, dimension g) under *Skills of discovery and interaction* is illustrated as the ability to:

g) use in **real-time** knowledge, skills and attitudes for **mediation** between interlocutors of one’s own and a foreign culture. The intercultural speaker can identify and estimate the significance of misunderstandings and dysfunctions in a particular situation and is able to decide on and carry out appropriate intervention, without disrupting interaction and to the mutual satisfaction of the interlocutors. (p. 63)

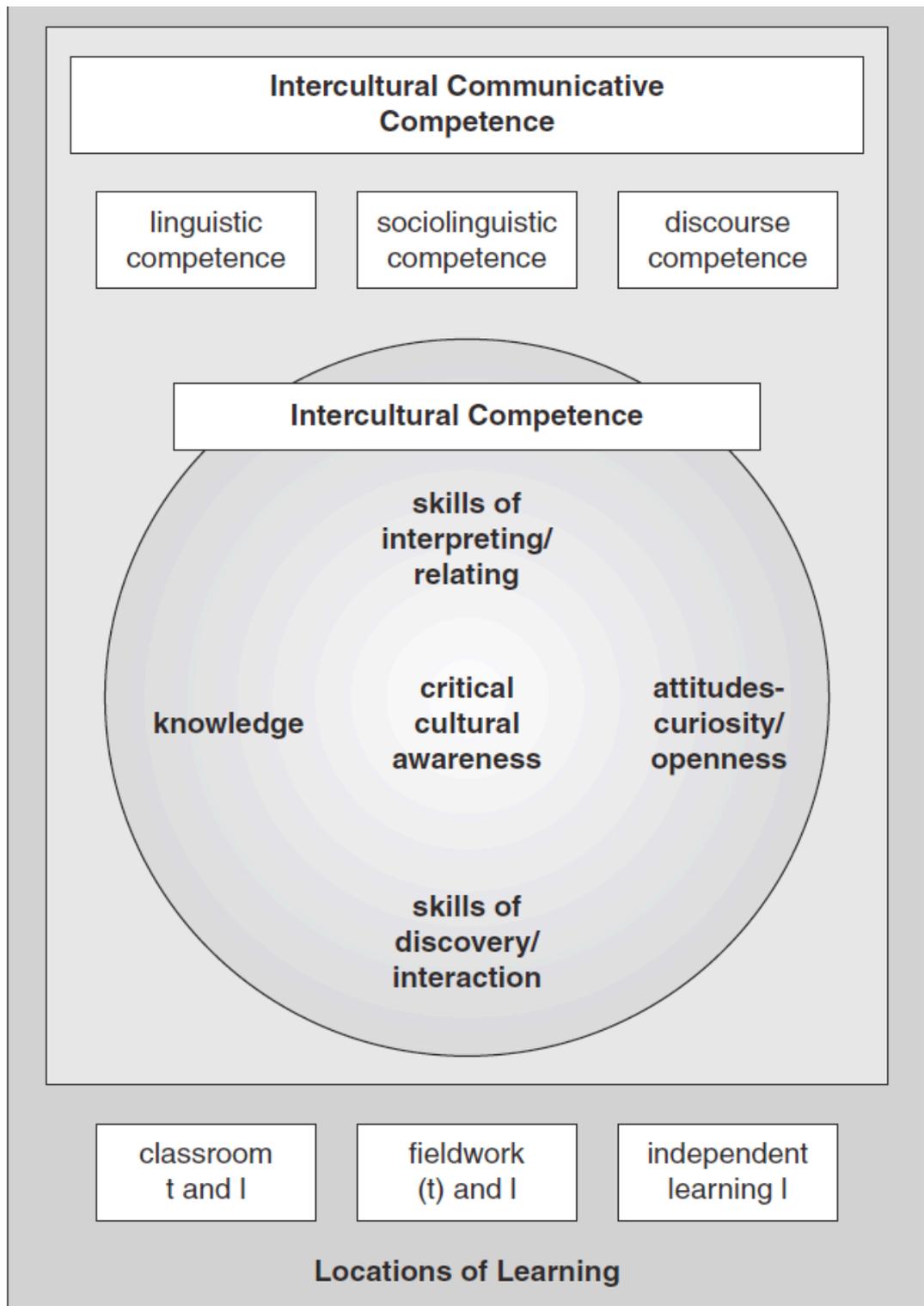
It is evident that the crucial point in S2g is to make use of the ‘real-time’ knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation in order to implement satisfactory communication, but in a language course like IEC, there is not such real-time interaction opportunity. Hence, it is reasonable that no evidence has been recognized in this Skills learning objective. However, there are three examples identified from students’ feedback, which explicitly represent their capability in doing intervention and being a mediator to solve the problem between their own and the interlocutor’s culture, on the premise of an imagined real-time interaction. Detailed analysis on this aspect will be expanded in Chapter six ‘Additional ICC

themes’.

In summary, IEC learners’ development in *Skills of discovery and interaction* are mainly represented in dimensions S2c and S2e. On the other hand, the inadequate embodiment in dimensions S2a, S2b, S2d, S2f and S2g is also significant. Both the extremes can arouse exploration regarding further fulfilment of course design and teaching methodology in the Chinese EFL context.

### **5.2.5 Critical Cultural Awareness/political education**

After analyzing students’ feedback, there is no evidence identified as instances of *Critical Cultural Awareness*. According to Byram’s (1997) statement in the ICC Model, *Critical Cultural Awareness* refers to ‘an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries’ (p.63). *Critical Cultural Awareness* (CCA) is considered as the most important skill in the ICC Model.



A Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 2009)

The figure above ‘A Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence’ shows the core structure of Byram’s ICC Model (1997) and along with this table, Byram (2009) also stated that ‘the disposition of the competences within the whole image represents their relationships: critical cultural awareness/*savoir s’engager* in the

center symbolizes its significance' (In Deardorff, 2009, p. 325), Moreover, Byram states "I have on numerous occasions insisted that 'critical cultural awareness' is crucial to my model of intercultural communicative competence, its role being symbolized by placing it at the center of one of the diagrams used to represent ICC." (personal communication)

According to Byram's (1997) explanation, Critical Cultural Awareness (CCA) involves three learning objectives (ability to):

a) identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures. The intercultural speaker: can use a range of analytical approaches to place a document or event in context (of origins/sources, time, place, other documents or events) and to demonstrate the ideology involved. (p. 63)

b) make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refer to an explicit perspective and criteria. The intercultural speaker is aware of their own ideological perspectives and values ('human rights'; socialist; liberal; Moslem; Christian etc.) and evaluates documents or events with explicit reference to them. (p. 64)

c) interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes. The intercultural speaker is aware of potential conflict between their own and other ideologies and is able to establish common criteria of evaluation of documents or events, and where this is not possible because of incompatibilities in belief and value systems, is able to negotiate agreement on places of conflict and acceptance of difference. (p. 64)

These three CCA dimensions represent the sequential order in developing the intercultural communicative competence, from a) recognizing the values, and b) making an evaluative analysis of the values with one's own ideological references, to c) interacting and mediating with the established criteria. It is obvious that CCA, which is indispensable to an intercultural interaction and as a consequence

of utilizing ‘one’s knowledge, skills and attitudes’ in collaboration, is the ultimate among the five *savoirs* of ICC Model. Therefore, CCA entails deeper analysis and reflection of intercultural communication, which cannot be realized easily in a short course like IEC or without well-structured intentional guidance. More implications on the language instructional techniques will be further explored in Chapter seven ‘Teacher and Teaching’.

### **5.3 Chapter Summary**

It is evident from this chapter’s previous discussions (5.1 and 5.2) that IEC learners’ ICC development are concentrated on three facets among the five *savoirs* including Knowledge (28%), Attitude (27%) and Skills of discovery and interaction (40%), and less frequently represented in Skills of interpreting and relating (4%) and Critical Cultural Awareness (0%). Meanwhile, it is also notable that learners’ enhancement are distributed unevenly in the respective *savoir*. For instance, among seven dimensions in *Skills of discovery and interaction*, there are only two (S2c and S2e) that are recognized from learners’ feedback, while the other five are absent with evidence.

All these findings on both extremes, whether adequacy or insufficiency reflected of learners’ ICC development, are informative and valuable in constructing an ICC model that is more appropriate in the Chinese university EFL context. Furthermore, the next chapter (Additional ICC themes) is intended as a valuable supplementary analysis. It will illustrate IEC learners’ ICC development using a framework complementary to Byram’s ICC *savoir* dimensions.

## Chapter Six

### Students' Additional ICC themes

#### 6.0 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter five) presents and discusses areas of students' ICC development that are directly related to Byram's (1997) five *savoirs*. This chapter explores further themes in addition to Byram's *savoirs*, which can also be recognized as IEC learners' ICC features in the Chinese EFL context. Two sections are included – the first (6.1) analyzes IEC learners' additional ICC development in five *savoirs* namely knowledge (6.1.1), attitudes (6.1.2), skills of interpreting and relating (6.1.3), skills of discovery and interaction (6.1.4) and critical cultural awareness (6.1.5), and the second (6.2) summarizes the content of the whole chapter. This chapter will continue to answer the research question 'What aspects of intercultural communicative competence have the IEC learners developed?'

#### 6.1 Additional themes relating to students' ICC development

In addition to the instances identified from IEC learners' feedback as their ICC development from the perspective of Byram's (1997) *savoirs*, other additional themes with specific features in the Chinese EFL teaching and learning context are also prominent. In the following section, I discuss these additional themes from five aspects – knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness, all of which is regarded as a valuable supplement to fully illustrate IEC learners' ICC development.

##### 6.1.1 Knowledge

Besides the instances identified as learners' ICC development from the perspective of Byram's (1997) *savoirs*, other Knowledge themes with specific

characteristics are also evident from students' feedback after taking the IEC. These additional themes including Knowledge of cultural facts (6.1.1.1), Knowledge of intercultural communication (6.1.1.2), and Cultural self-awareness (6.1.1.3) are expanded in the following three sections.

#### **6.1.1.1 Knowledge of cultural facts**

Although many Knowledge instances (n=55) are identified from IEC learners' responses, the most frequently cited type of cultural knowledge that learners mentioned in their feedback relate to aspects of surface level culture such as food, holidays, educational system, and greeting styles etc. Very few students refer to deep level cultural knowledge like values and beliefs. In general, Chinese college EFL learners tend to have limited cultural knowledge. This is largely due to the extreme exam-oriented education system in China -middle school students seldom have sufficient time reading related books or acquiring relative information apart from preparing for their college-entrance examination.

So it is not accurate to assume all the college students are fully equipped with wide aspects of cultural knowledge before they step into tertiary education. This is also the reason why most students believe that successful intercultural communication relies mostly on adequate cultural knowledge. In their minds, cultural knowledge is the initial step for communication with English-speakers, and only when they understand the different cultures well can they make an intercultural dialogue. The following examples recognized from IEC learners' responses show their belief that gaining knowledge and understanding of other cultures is essential for further understanding of otherness and implementing intercultural interaction.

'I have **known foreign culture more**, this is **useful** in my communication with foreigners.' (PQ-4, G1-10-MB)

'I **can't perform effectively** and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures, because I think **I need to know more about English culture** and most

of the time, I don't know how to express my ideas'. (PQ-8, G1-1-MB)

'This is the different between two different cultures. **If knowing each other, shock will disappear.**' (TS1, G2-3-MB)

'Now I know **more aspects about the (cultural) differences, so I am more aware of how culture impact communication** than before.' (PQ-6, G2-3-MB)

'My communication skill with foreigners get improving, because I **have become more understanding of their culture.**' (PQ-5, G1-10-MB)

'We should try our best to **learn their (other) culture so we can understand them better.** Furthermore, we should **try something new** or maybe we will regret.' (PQ-4, G2-9-FA)

'Yes, I am now more aware of how culture impact communication than at the beginning of the course. **Culture may serve as a barrier to communication.** But **if we understand each other's culture, it will be easy to solve this problem.**' (PQ-6, G3-1-FT)

'**Culture is the most important** thing when you communicate with others. Sometimes, it can **cause misunderstanding** between two people with their cultural background and differences.' (PQ-6, G3-6-FT)

The instances above illustrate Chinese EFL learners' understanding of the relationship between cultural knowledge and the communicative competence, i.e. grasping sufficient cultural knowledge of one culture determines what it means to be a competent communicator. However, this view is limited in terms of Byram's five savoirs that illustrate the complexity of ICC. A focus on cultural knowledge can act as a prerequisite, but definitely not the sole condition for achieving ICC. Regarding this inadequate assumption, EFL teachers should provide appropriate guidance in supporting learners' ICC fulfilment.

### 6.1.1.2 Knowledge of intercultural communication

Learners also emphasize the importance of acquiring the knowledge of intercultural communication, and they consider it useful in promoting their successful intercultural communication. The following table (Table 6-1) displays IEC students' representative comments from their post-course questionnaires.

*Table 6-1 Instances of 'Knowledge of intercultural communication'*

'I have learnt <b>how to communicate</b> with native speakers effectively.' (PQ-1, G2-8-MB)
'... this course helped me to know <b>the most essential information for me to make good communication with people outside China</b> , especially people in the UK.' (PQ-1, G3-2-FT)
'The new knowledge I have gained: <b>knowing the foreigners in depth</b> . I also <b>have some stereotyping views on foreigners before</b> . But <b>now, I understand that we shouldn't judge a person by the first impression</b> .' (PQ-4, G3-1-FT)
'I have learnt a lot of <b>knowledge about the intercultural communication</b> . For example, I have learnt the differences in different countries in communicating with each other, and know some ways to overcome the differences.' (PQ-4, G3-4-FE)

IEC learners' positive feedback on IC knowledge acquisition shows they understand this kind of learning about intercultural communication – for example about the nature of stereotypes - is an effective supplementary element to cultural-specific knowledge learning in the language classroom. While the traditional culture teaching mainly revolves around knowledge about food, customary clothing, and holidays, recent pedagogic proposals imply an integration of language and intercultural learning (e.g. Nguyen, 2008; Truong, 2009). The basic intercultural communicative knowledge is intentionally imbedded in the IEC programme, for instance, the discussion and analysis of 'stereotyping' issues in the last teaching session. Learners' comments show that the knowledge, attitude and skills they have developed along with these teaching processes will facilitate their future intercultural understanding when interacting with people from other cultures. On top, they also begin to develop their confidence and capability in respecting and understanding cultural differences in future intercultural interactions.

### 6.1.1.3 Self-culture awareness

Another feature regarding Knowledge summarized from IEC learners' feedback is their clear lack of 'self-culture awareness'. As illustrated previously in 'Less frequently addressed Knowledge dimensions' (5.2.1.3), there are very few instances representing learners' awareness of their own cultural rules and biases. For example, in Teaching Session Four 'Study in the UK', students are more likely to point out the cultural differences rather than recognize the similarity between countries. Meanwhile they have manifested limited ability in demonstrating the common knowledge of their own cultural group, in particular, the shared cultural values and beliefs. From TS4 learning process worksheet, the only example that contains learners' certain degree of basic self-cultural awareness is: '**Chinese culture is wide and complex.** I think we should first study Chinese culture exactly' (TS4, G2-4-MB). Despite the fact that this statement is a comparatively brief generalization, at the least the student has begun to recognize the similarly significant role of his or her own cultural value from others.

Compared with other themes evolved in ICC Knowledge facet, IEC learners' response regarding their knowledge of cultural self-awareness is the weakest. Heyworth (2005:7) states that 'much more useful descriptions of cultural differences and intercultural competences' are needed to avoid potential problems such as assuming that knowing some else's language automatically promotes understanding and respect. This assumption is also prevalent in the Chinese EFL teaching context, i.e. many people believe that learning another language and culture is another way to know about one's own; the development of cultural self-awareness is an expected concurrent outcome along with that of others.

Nevertheless, the findings in this study reveal that, IEC learners who are in the Chinese college EFL context, show limited awareness of their own cultural rules, or can hardly recognize new perspectives about their own cultural rules and biases. This insufficient recognition is one of their significant weaknesses as both foreign

language learners and Chinese citizens. It prevents them from gaining an accurate and deep intuitive understanding of their own cultural rules, let alone understanding how their own experiences have shaped these rules, and/or how to recognize and respond to cultural biases. This facet will be further illustrated in the chapters ‘Teacher and Teaching’ and ‘Conclusion’ regarding the necessary supplementary guidance for Chinese EFL learners in teaching objectives and methods.

### **6.1.2 Attitudes**

As analyzed in the previous chapter ‘ICC learning objectives Attitude’ (5.2.2), 53 instances are identified of IEC learners’ development in their ICC attitudes, and each Attitude dimension namely Aa) to Ae) has students’ attitude-related responses. These findings lend support to Byram’s (1997) definition of ICC learning objectives in Attitudes. Byram’s attitudes appear to be adequate and well-illustrated in the Chinese tertiary EFL learners’ context. However, along with further exploration of learners’ feedback concerning their ICC development as Attitudes, more typical features that represent Chinese learners’ traits are identified. These aspects recognized as IEC learners’ additional attitude themes include: more ‘openness’ than ‘curiosity’ (6.1.2.1), Chinese spiritual essence of ‘harmonious society’ (6.1.2.2), shyness as self-evaluation, more confidence as expectation (6.1.2.3) and Chinese learners’ learning concept (6.1.2.4).

#### **6.1.2.1 More ‘openness’ than ‘curiosity’**

According to Byram’s (1997) statement, the ICC *Attitudes* learning objective means: ‘Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one’s own (p. 57)’. If ‘curiosity’ and ‘openness’ are nominated side by side, IEC learners’ responses undoubtedly show more evidence on ‘openness’ than ‘curiosity’.

As to the ‘openness’ aspect, learners’ comments show their eagerness to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others (see 5.2.2.2 Attitude e)

part). And because students do not have opportunities to implement real-time interactions with English-speakers in the Chinese EFL context, their feedback is mainly concerned with their speculations to initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others. In addition, sufficient evidence (see 5.2.2.2 Attitude a) part) also presents learners' capability to suspend judgment in valuing their interactions with culturally different others.

However, as to the aspect of 'curiosity', learners can only ask simple or surface questions about other cultures, which is the initial stage towards developing curiosity. There is a large gap between their current stage and the final one, which eventually expects them to seek out and articulate answers to complex questions to other cultures and reflect multiple cultural perspectives. Learners' feedback tended to focus on surface level culture such as food, holidays, religion than on facets of deep level one such as values and beliefs. Furthermore, there is scarcely any evidence that shows learners' vigorous intention and engagement in the in-depth understanding of more than one cultural viewpoint.

Based on the fact of Chinese EFL learners' lack of recognition on curiosity regarding ICC *Attitudes*, language teachers are encouraged to integrate appropriate teaching materials and guidance in their intercultural language teaching practice. This can arouse students' interest in discovering different cultural perspectives as well as their willingness to question their own cultural beliefs and values. This aspect will be further discussed in subsequent chapters.

#### **6.1.2.2 Chinese spiritual essence of 'harmonious society'**

Another common feature identified from IEC learners' 'attitudes' evidence originates from their Chinese culturally bound values and beliefs. Chinese culture has been greatly influenced by Confucius philosophical system and emphasizes 'harmony' as the central theme in interpersonal communication and interaction (for example, Xiao and Guo, 2009). As to this aspect, students' responses have conspicuously shown their reluctance to break the communicative integrity. In addition, some comments represent their efforts in implementing a peaceful and

smooth communication process. The most frequent words they have applied in order to show their attitudes are ‘positively’ ‘in a right way’ and ‘enthusiastic’. The specific examples are listed below:

‘We should accept the difference of foreign culture **positively**.’ (TS1, G1-4-FB)

‘We should treat the differences between foreign countries and our country **in a right way**.’ (PQ-4, G1-4-FB)

‘Yes, I would be more **enthusiastic** about talking with them, introducing Chinese culture to them and trying to adapt to their habits. (PQ-8, G2-1-FB)

‘Explain the difference between their culture and mine. Every one of us has the right to choose. **When we stay with others, try to avoid the sensitive culture.**’ (TS3, G4-3-ME)

In the last example above, G4-3-ME further indicates that he is reluctant to take the initiative to delve into the core conflict (‘When we stay with others, try to avoid the sensitive culture’), which represents the Chinese spiritual essence of harmonious society. From a Chinese point of view, this is not considered as ‘retreating from the conflict’, but their manner of dealing with conflicts or addressing problems (see Xiao and Guo, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 1994). The other-culture confrontation or interactional problem resolution process is like a long flowing stream and people prefer to plan on a long-term basis. There are different practices in different stages of interaction and the mutual understanding cannot be expected to happen all of a sudden, but develop little by little.

Another example that clearly illustrates this perspective is learners’ feedback from Question 13 in Teaching Session Three ‘Food and Eating Habits’, namely, ‘If one of your friends who is from America criticizes Chinese cuisine, what is your possible reaction to his comment?’ The inquiry is proposed to look into students’ responses when they encounter misunderstandings of their own culture. The student G3-5-ME’s answer is ‘I may not argue with him (at that very time). When he stays a period in China, it is better to talk with him about Chinese cuisine’. His

comment shows his intention of holding off direct confrontation and waits to see the other side's modified or transformed ideas on Chinese food in the long run.

Based on the Chinese references of 'harmony', the space and time reserved by G3-5-ME when encountering an intercultural misunderstanding are valuable. Both sides can properly apply them by enriching their related experiences, further recognizing cultural differences, and finally negotiating an agreement. This concept of 'harmony' in Chinese culture and reference is significant while defining ICC Attitude, and more illustrations on this aspect will be expanded in the Conclusion chapter.

### 6.1.2.3 Shyness as a self-evaluation and more confidence as expectation

In the former analysis of Attitudes as ICC development section, Attitudes e) is the most frequently addressed dimension, and learners' responses on 'willingness to adopt other Conventions' are itemized in the table (Table 6-2) below:

*Table 6-2 Instances for Willingness to adopt other conventions in Attitudes e)*

'For a foreigner, we should **not be shy**, (should) **be confident** to talk with him (them) in regardless of the different thought. We should become **active and passionate** to communicate with different people.' (TS1, G1-9-FB)

'**Don't be shy and afraid** when communicate with others (English speakers).' (TS1, G2-2-FB)

'**Don't be shy** and **have confidence** facing stranger (English speakers). Be **more active**.' (TS1, G4-5-FB)

What is noticeable from IEC learners' feedback above is the emphasis on 'shyness' as a current self-evaluation and their expected performance to be 'more confident', 'active' and 'passionate' in the future intercultural communication. The IEC learners' reply typically represents dominant Chinese EFL learners' general status in their experiences of both language learning and language practising. Due to various reasons such as outdated pedagogy and exam-oriented assessment, vast majority of Chinese EFL learners may be reluctant verbally and even aurally in

communicating with English-speakers, in spite of many years of hard working in English. So it is reasonable for college EFL learners, who nevertheless have successfully passed the college-entrance examination, to be still desperate for improvement particularly in English listening and speaking.

And their reluctance to open their mouth, which is described as ‘shyness’ in their explanations, is both due to the limited language proficiency, their in-born personality traits and reserved attitude while communicating. The following examples further demonstrate learners’ emphasis on ‘confidence’ which they consider as crucial for energizing future intercultural communications:

‘Yes, I think I can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. **I will be more confident.**’ (PQ-8, G2-6-FB)

‘When I have an oral test in class, I will **have more confidence** to express my ideas.’ (PQ-8, G2-8-MB)

‘Yes, I am more aware of the situation when cultural differences impact communication and now I **have more confidence** that I can handle it.’ (PQ-6, G2-9-FA)

‘Yes, after learning the knowledge of (intercultural) communication, I have **the confidence of myself** and I’m sure that I will perform appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. I will exchange my real ideas with them’ (PQ-8, G3-1-FT)

Because ‘confidence’ is regarded as such an essential element for Chinese EFL learners in achieving successful intercultural communication, it should be incorporated as an important dimension in developing effective ICC Attitude model in the Chinese language learners’ context. Language teachers are also recommended to implement additional strategies aimed at strengthening learners’ confidence.

#### 6.1.2.4 Chinese learners' learning concept

Apart from 'confidence' as IEC learners' expected prerequisite for intercultural competence, 'determined effort' is also highlighted as a core element for successful interaction identified from students' feedback. The following responses show a range of Chinese learners' broad but common perspective accomplishing successful learning outcomes:

'I **can** perform better in communicating with members of English-speaking cultures **now**, and **will be better in the future**. I will keep attention on information of different cultures, and try to get more chances communicating with natives speakers of English.' (PQ-8&9, G1-10-MB)

'I feel **a little more comfortable** speaking with native English speakers. I think (it) **will be better** (in the future). I will get more culture books and try to communicate with others (English speakers).' (PQ-8&9, G2-5-MB)

'I also **feel nervous** (when I perform communication with members of English-speaking cultures). **But if I practice more, I can change (develop) more**. I will try to find more materials to improve my skills and communicate more with foreigners.' (PQ-8&9, G2-4-MB)

While all three students reveal their current status distinguished from being considerably comfortable ('can': G1-10-MB), to roughly comfortable ('a little more': G2-5-MB), and to not sufficiently comfortable ('feel nervous': G2-4-MB) in speaking with native English speakers, all of them willfully add supplemental explanations stating that the situation will be 'better' in the future. Besides, they illustrate their planning for future actions in order to further develop their intercultural competence. This is closely related to typical Chinese learning culture of 'determined and effortful learning' concept. From a Chinese learner's point of view, making a determined and constant effort throughout the learning process can be guaranteed, helping to ensure continuous progress that eventually initiates successful outcomes. However, this belief is still questionable in terms of

successfully developing learners' ICC: determined effortful practices without proper guidance or correct intercultural communication skills can still be ineffective.

In a word, as to IEC learners' ICC Attitude development, four facets should be highlighted: 'curiosity' (6.1.2.1), 'confidence' (6.1.2.3), Chinese cultural reference of 'harmony' (6.1.2.2), and Chinese learners' learning concept of 'determined effort' (6.1.2.4). These additional themes are significant when fulfilling an ICC model suitable for Chinese EFL learners, and also valuable in instructing teaching practices.

After analyzing both Knowledge and Attitude facets, the following two sections are concerned with Skills in the ICC Model. As analyzed in the former ICC learning objectives 'skills of interpreting and relating' (Skills-1) and 'skills of discovery and interaction' (Skills-2) section, a total number of 86 instances, with 8 in Skills-1 and 78 Skills-2, are identified as IEC learners' development in their ICC skills. Despite the fact that the largest number of instances associated with Byram's (1997) ICC learning objectives was identified in the Skills facet, some inconsistency was noted. For example, the achievement in six of the dimensions namely, S1b, S2a, S2b, S2d, S2f and S2g, was limited, as reflected in the IEC learners' feedback. Possible reasons for these limitations will be discussed in the following sections.

Perhaps one of the most significant causes that led to this lack of representation is whether these dimensions are adequate and suitable in the Chinese tertiary EFL learners' context. Along with further exploration of learners' ICC development in *Skills of interpreting and relating* and *Skills of discovery and interaction*, more typical features that represent Chinese learners' traits are represented. I will analyze these additional themes in sections 6.1.3 and 6.1.4 respectively.

### **6.1.3 Skills of interpreting and relating**

Byram (1997) describes *Skills of interpreting and relating* as: ‘ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one’s own (p. 61)’. The statement interprets the skill as a successfully fulfilled process of intercultural interacting including sequenced steps of ‘identifying, referring and mediating’. Identifying how these skills are properly developed through classroom-based intercultural learning remains very challenging. The processes require appropriately designed teaching materials and context-sensitive instructional tasks to assist students in acquiring the relevant competences. Related issues are expanded upon in the ‘Teacher and Teaching’ chapter.

As analysed in the previous chapter regarding ‘ICC learning objectives *Skills of interpreting and relating*’ (5.2.3), a total number of 8 instances are identified as IEC learners’ ICC Skills-1 development, and S1a and S1c have 4 examples respectively. S1b is the only Skills-1 dimension that lacks IEC learners’ responses, hence needs re-examination, particularly from the Chinese EFL learners’ perspectives.

#### **6.1.3.1 Developed ethno-relative view via reflection**

According to Byram’s (1997) statement, S1b is the ability to ‘identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present (p. 61)’. In order to achieve this competence, two conditions are essential. Firstly, students should be provided with a real-time interactional opportunity; then, they are cultured, enlightened and sophisticated enough to implement the intercultural interaction task.

For the IEC course, the first condition ‘to have a real-time interaction opportunity’ is generally not feasible, although ‘the interaction experience’ can be to some extent fictionally realized through classroom tasks like role-plays or scenario simulations. As to the second condition to achieve S1b, it is unrealistic to expect

every IEC learner to be greatly cultivated successfully fulfilling all the intercultural tasks. On the one hand, the ‘cultural system’ is a comparatively abstract and complex concept for the majority of IEC participants and their understanding are also unevenly distributed. This can be caused by various reasons like their previous teachers’ exam-oriented teaching approach and inadequate language curriculum. From another perspective the insufficiency could also be attributed to the IEC course design, i.e. the course teaching objectives are more inclined to develop learners’ mediation skills rather than interpreting and analyzing ones.

Although there is no strongly convincing evidence identified in S1b, some instances from learners’ feedback can represent the elementary level of this skill, which is categorized by the researcher as ‘the developed ethno-relative views via reflection’. The following examples are IEC learners’ related feedback:

‘I always think foreigners have stereotype of Chinese, however, we should not have this thought.’ (PQ-3, G2-9-FA)

‘And, first impression (inherent image) is not always right.’ (PQ-4, G2-9-FA)

‘I also have some stereotyping views on foreigners before. But now, I understand that we shouldn’t judge a person by the first impression (inherent image).’ (PQ-4, G3-1-FT)

The above instances are recognized from students’ responses in post-course questionnaires (PQ), which show their ICC development after the whole course. Together with evidence from their focus group interviews, students have made progress in developing their intercultural ethno-relative views, or in Byram’s words ‘identify(ing) causes of misunderstanding and dysfunctions (e.g. over-generalisation from examples; mistaken assumptions about representativeness of views expressed)’. Before undertaking the course, students admitted that they had ‘some stereotyping views on foreigners’, and as a result of the IEC teacher’s guided assistance conducted via intercultural critical incident analysis, they modified their preconceived ideas through continuous reflections

and realized that it is not proper to ‘have stereotyping views on others by the first impression’. Hence, this enlightened outcome in ‘misunderstanding and dysfunction identification’ was regarded as IEC learners’ potential development in Skills of interpreting and relating.

### 6.1.3.2 ‘Keeping neutral’ as the beginning stage of mediation

Learning objective c) under *Skills of interpreting and relating* (S1c) is elaborated in Byram’s (1997) work as the ability to ‘mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena’ and the intercultural speakers are supposed to ‘use their explanations of sources of misunderstanding and dysfunction to help interlocutors overcome conflicting perspectives’; ‘explain the perspective of each and the origins of those perspectives in terms accessible to the other’ and ‘help interlocutors to identify common ground and unresolvable difference’ (p. 61).

In spite of four instances recognized as IEC learners’ S1 development (in 5.2.3.2), majority of students’ comments are not perfect examples for this dimension. Considering question 13 in Teaching Session Three ‘Food and Eating Habits’, namely, ‘If one of your friends who is from America criticizes Chinese cuisine, what is your possible reaction to his comment?’ The question encourages students to analyse their responses when they encounter misunderstandings of their own culture. However, the following examples reflect learners’ tendency of ‘keeping neutral’, which is only the initial stage of ‘mediation of conflicting interpretations’.

‘I will respect them and don’t eat those things when I stay with them. But I will keep **neutral**.’ (TS3, G2-4-MB)

‘I’ll explain to them our traditional culture, but also not offend them. I will keep a **neutral attitude** towards it.’ (TS3, G3-3-FE)

‘中立。 [I will preserve an attitude of **neutrality**.]’ (TS3, G4-1-MB)

The neutral attitudes represented in learners' feedback while confronting misunderstandings can be traced back to Chinese spiritual essence of 'harmonious society', i.e. reluctance to break the consonance and efforts in keeping the balance (6.1.2.2). However, 'keeping neutral' is merely a passive way for mediation, and there is still a gap between 'neutrality' and 'successful mediation'. IEC learners' inadequate response within this dimension illustrates that it is a comparatively demanding task for Chinese EFL learners to interpret the sources of misunderstanding, analyse the differences and solve the problem. Hence, it is important for the teacher to integrate more mediation activities in the future course design, which can properly stimulate learners' thoughts and provide them with effective guidance as to how to solve the misunderstanding. More discussions on this aspect are expanded in the Conclusion chapter.

In summary, as to IEC learners' ICC development in *Skills of interpreting and relating*, two prominent themes are diagnosed: 'developed ethno-relative view via reflection' (6.1.3.1) and 'keeping neutral as the beginning stage of mediation' (6.1.3.2). These additional themes are significant when fulfilling an ICC model suitable for Chinese EFL learners, and also valuable in instructing teaching practices. In the next section, I will examine IEC learners' highlighted features in their responses related to 'Skills of discovery and interaction'.

#### **6.1.4 Skills of discovery and interaction**

According to Byram's (1997) statement in the ICC Model, Skills of *discovery and interaction* refers to the 'ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction' (p.61). In terms of the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)'intercultural knowledge and competence' rubric (AAC&U, <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/>), the correspondent skill is entitled as 'verbal and nonverbal communication' that expects learners to 'articulate a complex understanding of cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication' and 'skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences'. Both

statements are concerned with the skill of effective real-time mediation and interaction. Byram (1997) emphasizes ‘acquiring new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices’, while AAC&U focuses on aspects such as ‘cultural differences in verbal and nonverbal communication’.

As discussed in the previous chapter regarding ‘ICC learning objectives *Skills of discovery and interaction*’ (5.2.4), 78 instances are identified as IEC learners’ development, and the evidence concentrates on two Skills-2 dimensions – S2c and S2e, with responses of 85% and 15% respectively. On the other hand, there is no related feedback recognized as S2a, S2b, S2d, S2f or S2g from students’ responses. Next, I will examine strengths and weakness in IEC learners’ development from the Chinese EFL learners’ point of view.

#### **6.1.4.1 Underdeveloped ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture (S2a and S2b)**

To begin with S2a and S2b, both are closely related with the ability to ‘acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practice’. S2a emphasizes the method via ‘conducting an inquiry through the *interlocutor*’ in search of implications, whereas S2b underlines ‘reading a document or watching an event’ for the hidden references. Byram (1997) defines the two dimensions S2a and S2b as *Skills of discovery and interaction* as follows:

- a) elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena: The intercultural speaker can use a range of questioning techniques to elicit from informants the allusions, connotations and presuppositions of a document or event and their origins/sources, and can develop and test generalizations about shared meanings and values (by using them to interpret another document; by questioning another informant; by consulting appropriate literature) and establish links and relationships among them (logical relationships of hierarchy, of cause and effect, of conditions and consequence, etc.). (p. 61)

b) identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations: The intercultural speaker can ‘read’ a document or event for the implicit references to shared meanings and values (of national memory, of concepts of space, of social distinction, etc.) particular to the culture of their interlocutor, or of international currency (arising for example from the dominance of western satellite television); in the latter case, the intercultural speaker can identify or elicit different interpretations and connotations and establish relationships of similarity and difference between them.

In order to achieve S2a, ‘conducting an inquiry with an interlocutor’ is the precondition, which is easier and more accessible for students, who have various opportunities to interact with people from other cultures. In the context of the majority of Chinese tertiary EFL classrooms, it is unrealistic to expect language learners to obtain such opportunities, particularly via real-time interactions. By comparison, S2b, which highlights ‘reading a document or watching an event’ for implicit references, is comparatively far more easily attainable within the Chinese EFL teaching and learning context.

Take learners’ feedback in IEC Teaching Session 4 ‘Study in the UK’ for example, after watching two video-clips about sojourners’ experiences in the UK, students are asked to write a passage explaining their decision making process based on two options that they decide to further their study in the UK or if they continue their education in China. Students’ responses revolve around several aspects in describing their reasons, for instance, ‘*globalization* as a trend in current world’ and ‘*self-development* as priority from a long-term view’. The following two examples are identified from learners’ worksheets:

‘I think the main point for studying abroad is your **precious experience**. And as is well known that the quality of education in UK is higher than China. **The lost <drawback> is important and we should take it into consideration, but it is not the first.** Self-development is crucial reason.’ (TS4, G1-1-MB)

‘(Pre-Worksheet) I want to accept the different culture to improve my all-round development. What’s more, the world has been **globalized**. (Post-Worksheet) Although there are many differences and difficulties to go to UK, I think it is a good opportunity to **improve my ability to develop our own country**. What’s more, the world has been **globalized**, we should go out to **broaden our horizon**. It is known that the fees is expensive and maybe earn little money when you come back. But we should have **long eye <long-term perspective>**, maybe ten years later you will get surprise feedback. After watching the video and having the debate, I confirm that I will not regret to go to UK.’ (TS4, G1-9-FB)

The instances above illustrate students’ tentative attempts in relating and interpreting a document about an event from another culture with their own, however the evidence of achievement is not fully convincing in terms of the outcomes of S2b. Despite use of feasible strategies it is still challenging for Chinese EFL learners to properly acquire ‘the implicit references to shared meanings and values’, particularly to ‘elicit different interpretations and connotations and establish relationships of similarity and difference’ between their own and other cultures. Hence, there is still space for further developing EFL learners’ ability to continuously acquire new knowledge about a ‘foreign’ culture via language learning, and more references on pro-Chinese-learners’ teaching materials and instruction methods will be recommended in the forthcoming chapters.

#### **6.1.4.2 Speculated reactions in an imagined real-time interaction (S2d and S2g)**

Byram (1997) defines S2d in his ICC Model as ‘use **in real-time** an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes **to interact** with interlocutors from a different country and culture taking into consideration the degree of one’s existing familiarity with the country, culture and language and the extent of difference between one’s own and the other’ and S2g ‘use **in real-time** knowledge, skills and attitudes **for mediation** between interlocutors of one’s own and a foreign culture’s. The ‘real-time interaction’ is emphasized in both dimensions, and the ability to practice ‘knowledge, attitude and skills in real time

interactions' requires extensive real-time communication. Since IEC learners did not obtain opportunities to interact with English-speakers, which is fairly common circumstances for majority of Chinese college EFL classrooms, it is not surprising that no clearly convincing example has been identified within the responses. However, there are instances from students' feedback indicating reflection on how they would react in an imagined real-time interaction, together with some consideration of potential strategies.

Specific examples:

**'If they talk with me about weather, I think I will response enthusiastically, although it is a boring topic in China.'** (PQ-8, G1-3-FB)

**'I can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. For example, I can talk about the weather when I start to chat with English people.'** (PQ-8, G1-4-FB)

**'I think I can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. For example, if I lead an English foreigner to a bus station. During the way, I might talk about the weather with him.'** (PQ-8, G1-8-FB)

**'The skills I have developed is the way of starting a conversation with a foreigner. ... I am more aware of how culture impact communication. At least I know weather is a safe topic for foreign people and try to be outgoing when abroad.'** (PQ-5&6, G2-1-FB)

**'I think I can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. For example, talk about the weather and food.'** (PQ-8, G2-2-FB)

**'I think I can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. For example, when I don't know how to say, I can talk about weather with them. I am aware of the importance of intercultural skills.'**

**I can use them when I am in foreign country.'** (PQ-8&9, G2-3-MB)

And, three examples identified from students' feedback represent they know misunderstandings can occur based on cultural differences, and begin to apply strategies in negotiating a shared understanding. The following are the specific examples identified from Question 12 in Teaching Session 3 'Food and Dining Habit'.

*Q12: If you are the student who is mentioned in the diary scenario, what is your planning to solve the different dining habit problem?*

**'I will teach them how to cook Chinese food.'** (TS3, G1-1-MB)

**'I will learn to do some cuisine and let them taste them.** I believe they will like our food.'

 (TS3, G1-4-FB)

**'First I will tell the host <communicate with the host>. And if she doesn't change the style, I will cook a meal of Chinese food, and invite her to eat.** Maybe she will like and accept it.'

 (TS3, G1-8-FB)

G1-8-FB's intended reaction to an imagined real-time situation is an exemplary manifestation of his capability in identifying the causes of misunderstanding and deciding on a strategy for achieving mutual understanding and satisfaction. In her answer, she explains that 'First I will tell the host <communicate with the host>. And if she doesn't change the style, I will **cook a meal of Chinese food, and invite her to eat.** Maybe she will like and accept it'. While facing cultural differences and misunderstanding, the learner has not compromised, but decided on important purposeful endeavours such as 'communicating' and 'cooking a meal of Chinese food', which are interventions as mediator aimed at solving the problems and attempting to overcome the misunderstandings and dysfunctions.

Therefore, in the Chinese EFL learners' context, it is more suitable that Byram's model would be modified to also include 'imagined real-time interaction' in contexts where learners do not have the opportunity for face-to-face or virtual

intercultural communication.

#### **6.1.4.3 Broadening the domain in searching for knowledge of a new culture (S2e and S2f)**

##### S2e

According to Byram's (1997) statement of 'Skills of discovery and interaction', one important aspect of the skills is 'to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices'. Sufficient evidence identified from IEC learners' responses represent their strong intention to continuously acquire new knowledge about a foreign culture via diverse kinds of routes and procedures, particularly symbolized as their planned actions in seeking more cultural information. In Byram's (1997) statement of S2e 'identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society', he highlights that the intercultural speaker is expected to 'use sources (e.g. reference books, newspapers, histories, experts, lay informants)' to understand and analyze the relationships between cultures.

IEC learners' responses demonstrated a broadening of the domain of these sources: while searching for the information they require, they show more interest in strategies such as surfing on the Internet, watching films or TV plays, listening to radio broadcast, or travelling abroad. There are students who refer to reading books or newspapers as their intended method, but the number is comparatively lower than the ways mentioned above. So it is necessary to widen the domains of the information seeking sources as a supplement to the ICC Model, which in the mean time provides useful hints for the EFL learners and teachers. The instances below show typical relevant evidence:

'<I will> search on the **Internet** to find out the different styles of greetings about different countries.' (TS2, G3-3-FE)

'I will watch **movies or TV plays** made <produced> in foreign countries and **learn from them** (about **the international greeting styles**).' (TS2, G2-9-FA)

‘I will **listen to English news**(in order to continue developing my intercultural skills).’ (PQ-9, G1-7-MB)

‘(I will) **Travel abroad** someday and **make some foreign friends on the Internet**(in order to continue developing my intercultural skills).’ (PQ-9, G2-1-FB)

### S2f

S2f is another Skills-2 dimension, which well illustrates the broadened domain in learners’ searching for a new culture. This ICC dimension is explained as the ability to ‘identify and make use of **public and private institutions** which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures’ (Byram, 1997).

In the statement, Byram selects British Council and Confucius Institutes as the typical examples of ‘public and private institutions’ (personal communication) and expects intercultural speakers to ‘use knowledge of these institutions’ in order to ‘establish and maintain contacts’ with another culture. IEC learners’ feedback indicates that learners have broadened the range of strategies used to ‘establish and maintain contacts’ with another culture, and the following table (Table 6-3) displays IEC learners’ responses including their intended strategies, through which they would like to maintain contact with other cultures.

Table 6-3 Learners' strategies in S2f

Categories	Learners' feedback
Search the Internet	<p>'I will <b>search the relative information on line.</b>' (PQ-9, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>'<b>Surf on the Internet</b>, contact with other teachers who have been in Britain.' (PQ-9, G1-6-FB)</p> <p>'I will do more search on <b>the Internet</b> which are about the intercultural skills and communicate with my foreign teachers. Also, watching foreign movies is a good way.' (PQ-9, G3-6-FT)</p>
Communicate with English speakers	<p>'<b>Communicating with</b> my foreign teachers, and always practice my English.' (PQ-9, G1-1-MB)</p> <p>'<b>Keep attention on information of different culture</b>, and try to get more chance of <b>communication with native speakers of English.</b>' (PQ-9, G1-10-MB)</p> <p>'I will try to find more materials to improve my skill, and <b>communicate more with foreigners.</b>' (PQ-9, G2-4-MB)</p> <p>'I will get more culture book and try <b>to communicate with others (foreigners).</b>' (PQ-9, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>'<b>Talk to foreigners</b> more often. Don't be afraid to talk. Don't be passive.' (PQ-9, G2-9-FA)</p> <p>'<b>Have more conversation with native speakers.</b>' (PQ-9, G3-3-FE)</p> <p>'<b>To talk with foreign people</b> who are having a coffee and find more differences and practise.' (PQ-9, G3-5-ME)</p> <p>'I will do more search on the Internet which are about the intercultural skills and <b>communicate with my foreign teachers.</b> Also, watching foreign movies is a good way.' (PQ-9, G3-6-FT)</p>
Keep in contact with foreign friends	<p>'Surf on the Internet, <b>contact with other teachers who have been in Britain.</b>' (PQ-9, G1-6-FB)</p> <p>'I will continue to <b>communicate with teachers and keep contact with foreign friends.</b> And watch more movies and shows.' (PQ-9, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>'Travel abroad someday and <b>make some foreign friends on the Internet.</b>' (PQ-9, G2-1-FB)</p>

	<p>‘Firstly, I would like to <b>make more foreign friends</b> once there is opportunity. Secondly, I intend to go abroad to travel or study to feel their culture.’ (PQ-9, G3-2-FT)</p>
<p>Watch films / Listen to radio broadcast</p>	<p>‘I will <b>watch some films</b> and <b>read some books about it.</b>’ (PQ-9, G1-5-FB)</p> <p>‘I will continue to communicate with teachers and keep contact with foreign friends. And <b>watch more movies and shows.</b>’ (PQ-9, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>‘Read books, <b>watch movies</b>, and listen to music.’ (PQ-9, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>‘<b>Watch the UK movies and listen to the BBC records (broadcast).</b>’ (PQ-9, G2-7-MB)</p> <p>‘I will <b>watch more movies</b> to find more skills.’ (PQ-9, G2-8-MB)</p> <p>‘Read more books and <b>watch more videos</b> about the intercultural skills and to know more about foreign country’s culture.’ (PQ-9, G3-4-FE)</p> <p>‘I will do more search on the Internet which are about the intercultural skills and communicate with my foreign teachers. Also, <b>watching foreign movies</b> is a good way.’ (PQ-9, G3-6-FT)</p>
<p>Travel abroad</p>	<p>‘I think I would <b>travel to foreign country</b> and live with them (the people in that country) for a period of time.’ (PQ-9, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>‘<b>Travel abroad</b> someday and make some foreign friends on the Internet.’ (PQ-9, G2-1-FB)</p> <p>‘I want to <b>go abroad</b> for further study. Through the real experience in person, I will learn more useful skills of interculture.’ (PQ-9, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>‘Firstly, I would like to make more foreign friends once there is opportunity. Secondly, I intend to <b>go abroad</b> to travel or study to feel their culture.’ (PQ-9, G3-2-FT)</p>

IEC learners’ listed strategies through which they can create or keep in contact with another culture contain based on the four categories: ‘search the Internet’, ‘communicate with English speakers’, ‘keep in contact with foreign friends’, ‘watch films/listen to radio broadcast’ and ‘travel abroad’. It is evident that these strategies are complementary to the original domains in Byram’s model (S2f) and

will be a valuable supplement to ICC model construction in the Chinese educational context.

In terms of IEC learners' ICC development in *Skills of discovery and interaction*, four prominent themes are identified: 'Ability displayed to acquire new knowledge of a culture (S2a and S2b)' (6.1.4.1), 'Speculated reactions in an imagined real-time interaction (S2d and S2g)' (6.1.4.2) and 'Broadening the domain in searching for knowledge of a new culture (S2e and S2f)' (6.1.4.3). These additional themes elicited from learners' feedback are significant both in fulfilling an ICC model suitable in the Chinese EFL context, and providing valuable instructions in language teaching practices.

#### **6.1.5 Critical cultural awareness**

As illustrated in the section of IEC learners' ICC development in critical cultural awareness (5.2.5), there is no perfectly fitting evidence recognized as CCA instances. However, there is evidence from students' feedback that can basically represent learners' development from CCA aspects 'a) identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures' and 'b) make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refer to an explicit perspective and criteria'. For example, in Teaching Session Three 'Food and Dining Habits', students' discussions on western fast food as an aspect of globalization and their evaluation of the issue in the context of China's current development, reveal their capability in Ca) and Cb). Table 6-4 shows the instances in detail from students' reply to question 11 in Teaching Session Three 'Food and Dining Habits', i.e. *What is your opinion on western fast food invasion and expansion to China?*

Table 6-4 Learners' instances of Ca) and Cb)

<b>TS3-Q11:</b> <i>What is your opinion on western fast food invasion and expansion to China?</i>
'As a cultural integration, it can enrich our daily life.' (G1-1-MB)
'It is a tendency of the world's development.' (G1-4-FB)
'It is the culture-fuse of the world. It is the trending.' (G1-8-FB)
'It is a way of globalization. We cannot avoid it. Maybe we can combine our traditional Chinese food with western food and create a new kind of cuisine.' (G3-3-FE)
'We should respect the variety of food. Western fast food coming into China promotes Chinese economy, but eating too much is bad for children's health.' (G3-4-FE)
'报以欣赏的态度,西餐可以丰富我们的生活。' [I would like to treat the western food with attitude of appreciation; it may enrich our life.] (G4-1-MB)

Learners' responses shown in Table 6-4 demonstrate the basic level that is close to fully achieved ICC learning objective in CCA. It is undeniable that the CCA is not easy for Chinese EFL learners, and courses like IEC require carefully selected teaching materials and instructional methods taking account of learners' potential abilities so as to properly develop their intercultural competence. More discussions on IEC teaching content and instructional methods in developing learners' CCA are explored in Chapter Seven (7.2.5).

## 6.2 Chapter Summary

It is evident from the previous discussion that IEC learners' ICC developments are not confined to Byram's *savoirs*. Whether themes reflected from their feedback are positive or not, it represents distinctive features from the perspective of Chinese tertiary EFL learners.

As for the ICC Knowledge dimension, IEC learners highlight the importance of acquiring both culturally specific knowledge and the knowledge of intercultural communication; meanwhile their feedback represents limited awareness of their own cultural values. Regarding the ICC Attitudes dimension, IEC learners' feedback tends to reflect Chinese ideological features. On the one hand, they consider 'confidence' and 'learning effort' as the essential attitudinal role that can assist them in fulfilling their intercultural competence; on the other, their perspectives about solving cultural misunderstanding are influenced by the desire

to maintain a harmonious process of intercultural communication. Further progress still needs to be made since there is still insufficient knowledge of in-depth cultural values. Similarly, learners' curiosity in intentionally acquiring more cultural values and beliefs is also an underdeveloped competence.

IEC learners' ICC development in *Skills of interpreting and relating* is comparatively the weakest facet among the four. Two prominent themes are diagnosed – 'developed ethno-relative view via reflection' and 'keeping neutral as the beginning stage of mediation'. Both features still remain in the elementary level of this ICC skill fulfilment, and require enhancement from the Chinese EFL learners' stance.

Notwithstanding *Skills of discovery and interaction* is the most identified aspect in learners' ICC development, and quite a few distinctive themes are prominent. In terms of acquiring the knowledge of a new culture, students are more inclined to search for implicit references via 'reading a document or watching an event', rather than 'conducting an inquiry through the *interlocutor*'. The result is most possibly due to the limited 'face-to-face' interactional opportunities with people from other cultures in the Chinese EFL learning context. However, learners' comments identify encouraging potential strategies arising from the teaching and learning approaches employed, including simulation scenarios and other imagined real-time interaction processes. As to the domains in searching for knowledge of a new culture, IEC learners' suggestions have greatly supplemented the categories illustrated in Byram's ICC savoirs. Students show strong intentions in establishing and maintaining further contacts with another culture via diverse kinds of routes and procedures.

As the core aspect in ICC, IEC learners' improvement in critical cultural awareness is the least identified. However, from learners' comment to question 11 in Teaching Session Three, there is evidence that shows learners' basic achievement in Ca) and Cb). These kinds of information are significant in the future course designing and can be applied as the initial step for furthering learners' CCA enhancement.

In summary, all the distinctive ICC themes elicited from IEC learners' feedback regarding knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction are significant in constructing a more appropriate ICC model for Chinese EFL learners, with the aims of properly directing teachers' teaching and students' learning. The next chapter (Chapter 7) will be focused on illustrating the most effective teaching approaches applied in the IEC course that have been effective in enhancing learners' ICC.

# **Chapter Seven**

## **Teacher and Teaching**

### **7.0 Introduction**

Following the analysis of IEC learners' ICC development formulated in Byram's five *savoirs* (Chapter five) and additional themes (Chapter six), this chapter will analyse the specific aspects of the IEC syllabus and teaching practices enhanced learners' ICC. The first section is the general outline of learners' overall development in their intercultural communicative competence (as illustrated through Byram's (1997) *savoirs*) and the relationship to the IEC teaching sessions; the second examines the relationship between individual IEC teaching sessions and students' ICC development where the findings are supported by students' comments on teaching from their learning process worksheets; the third part illustrates learners' reflections on the IEC syllabus and instruction methods represented from their feedback in post-course questionnaires and focus group interviews. Finally, the main emergent themes are summarized in the light of teaching approaches and strategies that appear to be effective for the development of students' intercultural communicative competence. This chapter intends to answer this research question 'What aspects of the Intercultural Language Teaching approach within the IEC enhances learners' ICC?'

### **7.1 Overview of IEC learners' ICC development in teaching sessions**

In Chapter five, Table 5-1 shows IEC learners' instances regarding their ICC development in five *savoirs* recognized from their overall response including learning process worksheet and post-course questionnaire. The following table (table 7-1) presents the total amount of ICC *savoir* instances identified from student learning process worksheets after taking IEC.

*Table 7-1 ICC Instances in students' learning process worksheet*

<b>ICC Savoirs</b>	<b>Amount of instances</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Knowledge	42	24%
Attitudes	48	28%
Skills of interpreting and relating	8	5%
Skills of discovery and interaction	76	43%
Critical cultural awareness	0	0
<b>Total</b>	174	100%

Table 7-1 shows that 'Skills of discovery and interaction' is the most enhanced savoir (with 43% among all the ICC instances) and 'Critical cultural awareness' (with 0) is the least. In addition, table 7-2 displays the exact amount of ICC instances identified in each teaching session, including the most addressed dimensions (as illustrated by the lower case letter) in each savoir.

Table 7-2 ICC instances in IEC Teaching sessions

	<b>Knowledge (K)</b> Ktn=42		<b>Attitudes (A)</b> Atn=48		<b>Skills1 (S1)</b> S1tn=8		<b>Skills2 (S2)</b> S2tn=76		<b>Critical Cultural Awareness (CCA)</b>
<b>TS1</b>	Kh) n=4 Kk) n=2	14%	Aa) n=6 Ab) n=6 Ad) n=3 Ae) n=4	<b>40%</b>	S1a) n=2	25%	S2c) n=9 S2e) n=1	13%	0
	Kts1=6		Ats1=19		S1ts1=2		S2ts1=10		
<b>TS2</b>	Kk) n=9 Kts2=9	22%	Ae) n=15 Ats2=15	31%	S1ts2=0	0	S2c) n=30 S2ts2=30	40%	0
	Kts3=17		Ats3=4		S1ts3=5		S2ts3=36		
<b>TS3</b>	Kk) n=17	<b>40%</b>	Aa) n=4	8%	S1a) n=1 S1c) n=4	<b>62.5%</b>	S2c) n=25 S2e) n=11	<b>47%</b>	0
	Kts4=10		Ats4=10		S1ts4=1		S2ts4=0		
<b>TS4</b>	Kj) n=8 Ka) n=1 Kd-e) n=1	24%	Aa) n=5 Ab) n=3 Ac) n=2	21%	S1a) n=1	12.5%	S2ts4=0	0	0
	Kts4=10		Ats4=10		S1ts4=1		S2ts4=0		

Notes: TS/ts = Teaching Session (for instance, TS1 = Teaching Session 1;

Kts4 = Knowledge instances in Teaching Session 4)

tn = total number (for instance, Ktn = total number of Knowledge instances)

From the bold figures in Table 7-2, it is evident that the most useful teaching sessions in terms of stimulating IEC learners' positive ICC instances are as follows: TS3 'Food and Dining habits' which accounts for 40% of the *Knowledge* instances identified; TS1 'Culture Shock' which resulted in 40% of the *Attitudes* responses, while TS3 achieved the highest responses with *Skills1* and *Skills2* achieving 62.5% and 47% respectively. The factors contributing to the teaching outcome disparity are diverse and include the instructional techniques employed which are potentially the most significant.

Parts of the questions in students' learning process worksheets are closely related with teacher's teaching, and are designed to record students' comments on the IEC instruction. All the students' feedback on IEC teaching in their learning process worksheets are enclosed in Appendix 9 for further reference and specific instances are presented along with the discussion of teaching practice in the following section (7.2). Findings from students' feedback by and large reflect a close relationship between the IEC teaching and learners' perceived ICC development. The evidence can be tracked down from IEC learners' recognized ICC instances (as presented in the previous Chapter five and Chapter six as learners' ICC development). The later section in this chapter explores the relationship between IEC learners' improvement with reference to ICC savoir dimensions (Byram, 1997) and the teacher's featured teaching practice.

## **7.2 The relationship between ICC development and individual teaching sessions**

This section investigates the intercultural approach applied in the IEC from two sides – the one that effectively enhances learners' ICC, and the other less useful or helpful, that refers to Byram's five savoirs (1997) namely knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. It intends to pursue useful inferences and will analyse approaches in the IEC teacher's teaching practice and intercultural development strategies. Hopefully this will shed light on some significant ways that can successfully support Chinese EFL learners' intercultural competence development.

### **7.2.1 Knowledge**

Table 7-3 shows the number of Knowledge instances including specific dimensions identified from IEC learners' learning process worksheets. It intends to illustrate certain teaching sessions that are more helpful in developing students' ICC in the knowledge savoir.

Table 7-3 Knowledge instances (ICC objective) in Teaching Sessions

Teaching Session	Total	Knowledge dimension addressed	
Culture Shock (TS1)	N=6	n=4	h) processes and institutions of socialization in one's own and one's interlocutor's country
		n=2	k) the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country
International Greetings (TS2)	N=9	n=9	k) the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country
Food and Eating Habits (TS3)	N=17	n=17	k) the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country
Study in the UK (TS4)	N=10	n=8	j) institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them
		n=1	a) historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's country
		n=1	d) the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries e) the national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own country

The responses shown in Table 7-3 suggests that TS2, TS3 and TS4 contain effective instruction techniques for developing learners' knowledge savoir, and knowledge k) is evidently the most addressed dimension that predominates in TS2 'International Greetings' as well as TS3 'Food and Dining Habits'.

*Knowledge k)* 'the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country' is the most successfully realized objective among the ICC Knowledge dimensions, reflecting that the socio-cultural knowledge instruction in the IEC sufficiently facilitates learners' development. Almost one third of students' feedback about this dimension is concerned with 'non-verbal behaviours of interaction', with the majority of instances coming from TS2 'International Greetings' covering issues such as

‘addressing titles and names’, ‘greeting customs including how to shake hands’, ‘body language’ and ‘eye contact’. In class this information is illustrated through lecturing about the teacher’s own intercultural communicative experiences and reading analysis, followed by group discussion and role-play. It turned out that knowledge k) aspects are successfully enhanced through these teaching practices, and two students provide particularly encouraging feedback about learning through these type of activities.

**‘Practicing (shaking hands) is the most impressive part.** Yes, the teaching method is interesting.’ (TS2, G1-8-FB)

**‘The most impressive part is how to shake hands with others.’** (TS2, G3-6-FT)

Similarly, G3-2-FT makes suggestions for future teaching to include more similar activities - ‘My suggestions are as follows – **do more activities; play games related to the courses.** (TS2, G3-2-FT)’

Hence, simulation activities like role plays are highly recommended as an effective intercultural approach introduced in an EFL classroom, which will profoundly arouse the learners’ interest in exploring intercultural competence features.

### **7.2.2 Attitudes**

Table 7-4 shows the number of Attitudes instances including specific dimensions identified from IEC learners’ learning process worksheets. It intends to illustrate the more useful teaching sessions that can enhance students’ ICC in the attitudes savoir.

Table 7-4 Attitudes instances (ICC objective) in Teaching Sessions

Teaching Session	Total	Attitudes dimension most addressed	
Culture Shock (TS1)	N=19	n=6	a) Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or the profitable
		n=6	b) Interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices
		n=3	d) Readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence
		n=4	e) Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction
International Greetings (TS2)	N=15	n=15	e) Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction
Food and Eating Habits (TS3)	N=4	n=4	a) Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or the profitable
Study in the UK (TS4)	N=10	n=5	a) Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or the profitable
		n=3	b) Interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices
		n=2	c) Willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment

Table 7-4 illustrates that TS1 'Culture Shock' contains the largest number of attitudes instances (n=19) across four different Attitude dimensions a), b), d) and e). Since TS1 is the teaching session with learners' most significant development in attitudes, the following section will illustrate its teaching content and instructional methodology in detail along with students' comments on their preferred teaching methods. (The full list of students' feedback on teaching is attached in Appendix 9)

The data from students' feedback on TS1 embodies their preference for discussing and analysing 'Hong Kong students' diary entry' (Appendix 8) in small groups. Here are students' specific responses to TS1 teaching practice:

'(The TS1 is) Good learning experience. **Discussion** is the most impressive part. I like teacher's teaching method, because we are free to discuss anything related to our topic.' (TS1, G3-3-FE)

'I like the class; it is pretty good. What impressed me most is **analyzing the context and the discussion** part. Besides, I like Tina telling us her experiences in Britain most.' (TS1, G3-4-FE)

The teacher's original teaching plan highlights this in-class activity in order to fulfil ICC learning objectives. In TS1 'Culture Shock', students are presented with five Hong Kong students' diary entries, which describe the critical incidents during their sojourn experiences in the United Kingdom. After reading the stories, students are asked to reflect on the situation and investigate the stereotyping views with group partners, present their discussion results to the whole class, and further probe into the cultural connotations with the aid of the teacher's guidance and encouragement. Through the process of exchanging opinions, debating and self-reflecting, students are allowed sufficient time and space to identify and analyse the ethnocentric perspectives from the reading materials.

Analysing and reflecting on sojourners' culture shock experiences through an intercultural critical incident proved to be an effective way of developing IEC learners' ICC, particularly the attitudes dimensions. In addition, some students recommended involving more culture shock stories in future teaching, which shows their preference for similar activities, for instance, 'I'd like to listen to some **interesting stories about somebody who overcome culture shock.**' (TS1, G4-4-FB)

### 7.2.3 Skills of interpreting and relating

Table 7-5 shows the number of skills of interpreting and relating (S1) instances including specific dimensions identified from IEC learners' learning process worksheet.

*Table 7-5 Skills of interpreting and relating (S1) instances in teaching sessions*

<b>Teaching Session</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Skills dimension most addressed with number of occurrence</b>	
Culture Shock (TS1)	N=2	n=2	a) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins
International Greetings (TS2)	N=0		
Food and Eating Habits (TS3)	N=5	n=1	a) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins
		n=4	c) mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena
Study in the UK (TS4)	N=1	n=1	a) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins

Table 7-5 displays that 8 *Skills of interpreting and relating* instances are identified from IEC learners' feedback, with 5 examples in TS3 'Eating and Dining Habits'. Compared with 76 instances in the objective of *Skills of interaction and discovery*, students' development concerning *Skills of interpreting and relating* is limited. This low level of evidence of learners' progress, particularly in S1b, prompts further investigation into the reasons for this limitation in terms of teaching and syllabus design.

The most prominent cause originated from the IEC course planning, i.e. the course objectives were more inclined to develop learners' mediation skills rather than the interpreting and analysing abilities. The IEC allocated greater space for students to

develop their knowledge, attitudes and mediating skills, but fewer opportunities regarding skills of relating and interpreting. There was one occasion in the IEC when the teacher attempted to blend this aspect into the teaching; nevertheless, the procedure met challenges in terms of both teaching content and instructional methods.

In the last teaching session, the teacher integrated two reading texts into the learning content – one describing UK girls on the bus and the other illustrating an Iranian woman's feelings of stereotyping. Students were asked to deconstruct the author's viewpoints after reading and form their own standpoints on stereotyping people. This in-class passage reading and analysing is intended to engage students and promote their skills development in areas such as 'identifying the author's view from a document', 'interpreting the socio-cultural information different from their own', and 'explaining and relating it from their own cultural aspects'. However, students' responses showed that the data is not persuasive in terms of identifying the development of these skills. The next paragraph points to some of the inadequacies in teaching and resources that may have contributed to the relatively low level of development of some of the competences.

Firstly, the reading materials are not closely related to students' life and learners show restricted curiosity about the topics in these two articles. In addition, considering learners' linguistic proficiency, the articles that contain significant levels of unfamiliar vocabulary are difficult for most IEC learners to grasp. Students find it a demanding and burdensome task comprehending and eliciting the author's perspective in a limited time allocation set by the teacher. In order to smoothly proceed with next teaching step, the teacher consequently explained new words and expressions for students as their linguistic support. Last but not least, as to the instructional method, students were asked to analyse and summarise the article by themselves rather than via group discussions, which made this learning task even more challenging.

It is clear that the full development of these skills through classroom-based intercultural learning remains very challenging for Chinese EFL learners and the process requires appropriately designed teaching materials and context-sensitive instructional techniques in order to fully assist students. More suggestions regarding developing Chinese EFL learners' ICC, particularly *skills of interpreting and relating*, along with an intercultural teaching approach in EFL classroom will be outlined in Chapter eight Conclusions.

#### **7.2.4 Skills of discovery and interaction**

Table 7-6 shows the number of skills of discovery and interaction instances including specific dimensions identified from IEC learners' learning process worksheets. The section aims to explore the key strategies within successful teaching sessions that effectively enhance students' ICC within skills of interpreting and relating savoir.

Table 7-6 Skills of discovery and interaction (S2) instances in teaching sessions

Teaching Session	Total	Skills dimension most addressed with number of occurrences	
Culture Shock (TS1)	N=10	n=9	c) identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances
		n=1	e) identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society
International Greetings (TS2)	N=30	n=30	c) identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances
Food and Eating Habits (TS3)	N=36	n=25	c) identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances
		n=11	e) identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society
Study in the UK (TS4)	N=0	n=0	

Among the five ICC savoirs, *skills of discovery and interaction (S2)* appears to be the most addressed dimension in the IEC learners' feedback; Table 7-6 also displays that TS3 'Food and Dining Habits' contains the most evidence, with S2c and S2e being the most frequently reported dimensions. In the light of TS3 as the most productive teaching session regarding students' ICC development, the following section will explore the content and instructional methods the teacher implemented in this lesson. This part will lay an information foundation for drawing further implications regarding the intercultural teaching approach in the forthcoming chapter.

#### Teaching practice in TS3 and S2c development

In light of S2c as the most significantly developed dimension with 25 instances recognized in TS3, the researcher begins by illustrating this dimension's teaching. As illustrated in Chapter five (5.2.4), IEC learners' most significant progress is

manifested from their reply to Question 6 ‘*Suppose you are an international student in a foreign country, what kinds of customs will you follow when you are abroad?*’ (18 instances) and Question 12 ‘*If you are the student who is mentioned in the diary scenario, what is your planning to solve the different dining habit problems?*’ (7 instances). Students’ ICC achievements are realized through an intentional concern for the interlocutor country’s customs, identifying cultural differences from their own, comparing and reflecting on both sides, constructing a critical perspective and solving the conflicting understandings. The development of these competences is promoted through purposeful curriculum design and the teaching strategies employed within the IEC.

The teacher integrated multi-faceted learning materials on the topic of ‘Eating and Dining Habits’ – western food pictures, English breakfast and Chinese dish menus, in-class reading materials including ‘a teenage diet’ and ‘hospitality in social customs’, a video-clip in gastronomy and an after-class assignment about the fast food expansion. These materials that combined different cultural dimensions of the similar topic together assisted students in looking into a threaded theme throughout the whole lesson. The theme was introduced through a leading-in stage at the very beginning of the teaching session, with an objective to arouse students’ attention and provoke their thoughts confronting different opinions throughout their learning activities. The Hong Kong student’s diary entry, which was used to present the theme, is listed below:

‘I explained to my host mum that I felt awful sometimes when I eat too much fish’n chips, but she doesn’t quite understand what I mean. It is the first time I felt that I couldn’t quite communicate with her because of our cultural difference. Although she said she understand what I was saying, what she answered is to let it be; she said it would pass very soon. However, I want to tell her that in Chinese concept, it could not be combated; it is about one’s inborn body, different people are genetically destined the amount they could accept before irritating the natural balance. I felt bad to explain all these to her as it seemed to me that she doesn’t even understand, I couldn’t

actually translate the exact Chinese sayings to her even I could well chat with her.’

The diary entry describes the Hong Kong student, as sojourner in another culture, who has difficulty in getting used to the local eating habits and also meets challenges when she endeavours to explain her feelings to the host. The circumstance described in the entry is applied as an intercultural scenario to the IEC learners who were expected to consider the unresolved intercultural misunderstanding throughout their learning along with dimensional topic-relevant information investigated. At the final stage of the teaching session, the students were required to analyze the misunderstanding thoroughly and presented their solutions with reasonable and logical explanations from the ICC perspective.

The students’ responses to the critical incident analysis and scenario simulation practice were fertile and productive, which reflected their understanding of the difference between Chinese and English food, readiness to interpret their feelings to the host family and most importantly, their effort in achieving mutual understanding and avoiding unnecessary dysfunctions (detailed investigation about the instances can be found in 5.2.4). Meanwhile, findings from learners’ feedback on instruction practice in TS3 shows considerable satisfaction with this teaching session in terms of a learning experience and competence development.

Every IEC learner who has attended TS3 provided his or her appreciation of either the teaching content or instruction method. The majority showed a significant degree of satisfaction with topics such as: ‘western foods, table manners and hospitality in social customs’. Three specific quoted examples from learners’ feedback are as follows:

‘(This class is) very good. When teacher introduced **western food and table manners**, it was attractive to me. Yes, I like the teaching method and I know more than before after this class.’ (TS3, G2-1-FB)

**‘I learnt a lot of manners that I don’t know before** when I eat western food. The pictures that teacher gave us were very beautiful. The teaching method is really good.’ (TS3, G4-2-FT)

**‘The customs** are the most impressive part. I like the teacher’s teaching method: explaining the food with pictures. This may help us remember well.’ (TS3, G4-3-ME)

Notwithstanding the fact that learners’ comments concentrated on the ‘input’ rather than the ‘instruction’, their high praise reflected the successful fulfilment of a progressively developmental instructional method. The so-called instruction technique highlights cultural learning as a process in order to develop EFL learners’ intercultural competence in accordance with Byram’s five ICC *savoirs* as learning objectives. In summary the approach contained a critical incident as a threaded theme and several main stages including interpreting the socio-cultural meaning from topical written accounts, visual and auditory information, comparison of analogous situations with socio-cultural concepts, evaluation of the interpretations through critical questioning based on ICC theories, transferring clarified reasonable perspectives to new contexts (closely related with the critical incident), generating a logical solution, and finally, assessing the resolution via recognizing contradictions or exploring consequences. One stage is not clearly cut off from the other and learners can transfer freely from one stage to another in their learning process, although the final accomplishment is the same. Different stages can be supported with varied task-based teaching activities like group discussions or student presentations. The implications for future course development including revision of the instructional method are to be illustrated in Chapter eight.

#### Teaching practice in TS3 and S2e development

Examples from TS3-Question 11 (*What is your opinion on western fast food invasion and expansion to China?*) demonstrated students’ understanding of the relationship in

the contemporary world. As a reading assignment, students were exposed to an article on the topic of McDonald's fast food expansion, and the question was assumed to look into their understanding of the relationship between cultures and societies. The realized learning outcome is that eleven out of eighteen students' answers reflect their proper comprehension of the phenomenon given their exposure to cultural knowledge. Due to the limitation of the class time, it is the first time the teacher made an attempt to assign an after-class reading task for students. The outcome of this after-class reading task together with another round of in-class debates on their perspectives proved fruitful. Students were allowed abundant time and opportunities for further exploration of the topic after class, and when confronting contradicting ideas during in-class debates, they were better equipped with sufficient information in order to better reflect and/or defend their opinions. This example illustrates the importance of instruction technique as key element for effective intercultural EFL teaching approaches and will be further explore later in the next chapter.

Despite significant evidence of student competence development in 'identifying contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society' (Byram, 1997), it is also noteworthy to point out another area of weakness, i.e. learners' under-developed consciousness in applying various sources to understand different relationships and analyse differing socio-cultural interpretations. IEC learners' comments about their opinions on the issue tended to be simple and direct, and few of them mentioned how they selected relevant information so as to comprehensively understand the socio-cultural meanings. This shortcoming suggests that the teacher should try to develop existing teaching strategies through inclusion of more after-class assignments in future programs. This will be further explored in Chapter eight.

### **7.2.5 Critical cultural awareness**

There is no evidence identified as instances of critical cultural awareness from

learners' feedback in their learning process worksheets. Critical cultural awareness is fundamentally the core of ICC, which aims at developing learners' ability to critically evaluate cultural practices and implement proper intercultural interaction and mediation. It entails deeper analysis and reflection of intercultural communication for EFL learners in the IEC program. The teacher has intentionally integrated aspects of CCA objectives into the IEC syllabus, for example, the analysis and evaluation activity for the passage 'Fast Food Expansion' focuses on enhancing students' Ca) and Cb). The findings also showed that some students' ICC development was closely related to these dimensions (Chapter six). However, a significant improvement in CCA cannot easily be achieved substantially in a short course like IEC given Chinese EFL learners' linguistic and socio-linguistic competence and the Chinese tertiary education context.

Apart from the course length, and the practice of 'real-time communication and interaction' that should be modified to suit the Chinese EFL context, programs like IEC need a carefully designed syllabus with thought-provoking intercultural topics, and effective teaching practice that can fully equip learners with adequate opportunities for developing within this savoir. The implications for syllabus design and instructional methods geared to developing learners' CCA will be further explored in the conclusion chapter.

From the discussion in this section, it is apparent that IEC learners' ICC development is closely related to the features in the course syllabus design as well as instructional practice. The analysis above has helped to identify the more effective aspects of IEC including the teaching strategies, such as progressively developmental instruction method. These can be extended in future teaching. While the less useful ones should be revised. This section sets a solid foundation for further improvement of the intercultural approach in the Chinese tertiary EFL context. The next section will provide further implications for teaching and course development arising from

learners' reflections in their post-questionnaires and focus group discussions.

### **7.3 Learners' reflections on IEC intercultural teaching**

Learners' evaluation on teaching in the post-course questionnaires and focus group were elicited to complement the findings from their reactions in the IEC classroom. A broad range of perceptions about language teaching emerged and the three main themes elicited are: learners' recognition of distinctive IEC features, appraisal of the cultural aspects of learning, and teaching strategies suggested for future courses. These findings serve as complementary evidence about effective cultural teaching aspects in IEC with reference to how learners' attitudes changed, their skills developed, and how their intercultural awareness was constructed.

#### **7.3.1 Recognition of distinctive IEC features**

##### Learners' previous expectations and realized achievement

All IEC participants responded that their original course expectations were fully met. Two students (G1-5-FB and G2-4-MB) admitted that the IEC had exceeded their expectations. Learners were predominantly satisfied with both the content and teaching practice in the course. Eight students (G1-3-FB, G2-8-MB, G2-9-FA, G3-1-FT, G3-2-FT, G3-3-FE, G3-5-ME and G3-6-FT) particularly emphasized that what they had gained from the IEC made them feel more confident to interact with English speakers. The great majority of learners specifically referred to the cultural knowledge gained, changed attitudes and developed skills. These students' intercultural sensitivity had been extended and they were starting to accept cultural differences. They also developed more confidence in their ability to engage effectively in intercultural situations. The following are the typical quoted examples:

‘I understand many cases which I recognised as <foreigners’> bias are just the difference of culture.’ (G1-3-FB)

‘This course helped me to know the most essential information for me to make good communication with people outside China ...’ (G3-2-FT)

‘In the process, we realize the cultural diversity, and also know how to tackle problems ...’ (G3-3-FE)

### Distinctive features of IEC

The majority of IEC learners expressed substantial appreciation of the teaching methods implemented, particularly compared with their former language classes. For instance, G2-4-MB illustrated that:

*‘Because at first I think the teaching method maybe like the way our English teacher taught before and take <took> one book to teach us. But at the end of the course, I find I am wrong. The teacher selected many materials, like videos, pictures and so on. I can remember the content.’*

Learners’ also highlighted the differences between the IEC and their high school language classes. One student presented his views in the focus group interview:

“中学时的学习还是授课性的，而这次学习中文化主题探索性的。学生应试的目的性非常强，老师不会培养批判性思维，我们只要学会做题，万事大吉。”

*‘English classes in high schools were teacher-centred, but IEC is asking us to explore cultural issues. Our study was greatly exam-oriented – the teacher never cultivated our critical thinking ability. If we only learnt how to answer test questions, nothing needed to be worried about.’*

Although students admitted a lack of exposure to intercultural issues in their previous English instruction, they recognized that confronting and considering cultural differences in EFL classes had empowered them to be more critically evaluative.

Students illustrated their great preferences for the Hong Kong students' diary entries since it functioned well as the manifestation of cultural differences. The following student feedback is relevant here:

“香港学生的日记真实，贴近生活。每个事例中遇到的麻烦作为切入点，引起大家兴趣，生动新颖有趣。”

*'Hong Kong students' diary entries are real person's experiences and are closely relevant to our life. Intercultural misunderstandings are introduced from students' troubles they meet, and this can always arouse our great curiosity. The way in which our teacher lead in the cultural topic is creative and interesting.'*

#### Group discussion and debate

Other students highlighted 'group discussion' and 'debate' as the most impressive parts of the IEC programme, which echoed learners' most identified ICC achievement in teaching sessions (7.2). Based on the learners' responses, group discussion was considered as a very productive way for providing learners with deep learning opportunities. G1-2-MB responded that *'We can know and think deeply by the way of discussion'*. Students acknowledged their difficulty in understanding and talking about some topics in depth, but via group discussions they can further reflect on their own views through confronting challenges from their group members'. In spite of a case of linguistic barrier reported, IEC learners generally extolled group discussion as an effective way in promoting their thinking. Debate was another highly praised teaching activity in the IEC, in particular the one implemented in the TS4 'Study in

the UK'. The vast majority of students attributed their development in critical evaluation skills to this teaching task. A student specifically illustrated his opinions as follows:

“课堂上采用的辩论形式效果非常好。不仅有助于我们有序组织自己的观点，还通过你来我往的交锋中提高了我们的思辨能力。”

*'The debates organized in IEC class function well. It not only helps us logically arrange our views, but also improves our critical thinking ability through interactional idea exchanges.'*

Encouragingly, learners' positive feedback on teaching was also reflected in specific ICC development. Similarly, the most impressive aspects of the IEC they identified reflected closely the intended teaching and learning outcomes that focus on establishing effective intercultural learning in the language classroom.

### **7.3.2 Appraisal of the cultural aspects of teaching content**

Most students were satisfied with their cultural learning experiences in IEC and showed positive attitudes towards the multi-faceted socio-cultural topics covered. Quite a few students regarded auditory and visual materials as effective in introducing cultural aspects of learning owing to the fact that they were sufficiently informative and thought provoking. G3-3FE explained that '... displaying all kinds of pictures and videos ... make(s) our course more vivid and colorful.' In addition, video-clips bearing pertinent cultural meanings were remarkably efficient in arousing learners' curiosity and enhancing their deep learning. Another student illustrated his opinions regarding video-clips as well as suggestions for their future selection:

“视频有目的性，针对性强，比文章有趣多了。选择时，注意更贴近大学生的生

活。”

‘The video-clips shown in class are targeted with clear objectives, and much more interesting than reading articles. I suggest that we could select pieces that are more closely relevant to the university student life in the future.’

With regard to cultural topics that most interest them, the large majority of students indicated their preference for popular culture and topics that are closely related to their own life experiences. Some students mentioned their interest in British college students’ views on international current affairs as well as their perspectives on future career planning. Several students reported that they would like to explore further the ideological differences between cultures. One student specifically indicated that he wanted to know British undergraduates’ favourite magazine or newspaper articles. In this case, it is possible to compare their thoughts on the same issue and examine the difference. Overall, students revealed their preferred topics related to their own life, especially those concerned with confronting cultural differences having more complicated socio-cultural aspects.

### **7.3.3 Teaching strategies suggested for future courses**

To begin with, the course was deemed as too short from most learners’ point of view and G1-3-FB explained that if the course can be prolonged to the whole semester, she would be very happy and could expect greater progress. Besides, some students considered interactional time between the teacher and students as limited and they would like to have more opportunities to ask questions.

Moreover, some students pointed out the disirability of a group-based project before each teaching session with the aim of preparing themselves for the cultural topic. They admitted their inadequacy in socio-cultural understanding regarding some cultural topics, and the pre-class assignment would provide them with opportunities to

familiarise themselves with the cultural knowledge aspects, exchanging ideas with peer students and constructing their initial preconceptions. A student also explained that his silence in the class mainly stemmed from the lack of relevant cultural understanding. In general, students presented preferences to be informed and assigned with tasks for cultural learning before the classes.

Finally, the great majority students recommended supplementing the face-to-face interactions with English-speakers in the future course. G3-1-FT reported ‘(What I find lacking in the course is) the practical communication with foreigners. After learning the knowledge, we should put it into practice.’ And G3-2-FT also illustrated ‘For a short-term course, it is difficult to have all the information included, but I strongly recommend to add some face-to-face practice for the communication part’. Other innovative suggestions included inviting foreign English teachers to the class talking about their culture shock living in China, or their college mates who have completed their exchange study program describing their learning experiences in America.

As to the course improvement aspects, IEC students’ suggestions regarding teaching are valuable for constructing a more effective course that aims to develop language learners’ ICC. Their perspectives will be further analyzed in the conclusion chapter, with reference to Chinese tertiary EFL learners’ context in order to clarify the implications for the development of future teaching programs.

#### **7.4 Chapter Summary**

The findings indicated that the cultural teaching aspects in the IEC programme were constructive and effective in terms of enhancing students’ ICC but also identified potential for further development. The data gathered will be a valuable resource for

improving future EFL programmes that intend to integrate, and hopefully extend, the intercultural dimensions.

Students find the IEC more interesting, learner-centred and skill-enhanced compared with their previous language classes. They regarded their former language learning experience as dull, passive and targeted simply for passing exams. They demonstrated a strong preference for the teaching style in the IEC programme. Their favourite cultural topics included popular culture, and case studies of life experiences abroad. Other areas that also explored socio-cultural meanings were highly recommended. Learners also extolled several instructional activities like group discussion, debate and reading assignments as being supportive in assisting them to sharpen their views through confronting peer challenges and evaluating cultural issues. Learners' improvements in ICC savoirs seemed to be most apparent in certain IEC teaching features, e.g. evaluating intercultural critical incidents, for example the analysis of the Hong Kong students' culture shock experiences, and scenario simulation practices aimed at minimising intercultural misunderstandings.

As a teacher-researcher closely involved with the delivery and development of the IEC, I consider the progressive developmental instructional method, which has been comprehensively applied in the TS3 teaching practice, to be its most important element. This method has, in my view, generated considerable success in terms of learners' ICC development. This teaching method stems from the concept of 'teaching culture as a process' and includes sequential stages in order to help students enhance their intercultural competence as well as their critical thinking skills. The definition, description and the strategic aspects of this instructional method will be further discussed in Chapter eight together with the implications for the development of future programmes.

# Chapter Eight

## Conclusion

### 8.1 Introduction and summary

The main purpose of this study was to explore how an intercultural language teaching (ILT) approach was used in English language teaching (ELT) in the Chinese tertiary education context, and what aspects of learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) were developed. The study originated from the researcher's deep-rooted research interest in her teaching experiences, and was motivated by her own learning, teaching and observation. This led to a choice of action research as the method for the thesis, and this research attempted to investigate the value of applying an intercultural approach in EFL education by looking specifically into how Chinese college students may improve their intercultural competence.

In order to achieve the purpose of the study, a principal research question was asked: 'How can an intercultural language teaching (ILT) approach facilitate the development of Chinese college EFL learners' intercultural communicative competence (ICC)?' And, this core research question was divided into six sub-questions which I will introduce below.

The study was conducted in an 'Intercultural English Course' that integrated intercultural dimensions into the English language education for undergraduate students in a college of eastern China. The course followed an intercultural language teaching approach that intended to develop learners' intercultural communicative competence. In order to ensure a thorough analysis, the six sub-questions have been examined individually and analyzed in particular chapters.

Before collecting empirical data, relevant existing literature was surveyed which generated a helpful theoretical background for the study. The literature was reviewed critically in Chapter two. First, the literature on the cultural/intercultural dimensions in language education indicated that the intercultural communicative competence is crucial for language learners in order to be successful in communication. However, little literature was found that focused on the implementation and effectiveness of ILT approaches within the Chinese language tertiary education context. It has therefore been difficult to gauge whether the intercultural approach has effectively facilitated Chinese EFL learners' development since it has received little empirical research attention. Second, the literature on the development of language learners' intercultural competence indicated that Byram's notion of ICC appeared to be most relevant to the current study.

Having reviewed the relevant literature on research methodology, a qualitative research methodology was adopted for the current study (Chapter three). The case study project was conducted in China and the data collection tools included learners' pre and post course questionnaires, learners' learning process worksheets, the teacher's reflective journal and student focus group interviews.

The first sub-question was 'What are learners' positions before they take the Intercultural English Course (IEC)?' Pre-course questionnaires were used to gather data on this aspect (Chapter four). In brief, the results showed that learners' previous language learning experiences were mainly linguistic competence based with insufficient intercultural competence training. However, it was clear that students were eager to improve their intercultural communicative competence.

The second sub-question was 'What kind of Intercultural Language Teaching approach was applied within the Intercultural English Course (IEC)?' This was mainly answered by reviewing existing literature on the use of ILT in EFL education in both Chinese and non-Chinese contexts (Chapter four). In brief, the results showed

that the IEC syllabus design comprehensively incorporates intercultural dimensions within all major aspects of the programme including: course content, instruction methods, and the teaching philosophy.

The third and fifth sub-questions were as follows: ‘What aspects of intercultural communicative competence have the IEC learners developed in terms of Byram’s ICC savoirs?’ and ‘What aspects of the Intercultural Language Teaching approach within the IEC enhances learners’ ICC?’ Learning process worksheets and post-course questionnaires were used to collect responses to these questions (Chapter five, Chapter six and Chapter seven). Data collected from the teacher’s reflective journal and students’ focus group interviews provided supplementary evidence on teachers’ teaching and students’ ICC development. In short, the results showed that learners’ intercultural communicative competence have been developed through participation in the IEC programme. This appears to be the case both in terms of Byram’s savoirs, and additional ICC dimensions relevant to Chinese EFL learners’ context. The improvements appear to be closely related to the intercultural features integrated within the syllabus design and instructional practice.

Finally, the fourth and sixth sub-question responses will be discussed in this conclusion chapter: ‘What are the theoretical implications for ICC in the Chinese EFL context?’ and, ‘What are the pedagogical implications for an ILT approach in the Chinese EFL context?’

## **8.2 Summary of the research findings**

Having given a brief overview of the responses to the research questions, this section discusses the findings using Byram’s five ICC savoirs framework: development of intercultural knowledge, development of intercultural attitudes, development of skills of interpreting and relating, development of skills of discovery and interaction, and development of critical cultural awareness.

### **8.2.1 Development of intercultural knowledge**

In general, IEC learners developed intercultural knowledge as they gained more general and specific cultural knowledge and knowledge of intercultural communication. The learners gained knowledge of English-speaking cultures as a result of the teaching content and tasks applied in the IEC. As specified in Byram's ICC knowledge savoir, learners mostly addressed dimensions focused on 'non-verbal behaviour of interaction' and 'public and private institutions'. In addition, they acquired knowledge about implementing intercultural interactions, e.g. knowledge of conversation styles, non-verbal body language and the meaning of stereotypes. Further, a great majority of learners emphasized that both cultural and intercultural knowledge were crucial in developing their intercultural communicative competence.

Compared with surface knowledge, learners' understanding of deep cultural knowledge was limited, particularly in dimensions such as 'cultural self-awareness' and 'social distinctions and their principle markers'. Cultural knowledge is generally the more easily identified learning outcome, since most language instructors have rich experiences in teaching cultural facts. However, findings from this study indicated that IEC learners were not well-equipped with deeper levels of cultural knowledge including, in some cases, knowledge about their own culture.

In spite of learners' anxiety to acquire more cultural knowledge as the foundation for their ICC development, their intercultural knowledge reservoir was still waiting to be filled up. Hence learners' demand for cultural knowledge still needs to be fulfilled and their self-culture awareness properly raised through intercultural language learning approaches. Future language courses are recommended to offer strategies and assignments that integrate learners' acquisition of surface knowledge with deeper knowledge and understanding in order to stimulate self-culture reflection. It is crucial

for learners to realize that self-culture awareness is indispensable when analysing cultural differences from an ethno-relative perspective.

### **8.2.2 Development of intercultural attitudes**

Evidence for learners' development within each individual dimension of the attitude savoir can be identified, and it is the most widely addressed ICC savoir in the IEC. Almost all the learners showed their willingness to adopt commonly accepted cultural conventions of other cultures, and to engage with the experiences of daily life in another culture. This response was encouraging since it reflected an openness to interactions with culturally different others, and a readiness for changes when encountering differences. In contrast, responses suggested that learners' curiosity in discovering different cultural perspectives through initiating intercultural interactions, was not completely fulfilled.

Similarly, IEC learners were not prepared to extend their intercultural analysis when they encountered different cultural values, particularly the questioning of similar beliefs about their own culture. They also lacked initiative in exploring perspectives of a particular phenomenon in other cultures and their own, and this reluctance prevented them from further questioning the values and beliefs in their own culture. Nevertheless, developing this kind of interest is regarded as a valuable asset for intercultural learning because it allows learners to know, analyse and reinterpret their own cultural values, and those of others. More encouragement and support should be given to the further development of this attitude within EFL learners in order to: motivate and enhance learning, provide opportunities for expansion of intercultural learning experiences, encourage recognition of similarities, and negotiate possible differences. All of these challenges have implications for EFL classrooms and pedagogy.

Other prominent features regarding learners' intercultural attitudes were closely linked with Chinese cultural beliefs such as 'harmonious society', 'determined learning efforts' and 'the significance of confidence'. While encountering different views from other cultures or intercultural misunderstandings, learners' attitude in mediating is deeply influenced by Chinese spiritual perspectives. Awareness of these characteristics proved valuable when interpreting learners' responses and actions when dealing with problems arising from misunderstanding. Hence, it has been important to take these aspects into account in the development of a theoretical ICC model more appropriate to the Chinese EFL context.

### **8.2.3 Development of skills of interpreting and relating**

The data gathered in this aspect of the study provides instances of learner development in skills of interpreting and relating. This is reflected in the IEC learners' performance in recognizing ethnocentric documents/events and identifying and explaining ethnocentric perspectives. As discussed in Chapter five (5.2.3.2), these improvements emerged from the instructional activities and teaching and learning strategies. Since the IEC programme was not able to provide students with authentic real time interaction opportunities, the means by which students identified the ethnocentric cultural perspectives were primarily through reading documents and other forms of media. This study has therefore highlighted the need to extend the use of relevant media and learning strategies in future programmes in order to further enhance learners' skill of interpreting and relating. This has clear implications for syllabus design and teacher training.

Encouragingly, there was significant evidence to show that learners had developed their ability to mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena. While confronting different cultural perspectives, they were active in identifying the common ground and trying to solve conflicting understandings. However, some

learners inadequately developed their skills of interpreting and relating; they revealed their intentional decision of ‘keeping neutral’, which could be understood from the Chinese cultural point of view in solving the conflict, but only reached the initial stage of successful mediating according to Byram’s ICC definition.

Learners’ responses demonstrated a lack of adequate evidence regarding their development in the aspect of ‘identifying areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction’. This was largely due to the fact that the IEC did not provide learners with authentic intercultural communication opportunities. Nevertheless, several learners achieved significant changes in their intercultural ethno-relative views by the end of the course. For example, they modified their preconceived stereotyping perspectives through opportunities for constant self-reflection provided by the IEC learning programme. The deficiencies in overall development however indicated a need to revisit the syllabus design together with the learning strategies and activities.

#### **8.2.4 Development of skills of discovery and interaction**

‘Skills of discovery and interaction’ was the most apparent ICC savoir achieved within the IEC programme and the evidence mainly focused on learners’ ability to identify similar and dissimilar cultural interactional forms and negotiate a proper reaction. As discussed in Chapter five (5.2.4.2.1), this improvement was explicitly explored from two perspectives. First, the three phases in fulfilling objective c) of skills of discovery and interaction development. Second, consideration of the teaching context that was most effective in supporting learners’ development. In fact, the learners’ ability with respect to this savoir was significantly enhanced through the in-class assignments organized in two teaching sessions. The teaching activities, along with stimulating questions, encouraged learners to arrange their thoughts and to

engage in meaningful cultural analysis, leading to improved levels of intercultural understanding.

Because the course lacked authentic real time interaction opportunities for students, the teaching technique used in the IEC encouraged learners to visualize situations and to analyse their imagined observations and intercultural interactions. The data showed that learners were able to recognize important verbal and non-verbal aspects, such as body language and facial expressions that were prominent in their communication with people from other cultures. Thus, they were competent in observing and identifying similarities and differences between cultural aspects.

The capacity to develop language related knowledge, attitudes and skills in real time interactions would certainly benefit from extensive face-to-face communication. Although this particular dimension was not feasible in the IEC teaching context, in a truly authentic way, the ability to continuously acquire new knowledge of a culture remained an important objective within the IEC programme. The evidence suggests some significant areas of success here. Learners who developed their abilities in this dimension highlighted reading documents or watching a cultural event as a means of understanding otherness. Therefore, despite the lack of ‘face-to-face inquiry with an interlocutor’, some progress appears to have been made in this category. In addition, IEC learners broadened the domains mentioned in the ICC savoir that relates to searching for and keeping in contact with a new culture. These results will prove valuable in informing and constructing a more progressive ICC model, especially one that can take advantage of recent and future technological developments.

### **8.2.5 Development of critical cultural awareness**

In practice, in this study, the IEC learners showed minimal evidence of CCA development. There were some instances (6.1.5) however that suggested initial

progress in this savoir had been made, reflected in some students' ability to interpret different cultural values and to evaluate using intercultural criteria. Although it was challenging to fulfil this learning objective in a short course such as the IEC, learners were constantly encouraged to be mindful of criticality while making analysis of and reflections on intercultural issues. Even though the evidence of critical cultural awareness was not explicitly manifested after the teaching of IEC, the learners' tentative responses nevertheless encouraging. Moreover, these could be a starting point for future curriculum and strategy development that enable improvement in learners' critical skills and cultural awareness.

As discussed in chapter five (5.2.5), critical cultural awareness aims to develop the ability to critically evaluate perspectives and cultural practices. It is the most difficult dimension to achieve because it requires learners to gather sufficient cultural knowledge and to have developed proper attitudes and skills, especially in relation to identifying and mediating differences and similarities. Most importantly, learners need to be able to generate their own critical opinions when confronted with intercultural misunderstandings. The development of critical cultural awareness clearly implies improvement in the other four savoirs. Furthermore, an extended time span will be necessary to allow learners to fully widen their learning and proficiencies in intercultural competences. However, the practical and resource limitations of any language programme pose considerable challenges for curriculum designers and teachers, especially where ICC development is a key objective. As the teacher-researcher in this study I recognise the need to be continually creative in order to effectively facilitate ICC, particularly in the aspect of critical cultural awareness. Encouraging other teachers and education professionals will also be important in this process.

In conclusion, the Chinese tertiary EFL learners have developed their intercultural communicative competence within the IEC. A key feature of the programme was a commitment to developing intercultural communicative competence through an

intercultural language teaching approach. Students' development was represented by improved culture/intercultural knowledge, strengthened positive attitude towards other cultures, their enhanced ability to successfully interpret intercultural issues, and broadening of critical ethno-relative cultural perspectives.

Having presented IEC learners' ICC development through the analysis of the empirical data, the following section will provide more detailed suggestions for developing and applying an intercultural language teaching approach within the Chinese tertiary EFL context.

### **8.3 An intercultural approach in the Chinese EFL context**

In this section we turn to the remaining research sub-questions: 'What are the theoretical implications for ICC in the Chinese EFL context?' and 'What are the pedagogical implications for ILT approach in the Chinese EFL context?'

Given the findings relating to students' development in the ICC savoirs, including the specific factors deemed relevant to the Chinese language-teaching context, several modifications can be made to Byram's ICC savoirs in order to develop a theoretical framework that is more finely tuned to conditions within the Chinese EFL context (8.3.1). The findings relating to students' ICC improvement and the impact of the intercultural teaching approach applied in the course, including both teacher's and students' feedback on the teaching practice, have informed the development of an enhanced intercultural language teaching model. The new curriculum design is intended to enhance Chinese EFL learners' ICC through being more relevant to students' experiences and sensitivities, and more closely aligned to their learning needs. Its key features, it is argued, will provide progressive development from existing IEC provision. These are summarized in 8.3.2.

### **8.3.1 Developing a model of intercultural communicative competence for the Chinese context**

As discussed in Chapter two, Byram (1997) has helpfully provided a model of five *savoirs* in order to define a framework for the development of intercultural communicative competence. The objectives outlined for these *savoirs* were used to evaluate developments in students' intercultural communicative competences in a particular language education course. The IEC programme researched in this study was designed based on these ICC *savoirs*. The subsequent improvements in learners' ICC indicated that it was helpful and feasible to utilize these ICC *savoirs* in the EFL classroom at the tertiary level in China. Inclusion of the ICC learning objectives encouraged language teachers to make their teaching more purposeful and their assessing of learners' learning outcomes more specific and effective. However, some aspects in these ICC *savoirs* were initiated from a European perspective. Due to the different teaching and learning circumstances in China, the findings from this study suggest a need to supplement the programme with some context-sensitive aspects more appropriate to the Chinese EFL classroom. The following section will illustrate recommendations emerging from this study intended to make the ICC *savoirs* more suitable for the Chinese learning and teaching context. The following categories are organized in *savoirs* in order to provide alignment with the previous discussion.

#### ***Intercultural knowledge***

In general, knowledge about a culture includes socio-cultural information on everyday living, values and beliefs, non-verbal communication modes, interpersonal relations and social conventions. Cultural knowledge, along with attitudes, is regarded as a precondition for other *savoirs*, so it is obviously important for language learners. Byram's *savoir* objectives include a wide range of cultural knowledge aspects both of one's own and others' culture.

Two prominent features in the *savoir* is the ‘knowledge of self’, which is knowledge about society and culture in one’s own country (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 2003), and ‘knowledge about social and cultural processes’ (Byram, 1997). This information is generally accepted as learned and acquired in formal and informal education through the process of socialization such as at school or with family. Learners who come to foreign language classes will bring with them their knowledge and experience of both the target country and their own. This knowledge is largely implicit, unanalyzed and taken-for-granted (Kramsch, 1993). However, this embedded body of information plays an important role in how language learners may interpret cultural differences when experiencing intercultural encounters.

According to the empirical findings in this study, Chinese learners’ cultural knowledge reservoirs were limited mainly due to the focus determined by the intensive national examination system and instrument-oriented teaching approaches. They also highlighted cultural knowledge as the foundational on which to develop successful communication skills and strategies. They attributed their unsuccessful interactions to inadequate cultural knowledge and believed that ‘cultural knowledge decides interaction’. Therefore, they were eager to grasp a broader range of knowledge.

The foundation of knowledge referred to above is a necessary but not sufficient element in the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence when viewed from an academic point of view. While recognising that cultural knowledge alone could not be set as the sole condition for a competent intercultural communicator, it is suggested that more knowledge acquisition for Chinese EFL learners can enhance their confidence during language interactions. Therefore the knowledge aspect should be considered as an indispensable cultural dimension within the Chinese EFL context and opportunities for this to be strengthened should be provided. Cultural knowledge should be regarded as the content of language tasks in the EFL classroom so as to

provide a foundation for students to reach out to other cultural values. In this case, the sources from which students can obtain their cultural knowledge are important and require further consideration. These will be discussed in the ‘suggestions for teaching content’ section later (8.3.2.3).

#### Own-culture awareness

According to Byram (1997: 90), the intercultural speaker does not only ‘gather facts’ about the other culture, but s/he is able to integrate these facts in dialogue including information about his/her home culture. This deep learning aspect in terms of intercultural competence, requiring learners to reflect on self and engage in critical thinking, is demanding in practical situations. This is reflected in Duffy’s (2002) study of secondary French learners which suggests that identifying contemporary and past relationships between one’s own and other cultures and society (Knowledge a) in *savoir* objectives) is more appropriate for intermediate or higher level language learners such as undergraduates.

If we accept the assumption that knowledge of own-culture bears the same importance as knowledge of others, it is clear that the IEC falls short. IEC learners’ feedback on self-culture was limited and they seldom actively related the cultural issue with their own culture. So it was still challenging for the Chinese EFL learners, even though they are higher-intermediate learners in the tertiary education level. In this regard, Byram (1997) suggests that it is necessary to select the most suitable objectives for learners and integrate them into the curriculum design based on the context.

Hence, in the future course, more aspects of own-culture awareness should be encouraged in relation to the Chinese tertiary EFL teaching context. This can be done, for example, through purposeful and creative teaching activities designed to stimulate learners’ thoughts about their own cultural aspects. It also suggests that the course offered strategies for students to make self-culture reflection practices through on-line

or electronic intercultural communication programs. By means of communication with students from other cultures, they can exchange their ideas about similar cultural issues. In order to understand other cultures, students are required first to be aware of their own. The reflection on one's own culture facilitates the comparison of values, as cultural differences are not measured from an ethnocentric perspective.

### Knowledge of intercultural communication

Findings indicate that in addition to cultural-specific knowledge, the core concepts of intercultural communication are also of great significance for EFL learners' ICC development, particularly to those who are not familiar with the theoretical framework of intercultural competence. Due to the lack of understanding of the IC theories, it is easy for learners to lose valuable opportunities for intercultural analysis or misunderstand what the teacher's instructional purposes are.

In this regard, a mini-lecture on key aspects of intercultural communication intends to provide learners with the foundation necessary to analyse cultural differences by using the lenses of intercultural communication. The inclusion of IC theories within a developed language education programme is considered valuable but should not be over complicated or too time-consuming in relation to the rest of the programme. It is suggested that a mini-lecture of one or two hours, provided at the orientation stage or the very beginning of a course such as IEC, would be appropriate. For a short course like IEC, it is more feasible to have a separate section before the course starts in order to clarify the teaching aims. In addition to the initial provision teachers are also encouraged to periodically review and expand upon concepts covered in the presentation of IC theories. This can be done during students' in-class analysis and reflection sessions. Thus, the theory of intercultural communication is significant for EFL learners and its application can help them to make critical and meaningful interpretations of cultural differences from the IC perspective.

### *Intercultural Attitudes*

Attitudes are believed to be fundamental to understanding and appreciating other cultures, as well as implementing successful interaction with members of other cultures. However, due to the current situation in China, the majority of EFL classes do not provide sufficient occasions for learners to practise real time interactions with English-speakers from other cultures. In this case, maintaining an appropriate attitude is considered as an initial step of great significance in developing ICC.

Byram conceptualizes the attitudes in four objectives: curiosity, an interest in different perspectives; openness, a willingness to engage with other experiences of life; questioning, a willingness to question one's own cultural values; and, readiness, preparedness to adapt to and engage with another culture's communication conventions. Findings from this study suggested IEC learners had incorporated considerable degrees of 'readiness' and 'openness' through demonstrating their willingness to engage with other experiences of life. However, less evidence existed for the trait of 'curiosity' and similarly, the dimension of 'questioning', specifically, a willingness to question one's own cultural values.

As discussed in the previous section regarding learners' self-cultural awareness in knowledge, it is not difficult to make connections with the findings here in terms of IEC learners' reluctance in demonstrating the objective of questioning their own cultural values. In Byram's attitude savoir, this dimension is explicitly illustrated. The curiosity of something new, according to Byram, is not for 'the exotic or profitable'. He indicates that the attitude of developing an interest in discovering the perspectives of others as well as one's own, is valuable and a prerequisite for intercultural competence.

In the EFL classroom, the promotion of such attitudes can facilitate learners to expand their experience, realize similarities and negotiate differences (Byram, 2003: 48). In

the Chinese EFL context, teachers are strongly encouraged to integrate attitudinal development strategies more purposefully within their teaching content and instructional activities in order to effectively improve students' intercultural competences and learning outcomes.

Another important consideration in evaluating Chinese EFL learners' intercultural competence is the Chinese spiritual perspective. The beliefs and stances IEC learners have embodied included 'harmonious society', 'determined learning efforts', and 'the significance of confidence'. These together are key influences in achieving ICC and learning generally since their presence ensures effective levels of core motivation. These spiritual perspectives might be of little importance in other EFL contexts, however, it is vital to take them into account in Chinese EFL classrooms in order to properly evaluate learners' ICC development especially in their learning process. Hence the ICC model applied in the Chinese EFL classroom is recommended to incorporate these features in order to guide and support teaching and learning.

### ***Skills of interpreting and relating***

Findings from this study reflected IEC learners' inadequate development of dimension (b) within this skill. According to Byram's (1997) illustration, this objective requires the ability to 'identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunctions in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present' (P. 61).

To begin with, in the Chinese EFL context, it is generally hard to practise 'real' time or authentic interactions in order to realize this savoir. Hence, in the EFL classroom teachers are encouraged to offer fictional situations for students via teaching tasks such as presentations, simulations, role plays. In this regard, learners' skills development can be developed through construction of hypothetical situations. The implication for this savoir in the new ICC model is the inclusion of good quality

learning scenarios where students can practise their skills through a range of ‘imagined’ interactions.

IEC learners’ achievement in the skills of interpreting and relating was relatively poor reflecting that this was a demanding objective, particularly for Chinese students. Compared with ‘skills of discovery and interaction’, this savoir should be highlighted as a more challenging teaching objective. As discussed earlier in both ‘knowledge’ and ‘attitude’ objectives, the difficulty was to a large extent caused by learners’ lack of self-culture awareness. So how to effectively support learners to identify, analyse and explain a cultural perspective from an appropriate intercultural stance is essential and the related suggestions for teaching are expanded in next section.

### ***Skills of discovery and interaction***

Byram defined this savoir as the skills of interaction and skills of discovery. As to the first dimension, it required the ability to practise their use of knowledge, attitudes and skills in realistic situations reliant on extensive face-to-face communication. Since in most Chinese EFL contexts relatively few opportunities for this exist, learners’ development was assessed through their reactions to and analysis of hypothetical intercultural interactions. Notwithstanding the practical and resource limitations within language education provision, the inclusion and further development of such hypothetical teaching and learning approaches, including case studies and role play, will be a key element within any developed IEC. The construction of these activities will, however, more closely reflect the Chinese context, with the intention of increasing their relevance for students.

Regarding the ability to continuously acquire knowledge of a new culture, the responses suggested there had been significant progress in terms of the Chinese EFL context. IEC learners appeared to have embraced the objectives within the ICC savoir in this dimension and in some cases had broadened their approaches to acquiring

knowledge. Their views indicated that it is feasible, within EFL classrooms, to compensate for a lack of real time interaction opportunities, particularly with the aid of modern technology. This broadened domain (6.1.4.3) will encourage the development of an extended range of strategies, including the use of technology, enabling learners to search for new cultural knowledge and maintain effective contact with other cultures.

### ***Critical cultural awareness***

Critical culture awareness is the most demanding intercultural communication objective for Chinese EFL learners. As discussed in Chapter two, this savoir is the core of ICC, which should always be highlighted as the essential and ultimate goal. It is believed that Byram's illustration of the three dimensions in critical cultural awareness is accurate and well-structured, and the goal can be achieved through a skillfully designed curriculum, creative teaching, and appropriate time given for practicing skills and developing awareness. Since CCA is closely related with critical thinking ability, learners' improvement in CCA is to a large extent determined by their critical thinking ability. In the Chinese educational context, this concept is relatively new and students need better guidance in order to develop the related skills. Consequently, the integration of modules in critical thinking abilities within language education programmes is recommended. In this regard, the learning objectives of critical thinking skills in diverse levels can also be applied as valuable assessment tools for ICC improvement. This will make the teaching objectives more purposeful for a different teaching context and easier for teachers to determine learners' learning outcomes.

Overall, Byram's ICC savoirs contain well-structured and detailed elements that are vital for assessing intercultural competence. The savoirs provide a clear framework upon which to construct programmes that promote intercultural dimensions in the Chinese EFL classroom. However, based on findings from this study, there are still

some aspects that require attention and further revision in order to more fully apply a revised theoretical model within a Chinese EFL context.

First, the development of certain language skills will, ideally, require real time interaction opportunities with people from other cultures. Since this is not feasible in most Chinese EFL courses, it is recommended, as suggested earlier, to develop a more extensive range of learning and teaching strategies, including ‘imagined’ interactional cases. Second, achieving a comprehensive range of objectives, such as in Byram’s model, is a very demanding challenge given the relatively short duration of programmes such as IEC. The desirability of programmes that enable students to achieve at the very highest level, for example in areas such as critical cultural awareness, is not in doubt. However, it is necessary also to consider the practical limitations of time and resources given to a particular programme. In the end pragmatic decisions will need to be made, for example in some cases, the necessity to select practical and precise constituents of intercultural knowledge and skills that can provide clear evaluation of learners’ fulfilment. Third, certain aspects of the *savoirs* may be considered comparatively abstract and difficult to be directly implemented into EFL teaching and learning, especially if there are other extremely determined expectations of course outcomes. Those involved in curriculum design and delivery should therefore be aware of the challenges posed above as they construct purposeful teaching aims and instructional methods for new language learning programmes.

### **8.3.2 Intercultural language teaching approach**

Assuming that the revised ICC *savoirs* proposed in the above section (8.3.1) are comprehensive and accurate, the complementary dimensions advocated to take account of the Chinese EFL perspective embody key principles that can inform the design and implementation of language courses. It would be presumptuous to assume that the suggested intercultural language teaching model will unfailingly

develop learners' intercultural competence. It would be more appropriate to suggest that the intercultural features emphasized in the ILT approach and the five *savoirs* provide an extensive range of competence and curriculum options that represent opportunities for learners to develop critically, their language skills, knowledge, attitudes and awareness. In this approach, carefully selected teaching content, instructional techniques and assignments are perceived as means to stimulate learners' ICC development and can be tailored to suit particular contexts.

### **8.3.2.1 A progressively developmental instructional method**

As discussed in Chapter seven, the most efficient teaching strategy in IEC is the progressively developmental instructional method. It was comprehensively applied in the teaching session three 'Food and Dining Habit' and findings indicated this was a very effective session from both the teacher's and students' points of view. A detailed account of the learning strategies embodied in this teaching instance was given in the section on 'Teaching practice in TS3 closely related with S2c development' (7.2.4). Some significant features of the learning approaches described here are seen as highly relevant to the Chinese EFL context and are described next.

This progressively developmental teaching method stems from the concept of 'teaching culture as a process' that can be aligned with Byram's ICC *savoirs*. It aims to develop learners' intercultural competence and includes practical and logical steps that are designed to support learners' continuous improvement. To begin with the teaching content should include threads or topical themes relevant to the cultural context in order to elicit a full range of rich socio-cultural meaning. This is seen as a prerequisite to any language learning curriculum. Cultural values and knowledge can be realized through the development of culturally relevant learning and teaching resources, including the use of critical incidents, written documents, electronic

technology, and visual or auditory information in order to stimulate learners' curiosity.

The recommended approaches should also promote the following: identification and interpretation of socio-cultural meaning, comparison of analogous circumstances using socio-cultural concepts, evaluation of the interpretations through application of theoretical frameworks for critical thinking and intercultural competence, clarification and transfer of logical viewpoints to similar or new contexts, generation of feasible solutions, and finally, evaluation of the resolution through reflection on contradictions and consequences. The stages of the whole process are not clearly cut off from one another and certain stages might be more appropriate to different groups of learners. Many of the stages of learner development can be supported with diversified task-based teaching activities such as group discussions, simulation scenarios, role plays, student presentations etc. In addition to these instructional methods, other key features specific to intercultural teaching in the Chinese context are discussed below.

#### **8.3.2.2 Suggestions for teachers**

For the majority of Chinese EFL learners, the acquisition of intercultural skills including identifying, referring and interacting is sometimes regarded as complicated and challenging. In order to develop learners' ICC, teachers are encouraged first to set clear teaching objectives (i.e. the development of at least some of the dimensions in knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical cultural awareness of ICC *savoirs*) for each class teaching activity. Building on the core objectives teachers should identify any potential opportunities in the curriculum to stimulate learners' thoughts and enable them to fulfil the intercultural competence objective. In order to achieve these goals teachers should be encouraged to adopt and develop creative learning and teaching approaches.

For the more demanding ICC objectives teachers can apply appropriate levels of learning achievement to assess learners' development. This can boost both teachers' and students' satisfaction and increase their confidence as well. As discussed in the previous section (8.3.1), these sub-divided objectives can be constructed to take account of Chinese learners' spiritual beliefs and their learning concepts. In a large-scale educational context, prevalent in China, that currently favours examination-oriented approaches and instrumental language teaching strategies, teachers' primary focus tends to be on the linguistic goals with less emphasis on providing opportunities for the development of learners' intercultural competences. It is therefore considered timely to emphasise the need for language educators to focus more on the occasions in the language classroom that present opportunities to encourage learners to critically reflect on their own intercultural stances. These occasions can most likely originate from analysis of cultural misunderstanding, tension or different perspectives on cultural issues.

### **8.3.2.3 Suggestions for teaching content**

As discussed in Chapter four (4.2.2.1), the teaching materials selected for IEC learners were based on their linguistic ability and topical areas of interest. The cultural topics chosen were intended to enable them to identify useful socio-cultural perspectives. While the selection criteria for teaching content were helpful for IEC learners, analysis of the programme and the findings in this study give rise to certain implications which, arguably, will be valuable in informing future syllabus design.

Two important areas are recommended: the incorporation of appropriate levels of deep cultural knowledge, and, inclusion of underpinning theories of intercultural communication. The former aspect will increase Chinese learners' confidence, which is vital to success and improvement in their communication interactions. The latter is believed to be of great support for learners in informing and developing their core intercultural perspectives.

Then, in order to help learners realize competent self-cultural awareness, it is suggested to choose the teaching content with sufficiently informative socio-cultural values that can actively provoke learners' thoughts and stimulate their curiosity in relating to similar aspects of their own culture. The properly selected cultural issues are the first step for EFL learners to make a connection with similar aspects in their own culture so as to start a self-cultural reflection process. These cultural topics may contain popular culture and experiences close to learners' life experiences.

Finally, while cultural knowledge and values are taught in EFL classrooms, the sources from which the teaching content has been obtained need to be critically investigated. Findings in this study suggest that there needs to be an appropriate balance within language programmes in the use of sources from the flourishing Anglo-American media vis-a-vis the Chinese contextual material. Teachers can play a key role here in providing appropriate guidance that enables students to develop their analytical skills from balanced ethno-relative perspectives.

#### **8.3.2.4 Suggestions for instructional techniques**

Since Chinese learners rarely obtain real time interactions with people from other cultures, the EFL classroom is the important place for them to develop their intercultural competence. Apart from 'what to teach', 'how to instruct' is also a decisive component needed to secure learners' improvement. Findings indicated that proposing appropriate thought-provoking questions, and allowing students adequate space and opportunities to develop their skills can effectively facilitate learners' intercultural competence. Having students participate in pair/small group discussions can help them to develop skills for discovering cultural meaning, relating cultural phenomena and producing their own viewpoints.

Similarly, setting group assignments, including class presentations on specific cultural topics, motivate students to practise heuristic learning, in which they search for and gather information, interpret and analyse concept, and then make final conclusion through critical reflections. In addition to traditional classroom based approaches the heuristic learning stages can also be realized through Internet based collaborative learning programs or even through basic electronic communication (Kohn & Warth, 2011; O'Dowd, 2007). It is clear however, that students' interactions and critical mediation with people from other cultures, in whatever form, will promote improvements in their ICC. Assessment of progress can be achieved through the use of a range of learning and teaching strategies, for example, through analysis of the content of the group presentations. In a student-centred classroom, properly integrated instructional techniques such as group discussions and students' presentations can turn the classroom into a powerful space for effectively facilitating ICC.

This section has outlined the implications of this study in terms of a developed theoretical model of ICC, and has recommended the adoption of creative intercultural language teaching approaches in the Chinese EFL context. Next I will illustrate the implications of this study for future research.

#### **8.4 Implications for future research**

Currently there is limited study on cultural and intercultural teaching pedagogy in the Chinese EFL context. However, language courses that promote intercultural competence should find a considerable place in the university curriculum. The IEC syllabus designed for this study can provide useful information for language teachers to bring in change into their own classrooms. Hopefully, this thesis can stimulate more educators to join in the process and urge the government to draw more attention to reforming EFL education. Different aspects of the ILT approach advocated in this study also deserve to be scrutinized by multidisciplinary research projects. Though the

study was conducted in China, it is believed that the essential aspects recommended in the EFL and intercultural education can be applied more widely.

Further, as a college language teacher, I know that most teachers are willing to implement cultural aspects in their language classrooms. But their teaching practices can only be based on incidental or limited experiential learning. Hence, teacher-training programmes in how to integrate intercultural communication into the EFL syllabus to effectively facilitate learners' ICC development are highly recommended. Besides, this thesis argues for an intercultural language teacher as a lifelong learner concerned with continuous professional development in intercultural communicative competence. The specific strategies in preparing competent intercultural teachers should also be an important focus in future studies.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This thesis provides a contribution towards developing an intercultural dimension in Chinese tertiary EFL education. It offers a new perspective for the language curriculum that aims to facilitate learners' intercultural communicative competence. The researcher believes that the cultural teaching in the language classroom is significant. The study shows that with appropriately integrated teaching content and instructional approaches, learners' intercultural competence can be enhanced in their EFL educational process. Although the case study of this study was conducted in one college in eastern China, the intercultural teaching approach recommended is believed to be valuable and applicable to the general Chinese college EFL context.

## Appendix 1 Byram ICC Objectives in Savoirs (1997: 57-64)

### *Savoirs*

*Knowledge: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction.*

Objectives (knowledge of/about):

- a) historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries

The intercultural speaker knows about events, significant individuals and diverse interpretations of events which have involved both countries and the traces left in the national memory; and about political and economic factors in the contemporary alliances of each country.

- b) the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity), of travel to and from, and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems

The intercultural speaker knows about (and how to use) telecommunications, consular and similar services, modes and means of travel, and public and private organizations which facilitate commercial, cultural/leisure and individual partnerships across frontiers.

- c) the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins

The intercultural speaker knows about conventions of communication and interaction in their own and the foreign cultures, about the unconscious effects of paralinguistic and non-verbal phenomena, about alternative interpretations of shared concepts, gestures, customs and rituals.

- d) the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries

The intercultural speaker knows the events and their emblems (myths, cultural products, sites of significance to the collective memory) which are markers of national identity in one's own country as they are portrayed in public institutions

and transmitted through processes of socialization, particularly those experienced in schools; and is aware of other perspectives on those events.

- e) the national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own country

The intercultural speaker knows about the national memory of the other in the same way as their own (see above).

- f) the national definitions of geographical space in one's own country, and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries

The intercultural speaker knows about perceptions of regions and regional identities, of language varieties (particularly regional dialects and languages), of landmarks of significance, of markers of internal and external borders and frontiers, and how these are perceived by others.

- g) the national definitions of geographical space in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own

The intercultural speaker knows about perceptions of space in the other country as they do about their own (see above).

- h) the processes and institutions of socialization in one's own and one's interlocutor's country

The intercultural speaker knows about education systems, religious institutions, and similar locations where individuals acquire a national identity, are introduced to the dominant culture in their society, pass through specific rites marking stages in the life-cycle, in both their own and the other country.

- i) social distinctions and their principal markers, in one's own country and their interlocutor's

The intercultural speaker knows about the social distinctions dominant in the two countries e.g. those of social class, ethnicity, gender, profession, religion and how these are marked by visible phenomena such as clothing or food, and invisible phenomena such as language variety e.g. minority languages, and socially determined accent or non-verbal behavior, or modes of socialization and rites of passage.

- j) institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them

The intercultural speaker knows about public or private institutions which affect the living conditions of the individual in the two countries e.g. with respect to health, recreation, financial situation, access to information in the media, access to education.

k) the processes of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country

The intercultural speaker knows about levels of formality in the language and non-verbal behavior of interaction, about conventions of behavior and beliefs and taboos in routine situations such as meals, different forms of public and private meeting, public behavior such as use of transport etc.

### **Savoir etre**

Attitudes: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.

Objectives:

a) willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or the profitable.

The intercultural speaker is interested in the other's experience of daily life in contexts not usually presented to outsiders through the media nor used to develop a commercial relationship with outsiders; is interested in the daily experience of a range of social groups within a society and not only that represented in the dominant culture

b) interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices

The intercultural speaker does not assume that familiar phenomena/cultural practices or products common to themselves and the other are understood in the same way, or that unfamiliar phenomena can only be understood by assimilating them to their own cultural phenomena; and is aware that they need to discover the other person's understanding of these, and of phenomena in their own culture which are not familiar to the other person.

c) willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment

The intercultural speaker actively seeks the other's perspectives and evaluations of phenomena in the intercultural speaker's environment which are taken for granted, and takes up the other's perspectives in order to contrast and compare with the

dominant evaluations in their own society.

d) readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence

The intercultural speaker is able to cope with their own different kinds of experience of otherness (e.g. enthusiasm, withdrawal) during residence and place them in a longer term context of phases of acceptance and rejection.

e) readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction

The intercultural speaker notes and adopts the behaviors specific to a social group in a way which they and the members of that group consider to be appropriate for an outsider; the intercultural speaker takes into consideration the expectations the others may have about appropriate behaviors from foreigners.

### **Savoir Comprendre**

*Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.*

Objectives (ability to):

b) identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins

The intercultural speaker: can 'read' a document or event, analyzing its origins/sources e.g. in the media, in political speech or historical writing and the meanings and values which arise from a national or other ethnocentric perspective (stereotypes, historical connotations in texts) and which are presupposed and implicit, leading to conclusions which can be challenged from a different perspective.

b) identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present

The intercultural speaker can identify causes of misunderstanding (e.g. use of concepts apparently similar but with different meanings or connotations; use of genres in inappropriate situations; introduction of topics inappropriate to a context, etc.) and dysfunctions (e.g. unconscious response to unfamiliar non-verbal behavior, proxemics and paralinguistic phenomena; over-generalisation from examples; mistaken assumptions about representativeness of views expressed); and can explain the errors and their causes by reference to knowledge of each culture involved.

c) mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena

The intercultural speaker can use their explanations of sources of misunderstanding and dysfunction to help interlocutors overcome conflicting perspectives; can explain the perspective of each and the origins of those perspectives in terms accessible to the other; can help interlocutors to identify common ground and unresolvable difference.

### **Savoir Apprendre/Faire**

*Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.*

Objectives (ability to):

a) elicit from an interlocutor the concepts and values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena

The intercultural speaker can use a range of questioning techniques to elicit from informants the allusions, connotations and presuppositions of a document or event and their origins/sources, and can develop and test generalisations about shared meanings and values (by using them to interpret another document; by questioning another informant; by consulting appropriate literature) and establish links and relationships among them (logical relationships of hierarchy, of cause and effect, of conditions and consequence, etc.)

b) identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations

The intercultural speaker can 'read' a document or event for the implicit references to shared meanings and values (of national memory, of concepts of space, of social distinction, etc.) particular to the culture of their interlocutor, or of international currency (arising for example from the dominance of western satellite television); in the latter case, the intercultural speaker can identify or elicit different interpretations and connotations and establish relationships of similarity and difference between them.

c) identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances

The intercultural speaker can use their knowledge of conventions of verbal and non-verbal interaction (of conversational structures; of formal communication such as presentations; of written correspondence; of business meetings; of informal gatherings,

etc.) to establish agreed procedures on specific occasions, which may be a combination of conventions from the different cultural systems present in the interaction.

d) use in real-time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country, culture and language and the extent of difference between one's own and the other

The intercultural speaker is able to estimate their degree of proximity to the language and culture of their interlocutor (closely related cultures; cultures with little or no contact or little or no shared experience of international phenomena; cultures sharing the 'same' language; cultures with unrelated languages) and to draw accordingly on skills of interpreting, discovering, relating different assumptions and presuppositions or connotations in order to ensure understanding and avoid dysfunction.

e) identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society

The intercultural speaker can use sources (e.g. reference books, newspapers, histories, experts, lay informants) to understand both contemporary and historical political, economic and social relationships between cultures and societies and analyse the differing interpretations involved.

f) identify and make use of public and private institutions which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures

The intercultural speaker can use their general knowledge of institutions facilitating contact to identify specific institutions (consulates, cultural institutes etc.) to establish and maintain contacts over a period of time.

g) use in real-time knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture

The intercultural speaker can identify and estimate the significance of misunderstandings and dysfunctions in a particular situation and is able to decide on and carry out appropriate intervention, without disrupting interaction and to the mutual satisfaction of the interlocutors.

### **Savoir s'engager**

*Critical cultural awareness/political education: an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.*

Objectives (ability to):

a) identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures

The intercultural speaker: can use a range of analytical approaches to place a document or event in context (of origins/sources, time, place, other documents or events) and to demonstrate the ideology involved.

b) make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria

The intercultural speaker is aware of their own ideological perspectives and values ('human rights'; socialist; liberal; Moslem; Christian etc.) and evaluates documents or events with explicit reference to them.

c) interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills and attitudes

The intercultural speaker is aware of potential conflict between their own and other ideologies and is able to establish common criteria of evaluation of documents or events, and where this is not possible because of incompatibilities in belief and value systems, is able to negotiate agreement on places of conflict and acceptance of difference.

## Appendix 2 Questionnaire for course learners

### Pre-Questionnaire for course learners

Thank you for your precious time. Your responses are very valuable to this investigation. It won't take you more than 20 minutes to complete this form. Please feel free to use as much space as necessary.

Pseudonym (choose any English name you like) \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

English entrance result: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What aspects of English-speaking cultures are you familiar with?

Please give some examples.

2. Have you had any English classes where the discussed cultural aspects that are different from your culture (e.g. values, beliefs system etc.) If yes, what topics were addressed?

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you been taught in your previous English classes how to interact with English speakers? (For example, use of gestures or facial expressions when talking with them)

Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_ Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What aspects of the language do you feel you need to improve?

5. Do you practice English with native speakers? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Who with? \_\_\_\_\_

How often? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you find you have difficulties when you interact with native English speakers?

If so what types of difficulties?

7. Besides the formal language classes, what do you do to improve your English?

8. Why are you taking this course?

9. What are your expectations of this course?

10. What culture-related topics would you suggest to discuss in this course?

11. Give an example of a situation in which you experienced a misunderstanding when you interacted with a native speaker:

- Misunderstanding:

-How you solved the problem:

12. Do you know the term intercultural communicative competence?

Whether yes or no, what does the term mean to you?

## Post-Questionnaire for course learners

Thank you for your precious time. Your responses are very valuable to this investigation. It won't take you more than 20 minutes to complete this form. Please feel free to use as much space as necessary.

Pseudonym

(please ensure you give the same name with your pre-questionnaire)

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Has the Intercultural English Course met your expectations? Why?  
Explain and give specific samples.
2. What was the most interesting part of it? Explain
3. What did you find lacking in the course? Explain
4. What new knowledge have you gained? Explain
5. What new skills have you developed? Explain
6. Are you more aware now of how culture impact communication than you were at the beginning of the course? Explain
7. Do you feel more comfortable speaking with native speakers of English?
8. Do you think you can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures? Explain your response and give examples.
9. What do you intent to do to continue developing you intercultural skills?

### Appendix 3 Data collection stages

Stages	Data collection activities	Instruments/outcome
Stage I Lead-in	Document analysis on intercultural language teaching approach (ILT)	Literature Review
Stage II Preparation	Consent forms Syllabus design Induction session for the study Ss' Pre-questionnaire	Informed consent Lesson plans Figure of the course participants
Stage III Intercultural English Course	Teaching sessions	Video-taping teaching sessions; Teacher's class observation field notes; Teaching reflective journal Ss' learning process worksheets
Stage IV	Ss' Post-questionnaire Focus group interview	Gathering and presenting the data and start analysis

**Appendix 4 Instances of Knowledge as ICC Objective from students’  
feedback (full list)**

KNOWLEDGE: Of social groups and their products and practices in one’s own and in one’s interlocutor’s country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS	EVIDENCE
<p>a) Historical and contemporary <b>relationships</b> between one’s own and one’s interlocutor</p> <p>N=1 (TS*4)</p>	<p>‘First of all, China has <b>more and more relationship with other countries</b>, and <b>English is used by most of official language</b>. It is a good opportunity to study in UK to know the world well.’ (TS4, G4-6-MB)</p>
<p>b) the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity), of travel to and from, and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems</p>	<p>N=0</p>
<p>c) The types of causes of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins</p> <p>N= 6 (PQ*)</p>	<p>‘I understand that <b>many cases which I recognize it as bias is just the difference of culture.</b>’ (PQ-1, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>‘I learnt that <b>due to the cultural difference, it can make the communication more difficult. Because we don’t understand each other.</b>’ (PQ-6, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>‘They have <b>so many slangs and I may misunderstand the simple words if I am not aware of the different use of them.</b>’ (PQ-7, G1-6-FB)</p>

	<p>‘(Skills I have developed) Breaking the ice and the style of analyzing situations; <b>sometimes the problem comes from ourselves.</b>’ (PQ-5, G2-6-FB)</p> <p>‘(Yes, I am more aware of how culture impact communication.) <b>The improper ways of communication make things worse.</b>’ (PQ-6, G2-8-MB)</p> <p>‘The new knowledge I have gained: There are many differences between China and UK. We should try our best to learn their culture so we can understand them better. Furthermore, we should try something new or maybe we will regret. And, <b>first impression is not always right.</b>’ (PQ-4, G2-9-FA)</p>
<p>d) The national memory of one’s own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries</p> <p>e) The national memory of one’s interlocutor’s country and the perspective on them from one’s own country</p> <p>N= 1 (TS4)</p>	<p>‘One of the reasons I want to further my study in UK is that <i>my favourite Sherlock Holmes was born in UK</i>&lt;Sherlock Holmes is my favourite novel character and it originated from UK&gt;.’ (TS4, G1-3-FB)</p>
<p>f) The national definitions of geographical space in one’s own country, and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries</p> <p>g) The national definitions of geographical</p>	<p>N=0</p>

<p>space in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own</p>	
<p>h) The processes and institutions of <b>socialization</b> in one's own and the interlocutor's country</p> <p>N= 4 (TS1) + 2 (PQ) = 6</p>	<p><b>'I know what they like talking and playing.</b> I can make myself not special in foreign group.' (TS1, G2-3-MB)</p> <p><b>'Chinese always think we shouldn't become the first person to do something,</b> but it results <b>we loose many opportunities to success.'</b> (TS1, G1-9-FB)</p> <p><b>'English people have the same belief in God. Political system is different in China and UK, each one has its own advantages and disadvantages.'</b> (TS1, G3-4-FE)</p> <p>'In my view it is not enough to talk about western culture. It is better to recognize western values <b>from their histories</b> such as Revival of Learning (Renaissance) in which <b>individualism</b> occurred. These factors influence their behaviors and in this way we can better comprehend the differences between Eastern cultures and Western cultures.' (TS1, G3-5-ME)</p> <p><b>'The faith of British people</b> (is what I find lacking in this course). Because <b>most of them are religious believers and the religion has great influence on their life.'</b> (PQ-3, G1-1-MB)</p> <p><b>'Different culture make differences inbuilding relationship.</b> Some people like this, but others like that. We must know the key knowledge and culture.' (PQ-6, G1-9-FB)</p>
<p>i) Social distinctions and their principal markers, in one's own country and in their interlocutor's</p>	<p>N=0</p>
<p>j) <b>institutions and perceptions</b> of them, which impinge on daily</p>	<p>'The reason why I want to go to UK furthering my study is that it has <b>high quality education with many chances, and quiet and beautiful scenery.'</b> (TS4, G2-1-FB)</p>

<p>life within one's own and one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them</p> <p>N = 8 (TS4)</p>	<p>'Before college, I have already had an idea about studying abroad and never changed my idea. Because <b>the foreign culture is always attracting me, I want to know the different world and like the opening (open and free) feeling in western countries.</b>' (TS4, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>'The reasons why I want to further my study in UK is because that ... c) the economy of UK is fast (TS4-Q2) and a) the time of (completing the study of a) master is shorter than other country; b) <b>the history of UK's education is very long</b>; c) it doesn't need the grade of GMAT or GRE; d) UK is <b>a developed country</b>; e) <b>UK has many famous universities</b> and f) <b>The diploma is very helpful for our occupational career.</b>' (TS4, G2-7-MB)</p> <p>'It is <b>the original land of English language. The education system in UK is good.</b> And <b>the scenery</b> in the UK also attracts me there.' (TS4, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>'It is <b>a developed country. Its education is of high quality.</b> It is <b>the only country that one can learn authentic English accent. I like the way they teach and I can have more options on deciding which lectures we want to participate in.</b>' (TS4, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>'I like to study in the UK. Firstly, I think it has an <b>advanced higher education system.</b> It <b>stresses on improving students' creativity.</b> In addition, it helps students to find a way to solve tomorrow's problems.' (TS4, G3-3-FE)</p> <p>'The UK has <b>a different atmosphere on studying</b>; especially <b>its culture</b> is attracting to me. The UK is <b>a typical traditional European country</b>, and its <b>high quality education system</b> is famous all over the world.' (TS4, G4-5-FB)</p> <p>'For instance, as far as <b>China</b> is concerned, <b>there is not enough space for teenagers who just graduate from college to develop themselves.</b> And <b>for UK</b>, we must face too many issues that are obviously different from the environment we are used to, and <b>the tuition fees is very high</b>; society is also complicated.' (TS4, G4-10-FT)</p>
<p>k) The processes of social interaction in the interlocutor's country</p>	<p>'People from Western are <b>more able to accept physical contact than the Chinese.</b>' (TS1, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>'They <b>always say <i>I love you.</i></b>' (TS1, G4-8-FT)</p> <p>'Different country has <b>different greeting culture.</b>' (TS2, G1-3-FB)</p>

<p>N=2(TS1)  + 9 (TS2)  +17(TS3)  +5(PQ) = 33</p>	<p>‘I have learnt <b>more things about (greeting) customs different from us.</b>’ (TS2, G1-8-FB)</p> <p>‘<b>Different places have different styles of greetings.</b> It can help me communicate with others well.’ (TS2, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>‘The part that Tina taught us <b>how to shake hands</b> is most impressive.’ (TS2, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>‘The topic about <b>names and titles</b> is the most impressive.’ (TS2, G2-9-FA)</p> <p>‘I have learned <b>how to call someone in an exact way</b> and this is the most impressive part of the lesson.’ (TS2, G3-5-ME)</p> <p>‘Nowadays more and more foreigners come to China and it is good for me to know different styles of international greetings. <b>I learned from the class that in different country, there are different ways to communicate with others.</b> The most impressive part (of the class) is <b>how to shake hands with others.</b>’ (TS2, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>‘I have known <b>the culture of names and the different greeting styles.</b> The part of their (westerners’) <b>social greetings</b> is the most impressive.’ (TS2, G4-1-MB)</p> <p>‘I have learned <b>how to call the foreigners and how to start talking with them.</b> This is the important thing for me.’ (TS2, G4-2-FT)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, <b>don’t talk with your mouth full.</b>’ (TS3, G1-1-MB)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, <b>don’t talk with your mouth full and don’t play with your food.</b>’ (TS3, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, don’t talk with your mouth full.’ (TS3, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>‘I have known about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, don’t talk with your mouth full and keep your elbows off the table.’ (TS3, G1-8-FB)</p> <p>‘I have known about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, don’t talk</p>
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	<p>with your mouth full and eat all dishes on your plate.’ (TS3, G2-1-FB) &amp; (TS3, G2-9-FA)</p> <p>‘I have known about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, don’t get to the destination (eating place) too early.’ (TS3, G2-4-MB)</p> <p>‘<b>Don’t talk loudly</b>. If someone invites me to eat something, I will <b>wear formally and maybe take some presents</b>.’ (TS3, G2-4-MB)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, use fork with left hand while knife with right and don’t make any noise.’ (TS3, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, we should use fork and knife properly and don’t talk when you are at table.’ ‘Don’t speak when your mouth is full of food and finish the food on your plate.’ (TS3, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, people should not take the plates up to their mouth; on different occasions, they should wear different kinds of clothes.’ (TS3, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, we should not talk loudly or talk with our mouth full.’ (TS3, G3-3-FE)</p> <p>‘I have known something about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, don’t talk with your mouth full.’ (TS3, G3-4-FE)</p> <p>‘I have known about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, during your eating you must (had better) keep quiet.’ (TS3, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>‘If I were invited to British friend’s house for dinner, I would behave like this: <b>don’t talk with my mouth full; don’t play with my food; finish my food on my plate</b>.’ (TS3, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>‘I have known about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, don’t talk with your mouth full; eat all your food on your plate.’ (TS3, G4-2-FT)</p> <p>‘I have known about the <b>western table manners</b>, for example, <b>finish what’s on your plate</b>.’ (TS3, G4-3-ME)</p> <p>‘I have known many <b>body languages</b> of foreign country.’ (PQ-4, G1-2-MB)</p>
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	<p>‘They (English-speakers) pay attention to <b>polite, kind behaviors</b>. Use <b>more ways to show their thanks, such as saying ‘would you/could you ...’</b> (PQ-6, G1-6-FB)</p> <p>‘British people <b>like to talk about weather as a beginning (of conversation).</b>’ (PQ-6, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>‘The knowledge I have learnt is (how to apply the proper) <b>eye contact.</b>’ (PQ-5, G2-8-MB)</p> <p>‘(After the course, I have learnt) <b>Manners and ways in communicating with foreigners.</b>’ (PQ-5, G-3-4-FE)</p>
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\*Note: N = Number of instances; TS = Teaching Session; G = Group; M=Male; F=Female; B=International Business (student major); T=International Trade (student major); A=Accounting (student major); E=English (student major); PQ = Post-questionnaire

**Appendix 5 Instances of Attitudes as ICC objective from students’  
feedback(full list)**

ATTITUDES: CURIOSITY AND OPENNESS, READINESS TO SUSPEND DISBELIEF ABOUT OTHER CULTURES AND BELIEF ABOUT ONE’S OWN	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS	EVIDENCE
<p>a) Willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to <b>engage with otherness</b> in a <b>relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic</b> or the profitable</p> <p>N= 6 (TS1) + 4 (TS3) + 5 (TS4) + 1 (PQ) =16</p>	<p>‘We should <b>accept the different cultures based on the different environment.</b>’ (TS1, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>‘I <b>want to know more about</b> which factors will bring us the feeling of culture shock.’ (TS1, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>‘We should <b>be glad to accept other cultures and beliefs.</b>’ (TS1, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>‘I <b>want to know</b> more about the thoughts from Chinese people about their <b>(culture shock) experience</b> in foreign countries.’ (TS1, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>‘Every culture has <b>their own beliefs or values. We cannot ignore it or push others accept us.</b> We should be open to them.’ (TS1, G4-3-ME)</p> <p>‘I <b>would like to listen to some interesting stories</b> about somebody who <b>overcome the culture shock.</b>’ (TS1, G4-4-FB)</p> <p>‘<b>Different countries have different customs</b> and we should <b>respect</b> each other.’ (TS3, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>‘Fantastic! <b>It (western food) is so different from Chinese food. I would like to try!</b>’ (TS3, G2-1-FB)</p> <p>‘<b>Different cultures have different customs.</b> We should respect each other. <b>Don’t be too critical.</b>’ (TS3, G2-1-FB)</p> <p>‘We should <b>respect different countries’ different</b> eating habits.’ (TS3, G3-4-FE)</p> <p>‘I would like to go to UK. Actually, I <b>would like tounderstand any foreign country and foreign culture.</b>’ (TS4, G1-10-MB)</p> <p>‘I want to <b>get along with and know more about people from different countries.</b> And studying in the UK will offer me this opportunity,’ (TS4,</p>

	<p>G3-1-FT)</p> <p>‘What’s more, the experience that I will get (from studying in the UK) is the most memorable part in my life: <b>knowing their life, making friends from all over the world, that’s really exciting to me.</b>’ (TS4, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>‘We will <b>experience different cultures and customs.</b> Besides, learning in UK can help us <b>learn more about English beliefs and values.</b>’ (TS4, G3-4-FE)</p> <p>‘UK has lots of <b>different thoughts from China. And I am also interested in the culture and people.</b>’ (TS4, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>‘Culture varies from country to country. When we are in a different country, we <b>should adapt ourselves to their culture.</b> Though we may experience a totally different culture, we should <b>respect</b> it.’ (PQ-6, G3-3-FE)</p>
<p>b) Interest in discovering <b>other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena</b> both in one’s own and in other cultures and cultural practices</p> <p>N= 6 (TS1) + 3 (TS4) = 9</p>	<p>‘When teacher told us <b>the different thought of different country ...</b>, I feel impressive.’ (TS1, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>‘I will be <b>open and optimistic (positive)</b> about (new aspects of) other cultures.’ (TS1, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>‘It is <b>impressive</b> when our teacher tell &lt;told&gt; us <b>something new.</b>’ (TS1, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>‘The part that the teacher told us her <b>experience in UK</b>&lt;is most <b>impressive</b>&gt;’ (TS1, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>‘The <b>most impressive</b> part is the teacher talk about the <b>everyday life</b> during her stay <b>in the UK.</b>’ (TS1, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>‘<b>I want to know the cultures and beliefs different from our country.</b>’ (TS1, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>‘I want to know <b>the foreign culture and the different attitudes.</b>’ (TS4, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>‘Foreign culture is always <b>attracting</b> me. I want to know <b>the different world</b> and (I) like the opening &lt;free and open&gt; feeling in western countries.’ (TS4, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>‘I can make various friends from all over the world. We can exchange</p>

	our ideas together. It is a really exciting moment. <b>We can learn other countries' cultures, customs, values, beliefs directly and vividly</b> by communicating with them.' (TS4, G3-3-FE)
c) Willingness to <b>question</b> the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in <b>one's own environment</b>  N=2 (TS4)	<p>'In China, <u>no matter where</u> social based on Chinese culture (wherever we are, the environment is based on Chinese culture) and we can't know the European culture very well. Different culture can affect people very much. We can broaden our sight; we can change <u>our measure when we think</u> (mode of thinking).' (TS4, G4-9-FB)</p> <p>'(Studying in the UK can make me) feel the different culture, practice my English, grow up quickly, (and) <b>change my opinion about world/value/life.</b>' (TS4, G4-9-FB)</p>
d) <b>Readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation</b> to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence  N= 3 (TS1) + 4 (PQ) = 7	<p>'When we have a <b>culture shock</b>, we should <b>cope with it positively.</b>' (TS1, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>'We <b>must know the differences and admit</b>&lt;the differences between the foreign and Chinese&gt;. <b>And let us adapt to them</b>&lt;the unfamiliar environments/differences&gt;.' (TS1, G2-4-MB)</p> <p>'<b>Openness</b> is a good method to <b>overcome culture shock.</b>' (TS1, G4-6-MB)</p> <p>'Yes, I am more aware of how culture impact communication. I know we must <b>go through different stages and frustration</b> (when there are cultural differences), but if we try to adapt, we will have a good life.' (PQ-6, G2-4-MB)</p> <p>'The most interesting part is the diary of Hong Kong girls. It is interesting, which let me know <b>the real problems and situations</b> I will meet when I come to an unfamiliar place.' (PQ-2, G2-9-FA)</p> <p>'Culture varies from country to country. When we are in a different country, we <b>should adapt ourselves to their culture.</b> Though we may experience a totally different culture, we should respect it.' (PQ-6, G3-3-FE)</p> <p>'It is a <b>process to adapt to a new environment (while abroad).</b>' (PQ-4, G3-5-ME)</p>
e) Readiness to	' <b>For a foreigner</b> , we should <b>not be shy</b> , (should) <b>be confident</b> to talk

<p>engage with the <b>conventions and rites</b> of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction</p> <p>N= 4 (TS1) + 15 (TS2) = 19</p>	<p>with him (them) in regardless of the different thought. We should become <b>active and passionateto communicate with different people.</b>' (TS1, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>'<b>Don't be shy and afraid</b> when communicate with others (English speakers).' (TS1, G2-2-FB)</p> <p>'Knowing more about <b>different styles of international greetings</b> can <b>help me to know how to begin a conversation with foreign people.</b>' (TS1, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>'<b>Don't be shy and have confidence</b> facing strangers (English speakers). <b>Be more active.</b>' (TS1, G4-5-FB)</p> <p>'I am curious to know more about <b>different styles of international greetings</b>, because I want to <b>make friends with foreigners.</b>' (TS2, G1-1-MB)</p> <p>'I am curious to know more about <b>different styles of international greetings</b>, because <b>different country has different greeting culture. ...</b> I will <b>find out more</b> about different styles of international greetings and <b>classify it</b> according to these greetings.'" (TS2, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>'I am curious to know more about <b>different styles of international greetings</b>, because it can be good for us to <b>improve our relationship.</b>' (TS2, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>'I am curious to know <b>more about different styles of international greetings, because we maymeet different people from different countries.</b>' (TS2, G1-8-FB)</p> <p>'(Pre-W) I am <b>not much curious about</b> different styles of international greetings; one or two styles of international greeting is enough. (Post-W) I <b>amcurious to know more about different styles of international greetings</b>, because <b>different places have different styles of greetings</b>, it can help me <b>well communicate with others.</b>' (TS2, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>'I am curious to know more about <b>different styles of international greetings</b>, because I <b>like talking to foreigner. A good greeting is important. ...</b> I will <b>watch movies or TV plays</b> made &lt;produced&gt; in foreign countries and <b>learn from them.</b>' (TS2, G2-9-FA)</p> <p>'I am curious, because knowing more about <b>different styles of international greetings</b> can help me to know <b>how to begin a</b></p>
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	<p><b>conversation with foreign people.’ (TS2, G3-1-FT)</b></p> <p><b>‘I have known more about the greeting customs and accept the different styles of greetings.’ (TS2, G3-1-FT)</b></p> <p><b>‘(Post-W) I am getting more interested in this topic &lt;international greetings&gt; and I will look up some information in the library.’ (TS2, G3-1-FT)</b></p> <p><b>‘I am definitely curious to know more about different styles of international greetings, because it is of great importance for us to know the way of other country’s greetings in that we can make good relationship with them.’ (TS2, G3-2-FT)</b></p> <p><b>‘... it is interesting for me to know about the greetings especially it is useful when I work or study abroad.’ (TS2, G3-2-FT)</b></p> <p><b>‘I am curious to know more about different styles of international greetings, because it is the first step to know other country’s culture. ... &lt;I will&gt;search on the Internet to find out the different styles of greetings about different countries.’ (TS2, G3-3-FE)</b></p> <p><b>‘I have known the different greeting styles, and then I can avoid embarrassment when greeting with foreigners. I want to investigate different greeting gestures of different countries.’ (TS2, G3-4-FE)</b></p> <p><b>‘I am curious to know more about different styles of international greetings, because it is good foreffective communication.’ (TS2, G3-5-ME)</b></p> <p><b>‘Nowadays more and more foreigners come to China and it is good for me to know different styles of international greetings. ... and I can interact with my foreign teacher more confidently.’ (TS2, G3-6-FT)</b></p>
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## Appendix 6 Instances of Skills of interpreting and relating as ICC

### objective from students' feedback (full list)

SKILLS OF INTERPRETING AND RELATING: ABILITY TO INTERPRET A DOCUMENT OR EVENT FROM ANOTHER CULTURE, TO EXPLAIN IT AND RELATE IT TO DOCUMENTS OR EVENTS FROM ONE'S OWN	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSIONS	EVIDENCE
<p>a) identify <b>ethnocentric perspectives</b> in a document or event and <b>explain</b> their origins</p> <p>N = 2 (TS1) + 1 (TS3) + 1 (TS4) = 4</p>	<p>===Teaching Session 1=== n=2</p> <p>‘Different country has their different culture, for example, a country love a thing, but another country all hate it. ... <b>Through some stories (Hong Kong students' diary, i.e. critical incidents), I know the differences between China's &lt;Chinese&gt; culture and other cultures.</b> And I know how to do when I meet that situation (conflict/cultural differences).’ (TS1, G1-5-FB)</p> <p>‘The English culture have different meanings from the Chinese culture. For example, <b>the travel rules are different</b> (England drives on the left).’ (TS1, G4-1-MB)</p> <p>===Teaching Session 3=== n=1</p> <p>TS3-Q8: <i>What is your opinion on the Western food <b>now after the class</b>?</i></p> <p>‘The food they eat as lunch or supper are that we students called snacks. Typically it is not formal for us if we eat that food.’ (TS3, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>===Teaching Session 4=== n=1</p> <p>‘The class covers many aspects of international studies. Actually I don't exactly stay with either UK or China. Every choice has some advantages and disadvantages that are worth of considering. For instance, <b>as far as China is concerned</b>, there is not enough space for teenagers who just graduate from college to develop themselves. And <b>for UK</b>, we must face too many issues that are obvious different from the environment we used to, and the tuition fees is very high; society is also complicated.’ (TS4, G4-10-FT)</p>
<p>b) <b>identify</b> areas of <b>misunderstanding</b> and dysfunction in an interaction</p>	

<p><b>and explain</b> them in terms of each of the cultural systems present</p> <p>N=0</p>	
<p>c) <b>mediate</b> between <b>conflicting interpretations</b> of phenomena</p> <p>N=4 (TS3)</p>	<p>===Teaching Session 3=== n=5</p> <p><b>TS3-Q13:</b> <i>If one of your friends who is from America criticizes Chinese cuisine, what is your possible reaction to his comment?</i></p> <p>‘I will tell them <b>different countries have different customs</b>. We should <b>respect</b> each other.’ (TS3-Q13, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>‘<b>Explain</b> (that) every country has their own custom, and in the <b>neutral</b> standard (position). No side is wrong.’ (TS3-Q13, G1-8-FB)</p> <p>‘I would <b>explain</b> to them that it is our tradition and deeply rooted in Chinese culture, <b>make them understand</b> that the food is acceptable to us.’ (TS3-Q13, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>‘<b>Explain the difference between their culture and mine</b>. Every one of us has the right to choose. <b>When we stay with others, try to avoid the sensitive culture.</b>’ (TS3-Q13, G4-3-ME)</p>

**Appendix 7 Instances of Skills of discovery and interaction as ICC  
objective from students' feedback (full list)**

SKILLS OF DISCOVERY AND INTERACTION: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.	
OBJECTIVE DIMENSION	EVIDENCE
a) <b>elicit from an interlocutor</b> the concepts and values of documents or events and <b>develop an explanatory system</b> susceptible of application to other phenomena	N=0
b) identify <b>significant references</b> within and <b>across cultures</b> and elicit their significance and connotations	N = 0
c) identify <b>similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use</b> of them in specific circumstances  N= 9 (TS1)+30 (TS2) + 25 (TS3) + 2 (PQ) = 66  a) n=6 b) n=38	<p>a) <b>identify the similar and dissimilar interaction as a preliminary</b> (n=6)</p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 1== n=2            'For a foreigner, we should <b>not be shy</b>, (should) <b>be confident</b> to talk with him (them) <b>in regardless of the different thought.</b>' (TS1, G1-9-FB)</p> <p>'<b>I know what they like talking and playing.</b> I can make myself (don't be a) <u>not</u> special in foreign group.' (TS1, G2-3-MB)</p> <p>==Examples from Teaching Session 2== n=4  <b>Q4 (Pre-W) &amp; Q9 (Post-W):</b> n=2  <i>If you are in a foreign country and people treat you with their</i></p>

c) n=22

*social greeting custom (for example, in France, they hug and kiss on your cheeks), what will you do?*

‘(Pre-W) I will tell them **it is my greeting custom to shake hands.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G1-4-FB)

‘(Pre-W) I may **be shocked for a while** and then be **embarrassed.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G3-5-ME)

**Q5 (Pre-W) & Q10 (Post-W):** n=2

*If you don't like others' (especially foreigners') greeting style or body language, what will you do?*

‘(Pre-W) Tell others that their greeting custom is **different** from ours and that makes me feel uncomfortable.’ (TS2-Q5&10, G1-8-FB)

(Pre-W) ‘I’ll tell him or her **that I don’t like the greeting style or body language.**’ (TS2-Q5&10, G3-1-FT)

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**b) identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and ‘accept’ the differences(n=38)**

==Examples from Teaching Session 1== n=3

‘**Don’t be shy and afraid** when communicate with others <English speakers>. ... We should **accept the different cultures** based on the different environment.’ (TS1, G2-2-FB)

‘**The Brits have their own beliefs.** We had learned some culture of Britain. Of course, some of them are **totally different from Chinese cultures.** Each country has its own culture. Just as the saying goes, ‘When in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ (TS1, G3-3-FE)

“我们要从一些方面改变对他们的看法，也愿意去接受他们的生活方式。” [‘We should **change our inherent perceptions** of their culture in certain aspects, and be willing to **accept their behavior style.**’] (TS1, G4-12)

==Examples from Teaching Session 2== n=17

**Q4 (Pre-W) & Q9 (Post-W):** n=11

*If you are in a foreign country and people treat you with their social greeting custom (for example, in France, they hug and kiss on your cheeks), what will you do?*

‘(Pre-W) I may feel embarrassed and just shake hands. (Post-W) **Do it like them.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G1-3-FB)

‘(Pre-W) I will tell them it is my greeting custom to shake hands. (Post-W) I will **accept** it. Because I could respect their custom.’ (TS2-Q4&9, G1-4-FB)

‘I will **accept** them. I will treat them **in their social greeting custom.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G1-8-FB)

‘I will enjoy it and **learn from** them. I will **try to adapt** to it (their greeting style).’ (TS2-Q4&9, G2-5-MB)

(Pre-W) ‘**Do just like them.**’ (Post-W) ‘**Accept** it and learn to do it.’ (TS2-Q4&9, G2-9-FA)

(Pre-W) ‘I will feel very embarrassing (embarrassed) and may refuse it.’ (Post-W) ‘I’ll **accept** it and treat them with their social greeting custom.’ (TS2-Q4&9, G3-1-FT)

(Pre-W) ‘Just **accept** it. As an old saying goes ‘when in Rome, do as the Romans do.’ (Post-W) ‘I will **do the same way** to him/her even I don’t like that.’ (TS2-Q4&9, G3-2-FT)

‘Just hug them and **response (respond) to their greeting customs.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G3-3-FE)

‘(Pre-W) I may be shocked for a while and then be embarrassed. (Post-W) I will **do as they do.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G3-5-ME)

(Pre-W) ‘Maybe I will be shy, and don’t know how to do.’ (Post-W) ‘I will give them hug and kiss on their cheeks **back.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G3-6-FT)

(Pre-W) ‘Hug them and smile’ (Post-W) ‘Hug and kiss on their cheeks **back.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G4-2-FT)

**Q5 (Pre-W) & Q10 (Post-W):** n=6

*If you don’t like others’ (especially foreigners’) greeting style or*

*body language, what will you do?*

‘(Pre-W) At first I will accept it, **then** I will tell him/her I don’t like it and want him/her to correct it. (Post-W) I will **accept** it. Because it’s different among countries in culture and we should respect it.’ (TS2-Q5&10, G1-4-FB)

‘(Pre-W) Tell others that their greeting custom is different from ours and that makes me feel uncomfortable. (Post-W) I will **accept** it because it is their custom.’ (TS2-Q5&10, G1-8-FB)

(Pre-W) ‘Try to adapt to it.’ (Post-W) ‘**Adapt to it.**’ (TS2-Q5&10, G2-9-FA)

(Pre-W) ‘I’ll tell him or her that I don’t like the greeting style or body language.’ (Post-W) ‘I’ll still **accept** it because it reflects their culture.’ (TS2-Q5&10, G3-1-FT)

(Pre-W) ‘I will just shake hands with them.’ (Post-W) ‘If I stay in that country, I will **accept** the way they greet each other.’ (TS2-Q5&10, G3-6-FT)

(Pre-W) ‘Just stand there and smile to them’ (Post-W) ‘Try to adapt to them and **do as they do**’ (TS2-Q5&10, G4-2-FT)

==Examples from Teaching Session 3== n=17

**TS3-Q6:** n=16

*Suppose you are an international student in a foreign country, what kinds of customs will you follow when you are abroad?*

‘**Follow western customs.**’ (TS3-Q6, G1-1-MB)

‘**Follow their customs.**’ (TS3-Q6, G1-4-FB)

‘Give tips to waiter after eating. Don’t talk with mouth full. If I were invited to dinner, I would bring a present, such as books, candies decorations, and **follow the hosts’ behavior** when eating.’ (TS3-Q6, G2-1-MB)

‘**Don’t talk loudly.** If someone invites me to eat dinner, I will wear formally. Maybe I will take some presents.’ (TS3-Q6, G2-4-MB)

	<p>‘I will <b>follow all their customs</b> that I know before. I would send flowers to the hostess and wine to the host. When I leave, I will say <i>thank you!</i>’ (TS3-Q6, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>‘<b>Wear a dress; bring a small gift.</b> Say thanks to the person inviting me and invite him/her to my place.’ (TS3-Q6, G2-9-FA)</p> <p>‘Don’t speak when your mouth is full of food. Finish the food on your plate. I will wear some formal clothes and bring flowers or wine to the host. I will say thanks to the host and tell them I enjoy the food.’ (TS3-Q6, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>‘I will <b>bring some gifts</b>, maybe a bottle of wine when I am invited to a dinner.’ (TS3-Q6, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>‘We should bring some gifts if we were invited to a friend’s house. Maybe <b>some flowers or just a small gift.</b> Behave well. Sit up straight. Keep my elbows off the table. Ask permission before leave the table. Thank them for inviting me to their dinner.’ (TS3-Q6, G3-3-FE)</p> <p>‘<b>Follow the table manners.</b> I will wear formal clothes; bring a present like a bottle of wine. I’ll behave politely. I will say <i>thank you</i> afterwards.’ (TS3-Q6, G3-4-FE)</p> <p>‘I will <b>bring a gift</b>; come later or on time; wear casual clothes and when I leave, say <i>I enjoyed myself, thank you!</i>’ (TS3-Q6, G3-5-ME)</p> <p>‘I will <b>use knife and fork</b>, don’t talk with mouth full, ask permission before I leave the table.’ (TS3-Q6, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>‘Wear casual clothes and <b>bring gifts.</b> Thanks for the dinner.’ (TS3-Q6, G4-1-MB)</p> <p>‘<b>Don’t eat with the mouth full or open.</b> Wear the clothes that matching with the environment. <b>Bring some flowers</b> and thank them when I leave.’ (TS3-Q6, G4-2-FT)</p> <p>‘<b>Don’t talk with your mouth full.</b> Bring the drink <b>wine.</b> Thanks for the delicious food and say <i>I am happy to have dinner with you.</i>’ (TS3-Q6, G4-3-ME)</p>
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‘Don’t talk with your mouth full.’ (TS3-Q6, G4-7-FE)

**TS3-Q12:** n=1

*If you are the student who is mentioned in the diary scenario, what is your planning to solve the different dining habit problem?*

‘I will talk to my host family and tell them what I think. Maybe I will **adapt to their customs.**’ (TS3-Q12, G2-4-MB)

== Examples from Post-Questionnaires == n=1

‘Yes, I think I can perform effectively and appropriately with members of English-speaking cultures. For example, if I was studying in England, my host family said ‘I love you’ to me, **I wouldn’t feel shy as before, and I would say ‘I love you’ as a response.**’ (PQ-8, G3-4-FE)

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**c) identify the similar and dissimilar interaction, and negotiate a compromise (n=22)**

== Examples from Teaching Session 1 == n=4

‘For a foreigner, we should **not be shy**, (should) **be confident** to talk with him (them) in regardless of the different thought. We should become **active and passionate** to communicate with different people.’ (TS1, G1-9-FB)

‘I know what they like talking and playing. I can make myself (don’t be a) **not special in foreign group.**’ (TS1, G2-3-MB)

‘When we are in a conversation, we should **talk about things that everyone interested in.**’ (TS1, G4-8-FT)

“我们认识到适当的改变自己才能适应新环境。”

[‘We should know that only **adjusting ourselves appropriately** could we adapt to the new environment successfully.’] (TS1, G4-12)

== Examples from Teaching Session 2 == n=9

**Q4 (Pre-W) & Q9 (Post-W):** n=3

*If you are in a foreign country and people treat you with their social greeting custom (for example, in France, they hug and kiss*

*on your cheeks), what will you do?*

‘I will accept it and do as they do, but I will **refuse some beyond my acceptance.**’ (TS2-Q4, G1-1-MB)

‘I’ll response them (respond to their greetings) using their greeting customs **and smile.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G3-4-FE)

(Pre-W) ‘I will treat them with their social greetings.’ (Post-W) ‘**First** I will treat them with their social greetings, and **then tell them about our social greetings.**’ (TS2-Q4&9, G4-1-MB)

**Q5 (Pre-W) & Q10 (Post-W):** n=6

*If you don’t like others’ (especially foreigners’) greeting style or body language, what will you do?*

‘I will **tell them reasons** and refuse their behaviors. **But then I may shake hands with them.**’ (TS2-Q5, G1-1-MB)

‘(Pre-W) Exactly tell him or her, ‘**I’m sorry, but in my country, we don’t do in this way.** (Post-W) **Tell him my feelings.**’ (TS2-Q5&10, G1-3-FB)

‘If I don’t like others’ greeting style or body language, I will tell him or her my own style of greeting.’ (TS2-Q5&10, G2-5-MB)

(Pre-W) ‘I would **point out that it is not proper based on our traditional ways.** Maybe others (they) would try to accept and understand me (my decision).’ (TS2-Q5, G3-2-FT)

‘I think even though I don’t like them, I also need to respect their greeting ways. So I would like to respond to their greeting ways **gently.**’ (TS2-Q5&10, G3-3-FE)

(Post-W) ‘I’ll try to **begin talking about something when they want to greet me.**’ (TS2-Q5&10, G3-5-ME)

==Examples from Teaching Session 3== n=8

**TS3-Q6:** n=2

*Suppose you are an international student in a foreign country, what kinds of customs will you follow when you are abroad?*

	<p>‘I <b>don’t</b> use chopsticks.’ (TS3-Q6, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>‘If I have a meal, I will wear comfortable clothes, bring flowers, and <b>follow the foreign customs. But maybe just say thank you after dinner.</b>’ (TS3-Q6, G1-8-FB)</p> <p><b>TS3-Q12:</b> n=6  <i>If you are the student who is mentioned in the diary scenario, what is your planning to solve the different dining habit problem?</i></p> <p>‘I will try to get used to it. <b>In addition, introduce traditional Chinese food to my host family.</b>’ (TS3-Q12, G2-5-MB)</p> <p>‘<b>Every time eat a little. Show my respect but I won’t make myself feel uncomfortable.</b>’ (TS3-Q12, G2-9-FA)</p> <p>‘Maybe I will <b>explain to her that I want to eat something different</b> and (see) if she can provide Chinese food for me.’ (TS3-Q12, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>‘If I can’t stand the eating habit, I would like to <b>eat less or I can cook something in Chinese cuisines by myself.</b>’ (TS3-Q12, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>‘I may <b>cook some Chinese food for myself sometimes, or introduce some dishes</b> that the family may like for them.’ (TS3-Q12, G3-5-ME)</p> <p>‘<b>To adapt to the dining habit in their country, and bring some fruits and vegetables to share with the family and cook Chinese food</b> for them at weekends.’ (TS3-Q12, G3-6-FT)</p> <p>== Examples from Post-Questionnaires == n=1</p> <p>‘Yes, I <b>won’t do anything that is bad (inappropriate) for other country person (from another cultural perspective).</b>’ (PQ-6, G1-5-FB)</p>
<p>d) use <b>in real-time</b> an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills and</p>	<p>N=0</p>

<p>attitudes <b>to interact</b> with interlocutors from a different country and culture taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country, culture and language and the extent of difference between one's own and the other</p>	
<p>e) identify <b>contemporary and past relationships</b> between one's own and the other culture and society</p> <p>N=1 (TS1) +11(TS3)=12</p>	<p>===Teaching Session 1=== n=1</p> <p>'In my view it is not enough to talk about western culture. It is better to recognize western values from their histories such as Revival of Learning in which individualism occurred. These factors influence their behaviors and in this way we can better comprehend the differences between Eastern cultures and Western cultures.' (TS1, G3-5-ME)</p> <p>===Teaching Session 3=== n=11</p> <p><b>TS3-Q11:</b> <i>What is your opinion on western fast food invasion and expansion to China?</i></p> <p>'As a cultural integration, it can enrich our daily life.' (TS3-Q11, G1-1-MB)</p> <p>'If it is delicious, it is OK for them to melt with Chinese food.' (TS3-Q11, G1-3-FB)</p> <p>'It is a tendency of the world's development.' (TS3-Q11, G1-4-FB)</p> <p>'It is the culture-fuse of the world. It is the trending.' (TS3-Q11, G1-8-FB)</p> <p>'It is a chance for a communication among distinct food cultures.' (TS3-Q11, G2-1-FB)</p> <p>'I think it is the tendency of the world economy. We can know other countries' food.' (TS3-Q11, G2-4-MB)</p>

	<p>‘It is the global economics &lt;economy&gt; and bring the western customs to China.’ (TS3-Q11, G3-1-FT)</p> <p>‘I’m not very critical about this phenomena. It is a kind of globalization.’ (TS3-Q11, G3-2-FT)</p> <p>‘We should respect the variety of food. Western fast food coming into China promotes Chinese economy, but eating too much is bad for children’s health.’ (TS3-Q11, G3-4-FE)</p> <p>‘报以欣赏的态度，西餐可以丰富我们的生活。’ [I would like to treat the western food with attitude of appreciation; it may enrich our life.] (TS3-Q11, G4-1-MB)</p> <p>‘It is the cultural exchange.’ (TS3-Q11, G4-3-ME)</p>
<p>f) identify and make use of public and private <b>institutions</b> which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures</p>	<p>N=0</p>
<p>g) use in <b>real-time</b> knowledge, skills and attitudes for <b>mediation</b> between interlocutors of one’s own and a foreign culture</p>	<p>N=0</p>

## Appendix 8 Sojourn Hong Kong student's diary entry

‘After arriving at the pub, I ordered a glass of traditional English beer because I wanted to know why English people are crazy about beer. After sipping a little bit of the beer, I introduced myself to other inter-national students. However, their attitude was rather apathetic. I felt quite uncomfortable to continue our conversation because they seemed to be quite cold to me. Therefore, I just stopped trying to blend into their group. I become close with three Chinese students who came from Beijing. Chinese could always accept Chinese!...But I just sometimes find the international students particularly cold to Chinese and this hurt me because it was a kind of discrimination.’  
(diary, female, 11)

Jackson, J. (2005). Assessing Intercultural Learning through Introspective Accounts. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 11, 165–186.

## Appendix 9 IEC Learners' Feedback on Teaching (TS1-4)

### TS1

'It's an interesting class to know about the culture shock and the different stories about the foreign country. The part that the teacher told us **her experiences** in England was most impressive.' (TS1, G3-1-FT)

'If the teacher can show us some **pictures or videos** she or other people took in England, it would be better.' (TS1, G3-1-FT)

'The most impressive part is the teacher talk about the **everyday life during her stay** in the UK. I like the teaching method, because it can not only **provide us with information** but can improve our **reading comprehension**.' (TS1, G3-2-FT)

'As for the teaching content, it would be better for us students to have more **pictures and other visual materials**. And for the teaching method, the **communications between students** should be encouraged more. **Role play** is a good way for us to deep understand the content.' (TS1, G3-2-FT)

'(The IEC is) Good learning experience. **Discussion** is the most impressive part. I like teacher's teaching method, because we are free to discuss anything related to our topic. And our teacher tells us many **interesting things about Britain**.'

'It would be better if we can use **PPT**.' (TS1, G3-3-FE)

'I like the class; it is pretty good. What impressed me most is **analyzing the context and the discussion** part. Besides, I like Tina telling us **her experiences** in Britain most.' (TS1, G3-4-FE)

'I hope Tina can tell more about **her life in Britain** and more **differences about China and Britain**.' (TS1, G3-4-FE)

(Pre) 'Involve topic in a play which is on in class, or in a movie' (Post) 'about the

teaching method, maybe adding some **short movies** about part of life in foreign country can attract us greatly.’ (TS1, G3-5-ME)

‘I have more confidence to deal with the culture shock. Tell us some theories with the **true experiences of someone.**’ (TS1, G4-3-ME)

‘I’d like to listen to some **interesting stories about somebody who overcome culture shock.**’ (TS1, G4-4-FB)

‘I learned some habits of English people. Some **interesting examples** <teacher’s own experiences and incidents in diary entry> are very impressive.’ (TS1, G4-6-MB)

‘Yes, good learning experience and teaching method. I have **almost no ideas about some aspects of English beliefs before this class.**’ (TS1, G4-6-MB)

‘I think the teacher **can ask students more about what they don’t know and explain it** to them.’ (TS1, G4-6-MB)

‘It is an interesting class. We can learn different cultures in the class. And know about some **funny things because of the differences between different cultures.**’ (TS1, G4-8-FT)

## TS2

‘When the teacher tells us about the customs about other countries (greeting styles), I think that is most impressive.’ ‘I like the teacher’s teaching method. Because I don’t understand these at all before the class, so I like she tells me directly.’ (TS2, G1-3-FB)

‘Tina can use PPT or other illustration method.’ (TS2, G1-3-FB)

‘By PPT and videos.’ (TS2, G1-4-FB)

‘Practicing is most impressive part. Yes, the teaching method is interesting.’ (TS2, G1-8-FB)

‘Could be with the videos.’ (TS2, G1-8-FB)

‘The content and method are both perfect.’ (TS2, G2-5-MB)

‘Tell more interesting differences between China and other foreign countries.’ (TS2, G2-9-FA)

‘I know more about the greeting customs and accept the different styles of greetings. The experience that Tina told us about her first meeting with her tutor is the most impressive part of the class.’ (TS2, G3-1-FT)

‘(Learning experience) Try to be more active in class.’ ‘My suggestions are as follows – do more activities; play games related to the courses.’ (TS2, G3-2-FT)

‘It is of great importance for us to know the way of other country’s greetings in that we can make a good relationship with them.... And the most impressive part of the lesson is that we talk about the titling and naming traditions we like and dislike.’ (TS2, G3-2-FT)

‘(Learning experience) Great. Discussion is the most impressive part. I like the teaching method because it is interesting.’ ‘Use more videos.’ (TS2, G3-3-FE)

‘The name part is the most impressive.’ (TS2, G3-4-FE)

‘(Learning experience) Comfortable. How to call someone in an exact way is most impressive. I like the teaching method.’ (TS2, G3-5-ME)

‘The most impressive part is how to shake hands with others.’ (TS2, G3-6-FT)

‘Their (westerners’) social greeting is the most impressive. Yes, I like the teaching

method. It can make us know the differences between foreign country and China.’  
‘We can have some videos to see the differences.’ (TS2, G4-1-MB)

‘I like the teacher’s teaching method. She is a kind person and told us a lot of useful things.’ ‘We can do more efforts to enrich the contents of the topic, like how to refuse foreigners’ requests etc.’ (TS2, G4-2-FT)

### TS3

‘It is a wonderful class.’ ‘**More activities** will be better.’ (TS3, G1-1-MB)

‘I think it is very interesting. When Tina **showed us some foreign food**, I feel impressive. I like the teaching method, because it is **comfortable and interesting**.’  
‘Show some more videos.’ (TS3, G1-3-FB)

‘(Learning experience) Different countries have different customs and we should respect each other. **All kinds of foreign food** are most impressive. I like the teaching method.’ (TS3, G1-4-FB)

‘(Learning experience) Different countries have different cultures. I know more.’  
(TS3, G1-8-FB)

‘(Learning experience) Very good. When teacher introduced **western food and table manners**, it was attractive to me. Yes, I like the teaching method and I know more than before after this class.’ (TS3, G2-1-FB)

‘Wonderful. I have learned **various kinds of breakfast**. I am impressed by the part that teacher showed **the photos of western food**.’ ‘The content and method are perfect.’ (TS3, G2-5-MB)

‘The most impressive part is that the teacher introduced **what foreign people eat**. Yes, I like the teaching method and know many things I never know before.’ ‘Tell more interesting, surprising things about British (Britain).’ (TS3, G2-9-FA)

‘It is a very interesting class. The **food pictures** the teacher showed to us are the most impressive. I like the teaching method. It is clear and interesting.’ (TS3, G3-1-FT)

‘(Learning experience) Think more questions before, during and after class. The most impressive part in today’s class is that I learn **how to make the turkey in western style**. I like it because it is more like cooking and I like cooking very much. It is good for us to know more about the exact way of cooking in western culture.’

‘Suggestions: Make a follow-up line about the whole content of a certain class. By this way, students can have a full view of what will be learnt in today’s class.’ (TS3, G3-2-FT)

‘Great. **Watching the video and seeing those beautiful foods**. I like the teaching method. We use the PPT and watch the videos. It is interesting and vivid.’ (TS3, G3-3-FE)

‘I like the teaching very much. The only suggestion is that time is limited and we should try our best to finish our task. To make students active in class is a way to solve it.’ (TS3, G3-5-ME)

‘I know **more about western food**. The most impressive part is the desert. I like the teacher’s teaching method, because there are many pictures during the class.’ (TS3, G3-6-FT)

‘It helps me know **many kinds of foods**. **How to make the turkey** is the most impressive part. I like the teaching method.’ (TS3, G4-1-MB)

‘I **learnt a lot of manners that I don’t know before** when I eat western food. The pictures that teacher gave us were very beautiful. The teaching method is really good.’ (TS3, G4-2-FT)

‘**The customs** are the most impressive part. I like the teacher’s teaching method: explaining the food with pictures. This may help us remember well.’ ‘You can give us more media about the food or cultural contrary. This will impress us.’ (TS3, G4-3-ME)

‘(My learning experience is) Okay. **The table customs and other cultures** are most impressive part. Yes, I like the teaching method very much. As far as I think, it’s more funny than my English teacher’s class, though his class is very interesting.’ ‘No suggestions. I think it is wonderful enough. Funny and interesting.’ (TS3, G4-7-FE)

#### TS4

‘The most impressive part of the class is the introduction about UK’s education (system/environment).’ (TS4, G1-1-MB)

‘I like the teacher’s teaching method. It is interesting.’ ‘Video is a good tool in class. But too much is likely arouse opposite effect.’ (TS4, G1-3-FB)

‘The videos the teacher showed are the most impressive. Yes, I like the teaching method.’ ‘I think the teaching method is very good.’ (TS4, G1-4-FB)

‘(Learning experience) I know the difference (of education system) between UK and China; what I should prepare for studying in the UK.’ (TS4, G1-5-FB)

‘Yes, I like the teaching method very much.’ ‘Please give us more information about application and experiences.’ (TS4, G1-5-FB)

‘From this class, I learn more about UK. I think the most impressive is what kind of life in UK. Yes, I like the teaching method. The (frequent) video is very directly perceived and lively.’ [录像直观形象生动体现英伦生活] (TS4, G1-7-MB)

‘(Learning experience) (I have learned) Why (we) go to UK (furthering study) and

some information of going to UK. I like the teaching method; it makes everyone take part in the discussion and have our own ideas <debate>.’ ‘I think we can learn the culture from kinds of movies so that everyone has deep impression.’ (TS4, G1-9-FB)

‘I like the teacher’s teaching method. Because the teacher likes communicate with us.’ ‘Actually, I think the teaching content is not so useful. It is just like a talk; the information we can get from Internet easily.’ (TS4, G1-10-MB)

‘Good. The debate is most impressive. Yes, I like the teaching method because our teacher provides us a chance to express our feelings and standpoints freely. No suggestions.’ (TS4, G2-1-FB)

‘Going abroad for study like coins having two sides – a good side and a bad side. Yes, I like the teaching method, because it is more interesting than ever.’ ‘I like this class and hope cut the numbers of questions on paper <the questions on the worksheets>.’ (TS4, G2-2-FB)

‘The most impressive part is the bad lives <aspects> in foreign. I like the teaching.’ ‘We need more talking and movies.’ (TS4, G2-3-MB)

‘Teacher shows different videos about studying in UK. I know more details about that. I like this method. Because I think this is true. If the teacher says that, maybe I will doubt. (Criticality!!)’

‘Teach translated in Chinese means ‘jiaoxue’. That means teachers tell you something and students learn something. We are together. We should communicate with each other.’ (TS4, G2-4-MB)

‘It is wonderful. The most impressive part is the debate. I like the teacher’s teaching method because I can learn what I want to learn.’ ‘The teacher’s teaching content and method are perfect!’ (TS4, G2-5-MB)

‘(learning experience) Very helpful. Watching videos is the most impressive part.

Yes, I like the teacher's teaching method.' 'Sorry, I don't have any suggestions.'  
(TS4, G2-7-MB)

'(learning experience) There are many things we should prepare if we choose to study abroad. Too many videos; some videos are useless for me.' 'I like the teacher to tell some experience or interesting stories based on her UK life.' (TS4, G2-9-FA)

'Although there may be some difficulties if I choose to go to the UK. I keep my mind on the way I choose.' 'The part of TOM CAT is most impressive. Yes, I like the teacher's teaching method and it is very good in the content and the method.'  
'If the teacher's own experiences of studying in the UK can be connected with the videos, it could be better.' (TS4, G3-1-FT)

'The most impressive part is the debate. I think debate is an excellent way for us to think more. It is a good way for us to exam (check/assess) whether or not we can support ourselves using English as a weapon.' 'We should sit close to each other, good for communication and easy for exchanging ideas.' (TS4, G3-2-FT)

'Great! Watching videos and the debate. Yes, I like the teaching method. It is interesting.' (TS4, G3-3-FE)

'I like it. The video part is my favourite.' (TS4, G3-4-FE)

'I learnt the life, study environment in UK. The video about Chinese student life is most impressive. I like the teacher's teaching method; she provides us with various information about UK. No suggestions.' (TS4, G3-6-FT)

'From this class, I know some aspects of the UK, and all the videos are most impressive. I like the teacher's teaching method very much.' (TS4, G4-1-MB)

'(Learning experience) Your opinion is always changing. Try to find your true love and follow it.' 'Debate is the most impressive part.' 'I like the teacher's

teaching method because it will push us to think more during the debate.’ ‘First of all, the movie is impressive and attractive. But, if we just watch video, it is easy for us to think (of) other things. So, when students watch, try to explain more details about the relative thing about the video.’ (TS4, G4-3-ME)

‘I think this class is interesting, we can see (watch) some videos and know more about the further study life in the UK. It becomes more and more lively. And making debate is a good way to open our mind.’ (TS4, G4-4-FB)

‘The two videos at the first of our class contrasted (and showed) two different views about going abroad. We should consider the question twice and make use of further education. Not yet suggestions.’ (TS4, G4-5-FB)

‘It is good. The debate between two sides is the most impressive. Yes, I like the teacher’s teaching method. I think the videos are very interesting.’ ‘No suggestions. I think the teaching content and teaching method are suitable for students. It can make students take part in the class.’ (TS4, G4-6-MB)

‘Very good. I know the shopping, eating, studying, travelling etc. some aspects of life in the UK. Yes, I like the teaching method, because I can see the life about student abroad directly in different opinion. No suggestions.’ (TS4, G4-9-FB)

‘The class covers many aspects of international studies.’ ‘Share some things that happened during the period of studying abroad. And through these daily little things maybe we will understand more and impressive.’ (TS4, G4-10-FT)

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